

PAST STILL PRESENT

CPPS Archives Bulletin Issue 18, March, 2015

STATIONAL CHURCHES DURING LENT IN ROME—AND IN O'FALLON IN ROME

As early as the third century Christians in Rome during Lent would gather daily and process to a specific church where the Bishop of Rome, the Holy Father, together with other clergy would celebrate of Mass. These churches [at first there were only about 25] became known as “Stational Churches.” Over the next several centuries the practice widened to include more churches and more days than just the days of Lent. Days of Advent, Christmastide, and Paschaltide each had its own Station church for the celebration of the Eucharist.

On the way to the Stational Church the faithful would sing the Litany of the Saints. Once arrived at the church, the Holy Father would lead the congregation in prayer as they honored the saint connected with that church and venerated his/her relics. Usually the saint was a martyr, often the church marked the place of the martyrdom or burial or some artifact personal to the saint.

One such saint was **St. Lawrence**, highly esteemed in Rome—and among the Precious Blood Sisters, since many of us made our profession on his feast day, August 10th.

Four stational churches bear his name:

Saint Lawrence in Panisperna (*Thursday, First Week of Lent*): This church is built on the traditional **site** where St. Lawrence was martyred in 258.



The tomb of St. Lawrence in the Basilica of Saint Lawrence outside the Walls. His resting place has not been moved since his burial: the catacombs around it were cut away to provide access and the church was built over it. The present design of the tomb area dates from the 13th century.

Credit: holly Hayes <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/italy/rome-san-lorenzo>

Saint Lawrence outside the Walls (*Third Sunday of Lent*): This church was built over Lawrence’s **tomb**.

Saint Lawrence ‘in Lucina’ (*Friday, Third Week of Lent*): Housed in this church are many relics including the **grill** upon which Saint Lawrence was burned alive.



San Lorenzo in Lucina: reliquary containing the gridiron upon which Saint Lawrence was martyred

http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_cQ2xhpZfenk/TGGizBCKh0I/AAAAAAAAPIE/G7AnH6oYo6Y/s1600/Grill+of+St.+Lawrence.JPG

house I, Damasus, protected by the help of the martyr Lawrence, dedicate to you O Christ.”

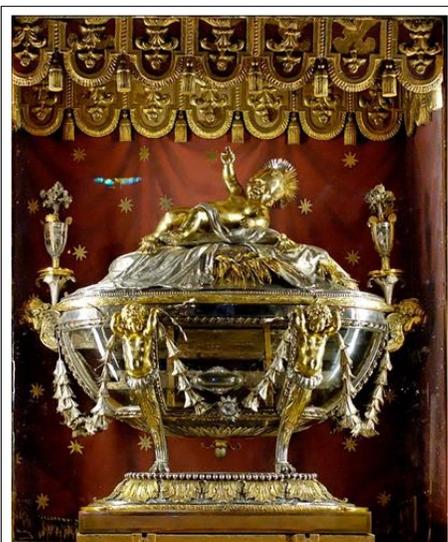
Saint Lawrence ‘in Damaso’ (*Tuesday, Fourth Week of Lent of Lent*): The church is believed to have been founded in the home of Pope St Damasus (366-383), by the pope himself. A Latin couplet attributed to him celebrates this: "This new



In the Basilica of Saint Lawrence outside the Walls is this statue of Lawrence holding his gridiron

Credit: Holly Hayes http://www.sacred-destinations.com/italy/rome-san-lorenzo/photos/xti_9181p

Among the most important stational churches are the **Basilicas** of **St. John Lateran**, the episcopal church of the Bishop of Rome [the Pope], **Saint Mary Major**, the oldest church in the West dedicated to the Mother of God, and **St. Peter's in the Vatican**.



