
✠ 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

LONG before the distractions of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century rationalism, Holy Mother Church put great focus on the cure of souls, the science of spiritual growth and development. Ascetical theology is based on philosophical psychology and the effort to understand what is the spiritual nature of man with all the complexity and dynamics of personality, character, environment, etc. that goes into such an assessment. The motivation for all this, of course, was to help souls get to Heaven. In the prevalent modern thinking the notion is widespread that in order to gain Heaven (if there *is* a Heaven) all you have to do is show up at the door! That is tragically wrong, but no wonder many people tune out any consideration of a "cure of souls." Why bother?

Ascetical theology is based on the gospel good news and the empirical observation and practical experience of thousands of priests over the centuries dealing with untold millions of souls. By the Middle Ages it had become clear that there were three major stages through which a soul progresses to God. Tradition-



The Presentation of
CHRIST
in the Temple, or
THE PURIFICATION OF
SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN
commonly called
CANDLEMAS
DAY

Thursday, February 2, 2006
Blessing of Candles, Procession
Solemn Mass and Sermon
Saint Theresa of Avila Church
West Roxbury
7:30pm

The liturgy begins in the Pavilion.
A reception follows the Mass.

ally these are called the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way, and the Unitive Way.

When a person in the Second Century said "I want to become a Christian" he was placed in catechism class, which may have lasted two or more years! The Church was looking for the catechumen to have passed through three major spiritual crises, which later were encapsulated in the triple baptismal renunciation of the flesh, the world, and the devil. Against Hollywood, which focuses on the physical body above all else, the Church has always used "the flesh" to refer to the whole natural, unregenerate, and unredeemed man. This includes his intellect, will, and imagination. Man is fallen. *Period.* And if he does what comes naturally he's not going to get to Heaven.

Sooner or later it hopefully dawns on a soul that life has more meaning and a better destination than attaching its worth to material goods. To some extent every one of us has been sucked into materialism and its mind-set. Own up to the fact that Madison Avenue is cleverer than you are! But when the realization sets in that life up to now (with all its goodies and gadgets) has been a deception, this leads to great disappointment. Of course some people never get to this point. But if one does get there, Jesus says "lucky you." (My words, not His!) He says "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Why blessed? Because only people who get to this disappointment ever find the Kingdom of Heaven. This soul has experienced renouncing the flesh even if he doesn't put it in those words.

But renouncing the flesh can lead to despair. And in panic response there is a temptation to find a quick fix. The world is pleased to oblige. It is only too ready to supply a full assortment of quick fixes! A brief scan of the daily papers gives the full menu of ways available to souls in panic searching for a remedy. Fortunately a lot of guardian angels put in overtime, and most souls survive the panic and the quick fix! But after renouncing life as a disappointment, many try to reform the world; they take up a crusade or cause of some sort or another. These are the souls who "want to make the world a better place than the one I found." Trouble is, the world they want to save *doesn't want to be saved!* When whites went to Alabama in the 1960s the blacks told them, "Whitey, go home." Yes, some progress may be made. But corruption and disillusionment follow even successful movements and revolutions. History shows that. And it's another sign that corrupt human nature is both incorrigible and has a knack for fouling its own nest. So the do-gooders are defeated and disappointed.

Where is the good news? Lord Jesus says "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." But comfort is not like Linus' blanket! A musician can tell you "comfort" is English for *cum forte* and it means "with strength." (And in a music score all those *fortissimo* markings do not mean to automatically raise the decibel level! But that's another

story.) Our Lord says such people who are disillusioned by the world's rejection of their efforts to reform it are being strengthened to continue the journey to the Kingdom. These people, stung by the defeat of their good efforts, often take the attitude "the world can go to hell in a hand basket." So they turn inside. Now these souls have renounced the world. This too has its dangers.

Disillusioned, these souls often launch into some form of self-development such as yoga or Zen Buddhism or TM. Some of them even turn to Christianity! But even here the motivation is "I am going to make myself into something I can be proud of." Do you remember being taught that sin is a three-letter word centering in "i"? Well, here it is. And, of course, this is the work of the devil. Long ago the old adversary showed his M.O. by telling Adam and Eve they could do it themselves. "Ye shall be like gods." (Gen. 3:5) It's a great temptation, and noble on the surface, to want to become god-like. The devil is full of "noble-on-the-surface" offers! The temptation of Our Lord in the wilderness comes to mind. But

when a soul realizes that no amount of self-development can get him to a point he can approve of himself, he will either despair (which is what the devil wants) or else he will reject this whole approach. When he does that he has in fact renounced the devil. So, when a soul has renounced the flesh and the world and the devil, he is ready for baptism! You can see that much more is involved in that baptismal triple renunciation than simply saying some fusty old theological formula!

Some souls never get to this point. For them our message must be that the road to Heaven, not hell, is paved with good intentions. Almighty God's complete and perfect judgment will take in what we try to do and intend to do as well as what we actually accomplish. That is enormous good news. Still, Our Father in Heaven is on record as having said "This is My Beloved Son, listen to Him." *And why did you not?* In response to all our excuses and laziness and lack of accomplishment perhaps the most devastating reply from Almighty God will be, "but I gave you My Son!"

