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# ✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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Volume IV, Issue 9

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

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## NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

“Far be it from Christians to even think of doing such things [as the pagans]! For temperance dwells with them, self-restraint is practiced, monogamy observed, chastity is guarded, injustice is exterminated, sin is uprooted, righteousness is practiced, law is administered, reverence is preserved, God is acknowledged: truth controls, grace preserves, peace protects, the Holy Word guides, wisdom teaches, life directs, God reigns.”

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH

Theophilus went to God about the year 190 A.D. That means that his greatgrandparents were contemporaries of the men who succeeded the Apostles in the leadership of the Church. Theophilus is close to the roots!

I make this observation in order to assert that, as reflected by Theophilus of Antioch, there is a Christian sexual ethic, and that it is found in the New Testament witness and in the consistent testimony and example of the Church from earliest times. That ethic is founded upon the doctrine of creation, that God cre-



ated the human race male and female and said that this is good. The insistence upon the distinction of the sexes shows one of the great contrasts between the Hebrew religion and that of the pagan world around them. Thus, the Sixth Commandment, against adultery, stands over against the practices of most pagan religions. Our Lord Jesus affirmed the Father's creation in His teaching about marriage.

From the earliest days of Christ's Church there has been an insistence upon sexual purity of life. For instance, when St. Paul spoke very plainly about the rejection of homosexuality, he did not defend what he said as though it were a private opin-

ion. He was speaking the mind of the commonly held Christian ethic. There is evidence in the early history of the Church that it was precisely this Christian sexual ethic which attracted pagans to Christian faith. The Church offered, among other things, a freedom from the sexual confusion of the ancient world. The Christian community did not conform to the culture in which it lived.

What seems noticeably missing in the ongoing stories of priestly sexual perversion (and what to do about it) is any consideration of the Church's ancient affirmation of chastity as the way of life for all Christians. (That would make news these days, even in the Catholic press!) ALL Christians are called to be chaste. The celibate takes a vow that by God's grace he or she may live a life where sexual energies are transmuted into other forms of self-giving. The bride and groom take vows "keeping thee only unto her (and him) so long as ye both shall live." Both vows stand over against promiscuity, self-gratification, and all the rationalizations of sexual behavior so prevalent in our culture.

The essential element in taking vows is consent. A sexual relation in the Christian understanding is a free decision, not a psychological necessity. The idea that God gives us a built-in sex drive designed for us to go out and propagate as widely

as possible is some kind of religion. But it is not Christianity. The Christian sexual ethic affirms quite the opposite. It says that sexuality does not have to be physically expressed. Our Lord Jesus was a single man (which is why the contemporary world reads all sorts of blasphemous things into the gospel in order to validate its own depravity). The stand for sexual purity was a “sign of contradiction” between the New Testament Church and its surrounding culture. And it is a sign of contradiction between the Church today and its culture.

Catholics are not very good at keeping any kind of vows these days! That marriage among Catholics ends in divorce at the same rate as in the secular society is an absolute scandal. From encouraging people to ask questions, it does not follow that the answers have changed. Before Catholics urge a change in the Church’s discipline for celibate priests, or clamor for anything else, all church people, bishops, priests, and laity had better return to the path of holiness. To quote Chesterton: “It is not that the Christian ideal has been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and left untried.”

Our society is passing through a state of intense sexual confusion. It has happened before in world history. The Church can be the light of the world only when she is clear about God’s will in the ordering of our human love and His available power to effect it. The way of renewal in the Church ethically is not to identify with the confusion of our culture but to repossess our true witness.

FATHER BRADFORD

## SHORT NOTES

Many thanks to all who contributed to the decoration of the chapel for the Easter Mass. Easter flower donations may still be received and memorials listed in the service leaflets during Eastertide.

There will be an Easter Tuesday, April 2nd, Mass in the St. Theresa Convent Chapel at noon.

The Feast of the Annunciation is observed this year on Monday, April 8th. You may attend Mass in any Catholic parish.

Our condolences and love to Arthur Swanberg on occasion of the death of his dear wife Marysia, who went to God on Sunday March 10th. The funeral Mass was offered in St. Theresa of Ávila Church on Thursday, March 14th. May she rest in peace!