This reliquary in the crypt of St. Mary Major holds five pieces of wood brought from Bethlehem in the 7th century and said to be from the manger which held the Infant Christ
wikipedia commons, public domain

Our Lady herself designated the site of **Saint Mary Major** with a miraculous snowfall on a hot summer day, August 5th. Pope Liberius began the construction of this church in 352. After the Council of Ephesus in 431, Pope Sixtus III began construction on a second, larger church. It is this second church which we see today. St. Mary Major is the stational church for Wednesday, First Week of Lent, Wednesday of Holy Week and Easter Sunday, as well as three Masses of Christmas—perhaps because of the relic of the manger enshrined here.

As the episcopal church of the Pope, **St. John Lateran** ranks above all other Catholic churches, including St. Peter's Basilica. It is the oldest church in the West.

St. John Lateran serves as stational church on the First Sunday of Lent,

Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday and the Saturday after Easter.

Although built much later than the other major basilicas [sixteenth century], **St Peter's in the Vatican** is the most recognizable church in Christendom.



the dome of St. Peter's Basilica as seen from the roof of Castel Sant'Angelo
Photographer: Wolfgang Stuck [detail] public domain
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Petersdom_von_Engelsburg_gesehen.jpg

The Holy Father celebrates Mass here on important feast days. Most recently [February 14, 2015], during the ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica Pope Francis welcomed twenty new cardinals.



Pope Francis preaches during a Penitential service at St. Peter's Basilica, March 28, 2014. Credit: Lauren Cater / CNA <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/>

St. Peter's is the stational church for Saturday of the First Week of Lent, Palm Sunday, as well as Ascension and Pentecost.

All in all there are about 45 stational churches in Rome.

The practice of pilgrimage to the Stational Churches died out during the Avignon Papacy, the time from 1309 to 1377 when the Pope was not living in Rome. However, the notation of Stational Churches was retained, as many may remember from their pre-Vatican II *St. Andrew* missals. And in 1932 Pope Pius XI granted a plenary indulgence to anyone who visited the station churches on the days appointed in the Roman Missal and who participated in the sacred liturgy.

IN O'FALLON



Rev. Martin B. Hellriegel as a young priest--no date

Enter Msgr. Martin B. Hellriegel, chaplain to the sisters in the Motherhouse in O'Fallon, 1918-1940.

The year that he introduced the stational churches to the sisters is not recorded, but Sr. Ann Hipp, who became an aspirant in 1935, remembers the talks that he gave about what stational churches meant to the early church.

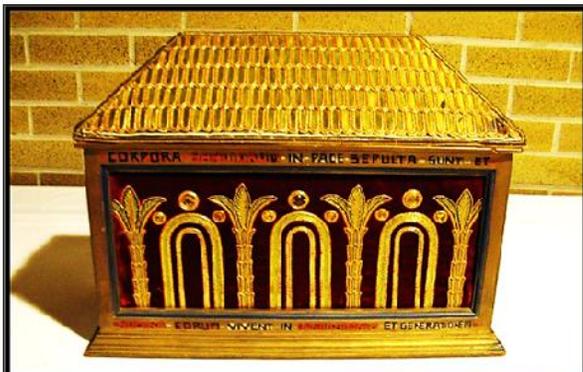
In *Martin B. Hellriegel: Pastoral Liturgist*, Noel H. Barrett describes how Fr. Hellriegel would gather the sisters in the auditorium (Sr. Ann remembers this). "The stage was furnished with an altar on which were placed a cross and two candles. To the one side of the altar was a large map of the stational

churches; on the other side of the altar was a lectern and a blackboard which would be handy for illustrations during the lectures. The program each evening would begin with a prayer; the major portion would consist of an explanation of the Roman station and the mass text for the next day.... At the conclusion of the presentation there was a procession into the chapel during which the short form of the litany of the saints was chanted. In the sanctuary of the chapel between the high altar and the communion table was a small altar with the relic of the stational saint. The sisters were given a blessing with the relic and an opportunity to venerate the relic on the way out of the chapel. A Lenten hymn was sung during the procession from the chapel. The stational relic remained on the small altar during the whole of the next day. Two continually-burning oil lamps would remind any visitor to the chapel of its presence. The celebration of the Mass of the day, a high Mass without organ, at 6:00 a.m. was the culmination of the Lenten liturgical prayer" [pp 49-50].

