
✠ 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

THE first person mentioned in the Christmas story was neither a Palestinian nor a Jew. He wasn't a shepherd or a wise man. His name was Caesar Augustus, and he lived 1500 miles away from the Holy Land, although the land wasn't holy for him. It was a remote province of the vast Roman Empire. But it was a decision by Caesar Augustus that triggered a journey. An obscure Galilean couple set out to obey an edict requiring a census. And it all led to the birth of the Son of God in Bethlehem.

If it hadn't been for Augustus, Jesus would have been born at Nazareth, which was the home town of Joseph and Mary. But as St. Luke explains, there was this enrollment or census Augustus had decreed for his empire. It meant that all subjects of Rome had to return to their ancestral home for registration. Some scholars used to observe that Rome never required her subjects to return to their original home village for such enrollment. But that was *before* the discovery of a Roman census edict dating to 104 A.D. which re-



quired Egyptians living elsewhere to return to their ancestral homes for registration. Archeology vindicated St. Luke!

Both Joseph and Mary were descended from King David, and so they had to travel eighty miles to David's city, which was a sleepy little village six miles south-west of Jerusalem. The Cunard Steamship Company had a famous logo. "Getting there is half the fun." But eighty miles on the back of a jogging donkey was not much fun for Mary, who was "great with child!" But my story returns to Augustus. He was the grand nephew and adopted heir of Julius Caesar. And Augustus reigned for forty-four years, a time marked by unprecedented peace and prosperity. Augustus presided over what has been called the *pax Augusta*, and among other things, this peace made travel on the Mediterranean Sea and throughout Europe safer and easier than it would be again until the

development of the steam engine in the 1820s. This *pax Augusta* made it possible for Christianity to spread so quickly in the years after Ascension Day and Pentecost. And it adds fresh meaning to St. Paul's phrase that Christ came "in the fullness of time" that is, when the time was right in God's eyes.

Augustus was a man of many talents. One of his concerns was to revive interest in Rome's state religion, which no one took seriously anymore. Philosophical skepticism had been on the rise, and the only sad alternative was found in the mystery cults that permeated the empire after the conquest of so many kingdoms. Augustus felt that this was a sad turn of events demoralizing Roman society. In point of fact, many Roman men and women were indulging in a very easy morality in order to escape what the classical jet-set called "the tedium of marriage." Soon both the marriage rate and the birth rate took a nosedive. It all sounds very modern, especially in western society today. This trend bothered Augustus. One day he entered the Roman Forum and told the crowd of men to divide into two groups, married on one side, and bachelors on the other. When the emperor saw that the husbands were so outnumbered by the bachelors he was indignant. Augustus lit into the bachelors and read them out. Now

the B.B.C. wasn't able to record the speech, but it was written out by Dio Cassius.

"What shall I call you? Men? But you aren't fulfilling the duties of men. Citizens? But for all your efforts, the city is perishing. Romans? But you are in the process of blotting out this name altogether! ... What humanity would be left if all the rest of mankind should do what you are doing? ... You are committing murder in not fathering in the first place those who ought to be your descendants!"

So much for imperial logic! But Augustus, always a hands-on ruler, put his words into action. He made promiscuity a crime, and conferred special social and political advantages on any father of three children. Bachelors, on the other hand became liable to restrictions in inheritance laws. Now these bachelors tried to circumvent both marriage and the penalties for remaining single by marrying infant girls. Augustus countered by setting a minimum age for engagement at ten years for girls, with a maximum courtship of two years. You can read more about Caesar Augustus in Suetonius.

All of this is background to the census Augustus promulgated in an effort to monitor the success of his marriage laws and concern for the birth rate. The census, of course, was also the basis for taxation. But that was probably not part of the promotion anymore than it was in 1917. You remember that the original internal revenue act was a temporary measure during the Great War. And like anything else in government, it just grew and never looked back. The census returns did show an increase in the population, and the emperor was pleased enough with the results

to list his census as No. 8 in the list of the thirty-five "Acts of Augustus" for which he wished to be remembered. These were engraved on bronze plaques outside his mausoleum. The first census in 28 BC tallied 4,063,000 male Roman citizens. In 8 B.C. it showed 4,233,000. And in 14 A.D. the number was 4,937,000. Bear in mind that the total population of the Roman Empire was about 55,000,000, and you can see that Roman citizenship was the privilege of a very few. You remember that St. Paul was a Roman citizen.

