

The Lion

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Saint Mark's Parish, Denver, Colorado*

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A ROOM WITH A VIEW AND MORE VIEWS: TRAVELS IN ITALY 2012

by Reader Stephen Greenlee

OUR TRIP WOULD START IN FLORENCE and end in Rome eleven days later while seeing Ravenna, Pisa and Sienna along the way. The excuse was to visit Sarah in Florence where she was finishing up her junior semester abroad program. But it was mainly a trip for Nancy and me to go on a fun little adventure together. Sarah enjoyed seeing her parents and showing us the sights in Florence. She took us on an afternoon hike across the Arno and up a hill to the church of St. Minias. It was typical of many of our outings on this trip, lots of walking, gazing at interesting and beautiful things, grand views and striding along with the locals, the tourists and the pilgrims. I will only relate a few bits of our very successful adventure here and most of that will focus on our day trip from Florence to Ravenna and our two and a half days in Rome.

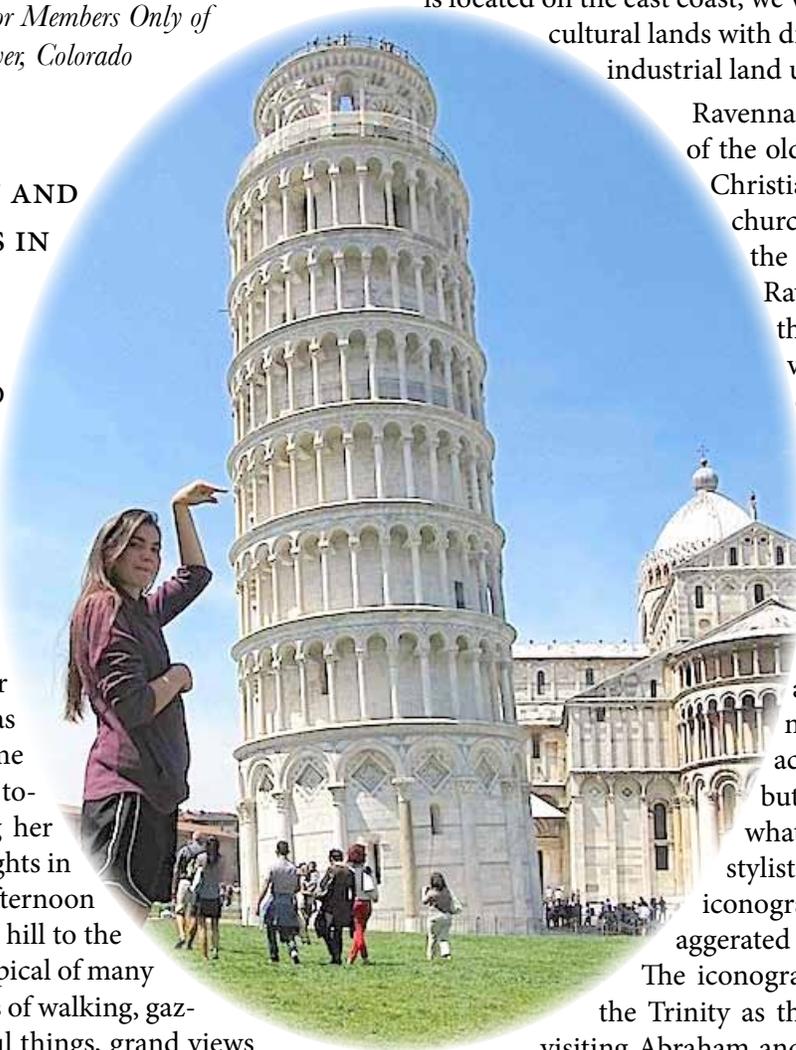
The trip to Ravenna takes two and a half hours via the local train and it makes a lot of stops. It is powered by a diesel engine and a transmission that sounds more like a delivery truck than a train and it only had three cars. The ride takes you through and over the Apennine mountains which are not really high but very beautiful. Sarah suggested this particular train rather than the slightly faster route that goes through Bologna because she had heard it had better views. The route follows a river with clear water and we saw many small farm plots on terraced plots of ground. The well dressed grape vines and olive trees were obvious but there were other well pruned kinds of small

trees. Everything is made of stone and concrete in Italy. Even the attractive grey picket fences on a closer look showed that they were cast in sections and were concrete. Like other train rides, you tend to see everyone's backyard. Most rural homes had gardens and many had chickens and goats or sheep. As we arrived at the plain of Ravenna, which is located on the east coast, we viewed productive agricultural lands with different crops and some industrial land uses as well.

