
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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April 2005

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

“And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.” (Mk 16:8)

SO ends St. Mark’s account of Easter, and his Gospel. Or does it? In your Revised Standard Version of the Bible is a passage that was added in the second century. It is claimed that this is Mark’s ending. So there are two endings to this Gospel and these two endings have been called the greatest of all literary mysteries.

What the fuss is about is how could the Gospel have ended in such a way with the women fearing, and telling no one, and not seeing Jesus? That is a non-starter if there ever was one! Surely St. Mark had recorded, or intended to record, as the climax and conclusion of the story, the appearances of Jesus to the disciples. But did he? Does the Christian Gospel need to be rounded off in this way? Perhaps St. Mark did not know that future generations would have different ideas about how a Gospel ought to end!



Never mind the witness of the other Gospels for the moment. Each is a treasure, an intensely intimate disclosure of a personal religious experience shared as far as may be with the reader. Each Gospel is capable of achieving its purpose independently of the rest, and standing by itself contains the whole truth of the Resurrection.

So consider St. Mark’s Gospel on its own terms and let us see what comes of that. You’ve heard me say his Gospel seems as if it were written on the run and intended to be read in a hurry. It’s the shortest Gospel, and it wastes no words. The various episodes are connected by that all-pervasive word “immediately.” Mark’s Gospel begins

abruptly, and we’re finding out that it ends abruptly. Francis Bacon said “In divinity, many things must be left abrupt.”

There is huge evidence that the early Church preserved the tradition of the life and teaching of Christ with scrupulous care. And in so many cases in the New Testament, the supernatural is actually understated. At the wedding in Cana, only the wine steward knows that Jesus has turned water into wine.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ transcends all normal experience, and therefore a writer faces a real problem of communication. How do you express what was experienced, to give an impression accurate and adequate, to someone who has not shared the experience? If I wish to tell you about a thunder storm, I can appeal to your previous experience of thunder storms. We have available for our use ordinary everyday language. But when St. Mark and the other evangelists wish to describe a scene that has Jesus as the central figure, language becomes inadequate. Someone is paralyzed. A few moments after he is brought into the Lord’s presence, that same man walks home carrying his mat. Already language is in trouble. It is impossible in the face of such an event to give an adequate retelling in everyday language in a

way that will express what was experienced. It was a miracle, we say, but that tells us very little, except that it was a super-extra-ordinary event that defies description.

If the four evangelists' efforts to describe Our Lord's life were fraught with such difficulties, think about how to tell of the Resurrection! The story told by all four of them is marked by a strangeness that is because they were face to face with a new, unique, and ineffable experience of God in Christ. If the evangelists are to tell us anything at all about Easter, they must use ordinary language. But as they do, each word necessarily means less to us than it meant to them, because from the beginning it was never adequate to its purpose.

So St. Mark uses ordinary language, and it is roughly appropriate to the extraordinary matter at hand. Even so, an element of mystery, strangeness, otherness, remains. And that is because, having said what he is able to say, Mark leaves much unsaid, and so do the others, because the language needed to say it does not exist.

Perhaps this explains in some way why Mark's Gospel ends so abruptly. It is as if he is saying that silent wonder in the presence of the Resurrected Christ expresses it best.

And this explains the fear and trembling in Mary Magdalene and the others. These women weren't cowards. They had stood on Calvary when the men were hiding. They had watched when Jesus was buried. What *did* take courage was the early Church proclaiming that these women were first at the empty tomb. Given the prevailing attitude

towards women, such a proclamation is remarkable. It was not politically correct. But it just so happened to be true.

The presence of the angel in the tomb is complained about by so many people as being a problem. But his presence testifies to the spiritual character of the discovery. These women haven't discovered an unusual moss growing on the side of some rocks! It is no ordinary discovery. Rather these women are the first of our race to look on the order of reality as never seen before. The Resurrection was a break with the previously known view of how things happen. And because spiritual truth can be revealed only by a spiritual being, the angel is there. And so it is no ordinary fear that seizes these women. They were not easily frightened. Attending an execution on Golgotha wasn't very ladylike, but they had been there, where they had been taunted and mocked by the Roman soldiers and the powers-that-be. No. Rather it is the numinous dread of a spiritual presence, which could be felt whether or not it could be seen; that is what frightened them.