In these census records you might wonder where the census mentioned in the Christmas story fits in. It was probably a provincial enrollment connected to the 8 B.C. census. But the machinery necessary to take the registration in far-off Palestine was not prepared until about 5 B.C. That too is believable, sounding like cost overruns and construction delays on the Big Dig! Some things never change! Since King Herod the Great, who was also part of the Christmas story, was known to have died in 4 B.C., the birth of Christ is usually set in 5 or 4 B.C. You might wonder about this B.C. and A.D. business, and how Christ could have been born five years before Christ! Blame a six-century Roman monk named Dionysius Exiguus (that sounds better than Dionysius the Little!). He is responsible for committing the greatest numerical error in history. In reforming the calendar to pivot about the Birth of Christ, Dionysius dated the Nativity in the year 753 from the founding of Rome. In fact King Herod died in 749. So the new dating, which we still use today, is four or five years off for the birth of Christ.

It is not likely Caesar Augustus ever examined the returns from Bethlehem. But had he done so, he would have seen a group of three names: Joseph Ben-Jacob, carpenter; Miriam Bath-IOachim, his wife; Yeshua or Jesus, firstborn son. Augustus never learned the significance of what happened in Bethlehem as a result of his decision to take a census. Caesar Augustus died when Our Lord Jesus was about nineteen years old and probably serving as an apprentice carpenter in Nazareth. But Caesar Augustus, so proud of the acts of his reign, would have been utterly astounded to learn that later ages would date his own death at 14 A.D. "in the year of the Lord" rather than 767 A.U.C. (*ab urbe condita*, from the foundation of the city). —and all because of that unknown subject of his in remote Bethlehem, a first born son called Jesus!

¶ *a talk given by Father Bradford at an inter-denominational Christmas service at the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory in Cambridge, Mass. December 17, 2004.*



CHRISTMAS FLOWER donations are being accepted for the decorating of the chapel for the Christmas season. Special envelopes are provided in the rear of the chapel, or you may send your gifts by mail. Memorials and thanksgivings are listed in the Christmas service leaflet. We must have these in time for printing no later than December 21st. Many thanks.



**IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Thursday, December 8, 2005
Procession, Solemn Mass & Sermon
7:30pm
Holy Day of Obligation

**THE FATHERHOOD
OF SAINT JOSEPH**

What is meant by the words ‘Receive Mary’? Nothing less than that Joseph must stay with Mary, because he had thought of leaving her. The angel said: Keep your wife, whom you had thought of leaving, for it is God who has given her to you, not her parents. She has not been given

to you for marriage, but that she may be with you, that she may be united to you, through my words. Now she is entrusted to Joseph, in the same way that Christ will later entrust her to his disciple.

“For what has been conceived in her is the work of the Holy Spirit.” These are wondrous words which surpass all human understanding, and all the laws of nature. How was a man to believe such things of which he’d never heard before?

“She will give birth to a son, continued the angel, and you will call him Jesus.” Do not think though, because the Child has been conceived of the Holy Spirit, that you are not required as a servant of the divine order of things. Though you may not have taken part in his conception, though Mary will always remain a virgin, I give to you the true role of a father: to name the new-born. It will be you who give the name. And although he is not your son, it is you who will fulfill the role of the father. Therefore, concludes the angel, through the giving of the name, I unite you intimately with the one who is to be born.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
(347-407)

“He undertook to help the descendants of Abraham, fashioning a body for himself from a woman and sharing our flesh and blood, to enable us to see in him not only God, but also, by reason of this union, a man like ourselves.”

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA
(c.376-444)

**SAINT OF THE
MONTH**



Juan Diego (1474-1548) & Our
Lady of Guadalupe
December 9th, December 12th

Blessed Juan Diego, a peasant farmer from the environs of today’s Mexico City, was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1990 because of the wondrous visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary he experienced in December 1531. He had converted to Christianity in 1525, having been led to Christ by the witness of the Franciscans who settled in his country after Cortez conquered this Aztec region.

