



# friends

a publication of *The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle*



July, 2010

## ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, HOME OF THE ST. JAMES SOCIETY

*Dear friends,*

While July might be the coldest month at the mission sites in the winter season of South America, just the opposite is true up here. The words of an old song from when I was a child called us “to roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer.” So in July, here in the United States, maybe the best summer celebration is on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. With pride and joy, we celebrate the spirit of independence in so many different ways. For the Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle, the feast of St. James the Apostle and the anniversary of the founding of our missionary group are celebrated on July 25<sup>th</sup>. At our home here at St. Stephen's Church, both the civic and the religious celebrations come together. St. Stephen's is important for the history of both the United States of America and the Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle. Let's take a walk around the North End of Boston and see why.

Stepping out of St. Stephen's onto Hanover Street, you can't miss the trail of red bricks embedded in the sidewalk: The Freedom Trail. It takes us past Paul Revere's house, built in 1680. Everyone knows about his famous ride in 1775 that led up to “the shot heard round the world” the next day. But not everyone knows that he cast the bell that hangs in the church tower and that the hand-wrought nails for the construction of the church were done by him.



St. Stephen's Church on a typical summer's day.  
Photo: Credits to Gregory L. Tracy.

Turning around and heading back toward St. Stephen's, we can stand at Prince and Hanover and admire the beauty of the Federal style architecture. Mr. Charles Bulfinch

(1763-1844) designed the church. He was the first American to practice architecture as a profession. Among his other works are the Massachusetts State House and the rotunda of

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# A WALK THROUGH



Standing beside the fire station at the corner of Hanover and Charter Streets, passers-by are able to get a good look at the steeple and bell tower of St. Stephen's Church.



Left: The feasts of the North End attract both locals and out of state visitors. Right: The Old North Church steeple from Salem Street.



Turn onto Unity St. and half way down, Paul Revere Mall is to your left and The Old North Church, to your right.



The baptistry at St. Stephen's church.



In 1967 Richard Cardinal Cushing, recognizing that the Society needed a home of its own, turned St. Stephen's over to become the new headquarters of the Society.



Leaving the Old North Church, take a walk up Hull Street and you will arrive at centuries-old Copp's Hill Burying Ground, the final resting place of many merchants and crafts people.

# THE NORTH END



visitors alike. Center: The intersection of Prince Street and Salem  
selection of restaurants, bakeries and shops. Right: A view of the



The Paul Revere House, located just three blocks away from  
St. Stephen's at 19 North Square, stands as a national historic  
landmark and site along the Freedom Trail.



The original cobblestones from Boston's early colonial days pave  
the streets of North Square.



The altar at St. Stephen's Church.



Simplicity and symmetry are characteristic of Federal style  
architecture.



Four Garden Court Street: home to John J. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald,  
congressman and mayor, and birthplace of his daughter, Boston's  
beloved Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy.

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the US Capitol. The cornerstone for the present structure, noted on the US National Register of Historic Places, was laid on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1802. But this location has been a worship site since the early 1700s. The New North Religious Society, a Congregationalist group, worshiped here first, followed by the Unitarians. In 1862 the then Diocese of Boston acquired the Bulfinch church in order to serve the Catholics of the growing Irish immigrant population, naming it St. Stephen's. One of the more famous figures of Irish descent to call St. Stephen's a spiritual home was Mrs. Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, daughter of the North End resident who became the mayor of Boston in 1906: Mr. John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald. She was baptized here in 1890 and her funeral liturgy was celebrated here in 1995. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, another group of newcomers – the people from the Italian peninsula and the island of Sicily - began to arrive in the North End, calling it home and sharing the culture that is still seen here today.

In the course of the years, many additions and much re-decoration was done to the Federalist style structure. In 1964 Cardinal Cushing approved a yearlong project to restore the building to the original Bulfinch design. A few years later he mandated that the Church become the home of the recently founded missionary society.



Charter Street Park: a quiet little nook where you can go to escape the crowds of Hanover Street, enjoy your lunch or sit and gather your thoughts.

On the second floor of the office/residence building on Clark Street, behind the Church, there is a hallway that has become a photo gallery. Photo portraits of all the groups sent to South America since the first years can be found. The old phrase, "if the walls could talk," holds very true for the rectory. Here, nearly 400 missionaries have told the stories of their mission work. Many have returned when special medical attention was needed. Many have passed through on the way home for a bereavement leave. Each year in the summertime, the missionaries come North to do the Mission Appeals in parishes not only in the Archdiocese of Boston, but also in many parts of the United States, England, Ireland and Scotland. St. Stephen's is our "home" in so many ways.

On Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 10:00 AM, a Memorial Mass will be celebrated at Cardinal Cushing's tomb at the St. Coletta School in Hanover, Massachusetts. On Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00 AM at St. Stephen's, a mass will be celebrated to honor the 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle. All are invited to attend both liturgies. Have a great summer.

Yours in Christ,

Handwritten signature of Kevin Hays

Rev. Kevin Hays  
Director



The Society's famous wall of photos in the hallway of the rectory includes photos of the first group of missionaries as well as the most recent priests to go down to South America.

For the purposes of wills and bequests, our official name is:  
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