
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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The Congregation of St. Athanasius

A Congregation of the Pastoral Provision of Pope John Paul II for the Anglican Usage of the Roman Rite

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NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

SOME years ago we had occasion to be traveling by automobile in the Utah and Nevada desert. It was at night, and the darkness is particularly intense and clear in the desert. We were flying out of Las Vegas on the next day.

In the west, there are far greater distances between cities than we know at home, and we had driven for well over 100 miles without seeing a single light. And then over a ridge ahead the entire city of Las Vegas spread out below us far ahead. It seemed every light was lit and the effect was stunning.

It would be at least another hour before we arrived, but from that first sight onwards *our thoughts were in the city we were approaching*, all its glamour and glitz and gambling, and how we would travel through it to our hotel and to our flight home.

Holy Church gives us Advent to be like that. These days are milestones on the road which leads to Bethlehem. And before we enter that little town and seek the stable, which is the throbbing heart of human history, to kneel at the unlikely Manger-Throne of Christ, the Church



bids us pause for a while on the highway and prepare ourselves by repentance. That is the only way we will worship and welcome the Christ Child aright.

Christmas is a subtle presence, and all the glitz and clamor of December, with its frenetic shopping pace, reminds me of the contrast between Las Vegas and the peaceful desert. I am sure that most of the people who visit Las Vegas are not aware at all of the desert. It is possible for you and me, likewise, to miss the coming of Christ. And it was that way at His very first coming. Jerusalem was where the movers and shakers lived. Bethlehem was the hick town.

And so, lest we miss the coming of Christ lost in all the hustle and bustle, Holy Church gives us Saint John the Baptist, himself picking up on the ancient themes of the prophet Isaiah. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." This message gives us in a very vivid way the meaning and purpose of Advent.

When an Eastern monarch visited his country, the advance party went first, preparing the way, literally preparing the road the king would travel: filling up the quagmires and muddy paths, leveling and smoothing the rough places, and taking the kinks and curves out of the road where possible.

John the Baptist warns us that when Christ comes to His people He finds exactly the same obstacles which opposed Him at His first coming: hills and marshes, devious ways and stony paths, What are these hills if not mountains of pride and the deliberate grievous sins which block Christ's path to our hearts? Any faithful examination of conscience will reveal them. What is it that hinders growth in the spiritual life? It is generally some positive fault or habit of sin which becomes a barrier like a mountain to the influence of grace.

What of the valleys to be filled? Are they not our laziness in the service of Christ? Our contentment with low ideals and all the things we call sins of omission?

The crooked must be made straight. Does this call to mind all our compromises with the world and its spirit, its insincerity and self-deception and lack of honesty in conscience with God?

And the rough places plain, the

rocks and ruts and potholes; are they not our venial sins, scattered like an obstacle course on LaGrange Street in February. They don't actually prevent Christ from coming to us, yet still they make His way more difficult because of our rough ways of speaking, judging, looking. Often you and I look so unlike the One we call Master.

Has something I have said got you dead to rights? Good. I've got me in the cross hairs too! And a good salesman knows how to make the sale and then stop making the pitch.

It is our business, like no other, during Advent, to throw down the hills and fill up the low places and straighten and smooth the highway for the progress of the King of Kings. I am not talking about a road that leads to December 25th. That is a twenty-four hour day and it will come and go. But we can see Bethlehem ahead on the road, and *our thoughts are in the city we are approaching*. In the Cradle of the Christ Child are to be found treasures of graces and love that are stored up there for you. The only question is, will you have them?

a sermon preached by Father Bradford on December 6, 1998

SHORT NOTES

On Sunday, December 3rd, the season of Advent begins with Litany in Procession at Mass, includes the blessing of the Advent Wreath, and the Exhortation, which is the long form of invitation to general confession. Sunday readings from Cycle C begin that day.

Copies of the *Magnificat Advent*

Book of daily devotions are on sale at the rear of the chapel. \$3.00 each, while supplies last.

The SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION is Friday, December 8th. It is *a holy day of obligation*. Anglican Use Mass is at 7:30pm in the convent chapel.

A QUIET EVENING FOR ADVENT will be conducted for us by Father Peter Stravinskis on Friday, December 15th beginning at 7:00pm in the chapel of St Theresa of Ávila Church. Fr Stravinskis is editor of *Catholic Response* magazine, author of many books and tracts, and in demand as retreat conductor and speaker throughout the country. He has visited us on previous occasions, most recently as conductor of a parish retreat in November, 2001. Please plan to attend, and bring your friends.