On December 9th of that year, he was on his way to mass in Tenochtitlan, nine miles distant, when he was distracted by beautiful angelic

sounds, some calling his name in his native language (Nahuatl). He was drawn to the hilltop nearby, Tepeyac (or Tepeyacac), the hill where a pagan shrine earlier had attracted worshipers of a mother goddess Tonantzin. Reaching the hilltop he suddenly found himself in the presence of Our Lady. Recognizing her immediately he bowed reverently. In their encounter she directed him to proceed on his journey, to seek an audience with the bishop (Father Juan de Zumarraga), and to ask that a chapel be built on that very spot where they were standing. The first and second audiences with the bishop did not succeed, but Juan Diego persisted, with the encouragement and help of Our Lady. On his third journey Our Lady gave him a sign to present to the bishop. She directed him to go up to the hilltop again to gather flowers for her. There he found incredibly beautiful roses of many types, roses growing in harsh rocky terrain. He gathered some, took them to Our Lady, and was given them from her hands to conceal in his cloak (tilma). When the bishop received him a third time, Juan Diego opened his cloak, out of which fell the roses and revealed a stunning image of Holy Mary of Guadalupe imprinted on the white cloth lining of the cloak. Overcome with awe the bishop carefully conveyed the cloak to his chapel. Within two years the church on the hill Tepeyac was built, just as Our Lady had commanded. Juan Diego devoted the rest of his life to living in simple quarters attached to the church and telling of the miraculous presence of Our Lady.

Additional miracles accompa-

nied the story. During his second journey to see the bishop, Juan Diego was anxious to complete the mission as his uncle, with whom he resided, was gravely ill. He went out of his way to avoid encountering the Blessed Virgin, but she appeared to him on his detour. She assured him that his uncle was healed, and indeed, that is what Juan Diego learned upon his return. To this day the cloak has been known to remain unharmed by wars and tumults, for example in 1921 during the Mexican Civil War.

The story of the name Guadalupe is interesting. According to the formal account, she used the Nahuatl term *coatlexopeuh* (pron. quat - la - su - pe), which translates into Spanish as "Guadalupe." The native term means "he who crushes the serpent," and thus she is often drawn with a snake under her feet. The contemporary source for this story is a Nahuatl document entitled "Nican Mopohua," which was translated into and published in Spanish in 1649.

December being the month for most of Advent and the Christmas season, it is appropriate to remember this humble person who was witness to one of the few accepted apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Although these dates are not on the General Roman Calendar, Pope Benedict XIV in 1754 authorized a Mass to be said on December 12th for Our Lady Guadalupe. It is on the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the USA and, of course, on the liturgical calendar for Roman Catholics of the Pastoral Provision.

THE CROWN OF THE YEAR

ADVENT brings Christmas, Judgement runs out into mercy. For the God who saves us and the God who judges us is one God. We are not, even, condemned by his severity and redeemed by his compassion; what judges us is what redeems us, the love of God. What is it that will break our hearts on judgement day? Is it not the vision, suddenly unrolled, of how he has loved the friends we have neglected, of how he has loved us, and we have not loved him in return; how, when we came (as now) before his altar, he gave us himself, and we gave him half-penitences, or resolutions too weak to commit our wills? But while love thus judges us by being what it is, the same love redeems us by effecting what it does. Love shares flesh and blood with us in this present world, that the eyes which look us through at last may find in us a better substance than our vanity.

AUSTIN FARRER

TO CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM

IF a human blessing had power to change nature, what can we say of the divine consecration where the very words of our Lord and Saviour act? The sacrament that you receive is consecrated by the word of Christ. If the word of Elijah had power to draw down fire from heaven, will not the word of Christ be powerful

enough to change the character of the elements?

You have read of the work of creating all things that he spoke the word, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created. The word of Christ which then could make what is out of nothing, can it not change the things that are into what they were not? To give new natures to things is no less wonderful than to change their natures.

But why do we use arguments? Let us give more immediate examples, and by the instance of the incarnation show the truth of the mystery. Did the use of nature proceed when the Lord Jesus was born of Mary? If we look to the order of generation, it normally results from the union of a woman with a man. It is then clear that the virgin gave birth outside the order of nature. This body that we consecrate is virgin-born. Why then do you seek the natural order in the case of the Body of Christ, since the Lord himself was born of a virgin in a way beyond nature? In truth it was the true flesh of Christ that was crucified and buried; indeed, therefore, the sacrament is of his flesh.

from *De Mysteriis*

ST. AMBROSE, c.340-397
Feast Day, December 4

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 JAMES THOMPSON *Priest and Martyr (†1582)*

In 1580, James Thompson left England to study for the priesthood in France. Although poor health forced him to halt his studies after only a year, he was ordained a priest by a special dispensation so that upon returning to England he could serve the persecuted Catholics of his native land. In 1582, he was arrested by the Elizabethan authorities, and at his trial openly admitted to being a priest. Onlookers at Father Thompson's execution were amazed to see him make the sign of the cross even as the hanging rope was strangling him.

