

# THE MARQUAND READER

WEEK OF OCTOBER 3, 2005

*Welcome to The Marquand Reader, Marquand Chapel's weekly newsletter. The Reader outlines upcoming services, explains liturgical traditions and innovations, and highlights particular points of interest for the Marquand worshipping community. If you have any questions about anything that you find in this issue, please contact Siobhán Garrigan, dean of chapel.*

## **This Week...**

Monday	<i>A Service Exploring the Frontier</i> , Stewart Everett, M.Div. '06 preaching Sacramental Winers, musical guests
Tuesday	<i>Feast of the St. Francis, Blessing of the Animals Service</i>
Wednesday	<i>Sung Morning Prayer in Global Song</i> , led by Marisa Green, Daniel Koh and the Marquand Chapel Choir
Thursday	<i>Service of the Word</i> , Christian Scharen, preaching
Friday	<i>Coalition Eucharist in Celebration of Coming Out Day</i> , Emilie Townes, preaching and presiding

## **Marquand Chapel Feature Series:**

### ***Almost Saints***

*-Elizabeth Lerohl & Siobhán Garrigan*

Marquand Chapel is pleased to present "Almost Saints", a series of worship services that will enliven the gospel message through highlighting the lives of particular servants of God.

### **What is a saint?**

In biblical terms, a saint is someone who is beloved of God. In Hebrew scriptures (the Psalms, Daniel) a saint is someone who loves God and whom God counts among God's people. In the New Testament, a saint is a baptized follower of Christ, living in fellowship with other Christians. Paul, in his letters to the early church, frequently addresses the people to whom he writes as saints (e.g.: Romans 1:7), and names those about whom he writes saints (e.g.: 1 Cor. 16:15). In scripture, saints are both living and deceased, part of a continuous community of those who live God's commandments faithfully.

### **Saints in Marquand**

The series that started last week, with a service remembering the words and witness of Dorothy Day, evolved from conversations with the leader of the Roman Catholic group here at YDS, Alice Kearney. These conversations were part of an ongoing dialogue about how

those worship on campus can be ecumenical in such a way that Catholics and non-Catholics can worship together. Saints are of particular importance in Roman Catholic worship and prayer life, and Catholics can invite others into their devotional practices in ways that are not currently possible with other liturgical practices, such as the celebration of the Eucharist.

In the Catholic tradition saints play a special role in the piety of many believers. For the faithful, saints are a part of the living tradition of Catholic prayer through the example of their lives, transmission of their writings, and their prayer today.<sup>1</sup> Saints are sources and origins of renewal of the church in difficult historical moments, through their inspiration and continual prayer to God. Saints are recognized because of their lives of extraordinary witness to God. Saints serve as moral examples, examples of holiness to which all believers might strive. The great variety of saints richly represents the diversity in the body of Christ, as saints range from early Christian martyrs to a young 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian teenager.

Saints in contemporary life are a strong force in the lives of many people. Saints, in their witness to Christ, moral example, and in their diversity help the modern Christian understand herself as part of a long tradition that extends from the first disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ to the people who this series pays heed, contemporary people who continue looking forward as reminders that we are still called to be saints.

### **Why *Almost* Saints?**

In Roman Catholic tradition, the Church officially “canonizes” or “beatifies” – names as saints -- only those whose lives have been marked by the exercise of heroic virtue, a reputation of sanctity and by conclusive arguments that they have been called upon and have interceded with God on behalf of other faithful members of the church in miraculous events.

This series will highlight the lives of people who are not officially saints, and may never officially be named as such. These people are titled “almost” saints to indicate that they have lived and do live lives of extraordinary witness and service to God. Like the cloud of witnesses that have gone before them, these people continue in the tradition of Roman Catholic saints, being models of witness to Christ and moral examples for believers.

This series also will encourage worshipers in Marquand Chapel to consider what it means to be members of the communion of saints, those committed to communion in holy things and among holy persons.<sup>2</sup> As the series progresses through the coming academic year, we will remember a whole host of people who act as saints for various members of our own community. As we did for Dorothy Day, the chapel will hold paintings and icons and other devotional aids about the person, we will hear about their lives, we will hear from them in their own words and we will listen to the stories of scripture and of our own lives in the light cast by each “almost” saint.

*Special thanks to Alice Kearney, Jennifer Seach, and Mary Lou Bozza who contributed information for this article.*

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<sup>1</sup> 2683, “Guides for Prayer,” Catechism of the Catholic Church, United States Catholic Conference, DoubleDay, New York, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> 948-950, Catechism.

## Friday's Coalition Eucharist

*-Matt Haugen & Elizabeth Lerohl*

In honor of National Coming Out Day (October 11), Friday's communion service will honor the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Christians. This service of Word and Sacrament will speak to the joys and challenges of sexuality in the church and among Christians.

Coffee Hour will follow Friday's service on the Quad.

October 7th is also the feast day of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, martyred in 303 AD in Syria, who are the unofficial patron saints of gay men. Meanwhile, Saints Perpetua and Felicitas, companions who were martyred in Carthage, 203 AD, are remembered on March 6th and unofficially are the patrons of lesbian women.

Sergius and Bacchus, Roman soldiers and companions, were martyred when they admitted their Christianity. After their arrest, the two saints were paraded through city streets in women's clothing, treatment that was meant to humiliate them as officers in the Roman army. They were then separated and each was tortured. Bacchus died first and appeared that night to Sergius, who was beginning

to lose heart. According to the early manuscripts, Bacchus told Sergius to persevere, that the delights of Heaven were greater than any suffering, and that part of their reward would be to be re-united in Heaven.

Sergius and Bacchus are particularly popular throughout the Mediterranean lands, in Latin America, and among the Slavs. For nearly a thousand years they were the official patrons of the Byzantine armies, and Arab nomads continue to revere them as their special patron saints.

Yale historian John Boswell has argued that their relationship is an example of an early Christian same-sex union, reflecting his controversial view that early Christians, like other ancient cultures, held more tolerant attitudes toward homosexuality. Even as this evidence remains disputed among scholars, the Saints' story of "coming out" as Christians is a powerful reminder to us of the ways in which groups of people historically have been marginalized and treated with violence, and how companionship and community is a source of courage to persevere when publicly revealing one's identity in a sometimes hostile and unaccepting culture.

### The Marquand Chapel Team

Siobhán Garrigan, *Dean of Chapel*

Patrick Evans, *Director of Chapel Music*

Jean Lowe, *Chapel Administrative Assistant*

Matt Haugen, Elizabeth Lerohl, Emily Scott, Kaji Spellman, Kelly Van Andel, *Chapel Ministers*

Mark Miller, *Gospel Choir Director*

Colin Lynch, Stephen Fraser, *Organists*

Marisa Green, Daniel Koh, *Marquand Chapel Choir Directors*