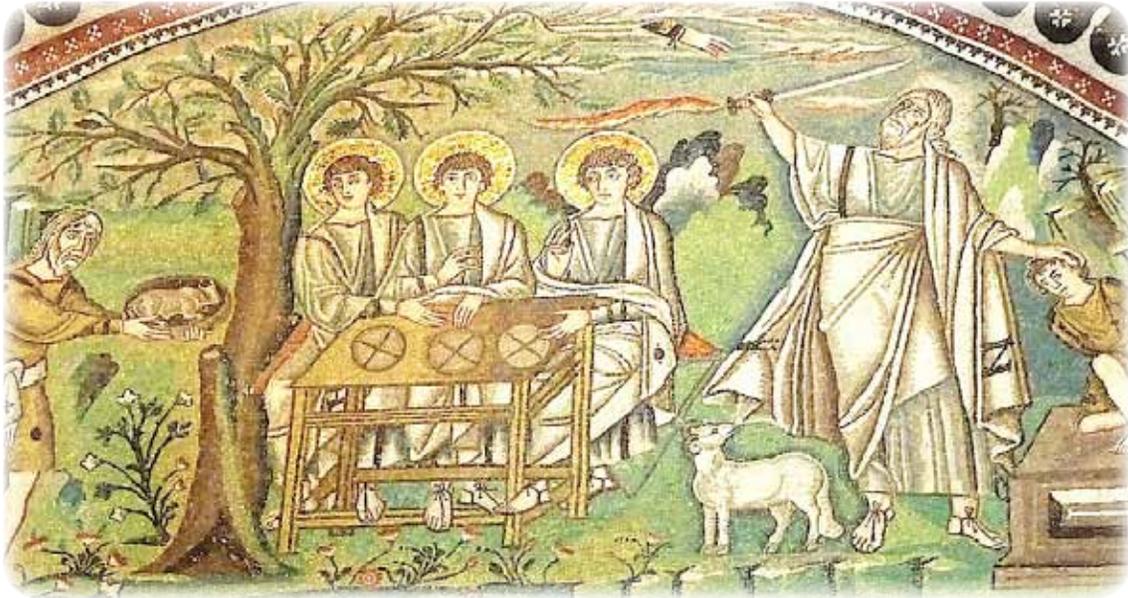
Ravenna has notoriety for some of the oldest and best preserved Christian mosaic art in its churches which date from the 5th and 6th centuries. Ravenna was the home of the Adriatic Roman Naval Fleet in the nearby city and harbour of Classe in the first century AD. It was the Capital of the Western Empire for a time and it was an Eastern Empire outpost during the reigns of Theodoric and later Justinian. The mosaic works are characterized as Byzantine but they are free from what we typically associate stylistically with Byzantine iconography. There are no exaggerated features or lobed heads.

The iconographic representation of the Trinity as the three angelic figures visiting Abraham and Sarah is found at San Vitale; it is simple and direct compared to the familiar Russian versions. Those three figures looked out at us and at their host Abraham just as they have for the last 1500 years.

Our first order of business upon arriving in Ravenna was to catch a cab from the train station to the church of St. Apollinaire in Classe. Classe is about 5 km away and its grand church stands alone very impressively with its round tower next to it. It seemed like every school age child in Italy was viewing the wonders of Ravenna this day, as we encountered field trip groups at most of the sites we visited. St. Apollinaire in Classe was full of kids, in many groups and loosely organized. Despite the crowd and constant reminders of "Silencio" we saw the glorious apse transfiguration mosaic and unfortunately no photos do it justice. We spent 30 minutes inside and came out to our waiting cabbie who took us back to the train station where we conducted the rest of our tour on foot.



We ran into the school field trip groups again near San Vitale. Wherever you go in Italy there are black African refugees that are street vendors of sunglasses, flowers, leather goods and slime balls that go splat when thrown on the ground but then kind of recollect themselves back into the form of a slime ball. One of these entrepreneurs found a ready market for showy bright colored sunglasses with a class of maybe 50 junior high age children...several of which were sporting the new shades and admiring each others good looks. So the wonders of San Vitale were colliding with the wonders of fancy sunglasses near the back entrance to the church.