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BLESSED WILLIAM HOWARD *Martyr (1614-1680)*

At the age of twenty-three, the English Catholic William Howard married Mary Stafford. As a viscount in the service of King Charles I, William had inherited from his father a love for art. In 1678 the Englishman Titus Oates falsely accused English Catholics of plotting against King Charles II (the "Titus Oates Plot"). Among those falsely charged by Oates was William Howard, who was soon imprisoned. William's confessor and fellow prisoner, Father James Corker, observed, "He was ever held to be of a generous disposition, very charitable, devout, addicted to sobriety, inoffensive in words, a lover of justice." Sentenced to death on December 7, 1680, William devoted his final days to prayer and to conversation with his family and friends,

manifesting a peaceful resignation to the will of God. He wrote a last testament in which he offers to God his imminent separation from his wife and children: "Receive, therefore, most dear Jesus, this voluntary oblation." He also sent his wife two beautiful letters, the last written just before his beheading on December 29, 1680.

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SHORT NOTES

In our Every Member Canvass for the funding of our 2006 operation pledge cards were mailed to parishioners and friends in November. Please fill these in and return at your early convenience. Many thanks.

An Inquirers' Class is underway, meeting with Father Bradford on most Thursday evenings at 7:00pm. Classes are for those interested in Catholicism or who are planning for confirmation or reception. A syllabus is available. Classes meet in the St. Theresa Rectory.

Traveling parishioners include David Burt who attended a gathering of continuing Anglicans in Grand Rapids, and who with Steve Cavanaugh represented the congregation at the confirmation of a group of former Episcopalians in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The Bishop of Scranton has planned to erect an Anglican Use congregation in his diocese.

Wilfrid Veldkamp has spent three weeks in Japan and China, on business and to receive an award for his work. Ask about the award. You will

be impressed.

A reminder that the Christmas collection is given to the Clergy Benefit Trust of the Archdiocese of Boston. Proceeds fund the retirement stipends and insurance of retired priests.

Thank you to those who read lessons at the Procession with Carols for Advent on November 30th.

A sermon by Father Bradford originally preached on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is reproduced in the current issue (November/December) of *The Catholic Response* magazine.

Many thanks to Eva Murphy for her work gathering signatures in the marriage petition drive endorsed by the Massachusetts Bishops' Conference.

Father & Mrs. Bradford have a new rectory address: 767 West Roxbury Parkway, Boston, MA 02132-2121. They move into their new residence in early December.

THE ANGLICAN USE ON THE INTERNET

MANY of the people who have found us have found us through the Internet. For those of you who are internet savvy, the following may be something you already know, but the truth is that the Internet now has become the most powerful source of information the world has ever had.

To give you a simple example, for this issue of *Contra Mundum* the Internet was used quite a number of times. The picture of Juan Diego



CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24, 2005

Procession, Blessing of the Creche, Solemn Mass of Christmas

8:30pm, Convent Chapel

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25, 2005

Solemn Mass & Sermon, 10:30am

Wednesday, December 28, 2005

A FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS
LESSONS AND CAROLS

7:30pm, Saint Theresa of Avila Church

Mary, Mother of God, Octave of Christmas

Sunday, January 1, 2006

Solemn Mass & Sermon, 10:30am

was found on the Internet. Most of the information Eva Murphy used in her story about this saint was found on the internet, and her story was sent to me via the Internet. The map on the back comes from the internet, and finally, and perhaps most importantly this whole issue of *Contra Mundum* will be posted on the Internet.

We have readers who get this in the mail, and there are others even from as far-away places as Australia, who squawk if we forget to put the latest *Contra Mundum* up on our web site. <http://www.locutor.net>

The parish web site is a wonderful resource for anyone wishing to learn about the Anglican Use in Boston. When you access the site, you are greeted with a copy of the icon of St. Athanasius, the one we have in the Sacristy. You see:

THE CONGREGATION OF SAINT ATHANASIUS

A Roman Catholic Community in the Greater Boston Area that Preserves Elements of the Book of Common Prayer in the Anglican Tradition and Liturgy

Then follows a menu:

- Our Service Schedule
- Congregation's Objective
- The Pastoral Provision
- Sermon Files
- Current *Contra Mundum*
- Readings, Service, and Announcements
- Where We Are
- How to Contact Us
- Congregation History
- Publications
- Book of Divine Worship, Anglican Use Gradual
- Anglican-Use Society and Sister Congregations

In the section called Publica-

tions, you can view and download many useful documents. Our Mass Booklet is there, the booklet we use for Morning Prayer, and the one we use for Evening Prayer are both there along with some of the music we use.

