

Ñ Contra Mundum Ñ

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

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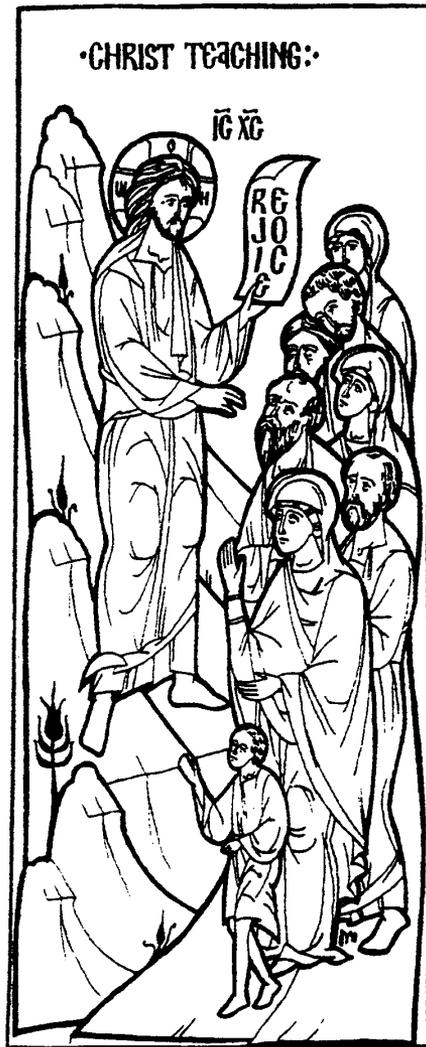
Notes from the Chaplain

THERE is an old *Punch* cartoon from the 1850s showing a train conductor looking into a non-smoking compartment at six men puffing away on cigars and pipes. In the caption under the cartoon the railway official announces “There are two important bye-laws on this line, gentlemen. Passengers are forbidden to smoke in non-smoking compartments; and the Company’s servants are not allowed to receive gratuities.”

In his announcement the conductor created a certain doubt as to the absoluteness of the laws in question. His comments cleverly left open both the possibility that the smoking ban could be lifted, and that the conductor could receive an appropriate thank offering for the waiver.

In both the secular and religious press, and in preaching, it is often, and also cleverly, insinuated, if not outright declared, that such and such a law or principle in the Catholic Church exists, and that it was at one time in force (or perhaps it is still in force in some places) but no one observes it around here!

We hear it said, as if there were something profound, reasonable, and eminently tolerant about it, that “your



truth may not be my truth” and that as Catholics we must of course take Church teaching “seriously into account,” but that there are other factors involved, and in the end “the law of the spirit” elevates to the highest level the mind’s ability to shape reality and give moral meaning to the

circumstances of life.

In effect what has happened is that the sources of Church teaching (scripture, tradition, and magisterium) are relativized to the status of information indistinguishable from other “points of view.” To say that the Holy Father or the local bishop “puts his pants on one leg at a time just like you and me” is to adopt a civil-political model of the Church and reject what God has revealed in Christ: sacred scriptures are revealed by God, sacred tradition is guided by the Holy Spirit, and the Church is commissioned to teach in Christ’s name. (Luke 10:16). These sacred sources are necessary, not optional, for the formation of a correct Catholic conscience.

A correct Catholic conscience is necessary for the reception of right belief and making right moral actions. Just as a bad diet results in ill effect in the body, so do morally bad actions weaken the soul. If a conscience is subjectively certain and objectively erroneous, the solution is not to celebrate this “freedom of human autonomy!” Error can only lead to more error. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that a conscience in conflict with Catholic teaching is an erroneous conscience and that the first thing to do is correct it. Why is this so?

Salvation has to be secured beyond the possibility of doubt. Sincerity is not the crucial ingredient. The actual and objective attainment of salvation can be secured only by the actual and objective fulfillment of certain specified conditions which are absolutely essential. No amount of sincerity or strongly held opinion of human autonomy will avail. *Actual* Baptism, not probable baptism, in the highest considered opinion of the minister, is necessary for salvation.

As for the vague reference to the "law of the spirit" which sometimes invokes the Second Vatican Council as the warrant for embracing such self-promotion and low-level ecclesiology, the Vatican Two fathers are on record quite the other way:

"In forming their consciences the faithful must pay careful attention to the holy and certain teaching of the church. For the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth. It is its duty to proclaim and teach with authority the truth which is Christ, and at the same time, to declare and confirm by her authority the principles of the moral order which spring from human nature itself."

DIGNITATIS HUMANÆ, N.25

"Bishops who teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff are to be respected by all as witnesses of divine and catholic truth; the faithful, for their part, should concur with their bishop's judgment, made in the name of Christ, in matters of faith and morals,

and adhere to it with a religious docility of spirit. This religious docility of the will and intellect must be extended, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra*, in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and that one sincerely adhere to decisions made by him conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made known principally either by the character of the documents in question, or by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed, or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated."