All the mosaic art we saw in Ravenna expresses a happy high regard for humanity, creation and the Saviour of the World. *Salus Mundi* is actually inscribed in the transfiguration apse of St. Apollinaire in Classe. As you study this art you also realize how tightly the visual forms adhere to the biblical texts. There is meaning in all the details. The oldest mosaics from the late 5th century in Gala Placidia's Mausoleum, have one really wonderful mosaic of Christ the Good Shepherd in which Jesus is unbearded, youngish and sitting in a pastoral setting holding a gold cross with his left hand and reaching out to caress one of the sheep with his right hand. Jesus loves his creation and mankind. The good creation of flowers, birds, fruits and vines adorn many of the mosaic works and they give the thematic and allegorical scenes a loving, hopeful and endearing quality. I can imagine going to church over the years at one these places where ones mind and heart could easily wander off on some new detail that had been previously unnoticed or while gazing at one of the familiar saints or scenes new wonders or meditations come to mind. The big bombastic art of later ages has its virtues but the more direct and focused mosaic works seem ideal for prayer and inspiration. It just doesn't get much better than what one sees in Ravenna.

St. Apollinaire Nuovo has processions of Martyr Saints; women on the north side clerestory, and men on the south and more mosaic saints higher up the walls above the processing Martyrs. They are all front facing and depicted as whole human forms. I think this church was one of the

inspirations for our Saints iconography at St. Mark's. Fr. John, Andrew and I were here in 2003 and made the one day tour of Ravenna on rented bicycles which is another successful strategy for seeing Ravenna in a day. I saw much more on this second visit and I had fun watching Nancy take in all the sights for the first time. We enjoyed puzzling out the many mosaic bible stories and representations while also gleaning help from our guidebooks.

The food in Italy is not just pizza, pannini and gelatto although we consumed plenty of those. We discovered Trattorias which are characterized by small home cooked meals at

moderate prices. When eating out it is acceptable to order just one or two of the course offerings. You are not compelled to eat multiple courses for your meal and tipping is not customary or expected. Primo course is usually pasta and the Secondo course is usually carne and if you order that dish you get exactly what you would expect, meat. If you order chicken you get a piece of chicken, no sides or garnish; if lamb you get a chunk of lamb but it is so delicious that no presentation enhancements or garnish embellishments are necessary. I also sampled sides of Spinache, Asparagus and some kind of broccoli greens during our trip and they were all just delicious. Sarah noted that there is no such thing as Italian lite cooking. The food is rich, slathered with olive oil or butter, seasoned perfectly and simply wonderful. The wine is very good and cheap. We liked the Chiantis of Florence and Sarah introduced us to a dark and rich red wine called Bolgheri, Lord have Mercy. The choice is usually simple *Vino Casa Rosa* or *Vino Casa Bianco* and no real need to explore beyond those tasty choices unless you are an oenophile; a half litre with your meal costs about \$3 Euros.

The train from Sienna to Rome was packed with passengers to the point of bursting on May 1st, Italy's National Labour Day. That day was fortuitous in many ways but especially in the sense that we made it to Rome and got off at Trastevere rather than the Roma Termini which saved us a lot of time and toil getting to our hotel. We chose to stay in Trastevere because it is right next to the center of old Rome

and because I had some familiarity with this area from two previous visits to Rome with Fr. John. On those excursions, we enjoyed Professor Paul Miller's hospitality and stayed at his flat apartment, where he graciously adapts to, befriends and enjoys lively conversations with Fr. John's assortment of travel companions.

After depositing our belongings at our B&B, we went straight to St. Cecilia's, where this Saint is buried under the altar and where you will find Stephano Moderno's serene and beautiful carving of the Saint as she was found in her tomb 1400+ years after she was boiled and nearly beheaded. The Pope instructed Moderno to carve exactly what he saw...the beautiful youthful and incorrupt form of St. Cecilia. We started here because it was close to our lodging. It was closed for siesta but at the courtyard gate we met a very nice family with four children ranging in age from maybe 10 to 17 who were also seeking St. Cecilia. The kids were home schooled and Mom and Dad thought a month of travel, via rented van, starting in Italy and ending in France would be beneficial to their education. Where do brave and brilliant parents like these come from....Parker Colorado, of course!