The Sermon Files has some recent audio files of sermons given at our services. If you have a computer with speakers, all you have to do is click and listen.

The Section Book of Divine Worship, Anglican Use Gradual will lead you to other sites on the Internet where you can get information about *The Book of Divine Worship* and where you can download a copy of our *Anglican Use Gradual*. Quite a number of churches are now using this Gradual.

Finally there is a section titled, Anglican Use Society and Sister Congregations. This will give you links to other sites on the Internet where you can find more information on the Anglican Use. Each of the Anglican Use Congregations has an Internet site. The Anglican Use Society and the Pastoral Provision each maintain sites.

If you surf the web using a search engine just asking for information on Anglican Use, you will be led to hundreds of sites where "Anglican Use" is mentioned. Some are obvious parish sites, others are more obscure. You will undoubtedly come across some blogs which mention Anglican Use, and there you may find the writings of people like Father Wilson, and Bill Tighe.

One famous blogger is Fr. Al Kimel. His weblog "Pontifications" is read by many, and since he is an Anglican converting to the Catholic

Church, he should be of interest to all of us. Fr. Kimel's blog can be found at <http://catholica.pontifications.net/>

There is also an Anglican Use Yahoo Group which was started by our own Terry Maltzberger. There are close to 300 members and well over 6000 postings which can be read in the archives. This is perhaps the most interesting place on the Internet as far as the Anglican Use is concerned because there is real discussion going on.

If you have not learned how to use the Internet yet, get someone to show you how. It is much easier than it used to be, and you will find the Anglican Use community on the Internet to be friendly and engaging.

Thanks are due to Wilfrid Veldkamp for maintaining the parish web site and to Terry Maltzberger for the Anglican Use Yahoo Group.

C. DAVID BURT

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:
767 West Roxbury Pkwy.
Boston, MA 02132-2121

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.

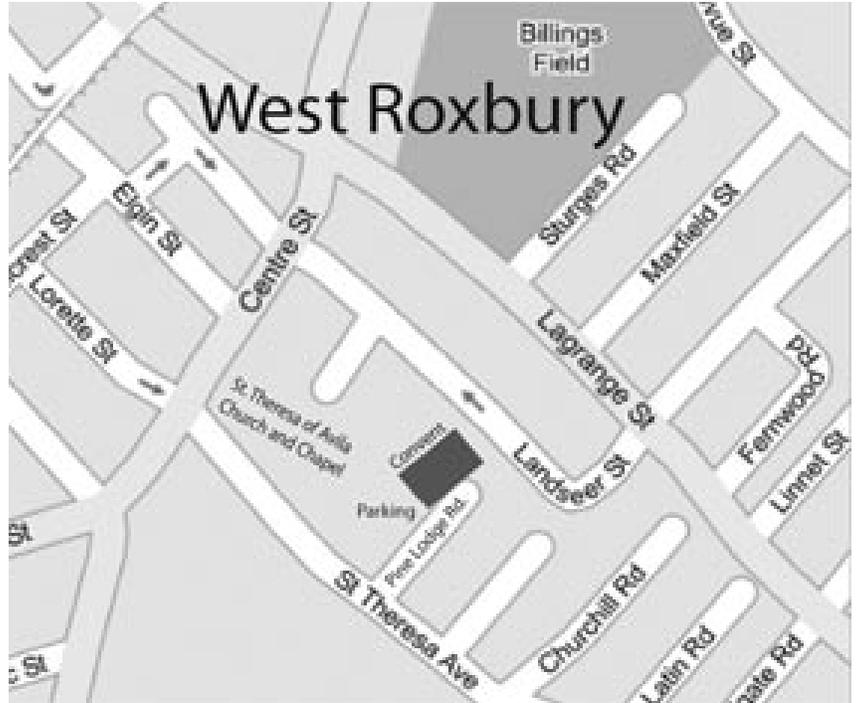
Directions by Car: From the North: Route 128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light bear left onto Centre St.. and immediately turn right at the next light onto St.. Theresa Ave.

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 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.



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

