
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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April 2003

The Congregation of St. Athanasius

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

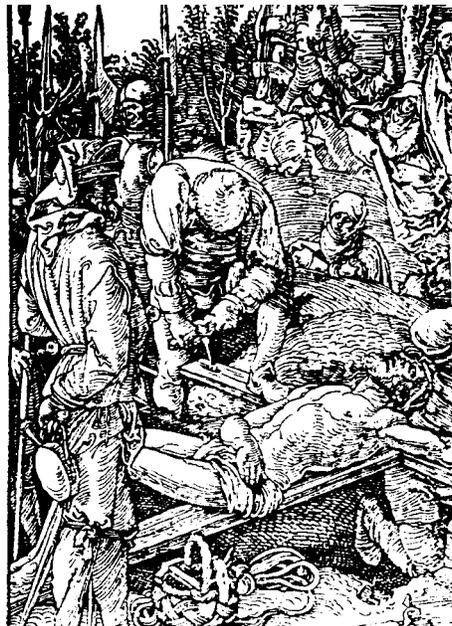
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NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

SAINT John's Gospel knows Jerusalem well. He says that when Jesus healed the sick man on the Sabbath (5:1-18) the location was at a very specific place. It was at a pool by the Sheep Gate, and that the pool was called Bethesda. John further says that this pool had five porches.

Whenever there is a miraculous physical cure in the Bible, we know that it is only something temporary for a body, which must come to physical death. Even Lazarus came out of the tomb wearing the grave clothes he would one day need. So it is not the physical cure, but the spiritual force behind the miracle that is the good news for souls. Let's look for that spiritual force.

Once upon a time God created the first clear pool of life. But an evil angel teaching disobedience troubled the pool. Mankind chose to serve the law of death, hate, and rebellion. Then came God's Son, Who for our sakes entered that pool of life troubled by sorrow and pain.



For the One Who is everlasting Son of God, His whole life was the pool of His Passion, a deliberate choosing our death in His perfect obedience to the law of love.

Think of that pool of Bethesda. Why five porches? There are five sacred wounds in the Man of Sorrows. We see also the angel of the Passion troubling Christ's obedience in Gethsemane. It was into a pool with five porches that the impotent man desired to be plunged in order to be healed. Saint John's Gospel invites us to put all these things together.

Think then of your life as a participation in the Passion of Christ, that Blessed Jesus comes looking

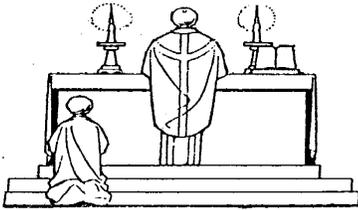
at your natural condition of sinfulness and your ability on your own to do nothing about it. If we desire to be put into the pool, Christ with His Own hands will dip us in the fountain of His Precious Blood, to cleanse and deliver us. And we will be able to walk in the way of the will of God.

The angel who troubles the pool of life is actually a good angel. He teaches us self-surrender, self-giving, and humility, and all those things we see in the Passion of Christ. The angel who troubles the pool of life helps us know why the Church forever beholds the wondrous beauty of a slain Lamb in the midst of the Throne of Heaven. The greatest joy is so often found, even sometimes in great suffering, when we have been dipped in the pool of Christ's obedience.

Of course a pool normally has four sides. But in the twentieth century the pool described by St. John was discovered and excavated on the property of the White Fathers near St. Anne's Church and the ancient Sheep Gate. It was trapezoidal in form and was found to have colonnades on the four sides and an unusual fifth one on a central partition, which divided the pool. Archeology had discovered St. John's five porches.

Father Bradford

SHORT NOTES



Tuesday Noon Masses will be celebrated in the convent chapel on April 1, 8, 15, and 22.

Stations of the Cross and Benediction will be offered on Friday, April 4th at 7:00pm in the St. Theresa of Ávila Chapel.

A year's-mind Mass for Ronald Jaynes will be offered at 9am on Saturday, April 5th. in the convent chapel.

Daylight Savings Time begins at 2am on Sunday April 6th. Set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night.

HOLY WEEK is April 13-20

The Easter Day collection is annually sent to the Clergy Benefit Trust. This fund provides for the retirement and medical costs of retired priests of the archdiocese.

IN MAY St. Athanasius Day is Friday May 2nd. Solemn Mass is at 7:30pm in the St. Theresa of Ávila Chapel. Ascension Day is May 29th. Solemn Mass is at 7:30pm in the Convent Chapel.



