
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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September 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

THE first three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are included under the name “synoptic” (Greek “common perspective”). The term was first used in a year forever etched in the annals of American history ... 1776, but by a German scholar named J. Griesbach. He was the first to put the texts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in three parallel columns for purposes of comparison.

When you do this, treating the gospels as literary form and not necessarily as sacred and devotional writings, you realize how closely related is the context and arrangement of the material of the story about Jesus. It is easy to see, because visibly presented on each page, the remarkable and complex commingling of agreement and disagreement among Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

A gospel parallels book for you to examine may at first glance look like a printing press ran amok! But it only takes a few minutes to understand the format and how it can work for you.

You will appreciate that there is a whole division of New Testament



SAINT MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

Thursday, September 29, 2005
Procession, Solemn Mass
& Sermon 7:30pm
Chapel of St. Theresa of Ávila
Church
West Roxbury

*Celebrating the Eighth Anniversary
of the Anglican Use in Boston*

studies which is devoted to explaining the agreements and disagreements in the synoptic gospels. We cannot wade into the various problems and proposed solutions, but what I want us to consider briefly is how the gospel came to be put in written form, and some of the theories attached to this process, and then give you from

the Catechism and the documents of the Second Vatican Council Catholic teaching on the whole matter. At the end I will even suggest some interesting homework.

In our consideration we must always keep in mind that Our Lord Jesus Himself left nothing in writing. The earliest writings we have are dated about thirty or forty years after His Ascension. This means that for several decades the deposit of the tradition about Jesus was transmitted by word of mouth.

If you have ever played that parlor game where a simple story is whispered from one person to the next and passed around the circle, you realize, often with amusing results, that in the process of oral transmission sayings and stories do not remain unchanged. Some stability enters the mix once the stories about Jesus had been committed to writing. But there is even evidence that Luke and Matthew did not hesitate to rework Mark's written account. (Not that Matthew and Luke were knowingly and willfully tinkering with sacred scripture. Remember that for them the Bible was what we call the Septuagint, the seventy books of the Old Testament.)

Before you worry that the oral tradition was a free-for-all crap shoot, like the parlor game I described, it is vital to remember that up until the

invention of the printing press in the 15th century very few people could or needed to be able to read, and as a consequence, their memory for facts and details was sharper than is ours. Just think about the common recitation from memory of the entire contents of epic poems like *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, *The Aeneid*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *The Fairie Queen*, to name a few, and you begin to realize how our modern capacity for memory has been stunted by our ability to go to the shelf and look things up. First century people could remember things more accurately, and especially in important matters. First century Christians staked their lives on the truth of the Gospel details.

There is another consideration about memory: and it brings me momentarily to something I have promised you towards the end of this talk: namely, Catholic guidance on our approach to literary criticism of the Bible. *Literaturgattung*, viewing the gospels as literary form, is a new creation of the past two centuries. But the gospel tradition itself records that Our Lord Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to guide and guard and lead the Church into all truth. In other words, there is a decisive supernatural element involved in the consideration of the Holy Scriptures, and Catholic teaching insists that we set all our study of the Bible on that framework.

When you compare the synoptic gospels you come to one of four possible conclusions:

1. Mark's gospel was first written, and, with an anonymous source for the sayings of Jesus, was used by the later gospels Matthew and Luke. This anonymous source might

have been written and now lost, or not written at all but was a pool of well-remembered sayings. Scholars call this hypothetical source "Q" for *Quelle*, the German word for "source."

2. Alongside this "two-document" theory, is the second possible conclusion you can come to when evaluating the synoptic gospels. It is called the "two-gospel theory" and puts the correct chronological order of the gospels at Matthew, first, followed by Luke, and then Mark. In this theory, Mark was written in order to unify the presentation of the very Jewish Matthew and very Gentile Luke approaches.

3. A theory promoted by a great Anglican theologian, Austin Farrer, whose work is held in high esteem by the Catholic Church, is that there is no "Q" and that Luke used Matthew as his primary source alongside his access to Mark.

4. The final view is that the Synoptic gospels, despite their shared material, are independent of each other, but all equally come out of the experience of the community of faith, the Catholic Church.

As convenient as it might be to say the disciples came back down from the mount of the Ascension with the New Testament tucked under their arms, this is not what happened. And the internal evidence of what eventually was written in all four gospels is that Our Lord Jesus in the first instance formed the disciples into a group whose task it was to spread memorized versions of His teaching and summaries of His actions. This is, after all, the known practice of the Pharisees and famous rabbis in the ancient Jewish world. So this fourth possible conclusion is

called the "multiple-source theory."

