
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

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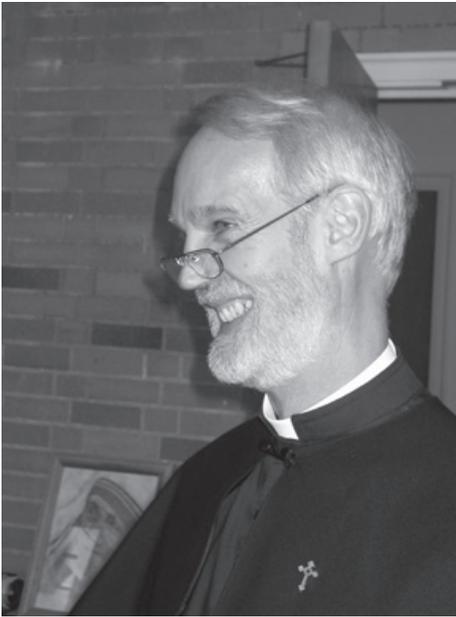
The Congregation of St. Athanasius

A Congregation of the Pastoral Provision of Pope John Paul II for the Anglican Usage of the Roman Rite

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Happy Easter from The Congregation of Saint Athanasius



NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

A YEAR ago last January, as this congregation was coming together, we considered what to call ourselves; who to choose as our patron saint. In many cases, people in a situation like ours simply pick one, a famous saint whose story is well known and whose name is pronounceable and easy to spell. We did neither!

By now many of you have read up on Saint Athanasius, and begin to realize just how crucial he was for right belief and in how much sympathy this great Doctor of the Church must be with us in our pilgrimage. For Athanasius was a man of the east, and it was in exile from Alexandria that he came to Rome and greatly impressed the Holy Father.

Athanasius lived nearly three quarters of the years of the critical fourth century. It was the period when the Roman Empire passed from paganism to the public recognition of

the Church. But during that century, Christianity passed through a period of great and popular hetero-orthodoxy to the Catholic faith. It is the personality of Athanasius, more than any other single force, that worked the change.

When Athanasius was a young man, there seemed to be almost as many ideas floating around in regard to the person of Christ as there were centers of Christian thought and speculation. A great, and by no means trivial, question arose: was there a time when Christ did not exist? Or was Christ eternally with the Father? Human nature being what it is, and made up more of administrators than thinkers, many in the Church, and successive emperors as well, argued that there should be room for various opinions! Sound familiar?

But by the end of Athanasius' long life, and the fourth century, two general councils of the Church had defined the nature of Christ and said that one point of view and only one was to be accepted as true: that Christ is only begotten, of the substance of the Father. And every time we repeat the Nicene Creed and say "of one substance with the Father" we are declaring that Saint Athanasius was right.

This is not an academic theological fine point. This dogma, the central point of the creed, is the hinge pin of the Christian faith and life. Athanasius once wrote that a man comes to the knowledge of God by studying the eternal world and studying his own soul. When as a young man Athanasius took stock of himself, his neighbors, and the world, he found all to be helpless in the face of evil and misery. Who could redeem it all,

Who could save us, but God Himself? No man, however holy, however divinely inspired, could deliver his fellows from this stranglehold of wickedness. Only God could cleanse, restore, and impart power for a new life. It had come to that. Athanasius concluded that if Our Lord Jesus, son of Mary, is divine only by an imputed or derivative divinity, then the Christian Church would lose the very core of its life. Athanasius was a theoretical, academic, theologian. But he was much more, He was fighting for the very soul of the Christian Gospel, that we are not saved by words or examples, but by what Christ did on the cross. Did Christ deliver us from the power of sin and death? He only did if He was God. It could not be done by some being peculiar to himself, another god placed between Almighty God and man, between heaven and earth, less than God and greater than man.

