
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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January 2003

NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

“The object of a retreat is the same as the object of the Christian life, sanctity, - the production, fostering, and maintenance of holiness. Now souls are sanctified by the pressure and cleansing action of the Spirit..... perhaps most easily and directly by taking the soul from its normal preoccupations and placing it in an atmosphere... in which with the minimum of distraction it can attend to and realize God— and this in essence is a retreat.”

EVELYN UNDERHILL
The Light of Christ

THOSE of you who have listened to or read my sermons over a period of years occasionally get to hear John 2:25: “He knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.”

Human beings are not a great mystery to the Lord Jesus. He knows what we can do; and He knows what we need. That is why He did much of His teaching only after He had drawn the people aside to a quiet place. Jesus dealt with the crowds the same way as with the inner group of disciples. The Sermon on the Mount, the locale of the feeding of



the multitude, and the Garden of Gethsemane are all examples of the Lord's recognition that we need to go apart with Him to a place of stillness.

Most of us do not know how to relax. And the tension is as bad for us spiritually as it is physically. A very great part of our growing to know the Lord is learning to relax the hold our worries have upon us and give them into His hands. Until we do that the true “freedom of the Spirit” is only so many words. Much of our anxiety betrays our lack of faith, and prevents us from fully living the Christian life.

We never realize the strain under which we live. But Jesus does. He tells us that “the care of this world chokes the word.” (Mt. 13.22) So His direction is that we “come apart, and rest awhile.” A periodic retreat will do for us what it did for Our

Lord's first disciples: it helps us relax towards God, so that His teaching can sink down into our hearts and take possession of us.

Remember that you are not being invited to go on retreat by your priest, or because we have Fr. Jones coming, or the Benedictine monks at Still River are set to welcome us. It is the Lord's standing invitation, and your decision to go is your response to that invitation.

Keep that truth in the back of your mind. It means that the initiative is not with you but with Jesus, Who already sees your need and is ever desirous to supply it. It would be a great mistake to suppose that you must gear up for an environmental hothouse of enforced spiritual growth! The chief activity will be the Lord's, and as you have accepted His invitation and desired to draw closer to Him, remember that He is also seeking you and His seeking is by far the more important.

After a retreat, do not attempt to evaluate it, or allow anyone else to persuade you that “it has [not] been worth it.” Our Lord's best work in us is done secretly, and we may be the last to realize it.

If each of us will make an annual retreat, a periodic quiet day in a church or religious house, and find a few minutes each day or a few hours each week to be still and quiet with the Lord, that will be a wise and holy thing.

FATHER BRADFORD

SHORT NOTES

Thanks to all those who were readers at the services of Lessons & Carols for Advent and Christmas, and to all who contributed towards the cost of the Christmas greens.

Our prayers of Christian sympathy go to Anne Johansson and her family on the death of her father, Emerson Marks in early November. Mr. Marks was 84 years old. May he rest in peace!

The Revd. David Stokes was ordained a Catholic priest on November 23rd. in the Diocese of Rhode Island. He is a former Episcopal priest.

Please remember to fill in and return your pledge card of financial support for the work of the congregation in the new year. Many thanks.

The Coming Home Network reports that as of November, 110 Protestant ministers had contacted them in 2002 for assistance in coming into the full communion of the Catholic Church. These ministers represent thirty-seven different Christian communities.

The Bradford Family wishes to thank members and friends of the congregation for their gifts and greetings during the holy season of Christmas.



Saint of the Month



St. Basil the Great

Bishop of Caesarea

329-379

Feast day January 2

IN St. Basil the Great we meet yet another of those intrepid heroes of the fourth century who put their lives on the line in defense of the orthodox faith. Last month we met St. Eusebius; St. Athanasius was another such courageous soul; both were prepared to sacrifice everything for the integrity of the Faith in the struggle against the Arians. You will remember that the Arians denied that our Lord Jesus Christ was very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Here is another such saint.

Basil was born about 329 into a Christian family of enormous distinction and great wealth, only four years after the Council of Nicaea. He was a brilliant student, educated in

all the knowledge coming down from classical Greece, and he might have had a brilliant scholarly career. This he set aside after his baptism at the age of 28. He went to Egypt to study the lives of the desert anchorites first hand. When he returned in 358 he founded a monastery for men, wherein the anchorites' style of life was reformulated in a rule for a disciplined community of shared prayer and work. This monastery, at Iborra, became the model for all other Eastern monastic foundations, and the monasteries following Basil's rule of life provided schools for those destined to become both Church and secular leaders.

By the time Basil was ordained to the priesthood in 364 the Arian troubles were boiling all over the Church and scalding the orthodox. His particular virtue was to defend not only Our Lord as truly God incarnate, but the Holy Spirit also, as worthy of the same honor, glory and worship as God the Father. This was the context in which he was consecrated Bishop of Caesarea in 370.