Many thanks to Fr James O'Driscoll and Deacon Michael Connolly for assisting at the Requiem Mass on All Souls' Day. And thanks to Fr Hugh O'Regan for the loan of vestments from Holy Trinity Church for our use that day.

Dr Terry Maltsberger returned home from sunny Italy with glowing reports of a lovely trip to Rome, Florence, Assisi, among other places.

Christmas Flower envelopes are available in the rear of the chapel for your use in offering memorials to loved ones and helping us with the cost of decoration for the season. Your generosity is much appreciated! Readers of the parish paper may send their instructions and contributions clearly marked for Christmas Flowers. Memorials are printed in the Christmas service leaflet.

Many thanks to Fr Thomas J. Powers for being our preacher at

Evensong on the Solemnity of Christ the King. Fr Powers is Pastor of Saint Maria Goretti Church in Lynnfield.

An Every Member Canvass letter has been mailed to our readers and members. Please consider your pledge to the Congregation of Saint Athanasius and return it to us at your convenience. Many thanks.

A pilgrimage FROM WALSHINGHAM TO ROME has been organized for nine days next September and is being led by The Most Revd John J. Myers, who is Archbishop of Newark and Apostolic Delegate for the Pastoral Provision. A brochure is available upon request. Copies are also to be found in the rear of the convent chapel.

Congratulations and best wishes to Fr John A. Dooher and Father Robert Hennessey who have been chosen by the Holy Father to be auxiliary bishops of the Archdiocese of Boston. Fr Hennessey will be our regional bishop. Fr Dooher is known to many of you as our "host" pastor at St Mary's Church, Dedham, when members of the congregation were preparing to become Catholic. Fr Dooher was very kind and encouraging to all of us in those days, and our initial reception Mass and my ordinations as deacon and priest took place in his parish church. The ordination will take place in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Tuesday, December 12th.

"The faithful, living in the liturgy the spirit of Advent, by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mother awaited her Son, are invited to take her as a model."

POPE PAUL VI
Marialis Cultus



THE ADVENT SAINTS

JOHN the Baptist and Mary are the two great personages typifying our existence in Advent. They, therefore, dominate the liturgy of Advent. Let us first gaze on John the Baptist. Challenging and active he stands before us, a “type” of the manly vocation. In harsh terms he demands *metanoia*, a radical transformation of attitudes. Those who would be Christians must be “transformed” ever again. Our natural disposition, indeed, finds us always ready to assert ourselves to pay like with like, to put ourselves at the center. Those who want to find God need, again and again, that inner conversion, that new direction. And this applies also to the total outlook on life. Day by day we encounter the world of visible things. It assaults us through billboards, broadcasts, traffic, and all the activities of daily life, to such an enormous extent that we are tempted to assume there is nothing else but this. Yet the truth is that what is invisible is greater and much more valuable than anything visible. One single soul, in Pascal’s beautiful words, is worth more than the entire visible universe. But in order to have a living awareness of this, we need

conversion, we need to turn around inside, as it were, to overcome the illusion of what is visible, and to develop the feeling, the ears and the eyes, for what is invisible. This has to be more important than anything that bombards us day after day with such exaggerated urgency. *Metanoie*: change your attitude, so that God may dwell in you and, through you, in the world. John himself was not spared this painful process of change, of turning around.

POPE BENEDICT XVI

¶*The Holy Father was Prefect of the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith when he wrote Co-Workers of the Truth, 1992.*

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 GEORGE BEESLEY
Priest and Martyr (c. 1563-1591)

In 1587, George Beesley, of Goosnargh, England, was ordained a priest upon completing his studies at the English College in Reims, France. Returning to England late in 1588, he ministered to the country’s persecuted Catholics for two years until he was captured by the infamous Elizabethan government agent, Richard Topcliffe. At the time of his arrest, Father Beesley was a robust young priest in good health, but Topcliffe subjected him to such severe torture

that he was eventually reduced to little more than a skeleton. Father Beesley was sentenced to death for being a priest. At his execution, facing a brutal death by drawing and quartering, he quoted Saint Paul’s words, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal 6: 14). Before dying, Father Beesley said to the onlookers, “Good people, I beseech God to send all felicity.”