We packed a lot into our brief time in Rome. A very fruitful visit to the Vatican and St. Peter's included the opportunity to see and hear Patriarch Benedict XVI as he preached in the Piazza San Pietro. We foiled the crowds with advance reservations for the Vatican Museum and we climbed to the lantern at the top of St. Peter's dome. On climbing back down, we found nice bathrooms and a replete and uncrowded souvenir shop on the roof along the north wall of St. Peter's. After taking advantage of all that, we climbed on down and exited into the nave of St. Peter's and even found an entrance to the undercroft where St. Peter and many Popes mortal remains lay entombed.

We took a few minutes to admire the farm produce stands in Campo de Fiori which to the natural eye look like they are photoshop enhanced with brilliant colors. We watched stray, but well fed, Roman cats in the archaeological excavations at Piazza Argentina. We also found cats at the Roman Cemetery next to San Lorenzo and one of them would have come home with us but for our diversionary manoeuvres.



I thought Nancy might be reaching her maximum absorption point of beautiful things on our last day in Rome when we decided to jump off the Number 3 bus to San Lorenzo and take a quick look at San Clemente. The Church of San Clemente is a beautiful little basilican

church which has beautiful mosaic work. An admission ticket lets you go underneath this church to explore the recent excavations that have unearthed an earlier church that preceded San Clemente and then you go below all that to some old Roman buildings that include a temple of Mithras and some other buildings that they don't know exactly what they were for. Nancy insisted we explore the undercroft and we found it to be a very interesting place. An English speaking guide with about 8 people was ahead of us so we chanced upon a free guided tour.



We lost ourselves in the walking, looking and learning while the usual distractions like political campaigns and worldly cares of home and work did not have space or time to divert our attention from our new environs and experiences. We paused to make our prayers and intercessions and we lit many tapers at the great martyr churches of Rome. Spiritual senses

enlivened, many new sights and experiences, very good food and drink and the fun of a shared adventure were the happy rewards of our efforts, thanks be to God. §

WHAT IS THE ANGLICAN PATRIMONY?

by Martha C. Eischen

An excerpt from *The New Oxford Review*, May 2012

AS someone who spent the first 71 of her 73 years as an Anglican, I would like to give a humble layman's explanation of the character and mystique of Anglicanism.

I was received into the Catholic Church on Advent Sunday, November 28, 2010. It was a most blessed day, shared by some of my family, friends, and my priest. I have been the beneficiary of great grace and blessing as I have journeyed in my new "home." My parish is Our Lady of Lourdes in Philadelphia. We are surrounded by so much of what I grew up with as an Anglo-Catholic that I hardly know that I am "across the Tiber."

I was born into a devout family of Episcopalians, one of six children. My parents raised us in the faith, and they lived it daily. Two of my father's brothers were Episcopal priests, one a religious in the Society of St. John the Evangelist in London. To be fair, ours was not a normal upbringing; we were extraordinarily blessed. My father often said of his own roots, "The lot has fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. 16:6). Ours was just that: We were raised, it would correctly be said, in the glory days of Anglo-Catholicism. For many years I worshipped at the Anglo-Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd in Rosemont, Pennsylvania; I know former rector Fr. Jeffrey Steenson, recently named the ordinary for the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, the American branch of the Anglican Ordinariate, very well.

Why did I "abandon" my roots after so many decades? Simply put, the disintegration of moral values that has wracked our society has become the norm in the Episcopal Church, for certain, but also in the wider Anglican Communion. Like so many Anglicans, the implosion spoke loudly to me regarding ecclesiastical discipline and authority. A question burned in my heart: Why I was out of communion with the homeland of Holy Mother Church, the See of Peter? The more I prayed, the clearer the answer became. So I took the "venture of faith," as Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman called it, and entered the Catholic Church, bringing with me all that shaped my Christian identity, all that was given to me as my "goodly heritage."

Perhaps this qualifies me in some small way to presume to "answer" the good bishop's question, "What is the Anglican Patrimony?" — at least as seen from the pew.

Every culture rightly contributes its own unique and wonderful gifts to the rich splendour of Catholic worship, and so it is that from Britain there arises a unique gift worthy of being counted in that beauty. There are several broad categories to which one can point that most clearly con-

tribute to the Anglican Patrimony. They are intertwined yet clearly identifiable. Alone they do not complete the picture, but put together they give a good sense of what can be called the Anglican Way.