The first task of the Catholic Church was not to write the New Testament. It was to preach the gospel, to convert and baptize. The Church right from the beginning began to do all the things we still associate with her work: in the way of worship, catechism, preaching missions, collections for the relief of the poor, soup kitchens, and homes for orphans and widows. All of these and more are described on the pages of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the second book St. Luke wrote. And the writing of the gospels, just as the writing of the epistles of St. Paul, came out of the needs, and reflected the experience of, the early Church.

In any case, when you have done with the gospel parallels and sifted the various ramifications, you come down onto the side of one of these four theories.

Catholic Biblical theology keeps the ship of Bible study on an even keel by not allowing us to forget that even scientific literary criticism of the gospels is set against the backdrop of the saving acts of God in Christ. And that the Bible is the book of the Church founded by Christ. This goes a long way in explaining how we get the agreements and disagreements found in the synoptic gospels.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission has this to say: "It need not be denied that the apostles when handing on to their hearers the things which in actual fact the Lord had said and done, did so in the light of that fuller understanding which they enjoyed as a result of being schooled by the glorious things accomplished in Christ, and of being illuminated by the Spirit of Truth. Thus it came about that, just as Jesus Himself after

His Resurrection had “interpreted to them” (Luke 24:27) both the words of the Old Testament and the words which He Himself had spoken, so now they in their turn interpreted His words and deeds according to the needs of their hearers. “Devoting [themselves] to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4), they made use, as they preached, of such various forms of speech as were adapted to their own purposes and to the mentality of their hearers; for it was “to Greek and barbarian, to learned and simple: (Romans 1:14) that they had a duty to discharge.” (*Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels* 8:2)

And in the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* from the Second Vatican Council, the document commonly referred to as *Dei Verbum*, the council fathers articulated the faith of the Church in this passage: “The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form, others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, while keeping the form of proclamation, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus Whether they relied on their own memory and recollections or on the testimony of those who “from the beginning were eyewitnesses and minister of the Word,” their purpose in writing was that we might know the “truth” concerning the things of which we have been informed (cf. Luke 12:4)” (*Dei Verbum*, 18-19)

So how can we know about Jesus Christ? We have to admit that those who wrote the gospel accounts as we have them were believers, deeply affected by faith in Christ. But it

does not follow that they were uninterested in what actually happened historically. Although they were not historians in a modern sense, and although the tradition about Jesus was directed to the practical needs of the Church, it does not follow that the evangelists were wholesale inventors of facts and were making it up as they went along. We may wish that the evangelists laid out the material differently, but we must always accept that the Bible is not biography, but the record of God’s saving acts in history, and that, as St. John says, “These things are written that you may have faith.”

To get a flavor of the synoptic gospel parallels, you might do some work on your own. It would be interesting to take a story found in all three synoptic gospels, and compare each incident in each story with the corresponding accounts in the other gospels. As suggestions, you might begin with the Parable of the Sower, 19 lines in Mark’s gospel, 16 in Matthew’s, and 12 in Luke’s, (at least in the Greek text.) Mark 13:1-9, Matthew 4:1-9, Luke 8:4-8.

Or for the Feast of the Transfiguration, you might compare the similarities and differences in each synoptic gospel. The story is found at Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36.

And then for dessert, compare the various accounts of the Resurrection, and include St. John’s account as well. The texts are Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-10; and John 20:1-10.

A consideration of gospel parallels helps us appreciate that the early Church did not “cook the books” but allowed the truth of the gospel to be conveyed to us through the various

historical traditions as they existed when the story was finally written out. When you have the truth you do not worry about making an air-tight case. When you have the truth, you simply proclaim it.

FATHER BRADFORD

These notes were originally presented at a Sunday morning adult class in August, 2001. They have been slightly revised for publication.

SAINT OF THE MONTH



Saint John Chrysostom
September 13

EPISCOPALIANS familiar with the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* will probably recognize this month’s saint, John of Chrysostom, because of a collect “of St. Chrysostom” that concludes the morning and evening prayer services in that book. His surname (meaning “golden mouth”), referring to his gift as a preacher, was not added to

his baptismal name until the sixth century. He is considered a patron saint of orators and preachers.

He was a learned man, a bishop, a Doctor of the Church, renowned preacher, and prolific writer of the 4th century.

He was born in Antioch ca. 347, the son of a military officer. His father died when John was quite young, and the widow Anthusa raised him and his older sister. He was provided a classical education in Greek, law, oratory, and Christian doctrine and the Scriptures. He was baptized and ordained a lector. Under the influence of Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, and Carterius, he chose the ascetic life and joined a monastic community ca. 373. The austere conditions of this community adversely affected his health and prompted his return to Antioch in 381 after just a few years. He became a deacon in a local church and in 386, a priest (under Bishop Flavian). He continued to write and preach as well as minister to the poor. He became known for his commentaries on the letters of Paul and the Gospels of Matthew and John and even for a series of sermons that helped to calm a contentious political situation involving new taxes!

