
✠ 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

<http://www.locutor.net>

Notes from the Chaplain

A shoot shall come forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. (Isaiah 11:1)

DECEMBER 8th always finds us in the northern hemisphere at the beginning of the winter season. Yet this feast of the Immaculate Conception is our celebration of God's springtime entered into our winter.

Every year in February or early March I try to be present when the first shoots come up out of the ground. They may be the tips of crocuses, snowdrops, tulips, or some other bulb that has lied dormant in the frozen ground, under snow and dead leaves. I look up near the house, in a protected corner where the sun has melted the snow and the leaves have formed a cozy blanket for the new shoots. And there they are, often pushing up through the snow and sometimes right through the leaves, the harbinger of spring. And even though we may yet have deep freeze temperatures, howling winds, and heavy snow, I know that it is just a matter of time before the garden will be in bloom.

Now travel back with me way past last spring to a time when the prophet Isaiah was surveying the scene of Israel's spiritual and politi-



FEAST OF THE IM- MACULATE CON- CEPTION

Solemn High Mass (Anglican Use)
Weds., December 8th, at 7:30pm.
(Holy Day of Obligation)

cal fortunes against the promises he carried in his heart from Almighty God. The "root of Jesse" was the old kingly dynasty of Judaea. Jesse

was King David's father, and David reigned at the zenith of Israel's power and influence in the world. After David, Old Testament history is a melancholy story of slow decline until the Jews were finally nothing more than a tiny dependency on the borders of the vast empire of Rome. There had been rebellion from the word of God and it had issued in defeats, forced exiles, and apostasy. The ruling house of Jesse had long disappeared; and Isaiah, thinking of the glory departed, compares it with a common sight: an old tree stump, gnarled and withered, with no more life in it. It is an image instantly recognized from any time you have walked in the woods.

But Isaiah sees something besides the old dead trunk. He sees a rod or branch, a fresh green sapling coming forth, a single slender branch. Later, in another inspiration come from God, Isaiah will tell us that a young woman will conceive and bear a Son and call His name "God With Us."

The single, slender branch is a young woman named Mary. We know that now, though Isaiah did not know, and in her virgin innocence and a spotless motherhood she will bear the blossom that is to redeem mankind and make it burst into flower.

Most years I arrive in my garden too late. The tips of the first shoots

have already broken the surface by the time I brush back any snow and leaves to have a look. It has happened quietly, out of sight. When Our Lady is conceived, our salvation is already in the bud: God's wonderful plan is silently at work, but the event is not even recorded in the Bible. No one noticed. No angels sang over the hills, no shepherds left their flocks to come and see, no wise men followed the stars. And yet the Coming of Christ began with this event we celebrate today. Our Lady is the consummation of the Old Testament, and with her conception the whole cycle of history begins again in a new creation.

When He created the first man, Adam, God had already made preparation. It was the sixth day, and He had fashioned with great care a perfect paradise for Adam and Eve to dwell in. We know what happened.

In the fullness of time God restored our fallen human nature in a New Man, the second Adam. And just as before, He prepared a paradise for this second Adam to dwell in; that paradise was the body and soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was winter for mankind in the world, but in the quiet home where Saint Anne gave birth to her daughter, God's spring had arrived.

¶ *a sermon preached by Father Bradford on December 8, 1998*

Mary

Yet Mary holds her finger out, and a divine hand closes on it.

The maker of the world is born a begging child; he begs for milk, and does not know that it is milk for which he begs. We will not lift our hands to pull the love of God

down to us, but he lifts his hands to pull human compassion down upon his cradle. So the weakness of God proves stronger than men, and the folly of God proves wiser than men. Love is the strongest instrument of omnipotence, for accomplishing those tasks he cares most dearly to perform; and this is how he brings his love to bear on human pride; by weakness not by strength, by need and not by bounty.

¶ *Anglican theologian Austin Farrer, in a Christmas Day sermon preached in Christ Church, Oxford*

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 DOMINIC COLLINS
Religious and Martyr (c. 1566-1602)

Dominic Collins, of Youghal, Ireland, served as a soldier in France, and later as a naval officer in Spain. While stationed in La Coruña, Spain, he devoted his spare time to frequenting the sacraments, spiritual reading, and meditation. On December 8, 1598, Dominic entered the Jesuit Order in Compostela, humbly intent upon becoming a lay brother, as he considered himself unworthy of the priesthood. During his novitiate, an epidemic struck many of his fellow religious, whom he assisted with great solicitude. After taking his

vows in 1601, Brother Dominic accompanied a Jesuit priest on a mission to Ireland, where he was soon captured by the English Protestant forces occupying the country. At his trial, Dominic was offered pardon if he would renounce his faith and serve in the English army. After refusing this offer, he was sentenced to death by drawing and quartering. At the scaffold, he knelt to kiss the gallows, and prayed for his persecutors, including Queen Elizabeth I. Before dying, he admonished his countrymen to remain loyal to the Catholic faith.

