
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

Volume IV, Issue 6

January 2002

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

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NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

“I Live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” So explained Saint Paul to the Galatians, hoping to impart to them some understanding of the nature of Christian life. That is something we must do also. How do we describe the Christian life? What makes it different from everything else?

Christianity is of course a *moral life*. Christians are, fundamentally, obedient to the revealed will of a holy God. Our imitation of Christ in this life must be issuing in a real advance in holiness. If it did not we should consider our discipleship a failure. Not only are we not indifferent to ethical concerns, or even mildly in favor of that which aspires to the character of our Creator. Rather, Christians are identified as those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Yet having said that, we cannot reduce the essence of the Christian life to the tenets of the Sermon on the Mount or the Ten Commandments. Not if we remember the Epistle to the Romans! Morality, isolated from other considerations, is most often a stumbling block along the path of holiness.



Christianity is an *intellectual life*. And of course the Gospel comes not by reading the Bible but by preaching. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” We all need constant and systematic instruction in the Faith, perhaps more than we get! It is also true that Christian disciples along the way frequently require advice and counsel. An enlightened soul, then, is the first requisite for a strong soul. But in the last analysis, the Christian life does not consist in facts about Jesus Christ but in knowledge gained through experience of Him. All the great religious men and women, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Theresa of Avila, to name but a few, stress that right thinking and right living are products of, and not causes of, the spiritual life with God.

Here we are beginning to get warm in our search for the essence of the Christian life. Any upward striving of the unaided human intellect is an example of the natural religion common to all men. What we call revealed religion is the result of the invasion of the human mind by the pure action of God. What follows revelation is response.

(When Catholics insist upon the necessity of the Christian Faith, this is no mere intellectual conservatism. It is loyalty to given truth. When we insist upon the necessity of the Sacraments, this is no mere delight in ceremonies. It is the acceptance of given life.)

All truth humanly perceived is divine. That is to say truth exists independent of human thought about it. And all men attracted to truth, goodness, and beauty, are souls attracted to God, whether they know it or not. Therefore, spiritual life and the supernatural working of God may be found among men outside the Christian dispensation altogether. “The Spirit bloweth where He listeth.” (John 3.8)

When we seek to describe the essence of Christian life, we cannot mean that it is only higher by degree of supernatural quality than everything outside the Church. Since the Christian life flows from the Incarnate Christ, it is and must be different in kind from all else. For the

coming of Christ brought a new principle into human life which exists nowhere else than in His fellowship.

The essence of the Christian life is *participation in the life of God* by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ. That is what St. Paul was telling the Galatians. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And this divine indwelling (which does not mean participation in the divine essence: there can only be union of things, which are different) makes it a fundamentally new relationship between the soul and God. By nature we are God's creatures. But when was the last time you thought of yourself as God's creature? That is because in Baptism we become something infinitely more: God's son or daughter. The eternal God is our Father. "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8. 15-16)

Even the word "adoption" fails to bring us the full significance of what happens. A legal adoption is a fiction. When all the paperwork is done, the child is no more the natural son of his adopted father than he was before the legal process. But divine adoption (supernatural law) does what human adoption (natural law) cannot do. St. Paul gets to the heart of the matter a little further into Galatians. "Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26-28)

We are sons and daughters of the Father in a way no natural law could make us: by being made one with Him Who is from all eternity God's Own Son. Christ makes our sonship a spiritual reality by granting through the grace of Baptism union with Him. This is the peculiar glory of the Christian life, separating it from all else, and the very reason why we desire to bring all souls to Christ. For by the grace of the Incarnate Christ we become the sons of God filled with His life and conscious of His indwelling Presence. And everything we are and do follows from that fact.

FATHER BRADFORD

Saint of the Month



St. Lucian of Antioch

Martyred 312

Feast Day 8 January

ST. Lucian, born in Syria, and one of the school of Antioch, was a figure of great importance in the formation of the early Church, but at the

same time, for us, not a terribly attractive one. He demonstrates that God sometimes uses stubborn, peculiar, and, no doubt, even repulsive people for his own purposes.