Easter flower envelopes are now available in the rear of the chapel on Sundays. Funds raised help defray the cost of decorating the sanctuary



and chapel for the Easter season. Memorials and thanksgivings are listed in the Easter service leaflet. Please return your contribution by Palm Sunday, April 13th.

SAINT OF THE MONTH

St. Catherine of Sienna (†1380 AD) Feast Day, April 29

IN St. Catherine of Sienna we have yet another example of how extreme personality traits, and even faults, can be transformed into transcendental strengths and saintly forces in the service of God and the Church. St. Catherine's life shows the transformation of what originally seems very like childhood stubbornness into mature courage, determination, and grit.

The beginning was not auspicious. Catherine Benincasa was the youngest of twenty-five children of a prominent dyer in Sienna. When she was six years old she experienced a vision that transformed her life. From then on she spent hours

CONFESSIONS are heard by Fr. Bradford on the Thursdays before First Fridays of the month, after the 4pm Mass in St. Theresa's Chapel, or by arrangement. Parish clergy hear confessions every Saturday from 3-4pm. in the St. Theresa Chapel.



in prayer and meditation, to the exasperation of her parents, who tried to force her to behave like a normal girl. In response, Catherine cut off her beautiful hair. Her family continued to harass her but she continued to fight back. Finally her father surrendered and let her live as she chose, so she shut herself up in a dark room, prayed, fasted, and slept on boards. In time she was accepted as a Dominican postulant.

She was much more than a stubborn girl with religious visions, however. Catherine was cheerful, charming, and kind to others from childhood, weaving crosses from flowers to give to others, in spite of her troubles at home.

She experienced many visions and was tried severely by loathsome temptations and degrading images, until finally she felt totally abandoned by Jesus. In 1366 the Savior appeared to her, along with Mary and the Heavenly Host, and espoused her to Himself, after which she gave up her years of lonely prayer and struggle. She became a nurse, caring for patients with leprosy and cancer whom the other nurses shunned.

Who would be surprised to learn she attracted much attention in Sienna? Many said she was a saint, and many others said she was a crazy stubborn fanatic. The Bishop of Capua became her confessor, and helped her win full support from the Dominican Mother House. Her stubbornness was now showing itself as fierce, independent courage for good in the face of opposition. When the plague came, she worked tirelessly

for the sick when others shunned them. She dug graves and buried bodies when others shunned them. She visited prisoners condemned to death, and began more and more to be called on to arbitrate feuds and to prepare troubled sinners for confession. She attracted a following. She preached and she taught; though she never learned to write, she dictated many letters and became a highly influential spiritual leader.

In the last five years of her life she became much involved in high Church politics. These were the days of the divided papacy,— she took on Pope Gregory XI who was in exile in Avignon and made it plain to him he should get out of France and come back to Rome where he belonged. How much influence she actually had on his return is not clear, but this indomitable woman spoke her mind. After the Great Schism of 1378 when Urban VI was elected pope in Rome and a rival set up in Avignon, Catherine wrote scolding letters to Urban and did her best to whip various European rulers and cardinals into shape to recognize him as the genuine pope. Urban VI invited her to Rome in spite of her reproofs, and there she wore herself out working for his cause. She was bold, tireless, and intransigent; she had the vision of a prophet. Like many other great figures in the history of the Church, she had no doubt that God's cause was beyond a doubt her own.

Catherine was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1970. Her head is kept in her house in Sienna, but her

body is preserved at S. Maria sopra Minerva at Rome.

“Whenever you think God has shown you other people’s faults, take care: your own judgment may well be at fault. Say nothing. And if you do attribute any vice to another person, immediately and humbly look for it in yourself also. Should the other person really possess that vice, he will correct himself so much the better when he sees how gently you understand him, and he will say to himself whatever you would have told him.”

Saint Catherine

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 ROBERT NUTTER, Priest and Martyr (c. 1557-1600) Robert was born in Burnley, Lancashire, in England, and was ordained with his older brother John in Douai in 1581. During his eighteen years on the English Mission in the reign of Elizabeth I, he spent much time in prison in the Tower of London. In 1584, tortured and heavily manacled for forty-three days, he heard of his priest brother’s martyrdom. Robert was banished. He returned to England, was caught and escaped, and finally was recaptured and hanged, drawn, and quartered in Lancaster in 1600.

