
Ñ Contra Mundum Ñ

Volume II, Issue 2

September 1999

The Congregation of St. Athanasius - Roman Catholic, Anglican Use

Notes from the Chaplain

IN September we will have a parish meeting on Sunday, the 12th, to take stock of our parish program in terms of outreach and evangelism for the anglican use. We also must consider our future at the Saint Aidan's location. There have been developments concerning the use of the property.

In the fall also we will have our EVERY MEMBER CANVASS for the financial support of our congregation in the coming year. This term may be familiar to some of our members but not to our newcomers, occasional visitors, and readers. In fact, some of you have already remarked in wonderment how we can support our work without taking up one (or more!) Sunday collections. Although we do encourage contributions to various worthy causes commended by the Archdiocese of Boston (and always implement the required collections at Christmas and Easter) most of our income comes not from what is placed in the alms basin but what members and friends have subscribed to giving over the course of the year.

All our members are expected to make a pledge of financial support. They choose when and how to pay



The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
this support, filling in a pledge card in the fall of the year, on which they indicate their preference of payment and amount to be paid. Some members pay their pledge all at once, some quarterly, monthly, weekly. When more convenient, these pledges are mailed to the parish treasurer; others prefer to place their contributions in the alms basin on Sunday.

Pledged income accounts for most of our operating revenue. In the fall of the year pledge cards are filled out by members and received by the parish treasurer. In return for this, year-end statements are given to each contributor of record for tax purposes. If you would like to know more about this brief description you may contact our treasurer, Bruce Rand, for details.

The other part of this whole giving process is more theological rather than operational. Giving the Biblical tithe (Read about it in Leviticus

27 and other places) is what Christians do after they have said yes to Jesus Christ. Tithing is one of the characteristics that separate Christians from the rest of the world. In that, it is like Sunday churchgoing. With the Biblical tithe, Almighty God revealed to Israel that it was to live on 90% of income, giving the 10th to the Lord. Giving less, then, amounts to a violation of the Eighth Commandment, THOU SHALT NOT STEAL, since the 10th is God's due as He has said.

In modern America, you and I are encouraged to live on 120% of income, not 90% (really less than that if we are saving properly). I don't need to tell you about that! I also need not tell you about all the many charitable solicitations outside the Church which clamor for our gifts. Do they count towards your tithe? They do if the charity is something the Church could be doing consistent with the Gospel. You have a certain amount of leeway here. And you can always ask. There is a high percentage of members of the anglican use congregation who are tithing, or who are working to becoming tithers. They are doing that by being percentage givers: actually doing the arithmetic in figuring out how close they can come to tithing as they aspire and struggle to reach the 10% mark. Is it a struggle? Tithers do not get discounts at the grocery store. They do not have a magic wand to wave

over automobile prices and utility bills. They DO have the comfort of conscience knowing they are following the instructions of their Heavenly Father, a Father Who is never outdone in generosity.

So..... if you are not a tither, begin with percentage giving and resolve to add to it each year. Remember that if you are not generous when you have little, you will not be generous when you have more. And when the funny little pledge card arrives, know that it is not just a fund-raising gimmick. It is an opportunity to assert that Jesus is Lord even of the wallet!

Father Bradford

Ann's Story

Another Conversion Story

AS Sinclair Lewis once stated, the fine art of writing is in applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair! While I did not convert to the Faith from the Episcopalians, I do think maybe God can use my story (as only He can!) to help others. I grew up un-Baptized, un-instructed in any denomination, the third of four children born to a fallen-away Catholic father and a Baptist mother, who agreed to have nothing to do with organized religion. My father came from Czechoslovakia, and my mother's people came over on the boat also, some 300 years earlier. My grandfather watered the pea plants in Johann Gregor Mendel's very carefully kept garden, and my grandmother was kidnapped by Turkish brigands (her parents were Congregationalist missionaries in Bulgaria).

