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Glasgow's many St. Mary's churches

Arthur Jones
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Another aside. Dateline, Scotland. Why, you might wonder, does the city of Glasgow have so many Catholic churches called St. Mary?s. These include St. Mary?s Church, Calton, St. Mary?s Church, Pollokshaws, St. Mary?s Church, Maryhill, to say nothing of St. Mary?s Cathedral.

The first part of the answer dates to the Reformation, when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and made himself head of the Church of England. The Anglican Church assumed the church edifices that had once served the Church of Rome, so the Anglicans have lots of St. Mary the Virgin and other St. Mary churches all over England.

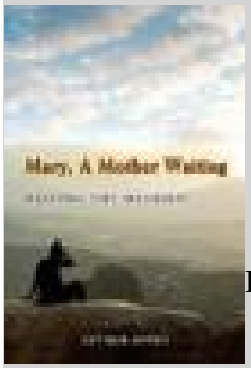
Catholicism was suppressed, brutally.

But they did go away, they suffered and held fast. My brother, sister and I were born in what was known as ?good, Catholic Lancashire,? where priests? holes and escape routes were numerous. Gradually, by 1829, the Crown eased up, Parliament passed the Roman Catholic Relief Act, which came as some relief but not equal rights. Finally, in 1850, British Catholic dioceses were re-established and Catholic church building began afresh.

There was a tradition of naming the first new Catholic church built in a town after the Mother of God, and the fact is that these places in Glasgow -- Calton, Pollokshaws and Maryhill -- were all separate towns later incorporated into the city.

Meanwhile, the Anglicans have all the ancient ones, many sadly in desperate need of repair, some of them quite beautiful. Inveterate travelers could spend a month or two just visiting all the St. Mary?s churches in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales -- and come away with enough architectural experience to write a book on styles from the 11th to 20th centuries.

More grist here for future asides ? and photographs perhaps.



In The Marian Blog, *NCR* books editor Arthur Jones invites a discussion on envisioning Mary, the mother of Jesus, in 21st-century terms.

Jones has been a Catholic journalist since before the Second Vatican Council. This month, Paulist Press releases his latest book, *Mary, a Mother Waiting, Raising the Messiah*. Jones describes his book as an exploration of the mother-son relationship of Mary and Jesus during the ?hidden years,? until she eases him front and center into his ministry at Cana.

You follow The Marian Blog and news about *Mary, a Mother Waiting, Raising the Messiah* on Facebook (**tinyurl.com/Mary-A-Mother-Waiting** [1]) and Twitter (**twitter.com/amotherwaiting** [2]).

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