
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

Volume V, Issue 5

December 2002



NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

IN an Associated Press story on relations between Catholics and Jews (in the *Boston Globe* in early November) reference was made to *Nostra Aetate*, a document of the Second Vatican Council. Issued on 28 October 1965, this document was a declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions. Readers of the *Globe* article were told that *Nostra Aetate* affirms “that God has not revoked his covenant with Jews.”

Section four of *Nostra Aetate* deals specifically with the Catholic

Church in its relationship to the people of the Old Covenant.

As holy scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize God’s moment when it came (see Lk 19:42). Jews for the most part did not accept the Gospel; on the contrary, many opposed its spread (see Rom 11:28). Even so, the apostle Paul maintains that the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts He bestowed or the choice He made. (See Romans 11:28-29; see Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*.) Together with the prophets and that same apostle, the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, when all peoples will call on God with one voice and “serve him shoulder to shoulder” (Soph 3:9; see Is 66:23; Ps 65:4; Rom 11:11-32).

The Council document says further on in section four “it is true that the church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy scriptures.”

Nostra Aetate does not say that God has not revoked His covenant with Jews. And regarding the rejection of the Jews, the document refers its readers back to the Epistle to the Romans.

Read Romans! There is no substitute. Specifically read chapters nine through eleven on St. Paul’s consideration of the unbelief of Israel, a rejection of Israel not complete, and that mercy to all is the ultimate purpose of God.

The idea of a remnant is a strong and prominent Old Testament prophecy. It has its birth in the account of the prophet Elijah. In one of the ab-

solutely most impressive accounts anywhere in the Bible (and dramatically set to music in Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*) the prophet hears the "still small voice" tell that there are seven thousand in Israel who have not bent the knee to Baal (I Kings 19:18). And right here is the birth of a religious idea. For the first time anywhere in history we have the idea of personal as opposed to national consecration. For in I Kings the whole nation has deserted God, and Elijah wants to hang it up. But he is made to understand that from this time forward it is the loyalty of the individual Israelite to the covenant with whom God and His prophets must reckon.

This idea of the remnant isn't a fleeting and passing fancy. It is prominent in the Bible from Mt. Horeb onwards, in Amos (9:8-10), Micah (2:12 and 5:3), Zephaniah (3:12-13), Jeremiah (23:3) and Ezekiel (14:14-20, 22), and comes to a great and dramatic expression in Isaiah, who names his two sons those names Catholic layreaders at Mass love to hate: Maher-shalal-hash-baz, meaning "the reality of the Divine vengeance" and Shear-Jashub, meaning "the salvation of the remnant."

In Isaiah it is the individual, true to his God, and not the nation, who is the object of Divine care. It was from this small remnant that a whole people pure and undefiled would spring (65:8-9). The early Christians did not ignore the Old Testament. It was their Bible, and they understood that the remnant true to God had been persecuted throughout Israel's history. (Revisit St. Stephen's speech in Acts 7.)

In the Epistle to the Romans

(written in advance of a planned visit) St. Paul mulled over the long and sad history of his nation's unbelief, and the fact that there had always been a true remnant whom God had selected. God showered upon Israel His blessings, and never revoked the choice He made. But St. Paul saw the falling away of the Jews as making possible the inclusion of the Gentiles. The Apostle believes God's feelings of mercy towards the Jews will never change, and sees the merits of the holy Patriarchs as a guarantee that Israel will, in God's good time, attain the faith necessary for salvation. Indeed, for St. Paul, the restoration of Israel is an easier process than the call of the Gentiles (11:24).

Most importantly, the unbelief and rejection of Israel is not a New Testament or Christian idea. It is one of the most significant prophetic portions of the Old Testament. And all of the above is reflected in the Second Vatican Council Document *Nostra Aetate* when it footnotes Romans 11:28-29! Such considerations are expected to be beyond the purview of an Associated Press reporter. But God help Catholics whose continuing Christian education is found exclusively in the pages of the *Boston Globe*!

Can God's saving grace come to non-Christians? While God certainly can do as He wills, salvation always takes place through Christ (John 14:6). And it happens in a mysterious relationship with His Church, remembering that "the action of Christ and the Spirit outside the Church's visible boundaries" must not be excluded (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 18).

