
✠ 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

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NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

¶ *In this Year of the Eucharist, the following is offered on the subject of sacramental signification. I hope you will find some nourishment in it for your assistance at Mass and devotions to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Just how does Calvary, a past event, become present for us in the Eucharist? It happens in a quite unique way. When we use that word “unique” we do not mean “unusual.” Rather, unique means “one of a kind.” It means that it never happened that way before nor shall it in the future.*

WE say that the Eucharist is a sacrament. And that it was constituted by Christ in the certain historic acts of the Last Supper and Calvary. It was Abbot Anscar Vonier who recalled to the Church that a sacrament is a sign of a very special kind. [Dom Anscar Vonier was Abbot of Buckfast, a Benedictine abbey in Devonshire, England. His important book, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, originally published in London by Burns & Oates, 1925, has been reissued by Ignatius Press for the Year of the Eucharist.]

Any sign represents something else. In the ordinary sense this means the sign of something which is absent.



But a sacramental sign re-presents. It makes something present again. The sacramental sign effects what is symbolized. There is effective causality: the sacramental sign brings about that which it represents.

Sacramental efficacy is a unique type of effective causality. It is, of course, supernatural. But that is not its uniqueness. Vonier writes, “if the priest at the altar brought down Christ from heaven in his natural state as a full-grown man, this would not be a sacrament in the least, as it would lack the very essence of the sacra-

ment, representative signification.” A sacrament is, above all else, a sign. An outward part is not necessarily an outward sign. So even though it is possible to have a real presence of Christ, it will not be a sacramental one if there is no sign, and therefore not a sacrament.

The abbot goes on to say that the sacramental world is a new world created by God and entirely different from both the natural world and the spiritual world. Sacraments are not modes of spiritual realities. They are a new creation with entirely new laws. What this means is that the real presence of Christ in the eucharist is both entirely real and altogether different from both His Presence on earth before His Ascension, and His Presence in Heaven after the Ascension.

Both the Presence of Christ on earth and His Presence in Heaven are presences in their own right. But so is the Eucharistic presence a presence in its own right. That is because by His institution and promise, Christ has attached to that presence certain material signs. And Abbot Vonier says that whatever Christ has done in attaching to His Eucharistic Presence certain material signs this sacramental sphere “is an unknown world with a well-known inhabitant.” The Eucharistic Presence then is something outside the realm of

our normal experience, and here it is good to remember the Greek word for sacrament, *mysterion*.

To support his view, Vonier quotes St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica* (III 5 lxxvi, 6) "Christ", says Thomas, "has not the same *esse* in himself which he has under this sacrament, because when we speak of his *esse* under this sacrament there is signified a relation of himself to this sacrament."

The Angelic Doctor says that Transubstantiation is a true description of the Eucharist change. But he also makes it plain that not only the means which makes the change but the real presence itself is altogether different from that by which things exist outside the sacramental sphere.

It was an Anglican theologian who anticipated Dom Anscar Vonier's thought by seventy years. Robert Wilberforce (1802-1857) was one of the most learned of the Oxford Tractarians and was in close association with the more famous John Henry Newman and Hurrell Froude. Robert was the son of the famous abolitionist William Wilberforce. [The Wilberforce brothers were a nineteenth century version of the Knox brothers. Robert and his youngest brother Henry were received into the Catholic Church. Robert was preparing for priesthood when he died. Henry was an editor of the *Catholic Standard*. Another brother, Samuel, was the Anglican bishop of Oxford.]

Robert Wilberforce, in his *The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (published in London by Mozley in 1853) said three things about the Eucharistic presence: it is supernatural, it is sacramental, it is real. Ever since the



David Burt and Terry Maltzberger visit with Fr. Carleton Jones, O.P. after Sunday Mass at St. Vincent Ferrer in New York City on their way back from the Anglican Use Conference in Scranton, PA, April 28, 2005.

Ascension, "the *natural* presence of our Lord's humanity is in heaven." And the Eucharistic Presence is supernatural *and* sacramental.

