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# ✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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Volume IV, Issue 7

February 2002



## NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

**S**OMETIME soon after you read this parish paper you should be thinking and praying about a Lenten discipline that you may have in place ready to implement on Ash Wednesday.

Because Lent is not a time of penitence but of *Christian* penitence, our single aim is to fix our sight more closely on the ideal of love. In that regard, you might consider 1 Corinthians 13, St. Paul's great Psalm in Praise of Love. Because of their literary and rhythmical beauty, these thirteen verses rank with the finest passages in the whole Bible. Their very popularity brings with it the danger of a superficial sentimentality. Nowhere does St Paul say a single word about love as an emotion. For him love is a motive. It is not how love feels but what love does that counts. More about that in a moment.

St. Paul was the second most influential man in the history of Christianity. Some even suggest the apostle changed the direction of the Church. What is sometimes forgotten is that Saul of Tarsus was a contemporary of Our Lord Jesus. Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road was not very long after the Ascension. And after his conversion, Saul, now called Paul, would have had abundant access to firsthand evidence about Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

(Paul is often called the Apostle

of Faith, and St John the Apostle of Love. But John could write "this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5.4) and St Paul could write 1 Corinthians 13!)

You can read these thirteen verses as evidence for Paul's having exact knowledge of the life and character of Jesus. You can even substitute the Name of Jesus for the word "love" where it occurs in this chapter and find as a result a perfect description of Our Blessed Lord.

Love, St Paul says, not as an emotion but as a motive for conduct, is the most desirable spiritual gift. The Christian disciple aims to make progress in love because it is Christ's desire for us, and Christ Himself is our motive for right conduct.

Remember that love of God and love of man are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. The love Paul is describing is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Both love of God and love of man are our response to God's love for us. Our Lent will be profitably kept if we plan to come out at the end of it with greater patience and affection for other people. That would be an end well pleasing to the Lord.

FATHER BRADFORD

## SHORT NOTES

Many thanks to the readers at our annual Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols: Michael Connolly, David Burt, Gloria and Bob Molloy, Wilfred Veldkamp, Bruce and Marcia Rand, Rita Strow, and Father Bradford. And thanks to Msgr. William Helmick for his kind permission to use St. Theresa of Ávila Church.

There will be a year's mind Mass for Stephen Molloy on Saturday, February 9th at 9am. "May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace."

Bring your palm branches and crosses from home for burning before Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is February 13th.

Condolences to the Weekes family and to the Daly family on recent deaths in their families.

The *Book of Divine Worship* has its own website, managed by Peggy Graham of Our Lady of the Atonement Parish in San Antonio, Texas. Access <http://www.bookofdivineworship.com>

Thanks to Fr. Robert McMillan, SJ for celebrating our Sunday Mass on January 20th when Fr. Bradford was away from Boston.

## Saint of the Month



St. Agatha

Feast Day 5 February

**I**N St. Agatha we once again encounter a virgin who dies to keep herself pure, refusing to yield to the lustful demands of an oppressor. Though the calendar of saints is filled with such examples, St. Agatha's is one of the earliest. So ancient in the Church is St. Agatha that she is named in the Canon of the Mass.

Of Agatha we have a legend, and perhaps not much history. But the story tells of a wealthy girl who had dedicated her virginity to Our Lord. The Roman consul Quintinian wanted to seduce her, and invoked the imperial edicts against Christianity to have her arrested and brought to him. When Agatha refused his advances, he sent her to a brothel kept by a certain "Aphrodisia" where she was tortured by rods, the rack, and by fire. She refused to give in. Her body was torn with iron hooks. Finally her breasts were torn or cut off, but she was miraculously healed when St. Peter appeared to her in a vision. After this she was rolled about on live coals and broken potshards and finally died in prison.

Stories of these uncompromising virgins can be puzzling to contemporary Catholics, perhaps especially to converts from Anglicanism to whom they seem at best indecorous, lurid, even bloodthirsty. We hear about Agatha and her virginal sister-saints in a pornographic era. How quaint these ladies seem in our age of Playboy, "Seinfeld," and near-naked newspaper advertisements.