In 398 Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, consecrated John the Patriarch of Constantinople. Some say that he had to be escorted secretly out of Antioch because of his popularity with the people, who were reluctant to let him go. John was interested in reform of certain abuses and laxity in clerical life and in extravagances and lavish indulgences of the court, in particular Empress Eudoxia (whom he called a “Jezebel”). This made him popular with the laity but alien-

ated him from some of the clergy. He became embroiled in a clerical synod in 403 (Synod of the Oak) and was declared banished to Bithynia by Emperor Arcadius. He was recalled after a brief time but banished again in 404 by an Arian council at Antioch after speaking out against a public celebration of a statue of Eudoxia placed in front of the church. In his last years he led an itinerant existence, still communicating with his supporters and with Rome and hoping to be restored to Constantinople. During his final journey he was forced to travel entirely on foot, in harsh conditions towards Pithyus, near the Caucasus Mountains. He died of exhaustion and fever on September 14, 407 at Comana in Cappadocia and was known to have declared as last words, *Doxa to theo panton eneken* (“Glory to God for all things”).

He was first buried at Comana and then later in the Church of the Apostles in Constantinople. In the early 13th century his relics were removed and interred in the choir chapel of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

He was declared a Father of the Church by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. He, Athanasius, Basil the Great, and Gregory Nazianzen were the four Greek Doctors of the Church so named in 1568. A large body of his writings is available to scholars and readers. He wrote a dialogue with St. Basil, entitled *On the Priesthood*. In addition to homilies on the Scriptures, many of his letters survive, most from banishment and exile. He is remembered for his firm belief in the Real Presence in the Eucharist, prompting the title “Doctor of the Eucharist.”

His feast day is September 13th; the Russian and Greek Orthodox calendars have November 13th as his feast day.

BIRTHDAYS



There are only three festivals in the Church celebrating birthdays—Our Lord’s, Our Lady’s, and Saint John the Baptist’s. All three births came under special conditions of sanctity not common to mankind.

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated because she was in the first instant of her conception preserved from all sin. Her birthday is celebrated because her singular privilege was granted by Almighty God in view of the merits of Christ.

Christ is God’s only begotten Son. You and I become God’s children by adoption and grace. But Our Lady came into the world sinless, in the same state as a soul at its

baptism. So at Mary's birthday, we celebrate as we commemorate in joy her redemption. It is in anticipation of our own.

On this day one came into the world in whom the prince of this world had nothing, and in whom dwelt the fullness of the divine perfection which is the hope of our calling.

Mary's birthday is cause for rejoicing.

*from a sermon by Father Bradford
September 8, 2001*

ABOUT ANGELS

ANGELS are creatures, they are **A**not God. Like ourselves, they cannot rest content within themselves without excluding happiness and making a home for misery. Like ourselves, they must reach outside themselves for the lovableness that will still the insistent demands of the will. Only God is totally sufficient unto himself, for only God is infinite goodness, only God has no end to attain but only goodness to share. Only God is home for the love of the angels, as he is for our love; they too must make their way home or remain forever exiles, wanderers in a world as empty and cold as a prison cell, for love's fire is the divine flame or it gives no warmth.

To the appreciation of our nobility be it said that the angels are no more free than the least of men. Liberty does not come in spoonfuls, it is not doled out in differing degrees; it is magnificently full or it is non-existent. We are, then, no less responsible than the highest angels for the use we make of that liberty;

and it is this awful splendor of responsibility that frightens men into an attempt to deny their humanity. The record of our use of it gives us grounds primarily for humility, since we are so often wavering, weak, timid both in our virtues and our sins. The angels suffer no such imperfections: their virtues are gestures of sweeping grandeur, their sins plumb the depths of the malice of hell. The movement of their wills, in other words, is a worthy complement to the instantaneous perfection of their knowledge.

It is an awesome thing to be loved or hated by an angel; one hardly less overpowering than the other. Nothing will arise to change that love or hate, there will be no belated discovery of goodness or evil, no error of judgement to be corrected, no rival to detract from the totality of love's embrace or hatred's spleen. The angel loves or hates instantaneously, with all the intensity of its unimpeded nature, irrevocably, with utter generosity or malice, in a roaring flame of consummation of its desire.