Christ is "the true light that enlightens every man (John 1:9). That means the Incarnation is the enfleshment of all that is true, and Jesus is the light which shows what is true in anything that is.

"To introduce any sort of separation between the Word and Jesus Christ is contrary to the Christian faith...Jesus is the Incarnate Word—a single and indivisible person...Christ is none other than Jesus of Nazareth; he is the Word of God made man for the salvation of all...In the process of discovering and appreciating the manifold gifts—especially the spiritual treasures that God has bestowed on every people, we cannot separate those gifts from Jesus Christ, who is at the centre of God's plan of salvation." (*Redemptoris missio*, 6; quoted in the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*.)

Walter Cardinal Kasper, in Boston early last month, was reported to have said that the Catholic Church disagrees with Protestant denominations, which argue that Jews must accept Jesus for salvation. It would have been more helpful, and accurate, to say that although Jews may not have to accept Jesus for salvation, Jesus Christ has to accept Jews for salvation.

FATHER BRADFORD



Congregation celebrates five years of Catholicism

BY DONIS I. TRACY, *PILOT* CORRESPONDENT

At St. Theresa of Avila Church in West Roxbury, there exists a little-known congregation of Catholics that differs from the mainstream. Their Masses are a little longer; their songs are a little different; their chaplain is married. They are the Congregation of St. Athanasius—the only “Anglican use” chaplaincy in the Archdiocese of Boston.

On the Feast of St. Michael—an important day in the Anglican communion—the congregation met for an Evensong liturgy in celebration of its fifth anniversary of entering into full communion with the Catholic Church.

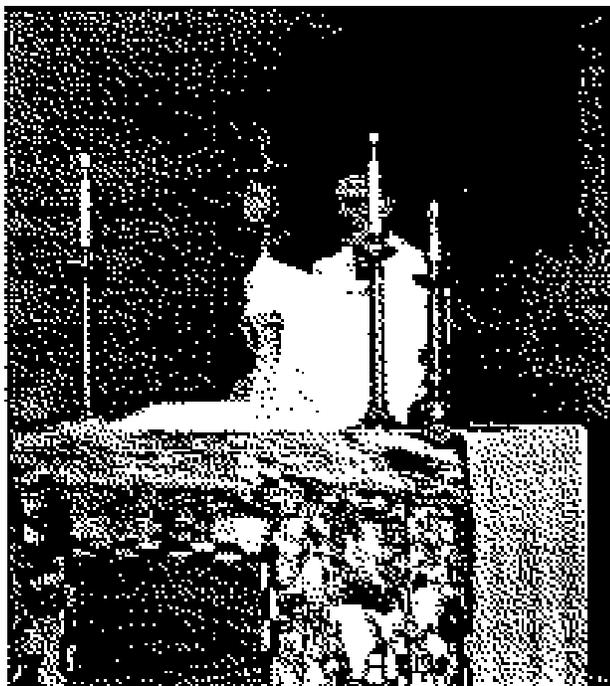
The congregation began with members of All Saints parish in Dorchester—an Episcopal parish which dates back over 100 years. In January 1996, Reverend Richard Bradford, his wife, their three grown children and 24 other members of his church, approached Cardinal Bernard Law and asked to be admitted into the Roman Catholic Church.

After one year of catechization and spiritual guidance, the congregation was officially accepted into the Roman Catholic Church by Cardinal Law on Sept. 28, 1997, in accord with the Pastoral Provision issued by the Congregation for the

Doctrine on the Faith. This Pastoral Provision allows former Episcopalians to retain certain elements of their Anglican liturgies while still being in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. There is also a provision for former Episcopal priests who are married to become Roman Catholic priests.

“People who want to take shots at the Church say it’s rule-bound, not welcoming, slow-moving, but that is so untrue in our case. It [the Church] knew it was running the risk of having this provision be seen as a wave of the future, or as something else that it is not. And yet, they did it. It would have been convenient to say to me ‘Come in as a lay man,’ but they left no stone unturned. This doesn’t play well in the media, but the Church was very loving in the accepting of our souls,” said Father Bradford.

Father Bradford is now the chaplain of the Congregation of St. Athanasius as well as parochial vicar of St. Theresa of Avila Church. “We



Father Richard Sterling Bradford, chaplain to the Congregation of St. Athanasius holds up a monstrance Evensong liturgy held to celebrate the congregation’s fifth anniversary of entering into full communion with the Catholic Church.

