

Henry George and Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn commemorated at St. Stephen's Church

Georgists arrived by bus in New York City August 9 at Our Lady of the Scapular and St. Stephen's Church. The evening was a joint celebration by the church's parishioners of their second pastor, Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn, and by the Georgists of the friendship of Henry George and McGlynn. Father Matthew Faulkner, pastor of the church, welcomed all, pointing out the exhibits about the church's history and commenting on the restoration of art in process at the church. Council of Georgist Organizations V.P. Mark Sullivan acknowledged the church's pastors, including retired Father Murphy, and parishioner Richard Fausette in planning the evening. Sullivan later presented, courtesy of Schalkenbach foundation, the books *Progress and Poverty*, *From Wasteland to Promised Land*, *Anthology of Henry George*, *Tolstoy*.

Richard Fausette, who had prepared the exhibits about McGlynn and George (see pictures, page 11), called attention to the huge mural of the crucifixion behind the church's altar. Restoration will remove the layers of dirt and grime from the mural painted by Constantin Brumidi 100 years ago. The Carmelites that now administer the church continue to work with the poor and disenfranchised. Henry George, contending with powerful business interests exploiting the working class and corrupt Tammany Hall, ran for New York mayor, with the support of Edward McGlynn. In the Catholic church, McGlynn's own archbishop was against him. Father McGlynn was excommunicated for five years for his support of Henry George, but during that time McGlynn continued to speak out on behalf of the poor. McGlynn was not the only priest who believed they had a right to speak out against the exploitation of the poor, but priests that felt this way were punished and their parishes taken away from them. This period in American history is known today as the great crisis because so many priests wanted churches in America to be democratic. Only McGlynn was excommunicated, because he was the greatest speaker, the most courageous, and because of that the most dangerous priest to the exploiters of the poor. The powerful feared him because he had the masses behind him.

Fausette continued with some further information about McGlynn, who was born in 1837 and at age 13 went to Rome where he grew up. He returned to America as a young priest. McGlynn was suspended from priestly duties and excommunicated for five years, after which a delegation was sent directly from Rome to reinstate him, over the objections of his Archbishop Corrigan. Pope Leo XIII, however, did not allow McGlynn to return to St. Stephen's. He was sent to a new parish and died 60 miles away from New York City in Newburg in 1900. Pope Leo XIII was aware of the misery of the working class and in 1891 uses the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* to speak of social and moral concerns affecting individuals in the industrialized age.

Brendan Fay, an independent researcher on Henry

George, spoke of the Nun of Kenmare, Ireland, Margaret Anna Crusack (1829-1899). It was her coming to the defense of McGlynn at the injustice within his own church community, when McGlynn defended the poor, that caused her to get involved in politics. Fay found material in the archives in Baltimore, including a pamphlet and 17 letters she wrote.

The Nun arrived in New York in 1884. She had met with objections from hierarchy of Archbishop Corrigan. She had already written over 60 books on theology and economics, and the condition of the poor. Her theme was not just charity but structures of injustice. She founded the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace in Newark, New Jersey. She received the poor and addressed their needs during the famine. She read about Henry George and Edward McGlynn and wrote "Questions of Today's Anti-poverty and Progress." She raised many questions. Newspapers all over New York were raving about this woman. There was excitement about Henry George and siding with McGlynn's issues. Archbishop Corrigan was not going to have Sr. Mary Frances Clare do her work in his city.

The few charges against McGlynn were his refusal to obey his Archbishop and refusal to obey the Holy Father in the matter of ecclesiastical discipline. She wrote how she found it intolerable that Father McGlynn and also other priests had to endure this at the moment of crisis for him. She also wrote about the indifference of the church to the poor. Thousands follow the downfallen priests that loved the poor, she said, because they see so many dignitaries care so little for the poor. The message didn't go down well. She didn't receive permission to speak. She was rebuked. Her writings and book and identification with McGlynn, in the end, led to her confrontation with the hierarchy and eventual severance from the Roman Catholic Church. McGlynn was reinstated to the church community of faith, but the Nun of Kenmare died in exile and in poverty in England, though she remained in correspondence with the sisters she loved. The memory of the Nun of Kenmare has remained in the words of a ballad about the working poor.

George Collins, Exec. Director of the Henry George School of New York, referred to the Anti-Poverty Society McGlynn founded. McGlynn had studied political economy. Having given much to charity, having founded four orphanages, having dealt with a never ending stream of people seeking employment, not alms, he asked, is there no remedy? It was his support of Henry George that caused his problems with his Archbishop, and during his five years of suspension, he was not allowed to preach from Christian pulpits. One of his monumental addresses, though, was at the Academy of Music in New York March 29, 1887, shortly after he participated in Henry George's political campaign. Take up the cross of this new crusade of justice and truth and humanity, he said; make room at the Father's table for all his children.