Purity is not a popular virtue, but Catholics are enjoined to aspire to it and to pray for it. "Walk by the Spirit," St. Paul wrote to the

Galatians, "And do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh." (Gal. 5:16) What the Church is trying to teach us, even with gory examples such as St. Agatha's, is that we must strive to follow the ways of the Spirit and not of the flesh. The way of the Spirit requires purity of intention and imagination, self discipline, and prayer. Here is what the catechism says:

"The sixth beatitude proclaims, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' 'Pure in heart' refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity, chastity or sexual rectitude; love of truth and orthodoxy of faith." (§2518)

In the lore of the Church St. Agatha, having been burned in her tortures, has long been invoked when there is danger of fire, especially at eruptions of Mt. Etna (she was Sicilian). Prayers have long been offered for St. Agatha's intercession on behalf of women with diseases of the breast. She is the patroness of bell-founders.

## THE BRITISH MARTYRS

**O**VER 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 THOMAS JOHNSON  
*Priest, Religious, and Martyr*  
(†1537)

As a priest member of the Carthusians' house in London, the Charterhouse, Thomas Johnson had seen several of his fellow monks taken away to prison and martyrdom. For in 1534 and 1535, King Henry VIII began his persecution of English Catholics who remained loyal to the papacy. Those left at the Charterhouse were subject to continued intimidation, but ten of them, including Father Johnson, refused to take the government's oath recognizing Henry as supreme head of the Church. The ten monks were imprisoned at the Marshalsea where they were bound to posts and left to starve to death. But Saint Thomas More's adopted daughter Margaret Clement bribed the jail warden to let her into the prison where, disguised as a milkmaid, she smuggled food to the Carthusians, concealing it in a pail on her head. At length the jailer refused to admit her any longer and all but one of the monks died of starvation. Years later as Margaret Clement was dying, she told her husband that these Carthusians had appeared round about her bed, "and did call upon her to come away with them."

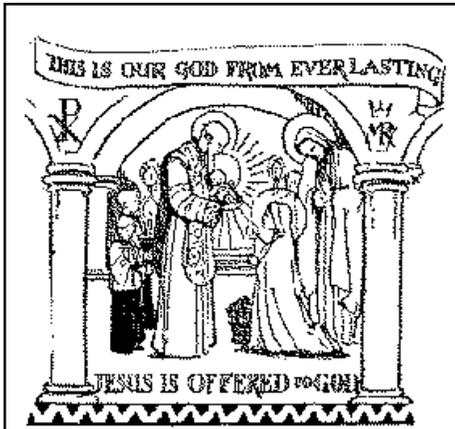
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BLESSED JOHN PIBUSH  
*Priest and Martyr* (†1601)

Born in the North Riding in Yorkshire, this Englishman studied theology at Rheims in France and was ordained a priest in 1587. He was then sent on the "English missions" He spent most of his mission in vari-

ous prisons, and was executed on February 17, 1601, in Southwark.

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The Presentation of CHRIST  
in the Temple, *or*  
THE PURIFICATION OF  
SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN  
commonly called

## CANDLEMAS DAY

Saturday, February 2, 2002  
Blessing of Candles, Procession  
Solemn Mass & Sermon  
Saint Theresa of Ávila Church  
Fr. Carleton Jones, OP, preacher  
9:00am

## SIMPLICITY

A 'simple' dinner party is not an excuse for carelessness, shoddiness, or bad manners. Reverence is taking pains to give God the best that human beings can offer, and simplicity is not the same thing as slipshod methods of worship. The ancients knew that they owed it to the dignity of God not to approach him except with dignity. This method of ap-

proach was very different from that of modern 'simple services' which are likely to be a sentimental hodge-podge, hastily put together, and because of the lack of effort, described as 'simple.'

The idea that a very 'simple' and plain celebration of the Eucharist approximates the Last Supper and the early Christian Eucharist is quite mistaken. Whether the Eucharist grew out of the Jewish Passover liturgy or out of the Jewish fellowship meal called the Kiddush, it was, by modern standards, a dignified, formal celebration which avoided that familiarity with holy things which so easily breeds contempt. And the early Christians from the start celebrated it with great solemnity in a dignified fashion.

REV. DR. FRANK GAVIN  
*Onetime professor of liturgics  
The General Theological Seminary, NY*

The first day of Lent  
commonly called  
**Ash Wednesday**

February 13, 2002  
Imposition of Ashes,  
Solemn Mass & Sermon  
Saint Theresa Convent Chapel  
7:30pm



**Remember O man,  
that dust thou art,  
and unto dust shalt  
thou return.**



## Stations of the Cross & Benediction

begin Friday, February 22nd  
details in the Sunday leaflet.