Daylight Savings Time returns on Sunday, April 7th. Set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed Saturday night.

Ascension Day is Thursday, May 9th. It is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Anglican use Mass will be offered at 7:30pm in the Convent Chapel.

There will be a year’s mind Mass for Ronald Jaynes, on Saturday, April 13th in the Convent Chapel. Mass time is 9:00am.

## Coin Folder

Lenten coin folders are now due to be returned to the parish treasurer or may be placed in the alms basin on Sundays. Proceeds benefit the work of Catholic Charities.

## PATRONAL FEAST DAY

May 2nd

The Feast of Saint Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the church, is Thursday, May 2nd. Our celebrant and preacher will be Fr. Joseph F. Wilson, who will be coming to Boston from his parish in New York to be with us that day. The Solemn Mass is at 7:30pm in the St. Theresa of Ávila Chapel. There will be a reception in the pavilion following Mass.



## EVENSONG IN EASTERTIDE

Solemn Evensong will be sung and Benediction celebrated on Sunday, April 21st at 5:00pm in the St. Theresa Chapel. This will be our only offering of Evensong during the Easter season. A reception will follow in the pavilion.

## 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 PAYNE***Priest and Martyr († 1582)*

Ordained in Douay, France, Father John Payne followed the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola to prepare himself before returning to his native England in June 1576. After being imprisoned under the regime of Queen Elizabeth I, Father Payne was released and secretly resumed his priestly ministry until his second arrest under false charges. Tortured on a rack in the Tower of London, the priest was subsequently executed on April 2, 1582.

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**BLESSED WILLIAM WARD***Priest and Martyr (1568-1641)*

Of his thirty-three years on the English mission, William, born in Thornby, Westmorland, spent more than twenty of them in various prisons. Ordained in Douay in 1608 at the age of forty, he at once set out for England, but was shipwrecked on the Scottish coast and there clapped in prison for three years. On his release he went to England and began the wandering life of a “refractory priest.” “He was ever known to be of an excellent spirit,” wrote one of William’s spiritual sons, a secular priest. “He did not preach set sermons, though his whole life was a continual preaching... The sole and true reason why he did wear no better clothes, nor covet better diet than he used himself to, was only by reason he did in his own conscience not think himself worthy of better. In all the time I knew this holy man, I could never hear him speak of any subject but it either began or ended with a

memory of Almighty God’s service, if his whole speech were not upon that theme.” In April, 1641, all priests were banished from England on pain of death, but this ascetical and intrepid apostle refused to leave London. In July he was arrested, tried, and condemned at the Old Bailey for his priesthood. At Tyburn, William gave forty shillings to the Sheriff to be distributed among poor Catholics and half a crown to the hangman. Dying, he cried out, “Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, receive my soul.”

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## Saint of the Month



St. George

April 23, Died about 303AD

**O**NCE upon a time a terrible dragon terrorized the entire countryside, its foul breath poisoning all who came near it. It had to be appeased every day with two sheep, but when the people ran out of sheep, what were they to do? They decided to offer the dragon a human victim, to be chosen by lot. Terrible to tell, the lot fell upon the beautiful princess of the region. She dressed her-

self as a bride and went forth to meet her terrible fate among great lamentation from everyone.

To her rescue came George. He attacked the dragon and ran it through with his lance. Then he led it away captive and tame, tied to the princess’s girdle.

The people were jubilant and amazed. George told them that if they would believe in Jesus Christ and accept baptism, he would rid them of the monster forever. The king and people agreed. George killed the dragon and 15,000 men were immediately baptized.

George refused any reward, but asked the king to maintain churches, honor the clergy, and treat the poor with compassion.

This heroic saint went on into Palestine where he died a martyr’s death under the tyranny of Diocletian and Maximian. Or so goes the tale.

He has been celebrated in England since the 7<sup>th</sup> century and appears in the Martyrology of the Venerable Bede. His cult took on great importance during the Crusades when he was said to have appeared in visions to the soldiers fighting the moors. King Richard I placed himself and the English army under George’s protection, and Edward III founded the Order of the Garter under his patronage. Henry V invoked St. George in his famous speech at Agincourt as the patron of England.