The Roman Emperor of the time, Valens, was an Arian, and vigorously persecuted the Trinitarian orthodox Catholics. St. Basil at great personal risk refused to surrender to Valens's pressure, and defended the Faith for the rest of his life with unflinching courage, great intellectual power, and charity toward his opponents. But he would not compromise.

Valens sent Modestus, the Prefect of the East, to intimidate Basil. St. Gregory Nazianzen, Basil's friend, tells us about that meeting. Modestus began by threatening Basil with confiscation of all his goods unless he would fall into the Arian line. Basil replied,

“Well, in truth, confiscation means nothing to a man who has nothing, unless you covet these wretched rags and a few books; that is all I possess. All my riches are within.”

Modestus next threatened to send Basil into exile.

“As to exile, that means nothing to me, for I am attached to no particular place,” Basil replied. “That wherein I live is not mine, and I shall feel at home in any place to which I am sent. Or rather, I regard the whole earth as belonging to God, and I consider myself as a stranger wherever I may be. All men are my brothers.”

When Modestus next threatened Basil with torture and death, he was told,

“As for torture, how will you apply it? I have not a body capable of bearing it, unless you are thinking of the first blow you give me, for that will be the only one in your power. As for death, this will be a benefit to me, for it will take me the sooner to the God for whom I live. I have been prepared to die for years.”

In amazement Modestus said that nobody had ever spoken to him like that before. St. Basil answered:

“Perhaps that is because you have never had to deal with a bishop.”

Modestus went away and Basil and his followers were persecuted no further. Basil died at the age of 50 in 379, just two years before the Second Ecumenical Council, which affirmed the Nicene faith.

AN EPIPHANY POEM

Lord, when the wise men came from far,
Led to thy cradle by a star,
Then did the shepherds too rejoice,

Instructed by thy angel’s voice.
Blest were the wise men in their skill,
And shepherds in their harmless will.

Wise men, in tracing Nature’s laws,
Ascend unto the highest cause;
Shepherds with humble fearfulness
Walk safely, though their light be less.
Though wise men better know the way,
It seems no honest heart can stray.

There is no merit in the wise
But love, the shepherds’ sacrifice.
Wise men, all ways of knowledge passed,
To the shepherds’ wonder come at last.
To know can only wonder breed,
And not to know is wonder’s seed.

Sidney Godolphin

¶ *Sidney Godolphin (1610-43) was a Cavalier poet killed in the English civil war.*

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.

SAINT HENRY WALPOLE Priest and Martyr (1558-1595)

Born in Norfolk, England, Henry studied in Norwich, Cambridge, and Gray’s Inn. He was converted to Catholicism at the time when Queen Elizabeth was launching once again Henry VIII’s persecution of Catholics faithful to the pope. Henry Walpole left England to prepare for priestly ordination at the English College in Rome. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1584, and four years after his ordination joined the

English mission. After two months in the Tower of London, where he was subjected to torture forty times, Henry Walpole was executed.

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BLESSED EDWARD STRANSHAM, Priest and Martyr (1557-1586)

Edward Stransham was an Oxford student. In April 1577, he left England for France to study for the priesthood at the English College, which was transferred from Douay to Rheims upon his arrival. He was ordained in 1580. Both as a seminarian and as a priest, Father Stransham took a particular interest in recruiting other candidates for the priesthood. He departed for England in 1581, but illness necessitated his return to France. In 1585 he set out again for England. Having reached London, Father Stransham took refuge in a Catholic couple’s home. While he was saying Mass at the house, government officials entered and arrested him, confiscating his chalice, paten, and vestments. He was sentenced to death by “drawing and quartering” for being a Catholic priest and for exercising his priestly ministry in England. On January 21, 1586, Father Stransham was executed together with another priest, Blessed Nicholas Woodfen. William Freeman, a Protestant witness of their deaths, was so moved by their constancy that soon afterward he converted to the Catholic faith and became a priest.

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PARISH RETREAT INFORMATION

On February 14-16 we will have our fifth parish retreat, at Saint Benedict Abbey in Still River. This will be the second time our retreat conductor as been Fr. Carleton Jones, OP. Most recently he has been our preacher at Candlemas in 2002. Other retreat leaders have been Fr. Joseph Wilson, Fr. Romanus Cessario, OP, and Fr. Peter Stravinskias.

The cost of the retreat will be \$90 per person. This covers two nights' accommodations and five meals, plus honorarium for our conductor. You may make financial arrangements with our treasurer, Bruce Rand.

ABOUT OUR CONDUCTOR

Fr. Jones is a former Episcopal priest and Cowley Father. He joined the Order of Preachers after his conversion, and at the time of our first retreat with him he was still pastor of Saint Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn. Fr. Jones was assigned to St. Stephen's Priory in Dover, Mass., at the time of his most recent visit to us, but is now in New York City, where he serves as Socius to the Provincial (Province of St. Joseph) of the Dominican Friars. Fr. Jones has spent his ministry in spiritual direction and giving retreats, and we are sure to profit from our time with him.