## A MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP

First of all, it is very important to remember that prayer is an encounter and a relationship, a relationship which is deep, and this relationship cannot be forced either on us or on God. The fact that God can make himself present or can leave us with the sense of his absence is part of this live and real relationship. If we could mechanically draw him into an encounter, force him to meet us, simply because we have chosen this moment to meet him, there would be no relationship and no encounter. We can do that with an image, with the imagination, or with the various idols we can put in front of us instead of God; we can do nothing of the sort with the living God, any more than we can do it with a living person. A relationship must begin and develop in mutual freedom. If you look at the relationship in terms of mutual relationship, you will see that God could complain about us a great deal more than we about him. We complain that he does not make himself present to us for the few minutes we reserve for him, but what about the twenty-three and a half hours during which God may be knocking at our door and we answer 'I am busy, I am

sorry' or when we do not answer at all because we do not even hear the knock at the door of our heart, of our minds, of our conscience, of our life. So there is a situation in which we have no right to complain of the absence of God, because we are a great deal more absent than he ever is.

ANTHONY BLOOM  
School for Prayer (1970)



The Temptation of Christ  
in the Wilderness

is the Gospel for the First Sunday  
of Lent Sunday, February 17th  
Litany, Solemn Mass & Sermon  
at 10:30am

GO IN PEACE

What were some of the effects that Christ first had upon those who encountered him? There were some who felt very guilty on account of their sins, and he brought to them the assurance of forgiveness that lifted a load off their hearts when he said, "Go in peace and sin no more". And if that is you, if you are burdened with a feeling of guilt, be very sure that the absolution that Christ brings (that is, if you confess your sins and ask his forgiveness) can be real and overwhelming.

And then there were those, alas,

who didn't realise their sinfulness because they were just complacent about themselves. And his grace brought home to them the real state of their need so that they could see themselves in the sight of God, and not just in the sight of their friendly and congratulating neighbours. And if that is you, and perhaps it is, be very sure that the grace of Christ can bring to you a sense of what you really are in the sight of God's love and righteousness, and re-beget in you a real contrition for your sinfulness, and a longing for his pardon.

MICHAEL RAMSEY



Jesus forgives



Confession

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.

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.

October 13 & 27, Church Architecture

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.

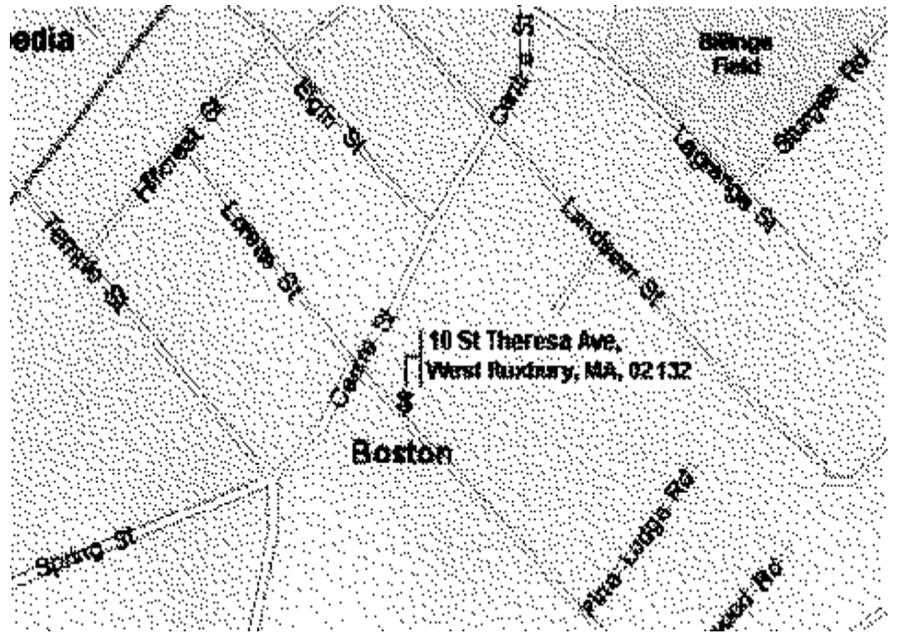
**Directions by Car:** *From the North:* Route  
128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street  
in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a  
traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the  
church. At this light bear left onto Centre St.  
and immediately turn right at the next light  
onto St. Theresa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