"It is a sacramental presence—the presence, that is, of a *res sacramenti*, which is not, in itself, an object to the senses of men.... There is a connection between the *sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*, and form and place belong to the first, though they do not belong to the second. So that though the *res sacramenti* in itself, has neither place nor form, yet it has them in a manner through the *sacramentum*, with which it is united."

And earlier in his book Wilberforce, commenting on the words of institution in the Mass "this is my Body" said this: "the word is" expresses the *identity* of the Subject and Predicate.... But identity is of various kinds, and what is the nature of the identity here intended?... It is plainly a peculiar principle—*sui ge-*

neris; which, being without parallel in the world around, is entitled to a specific appellation. For it depends upon that mysterious law of consecration, of which we have no other example; and by virtue of this act, the Subject and Predicate make up together a real, but heterogeneous whole.... So that since the relation between the Subject and Predicate in our Lord's words of Institution cannot be resolved into any more general idea, it can derive its name only from itself, and the union can be described as nothing else than a *sacramental identity*."

What all this means is that the Mass is not something which *happens* to Christ. Not in the sense that the events in His Incarnate Life happened to Him. The Mass does not repeat or imitate Christ's death. It is rather the Christ-given means by which His whole sacrificial action, centered in the Cross and cul-

minating in the Ascension, is made sacramentally present in His Church. The Mass is not a repetition of the sacrifice. Nor is it the completion of the sacrifice. It is the sacrifice itself, present in the unique mode of a sacrament, because divinely ordained to be the effective sign of it.

Each Mass is a new event. But it is not a new event in the life of Christ. For the redemptive act of Christ does not happen in the Mass. It is simply there, sacramentally.

What is Christ doing now? He is Christ the King. He is reigning in glory, seated at the right hand of the Father and interceding before His Father's throne for us. He is not dying on our altars. And the Mass contains and communicates the whole life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not a new sacrifice. It is the one sacrifice in its totality, under a divinely appointed sign.

Father Aidan Nichols, OP, says this about the real presence. "The saving sacrifice which summed up everything he was becomes accessible (present) through the symbolism of bread for eating, wine for drinking. Christ does not leave heaven; his transformed biology remains where it was. But the consecrated elements become the embodiment of his presence. There is a conversion of the medium in which our meeting with him is to take place. He himself becomes the medium in which we encounter him. This is what the Fathers of Trent, echoing those of the Fourth Lateran Council, called "that wonderful and unique conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body [of the Lord]~ and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the appearances alone of bread and

wine remaining." (*Epiphany*, The Liturgical Press, 1996)

The sacramental system is neither material nor spiritual. It is what it is. And in the Mass bread and wine become by sacramental causality the Body and Blood of Christ so that the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ is made present as the food and drink of the Church's existence and source of her life.

FATHER BRADFORD

¶*The original inspiration for this article was found in the writings of the Anglican theologian Eric Mascall. See especially his Christ, The Christian and the Church (London, Longmans, 1946) and his Corpus Christi, (London, Longmans, 1953.)*

Opinions

"In choosing or rejecting an opinion, a man ought not to be led by love or hatred for its holder, but rather by the truth itself; and therefore we ought to love both sides, those whose opinion we reject not less than those whose opinion we follow, since both of them help in the discovery of the truth and therefore it is right to say Thank you to all."

¶*Johannes Duns Scotus (c. 1264-1308) was a philosopher with profound influence during the Middle Ages. A backhand compliment to his popularity is that the Reformers and humanists coined the word "dunce" to ridicule the subtleties of his teaching.*

SHORT NOTES

It is the season for graduations!

Jessica Bradford has received her doctor's degree from the Vanderbilt

University School of Medicine and begins residency at the Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester this month.

Patrick Cavanaugh graduates from Boston College High School this month and will enter Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. in the fall.

Congratulations to them and their families!