Renaissance artists painted or sculptured his image and innumerable churches were dedicated to him. He is the patron of boy scouts, soldiers, knights, archers, and armourers. He is invoked against the plague, leprosy, and (appropriately for soldiers) syphilis.

What does this warrior saint have to say to us? We might remember that the four “cardinal virtues” are prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. St. George had a profound sense of justice and his legend reflects the most courageous fortitude. Was he afraid of the dragon? Probably, but he set his fear aside, risked his life, and ran the dragon through because it was right so to do. We Catholics are called to stand up to all kinds of dragons every day of our lives, not the least of which may hide in the darker reaches of our own hearts.



**O**N the first Easter evening the apostles were gathered behind locked doors, trying to pray but fearing greatly for their lives. Christ comes to them, speaking of peace and forgiveness and sacrifice.

At just about the same time two disciples, Clopas and, perhaps, his wife who had been at Calvary, were fleeing Jerusalem in an attempt to get away from haunting tragedy. Their faith is all gone. But Jesus comes to them as well, and shows them the glory of God in sacrifice, sympathy, and service. They begin to understand that the death upon Calvary was the greatest thing the world has ever seen. The Word of God is in Himself incapable of suffering. But Christ became man, came in order precisely to suffer, and through the Cross this Glory of God is seen in a certain and definite way in the Body

the Son of God assumed.

In both the Upper Room and to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Christ Resurrected was revealed, and later, when these two groups were reunited, they compared notes on the common fact that it was in the Real Presence of Christ that they had seen through the chaos the Glory of God.

The Mass continues to be that place for us: the Presence of Jesus, the sacrifice of Jesus, the Forgiveness of Jesus, the Vocation of Jesus. It is often hard to pray. Worship can seem dead. No doubt it was that way for the apostles in the Upper Room. The disciples on the road to Emmaus were fleeing from prayer. But just as for them the Real Presence of Christ was decisive, so too we are bidden to look through ritual and see God. It is Christ’s presence which makes our worship a living contact with the living God.

*A sermon preached by Fr. Bradford in St. Theresa of Ávila Church on Easter Wednesday, 2001*

## EASTER

**W**E do not know what happened when Jesus Christ rose from the dead; that is God’s secret. We do not know, that is, what happened to him, what change he underwent, what it was like for him to rise. We know some of the things that happened to his disciples, what he caused them to see, to touch and to hear. Through the signs of his presence which he bestowed, he made them understand at least this about himself: the whole Jesus who had lived with them before his passion was again alive, and with them again;

nothing had been lost where everything had been glorified. We break the bread on the altar for the death of Christ, but presently we mingle wine and bread to figure the coming together again of flesh and blood in the wholeness of Christ’s resurrection. And then we take to ourselves the words he spoke to the Twelve in the upper room: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

AUSTIN FARRER  
“The Crown of the Year”

### The Passover of the Lord

**B**RETHREN, how fine a thing it is to move from festival to festival, from prayer to prayer, from holy day to holy day. The time is now at hand when we enter on a new beginning: the proclamation of the blessed Passover, in which the Lord was sacrificed. We feed as on the food of life, we constantly refresh our souls with his precious blood, as from a fountain. Yet we are always thirsting, burning to be satisfied. But he himself is present for those who thirst and in his goodness invites them to the feast day. Our Savior repeats his words: *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.*

He quenched the thirst not only of those who came to him then. Whenever anyone seeks him he is freely admitted to the presence of the Savior. The grace of the feast is not restricted to one occasion. Its rays of glory never set. It is always at hand to enlighten the mind of those who desire it. Its power is always there for those whose minds have been enlightened and who meditate day and night on the holy Scriptures, like the one who is called blessed in the holy psalm: *Blessed is the man*

*who has not followed the counsel of the wicked, or stood where sinners stand, or sat in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.*

Moreover, my friends, the God who first established this feast for us allows us to celebrate it each year. He who gave up his Son to death for our salvation, from the same motive gives us this feast, which is commemorated every year. This feast guides us through the trials that meet us in this world. God now gives us the joy of salvation that shines out from this feast, as he brings us together to form one assembly, uniting us all in spirit in every place, allowing us to pray together and to offer common thanksgiving, as is our duty on the feast. Such is the wonder of his love: he gathers to this feast those who are far apart, and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically separated from each other.