My Way of Life

Fr. Walter Farrell, OP and

Fr. Martin J. Healy

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 STOREY
Layman and Martyr († 1571)

Blessed John Storey was born in the north of England. A married man, lawyer, and professor at Oxford, he became a Member of Parliament. He opposed several anti-Catholic laws under King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth. The first time he was arrested he escaped, but was pursued by the queen's Secret Service. Arrested again and accused of treason, Blessed John Storey was martyred at Tyburn.

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BLESSED RALPH CORBY
Priest, Religious, and Martyr
(1598-1644)

Ralph Corby was the son of an English Catholic family in which two of his brothers, his two sisters, and both his parents eventually entered religious life. Journeying to the continent, Ralph was ordained a priest at the age of twenty-seven and later became a Jesuit. Serving in England, he devoted himself to the poorest Catholics in the Durham area. As he arrived at their cottages, he would jestingly ask the inhabitants to look after his walking stick, which he referred to as "his horse". In July of 1644, Father Corby was arrested by Oliver Cromwell's Puritan soldiers as he was celebrating Mass. He and another priest, Blessed John Duckett, were together condemned to death for their priesthood. Anticipating his execution on September 7, the eve of the feast of the Birth of Mary, Father Corby observed in a letter: "I expect [await] that good Sabbath which is

the eve of her glorious nativity, by whose holy intercession I hope to be born to a new and everlasting life." As he and Father Duckett were about to be executed, Father Corby declared, "We die willingly and with all our hearts for our Savior."

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SHORT NOTES

We enjoyed a visit after Mass August 7 with Arthur Swanberg, who now lives in south Florida. Arthur was attending a family reunion in the Boston area, his first visit in three years.

Our friend Fr. John Grennon, OCD is being transferred by the Discalced Carmelites to a regional position in the Midwest. He will live in Milwaukee. Fr. Grennon has been a frequent guest at special services during the past year. We wish him well.

Dorothy Moran died in early August after a long illness, and was buried on August 6th. She is the mother of Frank Moran. Our prayers go to Frank and Cheryl and their family at this time.

The next service of Solemn Evensong & Benediction will be on Sunday, October 16th in the St. Theresa of Ávila Chapel.

Father Bradford was one of the persons interviewed for a story on the Pastoral Provision which appeared in the June 5-11 issue of *National Catholic Register*.

Confirmation classes for adults in preparation for reception into the Catholic Church are offered by ar-

rangement with the chaplain. Do you know anyone who is interested and could use some encouragement?

The congregation will conduct an Every Member Canvass during the month of October.

Fr. George Greenway has written from his new home in Saint Simon's Island, Georgia, where he has now settled. He sends greetings to all.

Rita Strow visited relatives in Ireland during August, and sent postcards. She has sold her home in Wilmington and will be moving to Atlanta to be closer to her son.

Chris Roberts phoned from Logansport, Indiana in mid-August. He is working in his local parish before returning to the Gregorian in Rome to finish his degree in sacred theology and, God willing, ordination next June 24th, in the Diocese of Lafayette. Chris attended our Sunday Mass on occasions when he was a student at Harvard. We wish and pray him well.

The Seven Sorrows of the B.V.M.



THE prophecy of old Simeon at the time of the Presentation

of Christ In the Temple concluded with these words to Mary, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." They indicate her role in the fulfillment of God's sacrificial purpose.

Like all Bible prophecy Simeon's words must come true. In fact, there are seven occasions, when Mary shared directly in her Son's, sufferings: first, at the prophecy of Simeon itself, when the Child Jesus was offered in the Temple on His fortieth day; second, during the flight into Egypt, to escape the slaughter carried out by King Herod; third, at the loss of Jesus when He was twelve years old and stayed behind in Jerusalem to be about His Father's business at the Temple; fourth, on meeting her Son on the way to Calvary, fifth, while standing at the foot of the Cross and listening to His words; sixth, when taking His dead body down from the Cross; seventh, at His burial in the stone tomb.

Saint Bernard points out that as the spear pierced Jesus' body but not His soul (He was dead already), so it pierced Mary's soul but not her body. In other words Mary was alive when she was pierced. Because Mary is the model of the Church, the bride of Christ, what happens to her is understood to happen to all God's people. The faithful always share in the Passion.

Because of Simeon's prophecy and these seven ways in which it is completely fulfilled, Mary is sometimes represented in art and symbolism with seven swords piercing her heart. ... The Seven Sorrows are celebrated on the Friday before Palm Sunday and on September 15) the day after the Feast of the Holy Cross.