The women are told that it is all good news, such as the frightened shepherds had been told at Bethlehem. The spiritual presence of the angel radiates love rather than fear. And they believe. But it is all so strange and unexpected. That certainly comes across in all the Resurrection Gospels. Resurrections don't happen, and when one does, no one is prepared for it. A tomb, empty grave clothes, a strange mystery in the air. They believe, and yet they fear. The experience is too much for them. Is that all surpris-

ing? Any attempt to give a plain matter-of-fact account of the Resurrection utterly fails to do justice to its very strangeness and to the awe-full-ness of the discovery the women so unexpectedly make. I wonder what happened to their burial spices? I can't see them taking them to the return counter for a refund! They fled!

These women have been in an awe-full presence of the All-holy. Like Jacob when he awoke from his dream, they know "how dreadful is this place" (Gen. 28:17) and, like Jacob, they are overcome with numinous fear.

It is at this point that Mark's rough narrative comes to its abrupt end. The world is forever a different place, for we know One Who has risen from the dead. But Mark chooses to leave us with a picture of these devoted women, overwhelmed by a strange dread and fleeing back to a familiar place in which they feel secure. The peace and confidence that come from the Risen Lord Jesus will come later. Thanks to St. Mark and the others, something of the moment when the empty tomb was discovered is preserved as part of the good news of Easter.

¶ *a sermon preached by Father Bradford at Easter, 1997.*

Decree on the Gift of an Indulgence during the 'Year of the Eucharist'

The greatest of the miracles (cf. Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Office of Readings, Second Reading) and supreme memorial of the Redemption which Our Lord Jesus Christ brought about through

his Blood, the Eucharist, as sacrifice and sacrament, faultlessly produces the unity of the Church, sustains her with the power of supernatural grace, bathes her in ineffable joy and provides supernatural assistance to nourish the piety of the faithful and impel them to intensify and indeed to perfect their Christian life.

In consideration of this, moved by concern for the Church and to encourage both public and private devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II decreed in his Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* of 7 October 2004 that a special “Year” be celebrated throughout the Church, to be called the “Year of the Eucharist”.

Furthermore, to encourage in the faithful throughout this year a deeper knowledge and more intense love for the ineffable “Mystery of Faith” and for them to obtain an ever greater abundance of spiritual fruit, at the Audience the Holy Father granted to the undersigned Moderators of the Apostolic Penitentiary last 17 December, the Holy Father himself desired to endow with indulgences certain specific acts of worship and devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, as follows:

1. A Plenary Indulgence is granted to each and every member of the faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayers for the Supreme Pontiff’s intentions, in a spirit of total detachment from any inclination to sin), every time they take part, taking care to do so with pious attention, in a sacred liturgy or pious practice in honour of the Most Blessed Sacrament, solemnly exposed or preserved in the tabernacle.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN
MARY
COMMONLY CALLED
LADY DAY
Monday, April 4, 2005
Solemn Mass and Sermon
Saint Theresa of Ávila Chapel
West Roxbury
7:30pm

2. A Plenary Indulgence is also granted to the clergy, members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and to the other faithful bound by law to recite the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as those who are accustomed to praying the Divine Office for pure devotion, every time, at the end of the day, when they recite Vespers and Compline before the Lord present in the tabernacle, either in community or privately.

Members of the faithful prevented by illness or by other just causes from visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist in a church or chapel, may obtain the Plenary Indulgence in their own home, or wherever the impediment obliges them to be, as long as they are totally free from any desire to relapse into sin, as has been stated above, and intend to observe the three habitual conditions as soon as they possibly can; they will make the visit in spirit, should they deeply desire to do so, with faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, and they will recite the “Our Father” and the Creed, and in addition, a pious invocation addressed to Jesus in the Sacrament (for example, “Praise and thanks be

at every moment to the Blessed Sacrament”).

If they are unable even to do this, they may obtain a Plenary Indulgence if in their hearts they desire to join those who carry out in the usual way the works prescribed by the Indulgence and offer to Merciful God the infirmities and hardships of their lives with the determination to fulfill the three usual conditions as soon as possible.

