

GAS Letter for July 2021 Intercession Paper

Dear Fellow Members of the Guild:

We did actually manage to have something of our usual observances in November, with a Solemn Requiem and Absolution at the Catafalque here at my church, Resurrection, which is the Guild's National Shrine. I was not absolutely sure that would be possible, as we had just been permitted to resume public worship in September, but we have in fact been open ever since. Our Choir were present and offered the Anerio Requiem, which I know well, as it was the default "short and simple" Requiem used at the church where I served my title for funerals which followed very quickly upon death. Of course, we were not permitted to have a reception or luncheon afterwards (and indeed still would not be), but it was very nice to have quite a few of our own, and even a small group of new members who made the journey from the Church of the Advent in Boston, whom we were very glad to see. The silver lining in all this is that our church's new video system and the broadcast, both live and available subsequently (including now!), was actually seen by several hundred people, probably the largest attendance – in a sense – at an annual Requiem for a very long time. At the Centenary of the American Branch in 1989, at S. Clement's, Philadelphia, where I was then senior curate, we had probably five hundred people I should think in a church that seats 750. The miracle of broadcasting, however, meant that many members could join us spiritually in this way, not only in this country, but several members of the Guild in England, I know, did the same, including, I believe, the President of the English Guild, the Lord Bishop of Richborough.

This autumn, things look better than last year, though it is dismaying how slowly the vaccinating is going and that some are still refusing even to seek it. I simply do not understand this. Vaccination has been going on since the late 18th century for smallpox, and it has eradicated it from the earth. All my life I have been vaccinated for all kinds of things, including smallpox, polio, and all the childhood diseases. We have all seen the dramatic effects raising the health of all mankind from them. When did you hear of a child in an iron lung from catching polio? When did you last hear of a child dying from whooping cough? Scarlet fever? Diphtheria? Which of your friends has died of smallpox? The answer is none. All because of vaccination. It is the key to the return to normal life in the world, and since viruses are unaware of and do not respect either state or national boundaries, everyone, everywhere, must receive this benefit, and as soon as may be.

So there are good signs for the autumn, but a few worrying ones, too. Still, we can only make plans, whether or not they must be altered, we have certainly all learnt that, if nothing else! The Solemn Requiem of the Guild will be Saturday, 13th November, at 11.00 a.m., at the Church of the Resurrection in New York. I cannot ask another church to undertake this and plan for it, only to have it be cancelled or severely curtailed, and at least scheduling it for my own church means that we know we can go forward in some way, no matter how bad things might become. I should think it unlikely that even then a sit-down luncheon or even a stand-up affair will be possible, but this year, unlike last, there is indoor dining in the city, so no visitors should go hungry or faint along the way if, as Our Lord says in the feeding of the four thousand, "divers of them have come from far". We shall announce the music of the day closer to the time, but our Choir will certainly offer a Requiem setting along with the hymns and the minor propers in which we all share.

It is possible that some members of the Council will join us for this Mass, but perhaps, as last year, that will have to be by broadcast. That, too, remains to be seen. The Council will meet the night before either entirely on the inevitable “zoom” or a mixture of some in person and some online.

What is certain is that our dead are prayed for here every day, by name, and the entire Necrology back to 1873, not just the more recent names that you receive in this Intercession Paper. If any of you would wish to undertake praying for the entire list, do please let me know and we shall let you know how to obtain a copy of the Chantry Book, which, combined with the current Intercession Paper, contains all the names. You may also request at any time prayers for the sick or dead to be offered here at the Guild’s National Shrine, and the prayers will be said and a candle lighted for your intention. Many do this, don’t hesitate if the need arises either with illness for yourself or sickness or death to one known to you.

The terms of Canon King, Father Godderz, and Messrs Barner and Enlow, expire this year, and we shall deal with those, as well as those of the Officers which are yearly, not tri-annually as the general terms of Council are. The Council also receives traditionally the greetings of the English Guild, and will deal with any other matters that must come before it.

Let me close by saying that the Guild is not only for those who are members to pray for the dead, and to expect such prayers when they die, though that is, of course, at the heart of it. It is also to pray for the sick, which we have done a great deal of, and for the proper understanding in the Church of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction and the purpose and character of church customs and observances after death. That last topic has become one that is fraught beyond belief, with things being seen and done which defy description and come nowhere near to anything like orthodox Christian practice. The recent funeral of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T., was a model of restraint, proper atmosphere, orthodox doctrine, using the full cultural tradition of the Western (and partly Eastern) church. Since it was, quite oddly, attended by a handful but seen by millions, perhaps it will serve as a welcome corrective to some of the three-ring circuses which go on, even in our churches.

Yours in the Holy Souls,

The Reverend Canon Barry E. B. Swain, SSC
Superior-General

**ANNUAL REQUIEM MASS OF THE GUILD OF ALL SOULS
SATURDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 11.00 A.M.**

**THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION,
119 EAST 74TH STREET, JUST EAST OF PARK AVENUE,
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

SERMON: THE REVEREND FATHER SUPERIOR-GENERAL

MUSIC FROM RESURRECTION’S PROFESSIONAL CHOIR

The Mass will be broadcast on our three channels: Vimeo, YouTube and Facebook, and will be available subsequently in the archives there. Since there is no time value (as there would be in a feast day), members may watch it and take part in it any time, or even from time to time.