It is when a desperate soul, with a record of all these defeats in his dossier finally says, "I can't do it, Lord, you do it in me." the Savior declares that this soul is on the right track. Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek." Now meekness is not getting shoved around. Moses was meek. But it took more than *chutzpah* for him to tell Pharaoh, "Let my people go or God will mash you!" Meekness is letting God run the show. And it is at this point, when he says, "I give up, God, *You* run the show," that a soul is finished with the Purgative Way. "Finished" is maybe too strong a word.



ASH WEDNESDAY

The First Day of Lent

March 1, 2006

Blessing & Distribution of Ashes
Solemn Mass and Sermon

7:30pm

Convent Chapel

Begin Lent in Church!



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

begin Friday, March 3rd.

It is not that we *graduate* from one way to the next! But purgation is no longer the predominant characteristic of this soul's condition.

If this brief and breezy sketch has whetted your appetite to know more about the cure of souls there is a vast literature for you waiting to be explored. Next time something on the Illuminative Way.

FATHER BRADFORD

FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP

THAT last figure at Candlemas is in the background of the story. Anna is with Saint Joseph in the background. There is a place in the background of the story of Jesus Christ. Being in the story of Jesus is crucial. Where you are on the stage of prominence is less crucial. Anna is quiet and unobtrusive, but faithful and devoted.

People do not understand such conduct. And it's true that when we don't understand these people we tend to make fun of them. People sometimes make fun of or disparage the Annas. But she has her reward. She had been in and out of the temple for sixty years, but this time was different! Coming at that instant she saw the light. All her devoted patience had prepared her for that instant.

Simeon and Anna, with faithfulness and patience in the face of discouragement and disappointment, form the very backbone of the Catholic Church, a church that stood against Imperial Rome in the Judaea of the Candlemas saints and against Hitler and Communism in Europe in the days of John Paul II.

In a world that measures success in terms of productivity, Christians realize that they also serve who stand and wait. This is not being idle by any means. Their posts of Christian discipleship are characterized sometimes by frenetic activity, energy, and excitement. But the chief hallmarks are always humility, obedience, faithfulness, and devoted patience.

from a sermon by Father Bradford at Candlemas, 1997.

SHORT NOTES

Many thanks to Deacon Michael Connolly for the solemn singing of the Epiphany Proclamation announcing the major holy days in 2006. Also to Judie Bradford for the reception after Mass on The Epiphany.

A year's-mind Mass will be offered for the repose of the soul of Stephen Molloy on Saturday, February 4th at 9:30am in the Convent Chapel. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

It was sad to see a note in a parish paper announcing no baptisms scheduled for the month of March (as we enter into the penitential spirit of Lent). But just how does depriving souls of Baptism help them (or the rest of us) focus on the penitential spirit of Lent?

We note the passing of Fr. William Turner St. John Brown, one of

the people who in the late 1970s was petitioning the Holy See for a Pastoral Provision for married Episcopal priests. Father Brown subsequently was ordained Catholic priest and served in the Diocese of Corpus Christi, where he was vice-rector of the seminary and personal theologian to the bishop. He was very active as editor of what eventually became known as *The Book of Divine Worship*. Fr. Brown was 83 years old. May he rest in peace!

Please return your blessed palms for burning prior to the March 1st beginning of Lent. Burned palms provided the ashes for use on Ash Wednesday!

A Friday night series of services of Stations of the Cross and Benediction will be offered in the St. Theresa of Avila Chapel beginning March 3rd. Other dates are March 17 and



Boston Catholic Men's Conference *"Band of Brothers in Christ"*

March 4, 2006, 8am to 6pm
New Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, South Boston

Tickets are \$35 by mail and \$40 at the door. Mail check payable to Boston Catholic Men's Fellowship, 350 Massachusetts Ave.

#145,

Arlington, MA 02474-6713.

Speakers include Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Papal Household.

31. Service time is 7:30pm. Watch for details.

On March 16th Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald will speak on the promise of interreligious dialogue in a world marked by conflict. The event takes place at Boston College. No time has been announced. Archbishop Fitzgerald is President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. For more info see www.rcab.org/EandI/HomePage.html

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 THOMAS SOMERS

Priest and Martyr (†1610)

Father Thomas Somers, a native of Westmoreland, England, served in the English mission during the continuing persecution of English Catholics under King James I. Following his capture by the Protestant authorities, he was sentenced to death for his priesthood together with the Benedictine priest, Saint John Roberts. Luisa de Carvajal, a devout Spanish laywoman who had come to England to serve the persecuted English priests, bribed the jailor into allowing her to provide a final dinner for the two condemned priests on the night before their execution. Luisa also gathered eighteen other imprisoned Catholics for this feast. The two martyrs were so merry that one of them, Father Roberts, expressed a

scruple to his hostess that perhaps he was "causing disedification" by his "great glee." Luisa answered, "No, certainly not. You cannot be better employed than in letting them all see with what cheerful courage you are about to die, for Christ." Later that evening, Luisa, in imitation of Saint Mary Magdalene, knelt down to wash the feet of the two priests. The next day, Father Somers was hung, drawn, and quartered together with Father Roberts.