LUMEN GENTIUM, N.25

Ever since Adam and Eve ate the banana, man has been making clever efforts to justify bad moral actions. But it isn't a funny matter such as laughing at the commentary under an old *Punch* cartoon. Salvation is at stake, and the Catholic Church is the steward of both the message and the medicine that aid us in the double task of mastering harmful behavior and cultivating the virtues that put our senses into order with the mind of Christ. Doing that is what the Bible calls "paths of righteousness." It is the road to salvation.

A soul heeding the christian call to perfection must rest its conscience not in the relativism of personal opinions but on moral truth. And this moral teaching deserves and requires the religious assent of our souls. Christ has made us free so that we may find our perfection in Him.

FATHER BRADFORD

SHORT NOTES

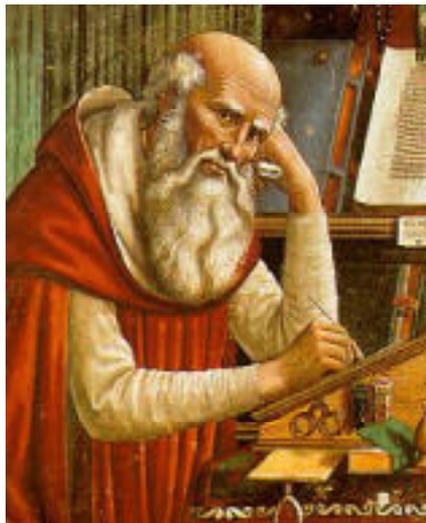
God willing, Fr Stephen Powers will be visiting us in early September. He is an Episcopal priest and Navy Chaplain and friend of Fr Bradford's who spent a year doing graduate study at Harvard and made The Parish of All Saints' Ashmont his parish. When a group of us left All Saints' Fr Powers was with us most Sundays until his time in Boston ended. Now his orders will be taking him to a new assignment in Southern California, where he has his permanent residence.

Looking ahead, we are planning an every member canvass in October for the financial support of the congregation in the coming year. Most of our operation is underwritten by subscribers, and thanks to the generosity of our members we have always been able to fund our program while making contributions to the work of the Archdiocese of Boston and the wider church. In October you will be asked to make a pledge of financial support for the next year.

In November we will offer a weekend retreat for members of the parish. The date, location, and speaker have yet to be determined.

At the end of September we will observe the third anniversary of the anglican use in the Archdiocese of Boston. The anniversary is kept on the Feast of St Michael and All Angels, which is Friday, September 29. Solemn Mass is at 7:30pm.

Saint of the Month



St. Jerome

(c. 341-420)

Feast Day, September 30

FROM youth St. Jerome was a literary, bookish young man, educated by his father, then at Rome, where he liked to visit the churches and catacombs. He decided to become a monk, and, after a time, left for Palestine. He lived for a time as a hermit in the Syrian desert, where he discerned that it was God's will he should turn from the classics to study Scripture in the original languages. Ordained in Antioch, he studied in Constantinople under St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and began to make the first of his many translations.

Returning to Rome he embarked on the enormous task of producing a standard Latin text of the Bible, basing his work on original texts. Even-

tually he produced virtually all of the Bible in a version which came to be known as the Vulgate.

Like many bookish, scholarly men, he was cantankerous and difficult, prone to sarcasms. His sharp tongue made him many enemies, which accounts in part for his frequent moves from one place to another, for he was often involved in conflicts and quarrels. He paid the price for being a brilliant defender of good causes by arousing jealousy and animosity.

He stayed in Rome until 385, leaving under a cloud, as he had Syria and Constantinople. He retired to Jerusalem and entered a religious community of monks and nuns. There he stayed for the rest of his life, teaching, writing and studying. He lived his life in a time of terrific controversy and heretical storms (the Council of Nicea had taken place sixteen years before his birth; St. Athanasius was his somewhat older contemporary) all the while remaining faithful to the teachings of Rome.

He died at Bethlehem and was buried under the Church of the Nativity, but later his body was translated to the basilica of St. Mary Major, Rome. In art he is often represented at work in a cave with a lion at his feet. He is one of the four Latin doctors of the Church, and is the patron saint of librarians.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

WE ARE MARKED MEN! Yes; marked for Jesus! At our Baptism, each one of us was marked with the Holy Sign of the Cross upon our fore-

heads by the priest as he said: "We receive this Child into the congregation of Christ's flock; and do sign *him* with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter *he* shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto *his* life's end. Amen."

As we began the battle of life as Christians, as soldiers of Christ, as members of His Body, our Marching Orders were given to us: CONFESS, FIGHT, CONTINUE. And our badge or insignia was the CROSS.