PHOTO BY PATRICK E. O’CONNOR

exist not primarily to sugar coat the Catholic church, but as a legitimate form of Catholicism,” explained Father Bradford.

Moving from the Episcopal Church was not a decision he and his congregation took lightly. In a pamphlet

that explains the origins of the Congregation of St. Athanasius, many factors are cited as instrumental to their decision to join the Roman Catholic Church, such as the increase in unorthodoxy in the Episcopal communion, the present disarray in Anglicanism and God’s desire that His Church be one. “I came out of a background that was cradle Episcopalian, but that saw that we were a schism,” said Father Bradford. “My family and I, and our congregation that came with us, saw it was necessary to enter fully into the Catholic Church. We became Catholic because we knew we had to be Catholic.”

“Man is made in the image of God,” he explains. “The fact that God has stamped the Catholic

Church as the visible body of God can't be separated from this. Our souls have been made for the visible Catholic Church on earth."

For Father Bradford, evangelization is key in his ministry. And yet, it is also often frustrating. "This provision is so generous I'd like to shoot firecrackers off. Yet, we have to be careful about how we evangelize. The [Catholic] Church isn't out to drive a wedge between [herself] and the Episcopal Church."

In speaking to non-Catholics who wish to enter the Catholic Church, he often finds much misinformation. "Ninety-five percent of what people know about the Catholic Church they find out from non-Catholics, or worse yet, from anti-Catholics," he says. "There are so many Protestants who are looking for exactly what we have to offer."

The preceding is an article about our Fifth Anniversary as a congregation reprinted from the Pilot.



**IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Monday, December 9, 2002
Solemn Mass & Sermon 7:30pm
Saint Theresa Convent Chapel
*Transferred from Sunday; not an
obligation this year.*

Saint of the Month



St. Eusebius of Vercelli

Died 371

Anniversary of his consecration:
15 December, Feast: 2 August

SAINTE Eusebius, a profound scholar of the early Church, attracts our attention as the figure who is credited with writing down the Athanasian Creed, that jawbreaker our Congregation undertakes to recite once a year in honor of our Patron Saint. Eusebius was a contemporary of Athanasius, and his friend. Eusebius shared in Athanasius's sufferings as they, and others, struggled against the Arian heretics.

A Sardinian by birth, Eusebius studied at Rome but was sent by the Pope to negotiate with the Emperor Constantius to negotiate the convocation of the Council of Milan which took place in 355. After that, the fat was in the fire. Eusebius was pressed to sign a condemnation of Athanasius

and his beliefs at that time, but he refused to do it, insisting instead on his loyalty to the teachings of the previous Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.). Because of these early orthodox saints we preserve the same loyalty in reciting the Nicene Creed, our common profession of Faith that all Catholics know by heart. At Milan Eusebius defended Athanasius, who was not there, and insisted that the secular forces should keep out of ecclesiastical decisions. For his pains he was banished, first to Palestine, then to Cappadocia, and then to Egypt, where Athanasius was also in exile.

The Emperor Constantius died in 361, whereupon Eusebius and other exiled bishops were allowed to come home. He worked closely with Athanasius, first in Alexandria, later in Antioch, laboring to heal the Arian schism of the Church. He did not live long enough to see Arianism finally put down, but gave his life in this cause.

What exactly was it that Eusebius, and, greater than Eusebius, Athanasius, struggled against? The Arian heresy essentially denied that Jesus was the Son of God. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "The drift of [the Arian heresy] was this: to deny that in any true sense God could have a Son; as Mohammed tersely said afterwards, 'God neither begets, nor is He begotten' (Koran, 112). We have learned to call that denial Unitarianism. It was the ultimate scope of Arian opposition to what Christians had always believed.... [The Arian heretics] described the Son as a second, or inferior God, standing midway between the First Cause and creatures; as Himself made out of nothing, yet as

making all things else; as existing before the worlds of the ages; and as arrayed in all divine perfections except the one which was their stay and foundation. God alone was without beginning, unoriginate; the Son was originated, and once had not existed. For all that has origin must begin to be.”

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.

