

# ST LAWRENCE'S CHURCH PARISH NEWSLETTER

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## Restoration of Paintings

For some time the condition of the paintings at either side of the altar has been a cause of concern. These pictures, "The Nativity" and "The Deposition from the Cross" (both attributed to Antonio Belluci, 1654-1721), depict the two best known events in Christ's mission, hence their prominent positions. This prominence also means that any degradation is likely to draw attention and it is very noticeable that there is whitened patch on the brow of Mary in "The Deposition from the Cross", as can be seen in the photograph. This also shows that there are other whitened patches and what appears to be a horizontal line about a quarter of the way down the photo.



These two paintings, and also the two behind the altar, "Christ Preaching" and "Moses Receives the Tablets" (both attributed to Louis Laguerre, 1663 - 1721) have been surveyed by a conservation specialist. The problems noted above are thought to be due to the discolouration of the pigment of

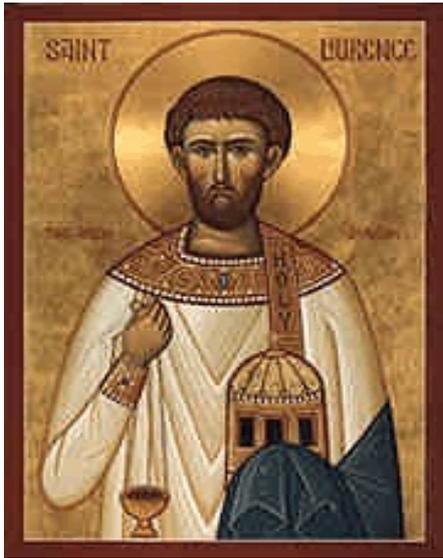
previous restoration and the deterioration of the mounting of the pictures. In fact the loss of pigment colour, which is the most obvious, seems to be the lesser of the two problems. The main problem is that all of the pictures suffer, to a greater or lesser extent, from a deterioration of the framing and from aging of the canvas which has resulted in sagging or rippling. There are also some tears that need to be repaired and previous patches that are coming away.

The paintings will be restored away from St Lawrence's and thus they will each be missing for several weeks. The restoration will concentrate on correcting the problems with the physical structure. Some retouching will be undertaken to reduce the effects of discolouration and cracking but the pictures will not come back looking radically different. Obviously the cost of the restoration will be considerable and we are looking to have some of this grant funded. The Friends of St Lawrence have also indicated that they will be able to support this endeavour.

## Who Was St Lawrence?

Little is known of the life of St Lawrence. What is clear is that he was immensely popular with the Christians of Rome. He was one of the seven deacons of the Church of Rome and on 6th August 258, he became the senior ranking Church official, following the execution of Pope Sixtus II. His tenure of this position did not last long, as he was summoned for beheading on the 10<sup>th</sup> August, and was commanded to bring the riches of the church with him. Lawrence had already given away the church's wealth, and arrived with a crowd of the poor, blind, sick and crippled - which were the church's true riches.

St Lawrence was martyred on a griddle, and is reputed to have told his murderers to turn him over, as he was "done on that side". It is perhaps unsurprising that he is known as a patron saint of cooks and restaurateurs.



The feast of St Lawrence's martyrdom falls at the time of the Perseid Meteor shower. This spectacular astronomical phenomenon was known in past times as the "burning tears of St Lawrence". (Text source: The Catholic Forum)

## My Life Put Simply - The Treasurer Martin Cook

I moved to Harrow in 1983, and tried several local churches before coming to St Lawrence's. I didn't really like it at first, the pews were too high and it seemed very grand and a bit remote. The fact that I'm still here 25 years later is purely down to the personal welcome I received when the Service finished.

I have worked as a Tax Inspector for most of those 25 years, and have got used to the sniggers when the story of Zacchaeus is read while I hold the Gospel.

In my free time I enjoy detective novels and trips away, either days out to see museums and galleries, houses or the English countryside, or holidays further afield, often spent in France, though I would like to see more of Italy as well.

I mostly listen to Classical music, but I can from time to time be found dancing to Cajun Music, a gumbo of French Patois and Country from the Bayous of Louisiana. I have also been known to "spot" car ferries. I spend some time in personal improvement groups, though this is not because I need to de-stress from the rigours of being Parish Treasurer!

## Open Garden Squares

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2009 why not discover the hidden treasures of three sites within the historic estate of Canons.

North London Collegiate School, former home of the Duke of Chandos is offering a fun afternoon for families including the chance to decorate and plant your own plant pot. Open from 1pm -5pm. Entry to the house and gardens £3 for adults, children free.

The stunning Canons Park, George V Memorial Garden will be the focus of Canon's Park's participation in this nationwide event. Local artists will be at work and there is a children's playground in the main park area. Open 10am-5pm. Entry free.

The third historic site is of course our own church. The unique appeal of the Grade 1 listed parish church of St Lawrence is the continental baroque interior. The walls feature paintings by French and Italian artists and most of the woodwork is attributed to Grinling Gibbons. There will be free guided tours between 2pm and 5pm.

## Is your will up to date?

It is important that you review your will regularly to ensure that it reflects your current wishes and circumstances. When you plan to do this why not leave a legacy to St Lawrence's church? For more details on types of bequest contact Martin Cook.

## Dates for Your Diary

Saturday, June 13 <sup>th</sup>	Open Square Gardens
Sunday, July 5 <sup>th</sup> 3:00 pm	Organ Concert with Paul Ayres
Sunday, July 19 <sup>th</sup> 2:00 to 5:00 pm	Canons Park Fun Day
September 19 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup>	London Open House.

## Contact Details

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