It has ever been the custom for Christians to trace over their own bodies that sacred Sign of the Cross to remind themselves from time to time of their vocations as soldiers of the Cross, to spur themselves on to renewed endeavors against the world, the flesh and the devil, and to recall the words of Christ. "Take up the Cross and follow me."

Perhaps the earliest reference we have to the making of the Sign of the Cross comes to us from Tertullian, who lived in north Africa about the year 200 A.D.: "At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign." What a wonderful way for Christians to impress upon themselves their pledge "to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto their life's end"!

There have been various ways of making the Sign of the Cross. No-

tice that Tertullian said they traced it upon their foreheads. Judging by the comments of St. Augustine and others, this seems to have been the general usage in early times. This is what the priest still does in Baptism. As time passed, the large Sign drawn from forehead to breast and from shoulder to shoulder became common, but anciently the motion was made from the right shoulder to the left. This is the way it is still done in the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

When one is taking formal part in a service, e.g., as a celebrant or as a server, it is customary in the Western use to do as follows. Unless one is carrying something, the two hands are clasped in front or the breast, the fingers being held parallel to one another, the right thumb being crossed over the left thumb. When it is time to make the Sign of the Cross, the hands are separated, and the left hand, with the fingers still extended, is laid flat against the breast rather low. With the fingers of the right hand also kept extended and parallel, the Sign of the Cross is traced from the forehead to just above the left hand on the breast, and then from the left side to the right side by just touching the shoulders. The two hands are then brought together again as they were to begin with.

In the services of the Church it is now customary to make the usual large Sign of the Cross at the following times: at the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" at the end of the

Of course, as Tertullian recommended, it is good practice to begin any new deed with the Sign of the Cross to remind ourselves of the Apostle's words. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Certainly at the beginning and end of our private devotions, before and after meals (in public as well as in private), we should make the Holy Sign.

Many people find it helpful to begin their meditations by using the words of Psalm 19, verse 14, thus: "Let the words of my mouth (here make the small sign on your lips), and the medita-

tions of my heart (here make it over your heart), be always acceptable in thy sight. (then as you finish the verse, make the usual large Sign of the Cross) O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

Just as Constantine had the vision of the Cross with the words, "In this Sign conquer;" so let us seek to hallow all we do or say with this Holy Sign and use it as our Battle Standard.

FROM A TRACT PUBLISHED BY
HOLY CROSS PRESS.

Ñ THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.



Creed, either Apostles' or Nicene; at the end of *Gloria in Excelsis*; at the beginning of *Benedictus qui venit*; at any blessing or absolution: at the beginning of the Gospel Canticles, i.e. *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittis*. There is a special form of the symbol to be used just as the Holy Gospel is being announced at Holy Communion, which is done by tracing with the thumb small Signs of the Cross successively on the forehead, mouth and breast, as if we were declaring our intention to follow the teaching of the Gospel in thought, word and deed. Another time when the Sign of the Cross is formed over the lips with the thumb is at the words. "O Lord, open thou our lips."



Holy Cross Day

September 14

The true cross was found by St. Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine the Great in the year 326. Her workmen, digging on Mount Calvary in search of the true cross of Christ, found three crosses. Two of the crosses were applied without result to a very sick woman. As soon as the third cross touched her, she was instantly cured. The adoration of the Cross on Good Friday is part of the Holy Week devotions. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross is kept on September 14th. When you visit the Abbey in Still River, ask to see the relic of the true cross which they have there.



*** COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF
ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

Everlasting
GOD, YOU
ORDAINED AND CONSTITUTED
IN A WONDERFUL ORDER THE MINISTRIES OF
ANGELS AND MORTALS: MERCIFULLY
GRANT THAT, AS YOUR HOLY ANGELS ALWAYS
SERVE AND WORSHIP YOU IN HEAVEN, SO BY YOUR
APPOINTMENT THEY MAY HELP AND DEFEND US
HERE ON EARTH; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD,
WHO LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU AND THE HOLY SPIRIT,
ONE GOD, FOR EVER AND EVER + + + AMEN +

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius,

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

worshiping at

Saint Theresa Convent
Chapel

10 St. Theresa Ave.

West Roxbury, Mass.

Rectory: 192 Foster Street,
Brighton, MA 02135-4620

Tel/Fax: (617) 787-0553

Web: <http://www.locutor.net>

Sundays 10:30am. Sung Mass, fol-
lowed by coffee and fellowship in the
convent solarium.

Saturdays 6:45am Low Mass fol-
lowed by Exposition until 3:30pm in
the chapel connected to the church.
Confessions 3:00 to 4:00.

Future Dates

Fri. Sept. 29: St. Michael and All
Angels, Solemn Mass at 7:30pm.