We lived on seven acres in Norwood (15 miles south of Boston, on Route 1). All around us, developments were being built, new streets, new houses. So our place, on the corner of Dean and Neponset Streets, was kind of a nature sanctuary, full of birds, butterflies, dragonflies, spiders, wild flowers, trees-- in addition to the animals kept and the gardens planted. Apple trees shaded the area near the house. We had two greenhouses. We kept (and slaughtered in the Fall) a pig every year; we had goats and chickens (and, later on, geese) and pet caterpillars that we raised, and they pupated and became beautiful butterflies. We did not have a dog, nor a cat. We grew and canned our own fruits and vegetables and mushrooms. We never tasted cow's milk until we went to other people's houses. Our parents' hobbies were antiques, art glass, horticulture, reading good books. There would sometimes be spirited discussions about how to use a word, or on what a word meant, and the argument-settler was Noah Webster's, the big dictionary which sat on the desk and was used every day. There was music too-- violin, cello, viola, mandolin, flute, pedal pump organ, piano, zither, ocarina (no drums). We went to the library --a family expedition-- every Saturday, First National, A&P (and, later on, Star Market) supplied what we couldn't grow, and my father was always bringing home some new food for us to try. (The only thing nobody would eat was the Limburger cheese.) A real treat was Neponset Valley Farms ice cream. The Holstein cows were on the fields and pastures adjoining the store. That was fresh ice cream!

I look back now, and can very

well see God's hand in our bringing-up. My father's vitriolic diatribes against hypocrisy, and my mother's exquisite tact and Yankee practicality, their honesty and altruism, and their active participation in the community, were such good examples to all of us, that each of the four children have also managed, in some small way, to help make the world better.

I began searching, as many do, in my teens for the answers to "Who am I?", "What is life all about?"; "Why am I here?"; etc., and I remember sitting in the tiny Catalonian Chapel tucked away in the Museum of Fine Arts (I stumbled upon it in my explorings of the place the summer I graduated from high school), pondering these things and looking back at those solemn eyes staring at me, from the Apse of the Pantocrator. I began to read the Bible, not as mere literature, but so as to find direction, somehow, and meaning. I entered Boston University, and I needed a place where I could sit, undisturbed for a half hour or so, morning and evening, and be still, and try to know God, whoever he is. I was amazed to find my name (no relation) inscribed in the basement meditation Chapel at B.U.'s Marsh Chapel, where I found Howard Thurman's writings. I found Hillel House, where I found Martin Buber and his "I-Thou" idea. I found the R.C. Chapel of St. Jerome. (The building was torched in the late '60's), where I found peace. I was 19 when I walked up the stairs, found the priest (Norman J. O'Connor, CSP, a very holy man of God) in his second-floor office, and told him I wanted to be a Catholic. Two years later (My father refused permission, so I had to

wait till I was 21), in 1964 I was Baptized, and received my first Holy Communion in St. Anne's (the former St. Stephen's) Church in the Back Bay. As a young Catholic (it's at least 3 years before a convert begins to know who the Church is!) I cut my "reading" teeth on the Maritians, Léon Bloy, Edith Stein, Teresa of Ávila, Thérèse of Lisieux, Thomas Aquinas, the Psalms, P. A. Liégé, G.K.C., Dom Marmion, St. Gertrude, von Hildebrand, Claudel, de Foucauld, John of the Cross, Pius Parsch, von Zeller, van Kaam, on and on into the lovely treasury of the Church, --and, above all, the Holy Gospels-- in all, the Holy Gospels, through it all, the Holy Gospels. I learned as a Catechumen, to pray, and to wait for God. My mother had died when I was 17, and my father died one year after I was Baptized and Confirmed. He asked me, shortly before he died, what was the origin of the Our Father? He listened as I told him.

So, the journey I started has not stopped; the way leads to the Father. The ultimate REALITY CHECK is at the foot of the cross. I have traveled enough, God knows, to learn that! In my work and in my prayers I hope to begin, be with, and finish in God. My consecration in 1974, as a virgin in the Church, living in the world (Canon 604) has been a fuller expression of the original Baptismal commitment, and God is faithful! The past 25 years have been full of interesting events, but Georges Bernanos says it very well: "Holiness is an adventure-- even, the only adventure, to which we are invited by God Himself-- and whoever has once felt within himself the stirrings of a supernatural hope far greater

than any mortal dread, has entered the sanctuary of the Catholic faith."

My aunt, a pillar of the Church of the Advent, and I would go to the 11:00 Service and then to the coffee and ... downstairs, and then to lunch and then to the Sunday afternoon concert at the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, so I got to understand Newman's writings, from this experiencing of the milieu in which he lived, and the Oxford Movement, etc. I attended the 1975 A.R.C. in Boston at Emmanuel. I became well acquainted with both the Sisters of St. Margaret and the Sisters of St. Anne. I admired how Bishop Burgess and Cardinal Medeiros together handled the very difficult and delicate matters of "intercommunion" and "busing" in the '70's and '80's. I was part of "Many Mansions" in downtown Boston-- yet another proof that the FAILURE of the CROSS is true success for the faithful Christian!