WHAT IS A SAINT?

"The saint is a medicine because he is an antidote. Indeed that is why the saint is often a martyr; he is mistaken for a poison because he is an

antidote. He will generally be found restoring the world to sanity by exaggerating whatever the world neglects, which is by no means always the same element in every age. Yet each generation seeks its saint by instinct; and he is not what the people want, but rather what the people need.... Therefore it is the paradox of history that each generation is converted by the saint who contradicts it most."

G. K. CHESTERTON

6 JANUARY

WHEN the Chaldeans, led on by the rays of a specially brilliant star, adored the Christ, there was given to the Gentiles a hope of worshipping the true God. When water, by a new order of things, was turned into wine, a foretaste was given us of the Sacrament of the new Cup. And when the Lamb of God was baptized, that gift of regenerating Baptism, which is so salutary to us, was consecrated. Therefore, since we have lately kept the Nativity of our Saviour with exulting gladness, we are bound, for His honour, and with hearty devotion, to celebrate also this birthday of His mighty works. And how rightly are these three mysteries celebrated by us on the same day, seeing that we confess the mystery of the ineffable Trinity under the one name of God! By means of these miracles, therefore, Christ our Lord and Redeemer was pleased to reveal Himself to the eyes of men, that His invisible Godhead, which lay hidden in His Manhood, might display itself in His working.

Let us therefore spiritually re-

joice in spiritual gifts, casting aside all sensual pleasure, that the light of the heavenly star may illuminate the darkness of our hearts, the blessing of the Father's voice enlighten us, and the wine of salvation gladden us when poured out by the hand of Christ.

ST. MAXIMUS.

¶ *St. Maximus the Confessor (d. 622) was a Greek theologian and a prolific writer on doctrinal, ascetical, exegetical, and liturgical subjects.*

THE EPIPHANY OR THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES [JANUARY 6]



The Collect

O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles: Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday, January 6,
2003

Procession, Sung Mass
& Sermon at 7:30pm

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL [JANUARY 25]



The Collect

O GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday, January 25,
2003

Low Mass at 9:00am



THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE COMMONLY CALLED THE PURIFICATION OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN [FEBRUARY 2]



The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that, as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Candlemas is Sunday,
February 2nd

Sung Mass & Sermon
at 10:30am

in the Convent Chapel

Solemn Evensong &
Benediction at 7:00pm
in St. Theresa of Avila
Church

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.

A Prayer for
the Anglican Use

O HOLY Ghost the Lord, who on Pentecost gavest the Church the gift of tongues, that Christ might be known and served by peoples of diverse nations and customs: watch over our heritage within that Church, we pray thee, that, led by thy guidance and strengthened by thy grace, we may increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Son, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

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.

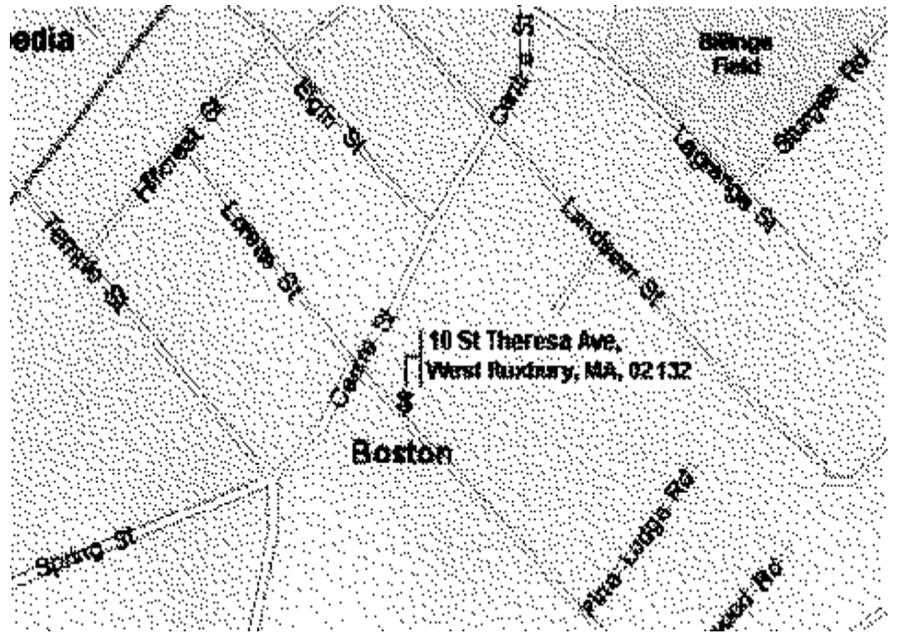
Directions by Car: *From the North:* Route
128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street
in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a
traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the
church. At this light bear left onto Centre St.
and immediately turn right at the next light
onto St. Theresa Ave.

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