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BLESSED MARMANDUKE BOWES, *Martyr 1585*

The 1585 statute of England's Queen Elizabeth I that had been invoked to condemn to death the priest Blessed Hugh Taylor also mandated the execution of all the laity who in any way assisted Catholic priests in the country. Upon learning of the arrest of Father Taylor, Marmaduke Bowes, a husband and father, rushed to York on horseback, and immediately after dismounting, without removing his boots and spurs, hurried into the castle yard of York to protest the priest's incarceration. Marmaduke himself was thereupon arrested and condemned to death for having once assisted Father Taylor by giving him a glass of beer. Although Marmaduke had until then exteriorly conformed to the Anglican state religion, he and his wife had been suspected of Catholic sympathies. Before going to his death, Marmaduke returned to the Catholic Church and made a firm profession of the Catholic faith. He was taken to the scaffold so swiftly that he was still in his boots and spurs

when he was hanged, dying only a day after Father Taylor.

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SAINT OF THE MONTH



St. Peter Damian
(1007-1072)

SAINTE. Peter Damian was actually not a canonized saint, but in the early 19th century Pope Leo XII declared him a Doctor of the Church.

He was born in Ravenna in 1007 and experienced a difficult childhood including having been orphaned at a young age. An older brother Damian, a priest, saw to his education, and he himself added the name to his own and became a successful teacher for a short while. In 1035 he entered a Benedictine monastery, Fonte

Avellana. There he rose to be prior of his community of hermits within a few years and set about reforming their rule of life, largely according to Benedictine principles and some of the ideals of St. Romuald (about whom he wrote).

He also concerned himself with the larger affairs of the papacy and various rulers of his time. He was a skilled writer, speaker, and diplomat. He became Bishop of Ostia (near Rome) and also cardinal in 1057, the latter somewhat against his desires (so the scholars say). He preferred the monastic life and persuaded Pope Alexander II to let him return to his life at Fonte Avellana. His mature writings on reforms in the Church coincided with the reign of Pope Leo IX.

He wrote letters, sermons, treatises, and even some works in verse (epigrams, prayers, hymns, etc.). Among his Latin treatises were *de Divina Omnipotencia*, *Liber Gomorrhianus* (moral decadence among the clergy), *Liber gratissimus* (validity of certain orders), and *Disceptatio synodalis* (a model debate between Church and State over Pope Alexander's election). In *Letter to a dying friend* (1065) he wrote: "May you see your Redeemer face to face, and standing evermore in his presence, gaze upon Eternal Truth revealed in all its beauty to the eyes of the saints."

He died at the Monastery St. Maria in Faenza during a journey from his native Ravenna, on February 22-23, 1072 and was eventually buried in the cathedral in Faenza. The liturgical calendar for Roman Catholics of the Pastoral Provision honors St. Peter Damian this year on February 21st.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear David,

I would hate for you to start "Letters to the Editor" in *Contra Mundum*, but I need to qualify the life of a "Squawker" (see *Contra Mundum* Vol. VIII, Issue 5, page 37). Fortunately the December issue arrived on St. Nick's day and I have had just enough time to make 20 copies to whet the appetites of the 30-40 who will turn up at the Sung Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception tonight at 7.00 pm (I will probably make more before then). The crowd is about evenly matched half our folk who venture out at night—half are trad Catholics of the Roman persuasion who will, hopefully, fulfill the requirements for the Plenary Indulgence before they arrive. On both sides there are avid readers of *Contra Mundum* and it's times like this when they get together that questions start flying—do you have the latest *Messenger*, *Contra Mundum*, *Fidelity*, *AD2000* etc.?? If it weren't for your efforts and those of Wilfred (I didn't know that he should have been my target!) Australians, and particularly those who strive to uphold the Faith, under whichever jurisdiction at this moment, would be unaware of the opportunities and paths which our brethren in the US have been able to read. Happy Feast (it's the Eighteenth anniversary of the founding of the Parish of Saint Mary the Virgin, Melbourne) Happy Advent and much joy at the coming Feast of our Lord's Incarnation.

In Christ,
Graeme

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UPCOMING SPECIAL SERVICES

Ash Wednesday Mass, March 1st, 7:30pm in convent chapel

Stations & Benediction, Friday, March 3rd at 7pm in St. Theresa Chapel

Evensong & Benediction, Sunday, March 12 at 5pm in St. Theresa Chapel

Stations & Benediction, Friday, March 17th at 7pm in St. Theresa Chapel

Annunciation Mass, Saturday, March 25 at 9:00am in convent chapel

Stations & Benediction, Friday, March 31st at 7pm in St Theresa Chapel

Maundy Thursday Mass, April 13th at 7:30pm in convent chapel

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) 325-5232
<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

