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America's Historic St.Mary's

by Arthur Jones

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Another pause for an aside on St. Mary's churches.

This from Msgr. Peter Smith in Glasgow who studied for a while in the United States and stayed in Alexandria, Virginia, where, he writes "the oldest Catholic Church is, you guessed it, St Mary's! (I did not serve in St Mary's, we were next door to it in Blessed Sacrament).

"The Pastor who was with me was transferred (after I had returned home) to St Mary's, Fairfax! That Fairfax St. Mary's is an historic church because of its importance during the Civil War and indeed Clara Barton began what would become the American Red Cross in that very church building.

"In 1862 General Lee's Army met the northern forces in the Second Battle of Bull Run: on three days there were around 25,000 lost between the two armies and the church was a field hospital. The soldiers who died in the church where they were getting medical attention were buried in the church grounds, though later the remains of all but one (a Confederate soldier) were moved to Arlington National Cemetery. The church is a national historic building and protected by the Federal Government."

Any more intriguing St. Mary's out there? I've a few for another time.

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