When one walks into an Anglican church, especially one in which traditional worship is practiced, one gets a distinct feeling of the presence of the Lord. Upon entering, one is given to silence and becomes "worshipful" in manner. One can look around and see the glorious stained-glass windows, which are filled with the "story" of our redemption. Just being there brings one a sense, however slight, of being one with the company of Heaven, for a time. It is inspiring, and it tends to open one to receiving the Holy Spirit in that reverent moment. God's peace is there. In a church built before the twentieth century, even "the stones" breathe witness to the Saviour down through the centuries. The Anglican "place" of worship is characterized by a solemn grandeur that lifts the humble human being out of the hubbub of the world and unites him with the hosts of Heaven as he worships or simply "abides in the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91:1). One is moved to repeat the Psalmist's declaration, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple" (Ps. 27:4). Such an atmosphere is indeed a part of the Anglican Way.

Whether the congregation is large or small, Anglican liturgy is dignified and reverent, giving one a clear understanding that "the Lord of Hosts is with us" (Ps. 46:7). Priestly vestments are rich and beautiful, often handmade, and the finest of fair altar linens are lovingly laundered for the King. The solemn manner in which the ministers and acolytes perform their part in the eternal drama contributes to the piety of all. This tone and manner is shared by the congregation, who fully participate in response. Whether a congregation of one or one thousand, the attitude is the same — before God, we render, corporately and personally, the awe, reverence, and dignity of our finest worship. The mark of pageantry is a part of the Anglican Way.

The most dramatic contribution to the Anglican Patrimony, however, is its hymnody. Magnificent music, sung in the most venerable traditions of choral greatness, and shared by a congregation singing to the rafters, lifts the soul to the heavenly throne. When one hears every voice lifting high their praises — such as was heard at the Mass of Beatification of Cardinal Newman as his "Praise to the Holiest in the Height" was sung — one begins to get a real, awesome sense of the best the Anglican Way has to offer. It's hard to imagine what could be more glorious than the whole body of Christ singing to the highest heavens, fol-

lowed by the great solemnity of the Canon of the Mass. There is no better expression of the Anglican Way.

The use of sacramentals contributes to personal and corporate reverence. Such things as bowing the head at our Lord's holy name, making the sign of the cross at timely points of prayer, genuflecting at the incarnates in the Creed, acknowledging the Lord at the elevation of the Host — all these “engage” the faithful in the act of worship. Their participation lends to their understanding of the Sacred Mysteries, and they are raised up in spirit, joining the saints as they worship together the King of Kings. It is a sacred time, and sacramentals help in a real way to create a courtesy, in body and spirit, that in turn contributes not only to sanctity but to keeping the attention and focus on the object of worship, our Lord and Saviour.

The tone and manner in which we bring ourselves before God — the manner in which we speak, act, dress, and present ourselves before Him — encourage our inward disposition of soul. They help to shape a humble, contrite, awe-inspired heart when we come before Him. This is also a part of the Anglican Way.

The language of the most widely used prayer books and hymnals in traditional parishes is Elizabethan English. Its formality, poetry, and beauty add a special dignity — and, once again, reverence — to the order of worship and contribute to the piety of the people. Such language helps to establish a humble, separate, unpretentious relationship between creature and Creator. Formal expression can be inspiring: Prayers and hymns that employ formal language tend to put the faithful in a reverent attitude before the Holy of Holies.

For Anglicans, great emphasis is placed on the pillar of the written Word. Of all translations of the Holy Bible, the King James Version is one of our chief treasures. Its translation pours off the lips, and is used in the traditional version of the Book of Common Prayer, the official book of worship in the entire Anglican Communion.

The Book of Common Prayer is itself a work of great spiritual and practical genius, a rich gift to the faithful. The universal Catholic disciplines of prayer and worship are arranged in their fullness, yet are easy to follow. The daily monastic Offices are consolidated into simple forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, enriched by many prayers for all occasions. The form for the Eucharist follows, including the Scriptures for the full liturgical year, saints' days, and other holy days. The rites for all the sacraments follow, and finally, the Book of Psalms, in support of the Offices. The Anglican prayer book is rightly called common because it provides not only for the clergy and religious but also for the laity, engaging them in the daily discipline of the Church's life of prayer. Anglicans know it

as well as they know the Bible! Anglicans throughout the world can pick it up and know they are “at home.”

Traditional and poetic language in liturgy and worship, as well as in the written Word and the Book of Common Prayer, are a big part of the Anglican Patrimony.

