



REMEMBER!

email Communiqué

Society of King Charles the Martyr - American Region

9 September 2019

Fr Charles Fuge Lowder, SSC Founder, died 1880

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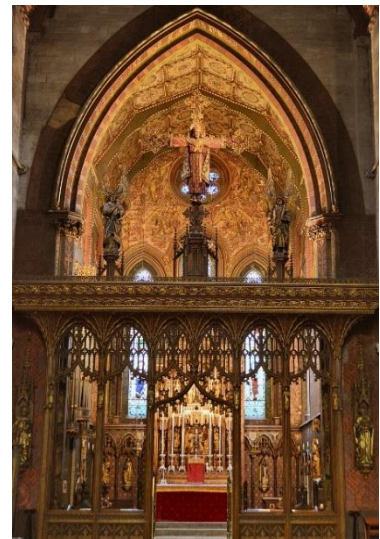
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Charles Lowder & KCM: Sharing in Christ's Sovereignty

September 9th is the commemoration of the death in 1880 of The Rev'd Charles Fuge Lowder, founder of the Society of the Holy Cross. Born in Bath, England, in 1820, he was the eldest child of Charles Lowder, a banker, and his wife Susan Fuge. While at Oxford he attended the University Church of Saint Mary the Virgin where the preaching of John Henry Newman drew him into the Oxford Movement and influenced his decision to enter the priesthood.

Lowder was ordained deacon in 1843 and priest in 1844. After his initial curacy, Lowder wished to move to a parish with a more Catholic pattern of worship and in 1851 became an assistant at the leading ritualist parish in London, Saint Barnabas' Church, Pimlico. The church, having been built to serve the poor, lay in the midst of a slum area.



The catholic worship and teaching at Saint Barnabas, however, was not without controversy. A certain Mr Westerton sought election as a churchwarden in order to oppose high-church practices. To this end, he hired a man to walk about the parish wearing a sandwich-board with the message, "Vote Westerton." In what he would later call "a moment of madness," Lowder gave sixpence to some choirboys to buy rotten eggs which they hurled at the poor man with the board. As a result, Lowder had to appear before Westminster magistrates, where he was fined, and before the Bishop of London, who suspended him for six weeks.

In order to stay out of the public eye during his suspension, Lowder travelled to France, staying at the seminary at Yvetot in Normandy. There he read a life of Saint Vincent de Paul which convinced him of the need for a society of priests in the Church of England to provide mutual encouragement and to extend the Catholic faith, particularly among the urban poor as Saint Vincent de Paul's Congregation of the Mission had done for the rural poor in France. Upon his return to England, Lowder gathered five other priests of like mind who, adopting a shared rule of life, formed themselves into the Society of the Holy Cross on February 28, 1855. They did so, Lowder would later write, "To defend and strengthen the spiritual life of the clergy, to defend the faith of the Church, and to carry on and aid Mission work both at home and abroad. The members of this society, meeting together as they did in prayer and conference, were deeply impressed with the evils existing in the Church, and saw also, in the remedies adopted by Saint Vincent de Paul, the hope of lessening them."

A year later, the Society was approached by the rector of Saint-George-in-the East whose parish included the notorious district of Wapping, the center of the London Docks, where poor dock workers lived alongside prostitutes and petty criminals. Wapping had no church, no school, and not a single communicant. Lowder and his brethren took up the challenge,



preaching mission sermons on the street and singing Evensong in a rented house. The sermons were met with catcalls, dancing groups of prostitutes, and the throwing of stones, excrement, and even a dead cat. Yet the missionaries persisted.

Lowder himself moved to Wapping in August of 1856. In 1857, Elizabeth Neale, sister of John Mason Neale, arrived with a number of companions and established the Community of the Holy Cross to assist with the mission.

Lowder's clergy and the sisters provided spiritual and practical assistance, Sunday school and night classes, a refuge for prostitutes, parish clubs, an insurance plan for dock workers, coal for the elderly, childcare for young mothers, and relief for the poor. In 1860, land was acquired for a church, and in 1866, a decade after the mission was begun, Saint Peter's, London Docks, was consecrated.

Shortly afterwards there was an outbreak of cholera in the district. A tent hospital was set up and a daily mass was said in the church. The selfless work of the clergy and sisters in caring for victims of the epidemic earned Lowder the love of his parishioners. From then on he was known as "the Father of Wapping" and "Father Lowder," the first Church of England priest to be so called.

The years that followed saw the same pattern of missionary and pastoral work, teaching and worship, that would come to be characteristic of Anglo-Catholic slum parishes. By 1880, Fr Lowder was exhausted. In August of that year he sought refreshment on a walking holiday in Switzerland and Austria. He died, probably of a perforated ulcer, at Zell-am-See, Austria, on September 9. Hundreds of clergy and thousands of parishioners attended his requiem at Saint Peter's and his burial at Saint Nicholas, Chislehurst. It was said by those who witnessed the scene that at every point in the crowd there were little children crying inconsolably.