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BLESSED ROBERT JOHNSON
Priest and Martyr († 1582)

Robert Johnson, of Shropshire, England, studied for the priesthood in Rome and France. Following his ordination in 1576, he prepared for the exercise of his ministry by making the lengthy retreat of the Spiritual Exercises with the Jesuits. After laboring for three years in England, he made a pilgrimage to Rome, which he concluded by again undertaking the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola. Upon returning to England, he was betrayed to the Elizabethan authorities by a spy who had been monitoring the English Catholics in Rome. While imprisoned in the Tower of London, Father Johnson was tortured on the rack. At his execution, he was denounced by the sheriff as a traitor. Father Johnson answered, "If I be traitor for maintaining this [Catholic] faith, then was King Henry and all the kings and queens of this realm,

heretofore, and all our ancestors were traitors, for they maintained the same." As he said his final prayers in Latin, a Protestant minister present rebuked him, exclaiming, "Pray as Christ taught." Father Johnson jestingly replied, "What! Do you think that Christ taught in English?"

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Saint of the Month



St. Ambrose

339-397

Feast 7 December

AMBROSE was the son of a noble and powerful Roman family. As a boy he studied Greek, rhetoric, and poetry and became a successful lawyer, then a governor. When he was not yet thirty years old, and finding himself in the middle of a turmoil in Milan when the Arian bishop, Auxentius, died, he appealed to the people for peace and reason-

ableness. To his shock, a child in the assembly cried out, "Ambrose for bishop!" The crowd took up the cry, and in spite of his pleas that he was not suitable (he had not even been baptized), he was within the week baptized and consecrated bishop.

Milan was the administrative capital of the Western Empire, and he played an important part in the politics. Although the trouble of the Arian heresy had been more or less settled at the Council of Nicaea in 325, there was still great controversy abroad, and the Arian party was far from pacified. To St. Ambrose belongs much of the credit for the suppression of the Arianism that remained abroad in the land. He rebuked the emperor Valentinian and Theodosius, the emperor to the East, and brought them to order, infusing them with a new respect for the Church.

Personally ascetic and kindly, St. Ambrose was much sought after as a political but also as a spiritual advisor, and, though he died before he was 60, profoundly influential. He was a friend to St. Monica, whose famous son, St. Augustine, came for teaching and instruction to St. Ambrose. Ambrose baptized him in 386.

In art Ambrose is often symbolized by the emblem of a scourge, which symbolizes the penance he imposed on the emperor Theodosius, and also by a beehive. According to the legend, a swarm of bees settled on him when he was a child, foretelling his future eloquence. He is patron of beekeepers. St. Ambrose was musical and taught his people to sing hymns. In the *1940 Hymnal* which we use and lies in our pews, five hymns are attributed to him.

SHORT NOTES

Our annual Every Member Cnavass began in November. We are asking for your pledge of financial support for the work of the Congregation in the coming year. Please return your filled in pledge card at your early convenience.

An Anglican Use Mass was celebrated in St. Michael's Cathedral in Springfield on November 9th. In attendance were members of the Catholic Women's Club of Springfield. Fr. George Greenway was the celebrant, Fr. Bradford was the preacher, and assisting at the Mass were Deacon Michael Connolly and David Burt.

Christmas Flower Fund envelopes are now available in the rear of the chapel. Subscribers by mail may send their memorials and thanksgivings to the rectory (the address is printed elsewhere in this paper). Flower donations arriving by December 22nd will be printed in the Christmas service leaflet.

Inquirers' Classes are ongoing, meeting in the St. Theresa Rectory on most Thursday evenings at 7:00pm. A syllabus is available.

An Advent booklet called "Make Straight the Way!" has been published by *Magnificat* magazine. Copies are available in the rear of the chapel, while supplies last. Cost is \$2.50. It contains meditations for every day of the Advent season, plus other aids to devotion.

An Advent-Christmas Music Concert will be offered at St. Theresa of Ávila Church on Sunday, December 12th at 4:00pm. The service features various parish choirs, hand bells, organ, and instrumentalists.



*The vision of the Word will
fulfill all our desires.*

WHAT man knows all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ, concealed in the poverty of his flesh? Scripture says: Although he was rich he became poor for our sake to enrich us by his poverty. He showed himself poor when he assumed our mortal nature and destroyed death, yet he promised us riches, for he had not been robbed of his wealth but was keeping it in reserve.