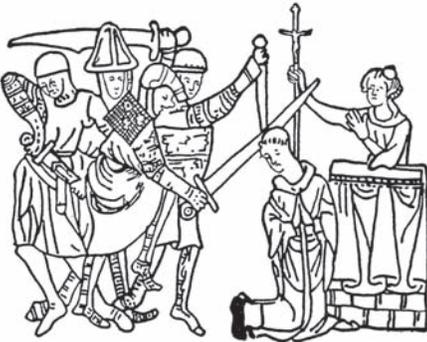
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Blessed WILLIAM CARTER
Martyr (1548-1584)

William Carter, a married bookseller, established his own printing press in London to publish Catholic literature for England’s persecuted Catholic Population. Continuously in danger from the Elizabethan authorities, he is said to have done his printing with a press so small that he could produce no more than one page at a time, and sometimes had to resort to copying books by hand. Previously he had assisted the imprisoned Catholic cleric, Nicholas Harpsfield (remembered for his biography of Saint Thomas More). William’s publication work led to his imprisonment in the Tower of London. In a futile effort to obtain names from him, his captors tortured him on a rack, questioning him about several chalices and vestments that had been entrusted to him for safe-keeping, and about the books found in his possession, which contained Catholic prayers, meditations, and spiritual exercises. At his trial, as the jury was deliberating, William received the sacrament of penance from a priest who was also facing a

likely death sentence. William was executed the next day.

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SAINT THOMAS BECKET, *Bishop and Martyr*

Becket: I am sure that to the hardened sinner, who drops to his knees for the first time and murmurs your name, marveling, you tell all your secrets, straight away, and that he understands. I have served you like a dilettante, surprised that I could still find pleasure in that service. And for a long time I was on my guard because of it. I could not believe this pleasure would bring me one step nearer you. I could not believe that the road could be a happy one. The hair-shirts, the fasting, the bells in the small hours summoning one to meet you, on the icy paving-stones, in the sick misery of the poor ill-treated human animal - I cannot believe that all these are anything but safeguards for the weak. In power and in luxury, and even in the pleasures of the flesh, I shall not cease to speak to you; I feel this now. You are the God of the rich man and the happy man, too, Lord, and you do not turn away your eyes from the

man who was given everything from birth. And he may be your true lost sheep. For your scheme of things, which we mistakenly call justice, is secret and profound and you plumb the hidden depths of poor men's puny frames as carefully as those of kings.

JEAN ANOUILH

Jean Anouilh was a French dramatist who wrote many plays after 1932. Becket was written in 1959 and translated into English the following year.

AN ADVENT PRAYER

Most gracious Lord, by whose direction this time is appointed for renewing the memory of thy infinite mercy to man in the incarnation of thy only Son; grant that we may live, this holy time, in the spirit of thanksgiving, and every day raise up our hearts to thee in the grateful acknowledgement of what thou hast done for us.

Besides this, we ask thy grace, O God, that we may make a due use of this holy time, for preparing our souls to receive Christ our Lord coming into the world at the approaching solemnity of Christmas.

Christ came into the world to do good to all. Grant, O God, we may thus prepare to meet him. Grant we may be watchful at this time above all others, in avoiding every thing that can be injurious to our neighbour, whether in afflicting him, or giving him scandal, or drawing him into sin, or casting any blemish on his reputation; but in all things, O God, may we follow the spirit of

charity, being forward in bringing comfort and relief to all, as far as their circumstances shall require, and ours permit.

Grant, O Lord, that thus we may prepare to meet our redeemer.

JOHN GOTER

Spiritual Writings Vol. 13 (1718)

Fr Goter (or Gother) lived from 1650-1704. He was an apologist (defender) of the Catholic faith.

THE ADVENT SEASON

The season of Advent is always the season of hope. We think of the patient hope of men and women across the centuries who listened to the words of the prophets and lived in joyful expectation. We think of the hope of Mary, who welcomed God's plan with great faith. We think of the hope of the Wise Men who set out on a long journey guided only by a slender promise traced in the stars. We are reminded of the hope that the grandest purposes of the Almighty can be found in the humblest places. And we embrace the hope that all the love and gifts that come to us in this life are the signs and symbols of even a greater love and gift that came on a holy night. The old carol speaks of a "thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn." And every year at this time we feel the thrill of hope as we wait on Christmas Day.

Excerpt of remarks made by the President of the United States at a Pageant of Peace in December, 2004.

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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