Saint of the Month



Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) is one whose name is familiar perhaps even to non-Catholics. He is the saint of lost objects. However he is appreciated for much more. He was a great preacher and for this, in part, he was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1946 by Pope Pius XII. Such were his gifts of homiletics that the adjective "evangelicus" was added to his title ("Doctor evangelicus").

Anthony was born in Lisbon to a family of the nobility. As a young

man he joined the Augustinian Canons Regular and studied the Bible. In 1220 he became a Franciscan and discerned a call to missionary work. A voyage to Morocco to further a mission to some slain Franciscan friars was cut short by illness and bad weather. He landed in Sicily and continued a journey towards Assisi, where in 1221 he attended a general chapter of Franciscans. He became a good friend and disciple of Francis of Assisi. Anthony was then assigned to a hermitage near Forli, where he might have continued in relative obscurity had not an occasion arisen to preach at an ordination service. The bishop and others in attendance were so struck by Anthony's theological and homiletical gifts that he was sent to preach in parts of Lombardy.

When Francis of Assisi died, Anthony was called back to become provincial of northern Italy. He wrote a series of "Sermons for Sundays" during this time and also was called to Rome to help advise on the legacy of Francis, for example the implementation of the vow of poverty. There had arisen controversy between a pragmatic approach and a strict observance of this vow. At the papal court he was also commissioned to write a series of "Sermons for Feast Days."

Near the end of his life he returned to Padua. He continued to be a popular preacher, not only in churches but also in public squares and marketplaces. He worked with the poor and those who had fallen into debt. He helped change laws that often imprisoned debtors, changing provisions so that the sale of one's possessions was permitted in order to settle debts. He died at Arcella, near Padua on June 13, 1231.

A basilica, Our Lady in Padua, was built to honor him at his burial site, and he was canonized less than a year later.

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 THOMAS GARNET

Priest, Religious, and Martyr (1575-1608)

As a Catholic philosophy student at Oxford University in Elizabethan England, Richard Garnet, the future father of the martyr Thomas Garnet, was a victim of the university's court of inquisition which sought to persecute Catholic students. When a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was discovered in Richard's room, it was confiscated, carried in a mock procession, and burned. Before the inquisitors, Richard so ably defended the Catholic veneration of religious images that many students and faculty members in attendance gained a newfound respect for this practice. Richard later settled and married in London, where his son Thomas was born. Thomas studied for the priesthood in Valladolid, Spain, where he was ordained. Father Garnet served in England for six years before being captured and exiled by the English authorities. After becoming a professed Jesuit in Louvain, Belgium, he returned to England in September

of 1607, but was soon arrested. Condemned to death for his priesthood, Father Garnet told the onlookers at his execution (June 23, 1608) that he was "the happiest man this day alive."

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BLESSED SIDNEY HODGSON

Martyr (1591)

A layman converted to Catholicism, he was hung at Tyburn for having helped Catholic priests, since the Law of Supremacy, whereby Henry VIII had himself recognized as head of the Church of England, forbade the presence of Catholic priests on English soil.

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THE FEAST OF SAINT IRENAEUS

"We have learned the plan of our salvation from none other than those through whom the Gospel has come down to us. They first preached the Gospel, and afterwards, by the will of God, they handed it down to us in the Scriptures, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith."

ST. IRENAEUS

Saint Irenaeus (c.130-c.202) was educated at Smyrna, where he was also a disciple of St. Polycarp. In 177 Irenaeus was ordained priest in Lyons and soon after was made bishop there. He wrote works defending the

Catholic faith and at the end won the martyr's crown. His feast day is June 28th.

The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

Friday, June 24, 2005

Low Mass at 12:00 Noon

Convent Chapel

S. BARNABAS
distributing money
to the hungry



The Feast of Saint Barnabas

Saturday, June 11, 2005

Low Mass at 9:00am

Convent Chapel

**THE SOURCE OF
SALVATION AND
TRUE LIFE**

ASK you to consider that our Lord Jesus Christ is your true head and that you are a member of his body. He belongs to you as the head belongs to the body. All that is his is yours: breath, heart, body, soul and all his faculties. All of these you

must use as if they belonged to you, so that in serving him you may give him praise, love and glory. You belong to him as a member belongs to the head. This is why he earnestly desires you to serve and glorify the Father by using all your faculties as if they were his.