Not that St. Lucian was repulsive. He was rather an important scholar who specialized in purging the many corrupt scriptural texts extant at the time. The Christian scholars of Alexandria had run to extremes in allegorizing the scriptures, and Lucian, as head of the theological faculty at Antioch, would have none of it. He insisted on the most literal interpretation of the texts, and no doubt, because of this, would have been regarded as a right-winger or a fundamentalist of the time.

Another difficulty about Lucian is his close connection to the archheretic Arius. Arius was his student, and Arius's teachings rent the early church asunder. Indeed, St. Athanasius was one of Arius's firmest and most steadfast opponents. Lucian has the unenviable reputation of being the real author of the Arian heresy. In his christological system — a compromise between modalism and subordinationism — the Word, though Himself the Creator of all subsequent beings, was made and not begotten. Christ was a *creature*, though superior to all other created things, according to this teaching. The great leaders in the Arian movement (Arius himself, Eusebius, the court bishop of Nicomedia, Maris, and Theognis) received their training under Lucian and always venerated him as their master and the founder of their system. Though Lucian was much blamed for the Arian calamity and was excommunicated for many years, he was restored to the Church in 285.

In his personal life Lucian was saintly and holy, and was revered as an example of holiness as much as he was as a scholar. During the persecution of Maximinus Daza he was arrested at Antioch and sent to Nicomedia, where he endured many tortures and, after delivering a long oration in defence of his faith, was finally put to death.

Perhaps his greatest achievement was the purification and preservation of scriptural texts, an accomplishment that influenced later scholars and helped define our versions of the Gospels. If it is said he was an excessive literalist, it must also be said that he was a preserver of actual and uncorrupted texts as well. Though he was associated with the Great Heresy of Arianism, he remained loyal to the true Faith in the end, and died as one of its early martyrs.

SHORT NOTES

Darryl Brathwaite is now in a rehabilitation center in Needham, having moved from the Greenery in Brighton. He continues to make recovery from the gunshot wound he took in his head in an attack over four years ago. We pray for Darryl at every Mass, and many of you continue to do this in your private prayers as well.

REST IN PEACE Bishop Lawrence J. Riley, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, emeritus. He went to God on December 2nd at age 87. Bishop Riley had visited our congregation three times in our first three years, once to ordain Father Bradford as a Deacon, and also was present at his ordination as a Priest. Bishop Riley always requested a remembrance in

our prayers, and we do so with affection and gratitude for an esteemed friend. Father and Mrs. Bradford attended the Funeral Mass in Holy Cross Cathedral.

Many thanks to all of you who contributed towards the cost of greening the chapel for Christmas. Your gifts are much appreciated.

The Rt. Revd. Abbot Gabriel Gibbs, OSB recently observed his jubilee of ordination with a Solemn Mass in St. Cecilia's Church, Leominster. Fr. & Mrs. Bradford attended the Mass and the banquet following, and many of you signed a card of best wishes on this happy occasion.

Fr. Bradford preached and concelebrated a Byzantine Liturgy Catholic Mass in St. Mary's Chapel, Boston College, on the Feast of Saint Nicholas. The service was arranged by Deacon Michael Connolly, about whom there was a nice write-up in the Boston College CHRONICLE December 13th edition.

Many thanks from the Bradfords to all of you who remembered them with cards, prayers, and gifts at the Christmas season. Your support and kindness is always much valued. They all join in wishing each of you a healthy and holy new year.



ASH WEDNESDAY
The First Day of Lent
February 13, 2002

THE BRITISH MARTYRS

OVER the years 200 men and women have been beatified for their heroic witness to the Catholic Faith in the British Isles during and after the Protestant Reformation. Here we continue brief mention of some of these individual martyrs.

BLESSED JOHN FOREST
Priest Religious, and Martyr
(1473?-1538)

In 1526 or 1527, Father John Forest, a Franciscan Observant from the age of seventeen, became the confessor of King Henry VIII's wife Catherine of Aragon just as the king was beginning his campaign for an annulment of his marriage. Aware of the dangers he and his fellow English Franciscans were facing in defending Queen Catherine and the rights of the Church, Father Forest wrote to the queen, "I earnestly beg your steadfast prayers to God, for whose Spouse we suffer torments, to receive me into his glory." Arrested on the charge of having told one of his penitents that the king was not the "Supreme Head of the Church," Father Forest was eventually sentenced to death by burning. At the place of execution he responded to the apostate Bishop Hugh Latimer's denunciation of him by observing, "Open your eyes, take example from that holy bishop of Rochester [John Fisher] and the blessed Thomas More, who renounced the goods of this world and chose rather to die than to lose their immortal souls."