Priests who carry out a pastoral ministry, especially parish priests, keeping in mind the “Suggestions and Proposals” indicated by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 15 October 2004, should inform their faithful in the most appropriate way of this beneficial disposition of the Church; such priests should be ready and available to hear their confessions and, on days to be determined as “convenient” for the faithful, should solemnly lead public recitations of prayers to Jesus in the Eucharist.

Finally, in imparting catechesis, let them urge the faithful to give frequent open testimonies of faith and veneration to the Most Blessed Sacrament as is proposed in the General Concession IV of *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, and also to be aware of the other concessions of the same Enchiridion: n. 7, Adoration and Eucharistic procession; n. 8, Eucharistic and spiritual Communion; n. 27, First Mass of newly ordained priests and jubilee celebrations of priestly and episcopal Ordinations.

This Decree comes into force during the “Year of the Eucharist” from the day on which it is published in *L’Osservatore Romano*, contrary

dispositions notwithstanding.

From the Offices of the Apostolic Penitentiary, Rome, 25 December 2004, on the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Cardinal James Francis Stafford
Major Penitentiary

Gianfranco Girotti, O.F.M. Conv.
Regent

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
April 3, 2005
Solemn Evensong
and Benediction
5:00pm
Chapel of St. Theresa of Ávila
Church
West Roxbury

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 JOHN KEARNEY

Priest, Religious, and Martyr (1619-1653)

Father John Kearney, a newly ordained Franciscan priest of Cashel, Ireland, was captured by the English parliamentarian authorities as he was returning to his native country from France. He was tortured in a futile effort to make him renounce

his faith. Hours before his scheduled execution, he was smuggled out of prison by an English Catholic benefactor. Father Kearney then returned to Ireland to minister to his countrymen. After nearly ten years spent thus, he was again captured by the English and was sentenced to death for being a priest, for administering the sacraments, and for confirming the people in their obedience to the pope. Ascending the scaffold in his Franciscan habit, he declared that he hoped “through the merits of Christ for the great reward which God has promised to those who love him.” Following his execution, Maria Grey, a penitent of his, approached his open coffin and took into her hand the dead priest’s right hand, kissing it and praying that he would intercede for her. Thereupon Maria and the others present were startled to see the martyr’s hand press hers, as if acknowledging her request.

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BLESSED JOHN SLADE

Martyr († 1583)

An English student and later professor at Oxford, John was beheaded for refusing to submit to Henry VIII’s law of 1534 establishing the supremacy of the king of England in religious affairs.

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Saint of the Month



St. Catherine of Siena

1347-1380

St. Catherine of Siena was made a Doctor of the Church in 1970 by Pope Pius VI. She was the first woman and first layperson to have been given this title. (St. Teresa of Ávila was also named that year.)

She is remembered for her dedication to spreading the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, whom she claims to have seen a vision when she was very young.

She was born to an Italian wool dyer, Giacomo di Benincasa and Lapa di Puccio di Piacenti and had many siblings (one account says 24). The deaths of at least three sisters (one a twin) in her early life prompted her to become even more diligent in her prayers and fasting. Her parents wanted her to marry, but she felt drawn to devote her life to God and in 1365 joined a local Dominican lay order of women, the Mantellate. She spent much of her

time at home in solitude, in penance, prayer, and meditation.

In her early 20s she felt called to abandon her solitary habits and take up more public roles. She became known as a gifted preacher, for which she experienced difficulties with the authorities. Blessed Raymond recounted that he had to get papal permission for several confessors to attend her preaching, so many were the converts. Her love for God and her wish to communicate that love were inseparable. She also committed herself to helping the poor and the sick, for example, in the famine of 1370 and the plague of 1374.

She was literate though at first many of her letters were transcribed by secretaries. Her confessor, spiritual director, and first biographer was Blessed Raymond of Capua. In 1377 she began to write *The Dialogue*, a work based upon some of her mystical experiences of God and including accounts of conversations she had with Jesus Christ.