[Barrett. ... St. Louis, MO: Central Bureau of the Catholic Central Union of America, 1990]

It is possible to conclude that Fr. Hellriegel introduced the Stational Churches to the community in the early 1930s, after Pius XI had encouraged the faithful to visit the churches. It was probably in the early 30s that the Ecclesiastical Art Department created the beautiful stational church reliquary. This reliquary holding a relic of the saint whose church was featured that day stood on a small table just behind the communion table of St. Joseph Chapel, flanked by two vigil lights [See picture on page 4]. This custom, begun in the 1930s, continued until about 1963 when the west end of chapel was constructed. Sr. Carmen Schnyder [profession '63] remembers seeing it during her novitiate.

The new post-Vatican II missals make no mention of the Stational Churches, so the custom of observing them fell into disuse.



The reliquary church was on loan for many years to Fr. Richard Stoltz, former pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary in New Melle and now pastor of St. Alban Roe in Wildwood. For years he has been instructing his congregations in the meaning and visitation of the Stational Churches. He graciously returned the reliquary to us.

It is presently on display in the cloister corridor in O'Fallon.

Sides **IN SEMINANT IN LACRIMIS
IN EXULTATIONE METENT**

They that sow in tears reap in joy

Back **QUI MIHI MINISTRAT ME SEQUATUR
ET UBI EGO SUM**

ILLIC ET MINISTER MEUS ERIT ALLELUJA
Whoever serves me should follow me, and
where I am there will my servant be Alleluia

CORPORA SANCTORUM IN PACE SEPULTA SUNT ET

corpora sanctorum in pace sepulta sunt et
The bodies of the saints are buried in peace and

NOMINA EORUM VIVENT IN GENERATIONEM ET GENERATIONEM

nomina eorum vivent in generationem et generationem
their names live from generation to generation



This picture is a Photoshopped simulation of the way the Stational Church Reliquary was set up in St. Joseph Chapel during Lent.

[Sr. Marcella Scego provided the information.]

Each stationary church had a placard such as this one.



According to Msgr. Hellriegel, the custom of observing the Stational Churches was to promote "interior transformation and transmutation through the Lenten Eucharist under the leadership of our stationary saint in holy fellowship."

TODAY

Pope St. John XXIII prompted renewed interest in the Stational Churches when, observing the tradition,

he celebrated Ash Wednesday Mass at Santa Sabina. Subsequent popes have also celebrated Ash Wednesday there, the latest

being Pope Francis.



Pope Francis walks in procession with other clergy and faithful at the Santa Sabina Basilica for an Ash Wednesday prayer service, in Rome, Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2015.

(AP Photo/Gregorio Borja)
http://www.nola.com/religion/index.ssf/2015/02/pope_ash_wednesday_rome.html



Interior of Santa Sabina – Pope Francis celebrating Mass, Ash Wednesday, 2015

<http://wdtprs.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/140305Francis07.jpg>

Starting in 1975, the Pontifical North American College in Rome began reviving the tradition of the pilgrimage, Monday through Saturday, to the stationary churches during the Lenten season. The seminarians, along with other students and visitors to Rome, gather and walk to the church where the Rector celebrates mass with them—sometimes with a standing-room-only congregation.

For more information (also the sources of the info in this newsletter):

<http://frcoulter.com/pics/station-churches/index.html> Virtual tour: pictures and text about each church

<http://www.pnac.org/station-churches/the-roman-station-liturgy/> North American College website Much info

<http://www.mostholyname.org/stationchurches/sc-map.htm> "Station Churches, a Lenten Journey" by Fr. Bill

<http://blenzinrome.blogspot.com/2014/03/its-ash-wednesday-people-so-here-we-go.html> last year, but good info

Or just Google "stationary churches." You'll find more information than you could absorb in several Lents.

Also, a recent excellent book:

Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches by George Weigel. New York: Basic Books, c2013