BLESSED THOMAS
SHERWOOD Martyr (c. 1551-
1578)

Born to a devout English Catholic family, Thomas Sherwood attended Masses held secretly in the home of a Catholic widow and considered becoming a seminarian in Douay (France) but was arrested in London. Although tortured, Thomas never yielded during his six months of imprisonment, praying amidst his sufferings, "Lord Jesus, I am not worthy to suffer this for thee..." He was martyred in 1578.

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An Epiphany Story.

St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, discovers the relics of the cross of Christ, and reflects on the three kings:

'Like me,' she said to them, 'you were late in coming. The shepherds were here long before; even the cattle. They had joined the chorus of angels before you were on your way. For you the primordial discipline of the heavens was relaxed and a new defiant light blazed amid the disconcerted stars.

'How laboriously you came, taking sights and calculating, where the shepherds had run barefoot! How odd you looked on the road, attended by what outlandish liveries, laden with such preposterous gifts!

'You came at length to the final stage of your pilgrimage and the great star stood still above you. What did you do? You stopped to call on King Herod. Deadly exchange of compliments in which began that



*The Feast of the Epiphany
Sunday, January 6, 2002, 10:30am
Procession, Solemn Mass and Sermon
Saint Theresa Convent Chapel*

unended war of mobs and magistrates against the innocent!

'Yet you came, and were not turned away. You too found room before the manger. Your gifts were not needed, but they were accepted and put carefully by, for they were brought with love. In that new order of charity that had just come to life, there was room for you, too. You were not lower in the eyes of the holy family than the ox or the ass.

'You are my especial patrons,' said Helena, 'and patrons of all late-comers, of all who have a tedious journey to make to the truth, of all who are confused with knowledge and speculation, of all who through politeness make themselves partners in guilt, of all who stand in danger by reason of their talents.

'Dear cousins, pray for me,' said Helena, 'and for my poor overloaded son. May he, too, before the end find kneeling-space in the straw. Pray for the great, lest they perish utterly. And pray for Lactantius and Marcias and the young poets of Treves and for the souls of my wild, blind ancestors; for their sly foe Odysseus and for the great Longinus.

'For his sake who did not reject your curious gifts, pray always for all the learned, the oblique, the delicate. Let them not be quite forgotten at the throne of God when the simple come into their kingdom.'

EVELYN WAUGH 1903-1966

The novel *Helena* was written in 1950



*Lord, I have loved the habitaion of
Thy house.*

"For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God's plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit. He was born and was baptized so that by His submission He might purify the water."

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

January 1:

THE NAMING OF JESUS

'You shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins' (Matt. 1:21)

Ah! Ah! that wonderful Name! Ah! that delectable Name! This is the Name that is above all names, the Name that is highest of all, without which no man hopes for salvation. This Name is sweet and joyful, giving veritable comfort to the heart of man. Verily the Name of Jesus is in my mind a joyous song and heavenly music in mine ear, and in my mouth a honeyed sweetness. Wherefore no wonder I love that Name which gives comfort to me in all my anguish. I cannot pray, I cannot meditate, but in sounding the Name of Jesus. I savour no joy that is not mingled with Jesus. Wheresoever I be, wheresoever I sit, whatsoever I do, the thought of the savour of the Name of Jesus never leaves my mind. I have set it in my mind, I have set it as a token upon my heart. What can he lack who desires to love the Name of Jesus unceasingly?

RICHARD ROLLE (c1300-1349)
Hermit of Hampole, Yorkshire

“[CHRIST] would never come and knock at the door unless he wished to enter; if he does not always enter, it is we who are to blame..”