The emphasis here has been placed on the expression of the faith in the Anglican Way, not on its content. It is the expression that is the “glue” that holds together the Anglican Patrimony. It can be counterfeited, for sure. But with the temptation to pageantry for pageantry's sake comes the glorious sense of being before His throne and “worshipping in the beauty of holiness.”

Not all Anglicans are thus formed. Many are truly Protestant in their understanding and expression. Some are Protestant in their understanding only, some in their expression only, some in both. Hence Anglicanism's “big tent” claim. “Big tent” is wonderful when it means that it embraces all of God's people, but not when it means that it embraces all theologies. The best and most beautiful of liturgies is counterfeit without the heart, mind, soul, and spirit embracing the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). It becomes a hollow play instead of the great outpouring of our devotion and offering to God.

As for the Anglican Patrimony, when it is at its best, we can say of it, “When ye glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as ye can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when ye exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary; for ye can never go far enough” (Eccl. 43:30).

Martha C. Eischen, a lifelong Anglican, came into the Catholic Church in Advent 2010. She is a retired business owner who now serves as an advocate for the elderly. Her writing includes her recently published book, Mothering Mother: A Daughter's Experience in Caregiving, in which she shares the sacred journey to the end of life, caring for her mother.

Lancelot Andrewes Press plan a second printing of the best ever Book of Common Prayer this summer. Besides a few typographical corrections the new printing will include tables of the Latin Paschaliium in addition to the Byzantine Paschal dates. The second printing will be hard cover and more suitable for pews and parish use. We will continue the elegant two colour printing throughout and the “thin paper” to maintain a portable book at just over 1,000 pages.

The American Psalter, perhaps the best ever for Anglican Chant, should be ready from the press by September 2012. Other titles are in production. See :

www.andrewespress.com

for pricing and ordering information.

The Avengers

Movie Review by Subdeacon John Brainerd

Wow, wow, wow. Those were my thoughts as I exited the theatre after viewing the new Marvel Comics film *The Avengers*. This movie worked on so many levels: relentless action, great costumes, and good looking cast, funny witty charming dialog, interesting villains. For a summer superhero movie, it is hard to find fault with *The Avengers*.

As with most superhero movies (and comics and graphic novels, and tv shows, etc., etc.) a threat to life as we know it on Earth has appeared, this time in the form of Loki, the Norse 'god' of mischief, thievery, and magic. He is resentful of being thrown out of Asgard (see last year's Marvel Comics film *Thor*) by Odin, with Thor's help. So, he has decided to take his revenge on Thor by subjugating Earth. I don't track on that exactly, but I guess since Thor has been spending time on Earth, Loki figures it would bother Thor if he made all earthlings his slaves. Anyway, somehow or other, Loki finds out about the Tesseract, a mysterious artifact (see last year's Marvel Comics film *Captain America: The First Avenger*) that provides unlimited power to those who can unlock its secrets. He steals the thing, uses his powers of mind control to force scientists to build a fancy trans-dimensional gate machine on top of a building in Manhattan (see 1984's *Ghostbusters*, and half a dozen other movies), allowing an army of nightmarish robot/reptilian cyborg creatures to attack Manhattan.

Meanwhile, Nick Fury, director of SHIELD (an acronym that has various equally awkward component words over the years), has activated the Avengers Initiative to counter the threat. The Avengers Initiative is an international government program to assemble (Avengers Assemble!) a team of extraordinary individuals, i.e. superheroes, to meet an extraordinary threat to the security, wellbeing, and very life on Earth as we know it. Since that is exactly what Loki threatens, Nick is just going down his checklist, just as any good bureaucrat would. So, he sends out the call to Captain America, Thor, Iron Man, Hulk, Black Widow, and Hawkeye, all of whom have appeared in recent Marvel films. With varying degrees of reluctance, each hero is contacted, and brought to SHIELD headquarters to get acquainted.

Now, as with most stories, and with most things in life, there are about as many ways to tell the story, as there are stories to tell. With these superhero/big budget blockbuster type movies, it is no different. The whole thing can be tedious and confusing, like the last *Transformers* movie. Every scene was about five blown up robots too long, and I spent the whole movie trying to tell which were the good robots and which were the bad ones. Or, they can be too short, like both of the *Fantastic Four* movies and the *Thor* movie. It was like the filmmakers thought they didn't need to put much into the film, since they figured everyone would

come out and see it anyway. They can take themselves too seriously, like the last couple of *X-Men* movies or the last *Batman* movie. All the characters felt obligated to keep very straight faces, as everything was very serious, we're all going to die if we are not careful, etc.