**Saint Theresa's Convent Chapel, 10 St
Theresa Avenue in West Roxbury. Parking
available.**

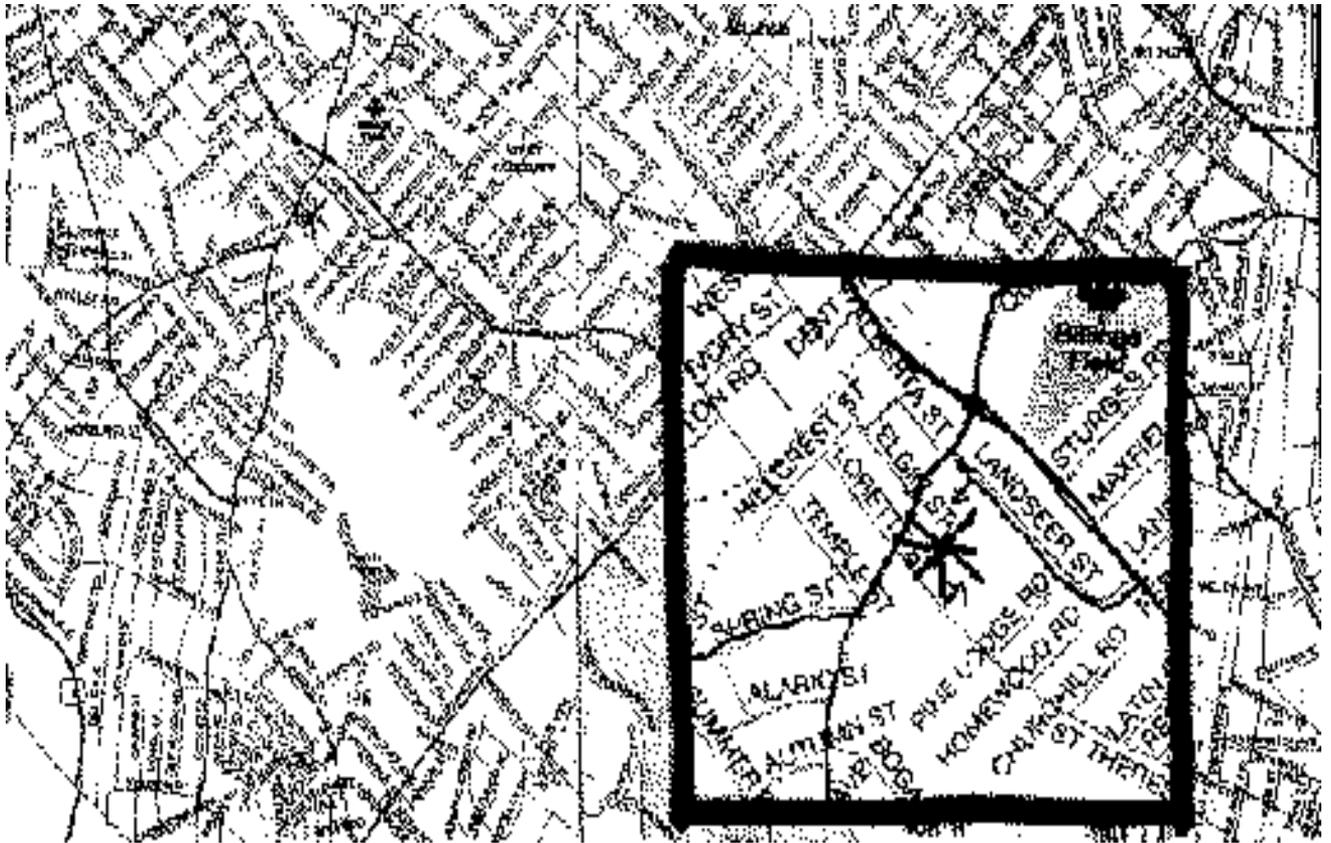
North and Mass Pike. Take Route 128 South to Route
109 East towards Dedham. Route 109 ends at the
VFW Parkway and becomes Spring Street which
leads to St Theresa's Church.

South. Take Route 128 to Route 1A North at Dedham
and continue on Route 1 to Spring Street and turn right
onto Spring Street which leads to the Church.

Dorchester and Mattapan. Take River Street to
Cummins Highway to Washington Street, south to
LaGrange Street, and west (right) on LaGrange to
Landseer Street and into St Theresa's parking lot.

Brookline. Take VFW Parkway to LaGrange Street,
turn left onto LaGrange into West Roxbury. Cross
Centre Street and turn right on Landseer Street and
into the Church lot.

MBTA Orange Line to Forest Hills. Then take the
#35 (Dedham Mall) bus, which has the most frequent
service. Routes 36, 37, and 38 also stop in front of St
Theresa's Church.



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10 St. Theresa Avenue
West Roxbury, MA