So what might Fr Lowder and the Society of the Holy Cross have to do with the Society of King Charles the Martyr? Both the SSC and the SKCM, of course, come out of the Anglo-Catholic revival in the nineteenth century. But the SSC is not a devotional guild as the SKCM is; rather, it is a society established upon the shared vision of a disciplined priestly life. The SKCM would only come to be established after Lowder's death, and there is no evidence that Fr Lowder had any particular devotion to the Royal Martyr. But King Charles and Fr Lowder both shared, each in his own way, in the ministry of Christ. An earthly priest stands at the altar to offer sacrifice *in persona Christi*. An earthly king shares in Christ's sovereignty. Members of the SKCM will understand that devotion to the saints is not only a matter of admiration, but imitation. There is a priestly and royal dignity proper to each Christian. Just as there is a special priesthood and a priesthood common to all, so there is a special kingship and a common kingship. The sovereign territory of a Christian is his own soul; the priestly oblation we make is "our selves, our souls and bodies."



- The Rev'd Martin C. Yost, SSC, Member, Board of Trustees

Message from Fr Lowther's Church: Cultivating Our Prayers and Devotions to the Royal Martyr

To visit Fr Lowder's church, St Peter's, London Docks (*see my picture of the interior, included with Fr Yost's article*), is to understand what Fr. Haggerston meant when he described the church as the "holiest and homeliest church in London." One understands that the building is constructed of brick, mortar, and glass, but it is held together by devotion. This, I think, is an answer to the question posted in Fr Yost's excellent introduction: what do Fr Lowder, the SSC, and the SKCM have to do with one another?

In the United States, the adjective 'homely' is not usually associated with a compliment. When Fr Haggerston described St Peter's as homely, he wasn't suggesting it was plain or unattractive, but rather that the parish church, through her decor and devotion, was authentically herself and that authenticity felt like a real spiritual home. St Peter's is filled with altars and shrines, almost one on top of another. What works at St Peter's would not work everywhere, yet instead of feeling over the top, it feels right. It's not affected or forced. It is holy and homely. As we consider cultivating our own devotions to the Royal Martyr, I find St Peter's a holy example. We don't need to make our parish or even our prayer corner the Banqueting House. It just needs to be *our* house. Devotion to King Charles should not be forced or affected. Our prayers and devotions need to be authentically ours. In becoming ours, they will feel like home. It will be then that we will find greater ease in inviting others.

- The Rev'd Steven C. Rice, Obl.S.B., D.Min., President

Watch for Annual Dues Statement and Contributions & Goods Opportunity

In early October we'll be mailing our annual statement so that members and friends may, depending upon their status, pay annual (including future years) dues, support the Annual Mass and/or the General Fund, become a Life Member, and/or purchase Society goods.



Today, **21% of our 439 members are Life Members**; another **20% of our members have prepaid their dues**, some for as many as 10 years ahead! It is likely that these numbers, as well as our membership total, will continue to grow.

We're making a significant change in **how we recognize and thank our contributors**. First, noting current giving trends, we have added a \$250 level for Annual Mass contributors and we have also established General Fund contributor levels using the Annual Mass levels. Second, rather than have a single **Benefactor** threshold of \$700 for one's cumulative contributions, we have raised that basic number to \$1,000 (grandfathering everyone already between \$700 and that number) plus added levels of \$1,500 and \$2,000. Each level will have a

distinctive name – *Supporter*, *Champion*, and *Cavalier*, respectively; those at all levels will be collectively designated as Benefactors, as now. Finally, to make certain that everyone has a

fair chance to be thanked under the updated recognition levels, **the Benefactors list in the December SKCM News will reflect all contributions received through 31 October.**

Many of us will spot these changes as being similar to recognition systems used by other organizations, designed to encourage as well as thank those who support the Society. Today, 38% of the Society's budget income comes from contributions, enabling us to keep our dues low and stable and for which we are thankful.

Several More Member Obituary Reports

During the current membership year, which concludes at the end of this month, we have had five members pass to the next life. We previously reported on five of them. There are three more for whom the prayers of all are asked: *Arthur J. Eaves, PhD, of TN* (died 15 March), *Susan Elizabeth Stultz Fulljames of CT* (died 31 January), and *Kyle Patrick Winn of MA* (died 4 May).

SOCIETY OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR XXXVII ANNUAL SOLEMN MASS OF SAINT CHARLES, K.M.

11 a.m., Saturday, 1 February 2020

Cathedral Church of Saint Paul the Apostle,
Springfield, IL USA

**WATCH FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SOON ...
MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**



S.K.C.M. (AMERICAN REGION)

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REMEMBER ... THE SOCIETY IN YOUR WILL OR OTHER PLANNED GIVING

AND BRING IN A NEW MEMBER THIS YEAR!