The Avengers didn't fall into any of these traps. The heroes, the villains, and the various other characters each had a distinctive look to them. Most scenes and the film as a whole had a good sense of timing and action, both comic and dramatic. The dialog was interesting and enjoyable. You could tell that the writers put some thought into making each line have some reason or thought to it. Even the classic, "Hulk smash!" (for anyone that doesn't know, this is about sixty percent of the dialog for the Hulk on any given day) had a nice little send up. Towards the end of the movie, during the big battle in Manhattan, Captain America is outlining tactics for each hero: "Hawkeye, get up high somewhere, and shot arrows; Black Widow and I will draw them down to us here" etc. Finally, he looks around, locks eyes with Hulk and says, "Hulk: smash!" There were numerous little vignettes like this throughout the movie, each character getting a chance to show a little something extra. Yeah I know, this is not *Pride and Prejudice*. When I talk about character development, I'm talking about comic book characters. But, that is part of the fun of the film, really. As comic book characters, they don't take themselves too seriously. At one point, Hulk confronts Loki. Loki says something like, "Stand back, I am a god!" at which point, Hulk grabs him by the feet, and proceeds to swing him back and for over his head a half a dozen times, bashing him against the floor, just as if Loki were a ragdoll, finally leaving him half embedded in the concrete. "Puny god," remarks Hulk, as he turns away.

Another little bit of dialog shows the filmmakers themselves don't take themselves or their subject matter too seriously. At one point early in the film, Captain America and Black Widow are fly around in a plane, trying to catch up with Loki and Thor. Thor has yet to buy into the whole Avengers thing. He is trying to talk Loki out of his plans for revenge, and maybe take him back home to Dad. Things are getting out of hand, and Thor and Loki are making a big mess of things. Captain America decides to jump out of the plane to confront them. Black Widow calls to Captain America (over the radio), "Cap, what do you think you can do against them? You will be killed! They are gods!" Captain America responds, "Well ma'am, as far as I know, there is only one God, and He doesn't dress like that." I got a kick out of that. I thought that was very funny, and it also shows the filmmakers had a good perspective on their material. This is all just pretend, just for fun.

If there are flaws to *The Avengers*, it would have to be lack of character development, romance, and great moral issues addressed. As an ensemble movie, there just isn't time for character development or romance. Iron Man confronts his

whole “I don’t really care about anything” persona to sublimate his loner shtick for the team, and Hawkeye and Black Widow hint around a very little about some past romance (“You remember Budapest completely differently than I do,” remarks Hawkeye). That’s about it on the character development and romance side of things. Regarding great moral issues, probably destroying and/or subjugating all life on Earth to Loki is pretty clearly a moral no-no, so *The Avengers* takes a pretty simple shot at addressing great moral issues.

Bottom line, if you take any pleasure in a superhero movie, and you only plan to see one this summer, see *The Avengers*. It is full of action, funny, charming, has all sorts of interesting ways for the various heroes to fight the bad guys (as well as each other every now and then), and pretty much rocks from the opening credits clear through to the sneaky epilogue after the final credits roll. Don’t do what I did, and leave after the first epilogue, half way through the credits. Of course, now I have an excuse to go again, since I missed the epi-epilogue the first time. Anyone want to go with me?

Quick Hits

The Five-Year Engagement

The *Five-Year Engagement*, as the title suggests, is a movie about a couple, who become engaged, and then, for various reasons keep putting off their wedding over a five year period. The film has some funny bits, and the two leads, Jason Segal and Emily Blunt, have a nice chemistry. As you might expect, it is the Hollywood version of an engagement, i.e. the film opens with the couple, who have been living together for quite some time (one can only assume as intimate acquaintances), sharing a home, mortgage, expenses, etc. finally deciding to take the next ‘big step’: marriage. Now, I’m thinking to myself as I’m watching this, “What is the big deal? You are already doing everything.” Really, how will their lives change when they are ‘married’? It is a puzzle.