While imprisoned at Wisbech Castle, Robert had wished to enter the Order of Preachers, and made his solemn profession which was received by the prior

provincial of Portugal. Pope John Paul II beatified him with eighty-four other martyrs of England, Scotland, and Wales in 1987. Reprinted from *Magnificat*, JULY 2000, No. 20, Page 377 With permission of *Magnificat*® USA, LLC, Dunwoodie - 201 Seminary Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10704 or Web site: www.magnificat.net. All rights reserved.

BLESSED EVERARD HANSE,
Priest and Martyr (†1581)

As an Anglican minister, Everard Hanse, of Northamptonshire, England, argued fiercely with Catholics, including his own brother, who was a priest. But upon falling ill, Everard called his brother to his bedside and was converted by him to the Catholic faith. Afterwards Everard went to Rheims, France, to study for the priesthood. In April of 1581, a month after his ordination, he returned to England. While he was secretly ministering to Catholic prisoners, Father Hanse was arrested by the Elizabethan authorities. At his trial, he spoke ably in defense of papal primacy. He was condemned to death for being a Catholic priest. The day before his execution, Father Hanse wrote a final letter to his brother who had brought him into the Church, telling him, "The day and hour of my birth is at hand, and my Master says, 'Take up your cross and follow me!' Farewell in the Lord." He also enjoined him to take care of their parents (who were still Anglican) and see that they be "instructed in the way of truth" (Catholicism).

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THE PRODIGAL SON

THE story of the Prodigal Son is a favorite parable, and the chief reason why this is so is that it tells us something that we want to know. It tells us about our relationship to Almighty God.... what He thinks about us. Are we going to be saved? What must I do to be saved?

The story of the prodigal son is the story of the father welcoming back with every sign of love the travel-stained ragged beggar who was nevertheless still his son. This story, told by a person in a position to know, represents to us so perfectly God's mercy towards the converted sinner. Let's see how this is so, and why it is a good news for us.

In the story, while the prodigal son was yet a great way off, the father saw him. There were two reasons for this. First, the father had never ceased to watch for the returning figure of his son. When I walk the deserted beaches of Cape Cod in winter, looking up at the old houses with their widow's walk, where women looked out to sea constantly for sight of their men folk, I think of Almighty God ever Vigilant, ever looking for me. It is incredible that God has nothing better to do than to look for me. You can say that too. Yet Jesus says we are right on the money when we think this way: this is what God is like, like a father never ceasing to look for his son. When Franz Kafka broke it off with his lady friend in Vienna and returned to Prague, she writes that she went to the post office every day for three years hoping for a letter from him. We have that kind of capacity that mirrors a trait of our heavenly Father. God is ever looking for us....not because of Kafka's girl friend, but because Jesus Christ

says so.... and most tenderly does He craft the parable of the prodigal son to say so.

And then, secondly, the father saw his son a great way off because he knew his son under his rags, even in the far distance. The son had put himself at a far distance from the father. We are so easily able to do that. Like the son, we can squander our inheritance. And the result is the same: rags and being barefoot. It is the condition of a slave. Our heavenly Father sees the degrading way we squander our inheritance as His children, preferring the rags of self-assertion and self-indulgence to the best-robed life of a son or daughter of the Author of light and beauty and warmth.

But He still sees the son, sees him when he is yet a great way off, and before the son sees him. "That is my son; I would recognize him anywhere, in any condition!" The father sees through the rags.

This is what the Father is like. And like Father like Son: Jesus on the Cross, dreaming of what the penitent thief could have been, and still might be, as a repentant converted sinner: even on Calvary snatching a soul to Himself.

Jesus shows us that the father is deeply moved with pity and tender love as this degraded, defeated, dejected, rejected scrap of humanity makes his way closer to God in repentance. And then what does the father do? He allows the son to return only as a son! Yes he is a degraded, dejected son and all that. "I am not worthy to be called your son." "Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee." Yes. You have that right! The father allows the son to make his confession. But then

the father will not hear of it when the son wants to become the father's slave. "Make me as one of thy hired servants." No. This he will not allow. The father ends the confession at the point the son begins to offer the solution! Like him, we must confess our sins and take the consequences, but we cannot tell God what to do with us. The prodigal can return as a penitent, defeated, degraded son, but only as a son, to the father. He cannot change the terms of the relationship.