*From an Easter letter by Saint Athanasius*

## Adult Baptism

**A**FTER this you were led to the Holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ was carried from the cross to the sepulchre that is before our eyes. Each of you was asked whether he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and you made this confession and descended into the water three times, and ascended again; here again quietly pointing by way of a figure to the burial of Christ for three days. For as our Saviour passed three days

and nights in the heart of the earth, so you in your first coming out of water represented the first day of Christ under the earth, and by your descent, the night; for as he who is the night sees no more, but he who is in the day stays in the light, so in descending you saw nothing, as in the night, but in coming up again you were as in the day. At one and the same moment you died and were born; the water of salvation was your grave and your mother at once. What Solomon spoke of others may be applied to you. He said: 'There is a time to bear and a time to die' (Eccles. 3:2); but to you on the other hand the time of death is also the time to be born. One and the same season brings both of these about; and your birth and your death go hand in hand.

O what a strange and inconceivable thing it is! We did not really die, we were not really buried; we were not crucified and raised again; our imitation of Christ was but in a figure, while our salvation is truth. Christ actually was crucified and buried, and truly rose again; and all these things have been transmitted to us, that we might by imitation participate in his sufferings, and so gain salvation in truth.

St. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM  
*Catechetical Lectures*

Four Day Penn. Dutch & Gettysburg Tour, August 30 - September 2, 2002 \$419.00 pp TWIN / \$409.00 pp TRIPLE / \$519.00 pp SINGLE. Your motorcoach will depart from: Salem Temple, 220 Woodrow Avenue, Dorchester, MA 7:30 AM. This is a benefit for the parish. A prospectus is available at the back of the chapel.

## 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,  
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**Sundays** 10:30am. Sung Mass, followed by coffee and fellowship in the convent solarium. Adult Christian Education two Sundays a month.

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 12 & 20, Church  
Architecture.

November 10 & 17, Heroic  
Saints and Martyrs.

December 8 & 22, Great Angli-  
can Figures.

January 13 & 27, Eastern  
Religions.

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.

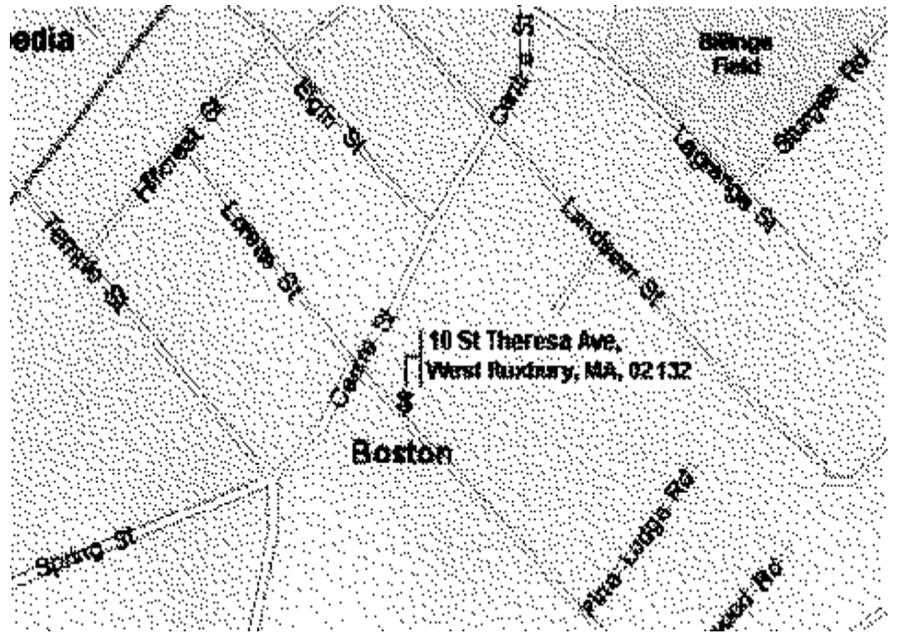
**Directions by Car:** *From the North:* Route  
128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street  
in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a  
traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the  
church. At this light bear left onto Centre St.  
and immediately turn right at the next light  
onto St. Theresa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



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