He belongs to you, but more than that, he longs to be in you, living and ruling in you, as the head lives and rules in the body. He desires that whatever is in him may live and rule in you: his breath in your breath, his heart in your heart, all the faculties of his soul in the faculties of your soul, so that these words may be fulfilled in you: Glorify God and bear him in your body, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in you.

You belong to the Son of God, but more than that, you ought to be in him as the members are in the head. All that is in you must be incorporated into him. You must receive life from him and be ruled by him. There will be no true life for you except in him, for he is the one source of true life. Apart from him you will find only death and destruction. Let him be the only source of your movements, of the actions and the strength of your life. He must be both the source and the purpose of your life, so that you may fulfill these words: None of us lives as his own master and none of us dies as his own master. While we live, we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die, we die as his servants. Both in life and death we are the Lord's. That is why Christ died and came to life again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Finally, you are one with Jesus as the body is one with the head. You must, then, have one breath with

him, one soul, one life, one will, one mind, one heart. And he must be your breath, heart, love, life, your all. These great gifts in the follower of Christ originate from baptism. They are increased and strengthened through confirmation and by making good use of other graces that are given by God. Through the holy eucharist they are brought to perfection.

From a treatise on the admirable Heart of Jesus by Saint John Eudes, priest

**The Congregation of
Saint Athanasius,**

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

Sunday Mass 10:30am
Saint Theresa Convent
Chapel
10 St. Theresa Ave.
West Roxbury, Mass.

Fellowship and Coffee in the
Solarium after Mass

Adult Class as announced.

Rectory: 192 Foster Street,
Brighton, MA 02135-4620

Tel/Fax: (617) 787-0553

Web: <http://www.locutor.net>



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.

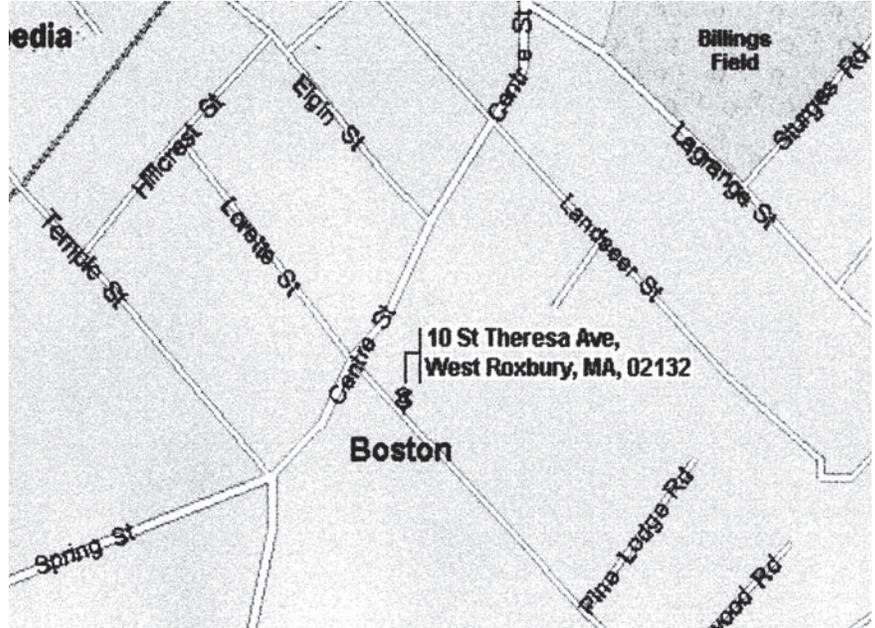
Directions by Car: From the North: Route 128 to
Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West
Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at
Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light
bear left onto Centre St.. and immediately turn
right at the next light onto St.. Theresa Ave.

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.



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10 St.. Theresa Avenue

West Roxbury, MA 02132