By every one of these vivid details our Lord Jesus brings out more and more convincingly the almost incredible love of God for us. Even when we are in the soiled rags that we have made of the white robes of baptism. Look at what we have done with the once whole and perfect righteousness He gave us! And yet even now, if we but turn to Him and give Him opportunity, He will come while we are a great way off, with the best robe of fresh holiness, the ring of sonship, and the gospel of peace.

Jesus tells us in another place that heaven is *en fête* when such joy on the face of our Lord is caused by the repentance and return of a sinner. Let that repentant sinner be you and me. Lord Jesus: give us the courage to cause such joy!

*a sermon preached by Father Bradford
on Sunday, March 26, 1994*

IN THE CROSS

IN the Cross we can see and understand the harm and dreadfulness of sin, of setting our will against God's will. Ordinary folk like ourselves, for ordinary human motives, crucified the Son of Man. That is what

we do to God. There is a sense in which it is perfectly true to say that you and I did that to Christ, that we crucify Him afresh. Well, our sorrow for that is to get merged into our love and devotion to Him for what He is and what He does for us there, and the resultant power is to drive us in a life set now once again in union with His will.

You and I are the Church, remember. The Church is not some vague body outside us that we think ought to do this or ought to do that. She is us. And if she conquers in any other way than God's way she will not be the Christian Church.

The Cross then shall be our glory. Its way our way. It redeems us, and then redeemed we carry it, and then one day it carries us, – very likely in some quite great act of sacrifice, material or intellectual. It is not that one day death will be swallowed up in victory. It is swallowed up now. As we die with Him we begin to live. The darkest moment of Holy Week leads directly into the glory of the Garden on Easter morning. In us the Christ advances each Holy Week to Calvary once more, and once more hatred and hostility will be met by Love, and pain will be conquered by the suffering of it. The triumphal procession on Palm Sunday is a real one, not a mock one. The King of Glory in real truth rides on and conquers. Whatever it may look like to the world, Good Friday is a complete victory of God's methods over man's, as we shall see, you and I, if we have the courage to try them. But it will need courage because Calvary is not a pathway of roses, and a Cross almost always hurts.

Dom Bernard Clements, OSB

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,
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.

Coin Folders

Proceeds from the Lenten Coin Folders will be sent to Catholic Charities. Please return your folders after the end of Lent.

The Catholic Church shall abide and remain and stand fast with God and God fast with it.

Saint Thomas More

Solemn Evensong and Benediction

Second Sunday of Easter

April 27, 2003

Saint Theresa of
Ávila Chapel

West Roxbury

5:00pm

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.

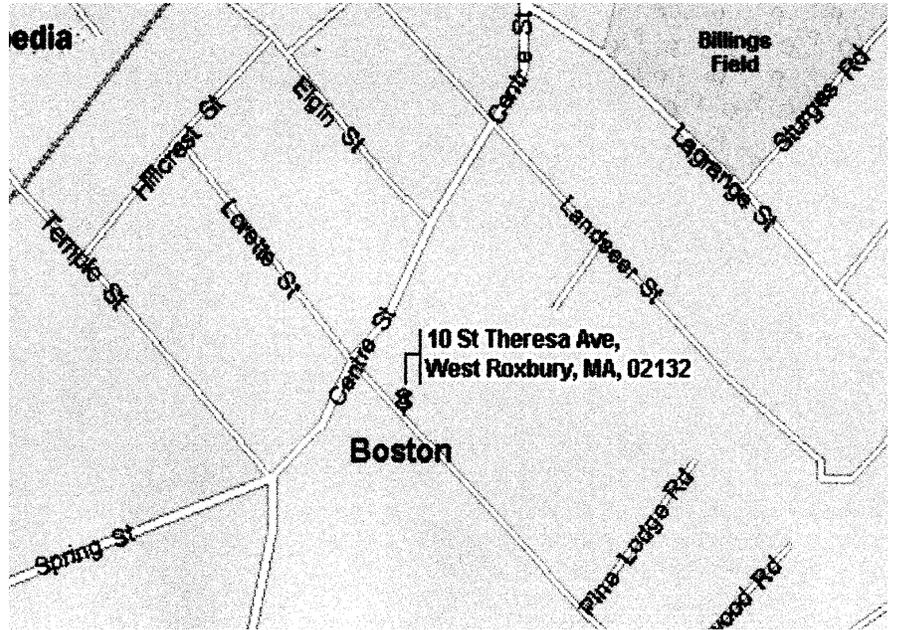
Directions by Car: *From the North:* Route 128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light bear left onto Centre St. and immediately turn right at the next light onto St. Theresa Ave.

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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