I could go on and on and on, but I think you get the idea -- God is in charge, and God is Good. Let us pray to the Holy Trinity indwelling, and to Mary our Mother in this Mystical Body of her Son our Savior, and to all the holy saints who have gone before us, for protection in the Holy Name, for light, for peace in all God-Love Unchanging!

Ann Stitt

PARISH RETREAT

November 12 - 14

at Saint Benedict Abbey,
Still River, Mass.

Fr. Carleton Jones, OP
Retreat Leader

Saint of the Month



St. Vincent de Paul

27 September

MOST of us are aware of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a vast organization of Catholic laymen spread across the whole world, the purpose of which is to relieve the suffering of the poor. There is in fact an important center of the Society in Boston. It began in Paris in 1833, the inspiration of a group of students at the Sorbonne under the leadership of a brilliant young lawyer and professor, Frederick Ozanam. As the Society rapidly expanded, it reached the United States, the first North American center (called a conference) appearing in St. Louis in 1845. Who was St. Vincent de Paul? Why did Ozanam and his younger brothers choose this saint for their patron?

Vincent de Paul became a priest to escape the poverty of his own child-

hood, intending to seek preferment, retire early, and to return home to look after his family. He was ordained in 1600, but in a sea voyage from Marseilles was captured by African pirates and sold into slavery in Tunis. He managed to get away after two years and made his way back to France. His spirituality was deepening, and his special vocation to the service of the poor henceforward asserted itself. Named pastor to a poor rural parish outside Paris, he was amazed to feel so happy in the work. The bishop soon sent him to be chaplain to the wealthy de Gondy family in Picardy, and with their help, he began organizing people to serve the poor. With the influence of the de Gondys King Louis XIII appointed him chaplain general of the galleys of France with responsibility for the spiritual well-being of all the convicts. He began preaching missions in 1617, and his palpable spirit of humble charity began to move many others. Rich friends were eager to help in the work. Under Vincent de Paul's leadership the Congregation of the Mission, reaching out to the poor in the countryside, recruiting priests for charitable work, arose. So did the Sisters of Charity, a new type of religious community. These novel sisters lived not in convents but in houses. Their cloister was the streets of the city, and their enclosure, commitment to God and service to the wretched. They dedicated their lives to visiting the sick in their homes, in hospitals, caring for prisoners, orphans, the mentally ill, and the homeless of Paris. Vincent de Paul, in taking this step, gave women their first public role in the Church in 800 years.

Integrating practical, direct charitable work with a life of prayer, he said, "I will set out to serve the poor. I will try to do so in a gay and modest manner, so as to console and edify them; I will speak to them as though they were my lords and masters. Even when one scolds me and finds fault with me, I will not omit the fulfillment of my duty but pay the respect and the honor due." He taught that Jesus was alive in the poor. Underneath the frightening surfaces of poverty, he insisted, one finds the suffering Lord.

Acutely sensitive to the gospel scenes in which Jesus encountered needy people, his fundamental accomplishment was to have communicated to the poor of his day that God really loved them, and, further, to have demonstrated to those who were drawn into his work that in serving the poor one serves the Lord Jesus.

He never made it back to the bosom of his family to live that life of comfort and ease he had planned as a young priest. The poor of France became his family, the convicts, the orphans, and the outcasts. When he died at the age of 80 on 27 September 1660, he was mourned and revered by thousands. He was canonized by Clement XII in 1737.

CHEAP grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjack's wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, bap-

tism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

WHEN the Seraphim glorify God, saying thrice, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts," they are glorifying Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And likewise, just as we are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son, so also in the name of the Holy Spirit; and we are made sons of God, not of gods. For it is Father, Son and Holy Spirit who is Lord of hosts. For the Godhead is one, and there is one God in three persons.