It is also called the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

from the newsletter of the Church of the Good Shepherd, East Chicago, Indiana (March 4, 2005)

SAINT PETER

IN a little retreat house where Jesus was staying for a time, one day He looked deep into the eyes of a fisherman named Simon and said, rather formally, “thou art Simon, son of Jonas. Thou shalt be called Cephas.” (Which means rock in Hebrew and the Greek word is Petras.)

Jesus had a penchant for giving nicknames. You remember that He called James and John “Boanerges” or sons of thunder, because of their hot tempers. In the case of these sons of Zebedee the nickname was obvious to those other disciples who perhaps saw the brothers boil over on occasion. But Simon the Rock? It wasn’t obvious to anybody, not for a good long time. They knew Peter to be sometimes violent, falling asleep

in his prayers, presuming to tell his Master how to run His life, and on two tremendous occasions failing completely in moral courage. That was some rock!

The other strange thing about the Lord’s giving this nickname was that Simon had come to take the measure of Jesus, and the tables had been turned. The Lord was judging Simon, knowing him for not who he apparently and on the surface is, but whom he really is down deep where no one but God can see.

Peter set out on a great adventure with the Lord Jesus that day. It began with his simple and generous heart blurting out wonderful words: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” And Jesus blessing Peter as no man had ever been blessed: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.”

But then there were the ups and downs of Peter’s life. Now there certainly are ups and downs in everybody’s life, but yours and mine are not played out mercilessly in

the pages of the world’s best-selling book! In it, Peter’s life reached the pits with his desperate betrayal of His Master before the cock crew on Good Friday morning. Yet it was in Peter that this burning love for Jesus in the end burned up all the cowardice, and all the rest, and left him what Jesus had predicted he was, the rock, the prince of the Apostles, and the greatest of them all.

Like Simon the fisherman, we start out judging Jesus and what is to be our relationship to Him. We wind up being judged by Him, Who takes our measure and knows what we will make of it. It was a long time being fulfilled in Simon Peter, and whatever Christ Jesus has decided for you and me may also be a long time coming to fruition. But Jesus doesn’t make mistakes, not with Peter, and not with us, and in the end it will be as He says.

A sermon preached by Father Bradford on the Feast of SS Peter & Paul 2002.

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius,

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

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

Fellowship and Coffee in
the Solarium after Mass

Rectory: 192 Foster Street,
Brighton, MA 02135-4620
Tel/Fax: (617) 787-0553
<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.

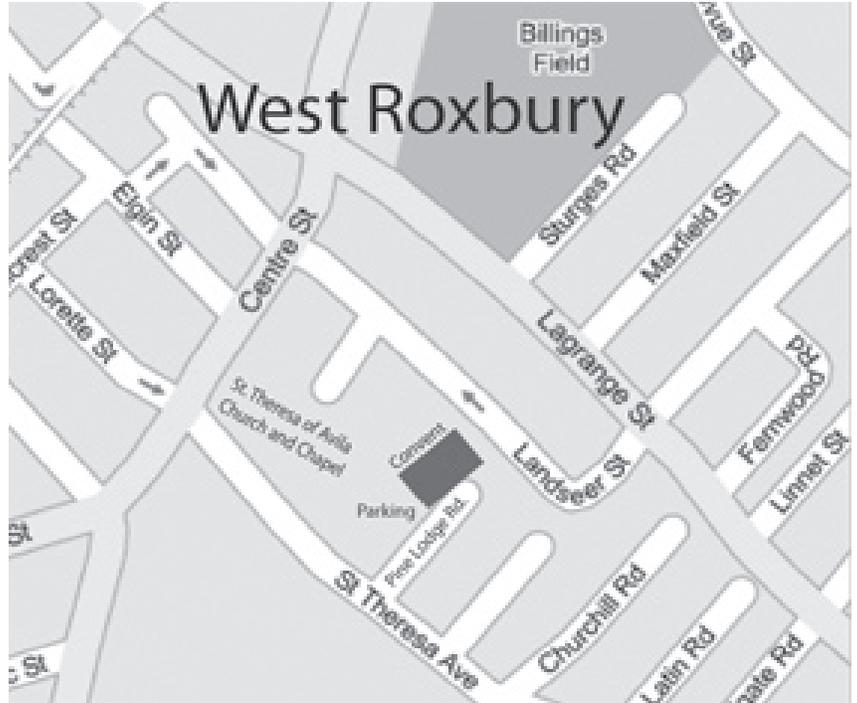
Directions by Car: From the North: Route 128 to
Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West
Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at
Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light
bear left onto Centre St.. and immediately turn right
at the next light onto St.. Theresa Ave.

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 Station, but no Sunday service is available.



Contra Mundum
The Congregation of St. Athanasius
10 St. Theresa Avenue
West Roxbury, MA 02132