How great are the blessings of his goodness which he reserves for those who fear him and shows to those who hope in him! Until he gives them to us in their plenitude, we can have only the faintest conception of them; but to enable us to receive these blessings, he who in his divine nature is the equal of the Father assumed the condition of a slave and became like us, and so restored to us our likeness to God. The only Son of God became a son of man to make many men sons of God. He instructed slaves by showing himself in the form of a slave, and now he enables free men

to see him in the form of God.

For we are the sons of God, and although what we shall be has not yet been revealed, we know that when he appears we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. For what are those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, what those divine riches, if not the one thing that can fulfill our longing? What are the great blessings of his goodness, if not the one thing that will content us? Therefore: Show us the Father, and all our desires will be satisfied.

Christ speaks both in us and for us when, in one of the psalms, he says to the Father: I shall be satisfied when your glory is revealed. For he and the Father are one, and whoever sees him sees the Father also. The Lord of hosts is himself the king of glory. He will transform us and show us his face, and we shall be saved; all our longing will be fulfilled, all our desires will be satisfied.

But this has not yet been accomplished; he has not yet given us the vision that will satisfy every desire; we have not yet drunk our fill of the

fountain of life. So while all this remains in the future and we still walk by faith, absent from the Lord, while we still hunger and thirst for justice and with inexpressible longing yearn for God's beauty, let us reverently celebrate the day he was born into our own servile condition.

Since we can as yet form no conception of his generation by the Father before the daystar, let us keep the festival of his birth of a virgin in the hours of the night. Since it is still beyond our understanding that his name endures for ever and existed before the sun, let us at least recognize his dwelling that he has placed beneath the sun. We cannot yet behold him as the only Son, abiding for ever in his Father, so let us recall his coming forth like a bridegroom from his chamber. We are not yet ready for the banquet of our Father, so let us contemplate the manger of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*From a sermon by
SAINT AUGUSTINE*



**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 26, 2004

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

Saturday, January 1, 2005

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Octave of Christmas

Solemn Mass and Sermon, 10:30am

not a Holy day of obligation this year



**A PROCESSION WITH
CAROLS FOR ADVENT**

Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 5, 2004, 5:00pm

Saint Theresa of Ávila Chapel

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius,

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford, Chaplain

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.

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.

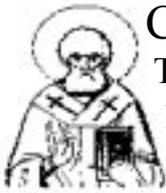
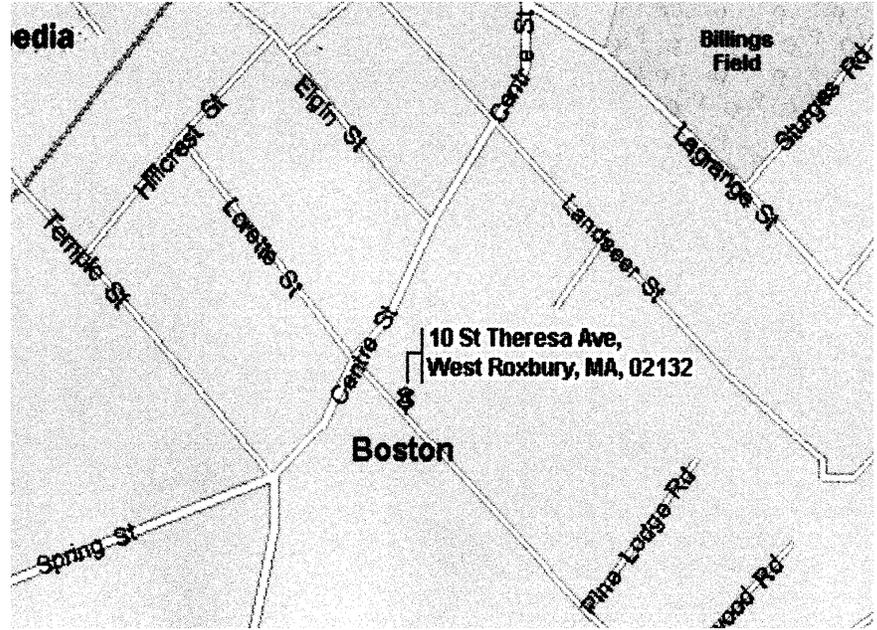
Directions by Car: From the North: Route 128 to
Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West
Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at
Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light
bear left onto Centre St.. and immediately turn
right at the next light onto St.. Theresa Ave.

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 High-
way 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 Sta-
tion, but no Sunday service is available.



Contra Mundum

The Congregation of St. Athanasius

10 St.. Theresa Avenue

West Roxbury, MA 02132