ST. ATHANASIUS (d. 373)

WHEN we contemplate the physical creation, we see an unimaginable complex, organized on many planes one

above another; atomic, molecular, cellular; vegetable, animal, social. And the marvel of it is that at every level the constituent elements run themselves, and, by their mutual interaction, run the world. God not only makes the world, he makes it make itself; or rather, he causes its innumerable constituents to make it. And this in spite of the fact that the constituents are not for the most part intelligent. They cannot enter into the creative purposes they serve. They cannot see beyond the tip of their noses; they have, indeed, no noses not to see beyond, nor any eyes with which to fail in the attempt. All they can do is blind away at being themselves, and fulfil the repetitive pattern of their existence. When you contemplate this amazing structure, do you wonder that it should be full of flaws, breaks, accidents, collisions and disasters? Will you not be more inclined to wonder why chaos does not triumph; how higher forms of organization should ever arise, or, having arisen, maintain and perpetuate themselves?

Though a thousand species have perished with the mammoth and the dodo, and though all species, perhaps, must perish at the last, it is a sort of miracle that the species there are should have established themselves. And how have they established themselves? Science studies the pattern, but theology assigns the cause: that imperceptible persuasion exercised by creative Will on the chaos of natural forces, setting a bias on the positive and achieving the creatures.

AUSTIN FARRER

“God seems to have an inordinate affection for beetles.” DARWIN

Father Carleton Jones to lead Parish Retreat

FATHER Carleton Jones, OP is remembered fondly by many of us as. I remember him particularly as a classmate at The Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge back in the 60's. Yes, the fateful sixties! Well I'll have you know that Carleton and I were among the stalwarts that held the line against much of the foolishness that went on at ETS. I say *much* of the foolishness because obviously we were young at the time and prone to some reckless behavior. Carleton was a Yale man, and I went to Bowdoin. We had also both spent some time in England. Need I say more? All in all, he gained himself a reputation as a staunch catholic, and it was no surprise not long after graduation to see him join the Cowley Fathers. That was the 60's. Then came the 70's when all hell broke loose in the Episcopal Church. Carleton was the “darling” of SSJE, but they were not to have him. Great was the furor in Anglican circles when it became known that, following Newman, he had crossed the Tiber! He made almost as much of a splash in that fluvial clerical swim meet, as Father Rutler did, if that were possible. No more treading water for him! I got to see him frequently on his visits to

the Monastery in Still River, and he was instrumental along with others in bringing me across those turbulent waters too. I would say that his clerical swim suit now bears many badges for spiritual life saving. Thank you Father Carleton.

Looking forward to the retreat,
David Burt

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius,

worshiping at

Saint Aidan's Church

158 Pleasant Street

Brookline, Mass. 02446-3149

Parish House: (617) 227-0854

Rectory: (617) 787-0553

Sundays 11:00am. Sung Mass followed by coffee and fellowship.

Wednesday, Sept. 8, Nativity of Our Lady, 7:30 pm, Mass

Sunday, Sept. 12, Parish Meeting and Luncheon after the 11:00 am, Mass

Tuesday, Sept. 14, Holy Cross Day, 7:30 pm, Mass

Wednesday, Sept. 29, St. Michael and all Angels, 7:30 pm, Mass

Saturday, (Date to be announced.) 9:00 am Requiem. You may submit names of the departed souls to the parish office. They will be remembered at Mass that day.

Saturdays

11:30 - 1:30 Confessions in the chapel, Fr. Raphael Caamano. No appointment necessary.

Here's where we are...



Contra Mundum

The Congregation of St. Athanasius
158 Pleasant Street
Brookline, MA 02446-3149

Saint Aidan's Church, 158 Pleasant Street in Brookline. Parking Available.

Commonwealth Avenue: From east or west, turn onto Pleasant Street south to the church at the corner of Freeman Street.

Boylston Street: From east, turn onto Harvard Street, veer right onto Sewall Avenue and left on St. Paul Street. At the corner of Freeman, turn left to the Church. From west, you cannot make a left turn onto Harvard Street. Turn right around the fire station, cross Boylston Street and proceed northbound on Harvard Street. Follow directions above.

Beacon Street: From east or west, turn onto James Street and right onto Pleasant Street and proceed to church.

Mass Pike: Exit at Allston-Brighton tolls, take ramp for Cambridge Street-Allston to Harvard Street, Left on Harvard and left on Brighton Ave. which merges into Commonwealth Avenue. See directions for Commonwealth Avenue above.

MBTA Green Line B car, stop request at Pleasant Street. Walk four blocks south on Pleasant Street.