BLESSEDS GEORGE NICHOLS, RICHARD YAXLEY, THOMAS BELSON, AND HUMPHREY PRITCHARD Martyrs († 1589)

The Saint Catherine’s Wheel Inn of Oxford was in 1589 a secret meeting place for England’s persecuted Catholics. Humphrey Pritchard had worked as a servant at the inn for twelve years, covertly assisting his fellow Catholics. One evening, another Catholic layman, Thomas Belson, had arrived to see his confessor, Father George Nichols, who was staying at the inn along with Father Richard Yaxley. At midnight, officers from Oxford University raided the inn and arrested the four men. They were later sentenced to death. While awaiting execution, Father Nichols won over a condemned thief to the Catholic faith. Belson, Pritchard, and the two priests were executed together. After the priests had died, Belson, upon climb-

ing the scaffold, venerated their remains, praying that they would obtain for him by their intercession the courage he would now need. The executioners urged Pritchard to recant, claiming that he was too unlettered to understand what Catholicism was; but to this Pritchard replied, “What I cannot say in words I will seal with my blood.”

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SAINT PHILIP HOWARD Martyr († 1595)

The English Earl of Arundel and Surrey, Philip embraced Catholicism and was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he died at thirty-eight. Although condemned to death in 1589, he was never executed. His body rests in the cathedral of Arundel. He is one of the forty martyrs of England and Wales canonized in 1970.

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2002
Litany in Procession
Solemn Mass and Sermon
10:30am

A PROCESSION WITH CAROLS FOR ADVENT

Sunday, December 8, 2002
4:00pm
Saint Theresa of Avila Chapel

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.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE CHRISTMAS EVE

Procession, Blessing of the Creche
Solemn Mass of Christmas
8:30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY
Low Mass and Sermon 10:30am
Holy Day of Obligation

Sunday, December 29, 2002
THE HOLY FAMILY
Sunday in the Octave of Christmas
Solemn Mass at 10:30am

A FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS LESSONS AND CAROLS
Saint Theresa of Avila Church
5:00pm
A reception follows the service

Wednesday, January 1, 2003
MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
Octave of Christmas
Solemn Mass and Sermon 10:30am
Holy Day of Obligation

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.

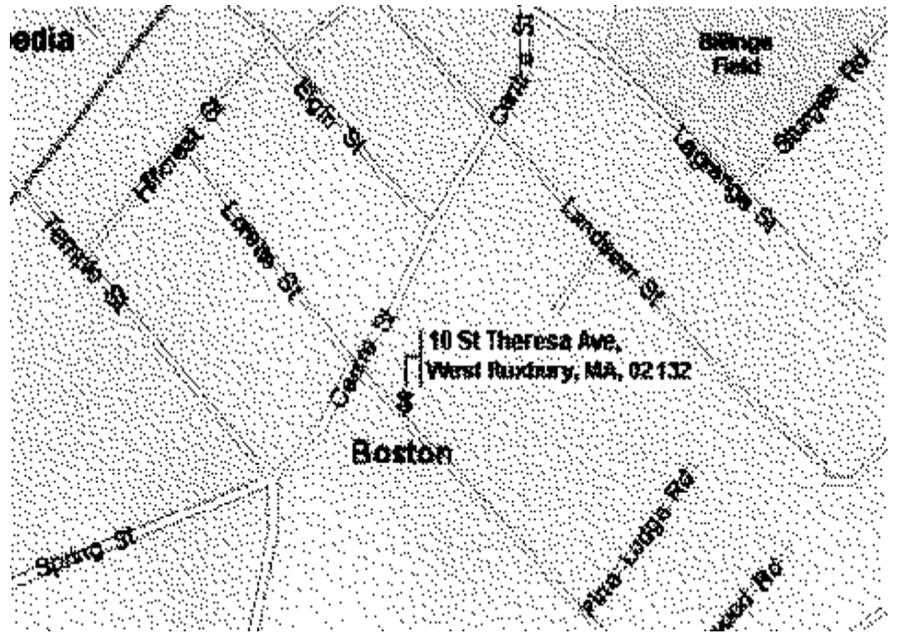
Directions by Car: *From the North:* Route
128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street
in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a
traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the
church. At this light bear left onto Centre St.
and immediately turn right at the next light
onto St. Theresa Ave.

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