What I will say about the film, and our American culture in general, is I believe that, even with all the cynicism, Elizabeth Taylor being ‘married’ six times (or whatever it is), there is still that glimmer of the divine. Just as some writers remark on the American celebration of Christmas, with all of its secularism and commercialism, still reflecting a perception, however dimly, of the astounding fact of Our Lord’s Incarnation, so too do we see *The Five-Year Engagement* treating the mystical sacramental union between man and woman in marriage as something divine, incredibly precious, not to be entered into without due preparation and

sober thought. I mean, why else wait five years? If it didn’t matter, why not get married anytime along the way, or not get married at all? §

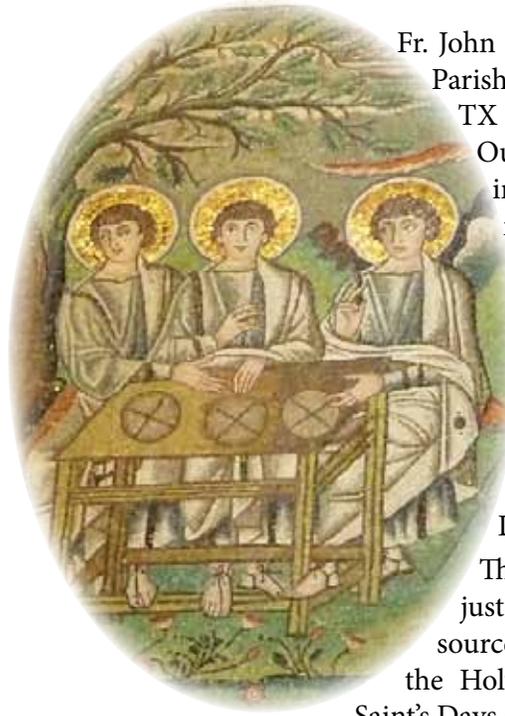


Pictured above are some of the workers who volunteered over the Memorial Day weekend to build fences and other improvements to the St. Laurence Campus just West of Canon City, Colorado. The youngsters participated with their parents in both the outdoor activities, including hiking, and in the Chapel Services. We sang Matins and Evensong and served Mass on Saturday and Ascension Sunday. The children have an amazing ability to learn and sing the simple Psalm tones while following the sacred text. Sam and Carol Hepp prepared the meals. The group watched the first of the “Catholicism” film series on Friday night. Fr. Robert Barron gives a brilliant program, with on site cinematography, of the life of Jesus in the Holy Land. So the pattern of *Ora et Labora* served well for Friday through Sunday. Every bit of the Tallahassee Valley was as green and beautiful as possible and the weather most pleasant. Saturn and Mars and the Moon were objects for the telescope. Another Retreat is planned this summer. Thanks to Frs. Lester Bundy and John Falcone for serving at St. Mark’s on Sunday.

Subdeacon Jason Zacharias Falcone will reside at St. Laurence this summer and work on several projects including construction of a small house across the road from the Lodge. We hope to make some progress on this before Mother Sophia comes for a visit in July and several Benedictine monks plan a retreat at the end of July. Jason is a student at Holy Cross Seminary and plans to serve as an Orthodox Priest and Military chaplain. He already has completed the St. Stephen Course and obtained an M.A. in Theology from Balamand University. Much of his studies were accomplished while he served as a Captain in the U.S. Army and deployed in Iraq. Jason is 25 years old and plans to be married in August. Lord have mercy.



Emily Huft graduated from Regis University and will be teaching 2nd graders at Lowry Elementary School in the Fall.



Fr. John will join our delegates at the Parish Life Conference at Houston, TX from June 6th to June 9th. Our plan is to attend the meetings and events and to promote the Lancelot Andrewes Press with brochures advertising the books and icons.

The Parish work day is to be Saturday, 23 June with all the cleaning and painting and repair activities directed by Major Reader Andrew Diederich and the Vestry.

The 2012 Calendars are now just \$ 2.00 each and are a fine source of information regarding the Holy Seasons, Holy Days, and Saint's Days of the Christian Year.

The Church women are planning a Two-Day Church Yard Sale on Friday, July 6th and on Saturday 7th. Proceeds from this event will go to the "Parish Kitchen Remodeling Fund." See Kathryn Reeves for details. We are collecting treasures from your attics and garages in the back hallway and any other places we can stash them until the great event. We will need many volunteers to staff the sale.



Michael Rench graduated from Byers High School and will begin an internship at City Wide Bank this Summer.

THE LION
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address correction requested

The Lion is an unofficial and uncompensated and popular newsletter of St. Mark's Parish of Denver, Colorado.

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