AMBROSE OF MILAN



The Presentation of the Lord
CANDLEMAS

Blessing of Candles, Procession
Solemn Mass & Sermon
Saint Theresa of Avila Church
Saturday, February 2, 2002 9:00am
Fr. Carleton Jones, O.P., Preacher



The Baptism of the Lord
Sunday, January 13, 2002
Asperges, me
Sung Mass & Sermon
Convent Chapel
10:30am

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius,

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

worshipping 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, followed by coffee and fellowship in the convent solarium. Adult Christian Education two Sundays a month.

January 13 & 27, Comparative Religion: Paganism

February 10 History: The Medieval Church.

February 24, History: Bob Alpert: Martin Luther.

March 10 & 17, Doctrine: Scholastic Theology

April 14 & 28, Evangelism: Renewal Movements in the Church

May 12 & 26, Christian Life: Educating Children

June 9 & 23, Worship and Liturgy: The History of the Divine Office.

July 14 & 28, Old Testament: The Prophets.

August 11 & 25, New Testament: The Pauline Epistles

September 8 & 22, English Monasticism.

St. Theresa Church and Convent
Chapel, West Roxbury, MA 02132
Pine Lodge Road (off St. Theresa
Avenue)

Park either in the church parking lot or on Pine
Lodge Road. The side door of the convent is
open during the time of our services.

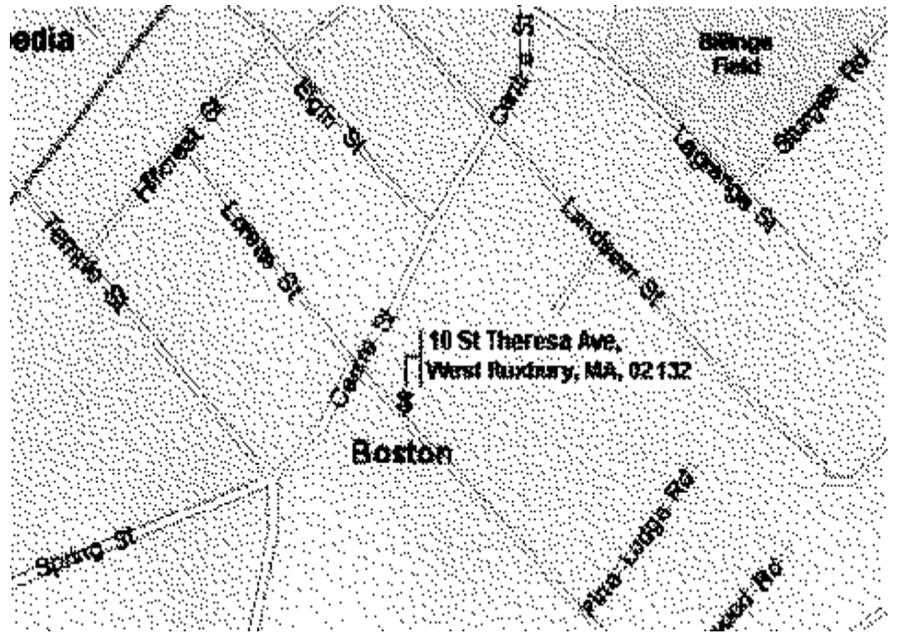
Directions by Car: *From the North:* Route
128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street
in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a
traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the
church. At this light bear left onto Centre St.
and immediately turn right at the next light
onto St. Theresa Ave.

From the South: Route 1 north through
Dedham to Spring Street. Turn right onto
Spring Street then follow the directions above.

From Dorchester and Mattapan: Cummins
Highway to Belgrade Avenue to Centre Street
left on St. Theresa Ave.

From Boston: VFW Parkway to LaGrange
Street. Turn left onto LaGrange Street, crossing
Centre Street and turn right onto Landseer
Street. Turn left into the church parking lot.

Directions by Public Transportation: *Orange line*
to Forest Hills terminal. Bus to West Roxbury.
#35 bus to Dedham Mall. #36, #37, and #38
also stop at St. Theresa's. *Commuter train* to
West Roxbury Station is a short walk to St.
Theresa's. Departs from South Station, but
no Sunday service is available.



Contra Mundum

The Congregation of St. Athanasius
10 St. Theresa Avenue
West Roxbury, MA 02132