She was passionate about the state of the Church and of Society and in the course of several years wrote letters and traveled to Florence, Rome, Pisa, urging reforms. For example in 1376 she met with Pope Gregory XI in Avignon, about his interdict on Florence. Her efforts did not succeed, and she returned to Siena to found an order of cloistered nuns.

She was known for asceticism, especially fasting, and early on established habits of contemplative prayer; both were primary in her life

She was only 33 when she died on April 29th, in Rome, having em-

barked on a fast to plead for God to save the Church. Her body was buried first in the Minerva cemetery in Rome and then the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, below the high altar. She was canonized in 1461 under the Sienese Pope Pius II.

SHORT NOTES

A year's-mind Mass will be offered for the soul of Ronald Jaynes on Easter Saturday at 9am in the convent chapel. Ron was a faithful altar server. He died in 2001.

Lenten Coin Folders should be returned to the chapel soon. Proceeds benefit the work of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Boston.

Daylight Savings Time returns Sunday morning, April 3rd at 2:00pm. SPRING AHEAD one hour before retiring Saturday night.

An Anglican Use Conference will take place on Friday, April 29, 2005 in St. Clare Catholic Church, Scranton, Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Anglican Use Society and the St. Thomas More Society. Featured speakers are Fr. Aidan Nichols, OP, who has been lecturing in this country this winter, and Dr. Alexander J. Burke, Jr. of Hofstra University and Fordham University, who will deliver a paper on Cardinal Newman. For more information and to register, please call 484-437-8703. <http://anglicanuse.org>

In May, our patronal feast, St. Athanasius Day, is Monday, May 2nd. Solemn Mass is at 7:30pm.

Ascension Day is Thursday, May 5th. This is a holy day of obligation. The Anglican Use Mass is at 7:30pm.

Regina Cœli

From Easter Day until Pentecost

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven: alleluia

He whom thou wast meet to bear: alleluia

As he promised hath arisen: alleluia

Pour for us to God thy prayer: alleluia

∞ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia:

∞ For the Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.

O GOD, who by the resurrection of thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ hast brought joy to the whole world; grant that through his Mother the Virgin Mary we may obtain the joys of life everlasting. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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.

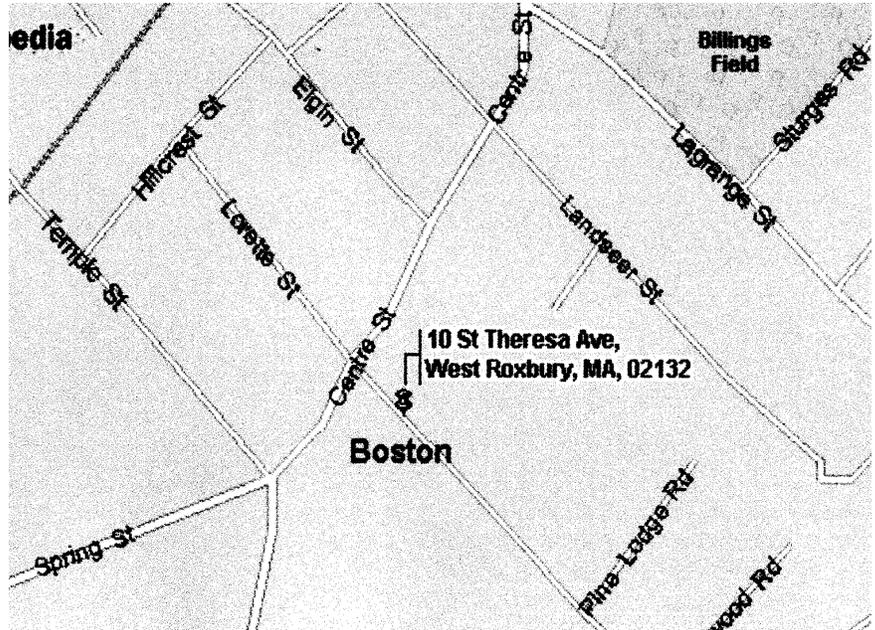
Directions by Car: From the North: Route 128 to
Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West
Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at
Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light
bear left onto Centre St.. and immediately turn
right at the next light onto St.. Theresa Ave.

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