If all of this seems "old hat" to us, and taken for granted, it is because the Catholic faith has guarded and proclaimed the precious deposit of faith to all generations. But at the beginning of Athanasius' life, there were many confessions of faith or creeds in use. For the most part they were in agreement on the essentials. But they differed in detail. Men of great good will, such as Eusebius, used creeds which had satisfied spiritually large and important sections of the Church. And yet these creeds gave room for vital differences of opinion on the Person of Christ. Creeds were expressed in such general terms that men with widely differing views might repeat these creeds in all honesty. Sound familiar?

Compromise was in the air.

The emperors wanted it. They saw Christianity as the glue to keep the wide-flung empire together. Controversy within Christianity was seen as unseemly, and many of the bishops thought so too.

A new car eventually is an old car. You begin to put up with things that don't work right, but because the car is paid for you put up with the annoyance. Eventually you put up with things that compromise and endanger your safety. We don't very often begin with big compromises. We begin with little ones, hidden ones even. We slide into them, sometimes allowing events or even the passage of time, or the revolutions of the odometer, to make decisions for us. We can compromise without even realizing it. It was our experience of Christianity within the Episcopal Church that led us to the necessity of seeking full communion with the See of Peter. We are doing it because we love Jesus, and where we were was compromising and endangering the safety of our souls. That is something Saint Athanasius would understand!

The fourth century was predictable. Athanasius was seen as the troublemaker and arch-villain, narrow-minded and all that. Of the forty-five years of his episcopate, the majority were a sequence of depositions, exile, triumphant returns. There were three long periods of exile as well as briefer times. He was accused of extorting money, of murdering a bishop, of inciting riots, of misappropriating funds, of preventing the grain fleet from sailing to Constantinople from Alexandria. All manner of calumny and lies. Does this sound familiar?

For fifty years, Athanasius was



SAINT ATHANASIUS DAY

Tuesday, May 2, 2006
Solemn Mass & Sermon
7:30pm
Chapel of St. Theresa of Ávila
Church
West Roxbury

the sole champion of Christ in the East and often supported by the Pope alone as the champion of the orthodox Catholic faith. It was, as the saying goes, *Athanasius contra mundum*.

Athanasius never lost his faith or his supernatural courage and confidence. His persistence was legendary. Once appealing to the emperor on some matter and not receiving a reply, he went personally to Constantinople and waited until the emperor appeared in a public procession, stopped the imperial horse in the middle of the street, stated his case, and won the emperor's approval! How about that for a bishop protecting his flock?

There are other stories that may be attributed more to the high esteem

people felt for Athanasius rather than their truth-telling. The fourth century Greeks had their version of the blarney stone!

How important and influential was Athanasius? You can read the fourth century vacillations of the Church, tempted by compromise and heresy and, finally affirming Catholic faith, by the personal fortunes of the bishop of Alexandria! When the emperor was satisfied with the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius was left to administer his diocese. When the emperor changed his mind about Nicaea, Athanasius was banished. When the next emperor was getting his footing, Athanasius was left unhindered. But when the new emperor determined Athanasius was divisive in the Church, he was again driven into exile. When imperial policy, irritated by approaching defeat, turned ugly, troops invaded a church and scoured the desert for the bishop; and, when the emperor Julian the Apostate wanted to destroy the Church, he restored the one man who by unyielding faith and uncompromising belief could wreck the harmony of the Church: you guessed it: Athanasius!

Eight years after the death of Athanasius, the emperor Theodosius summoned the second general council; and, when he approved of its conclusions he and the bishops had defined the faith in the terms Athanasius had expressed steadfastly for fifty years.

The entire Roman world, what we call the ancient civilized world, which has bequeathed everything to us in the way of math and science, literature and drama, and law, was essentially pagan when Athanasius was born. Not only was it Christian,

but Catholic, at his death.

Ever since Athanasius, the Christian, with him, asserts that the divine nature of Our Lord Jesus can only be described in terms that might be used only for God Himself. Like Athanasius, we assert, that whenever we listen to the words of Christ we hear the words of God, whenever we read of the deeds of Christ we read of the works of God, whenever we see the face of Christ we behold the fullness of the Godhead bodily. There is no other Christianity than that. And with Athanasius "what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops."

*HOLY ATHANASIUS!
PRAY FOR US!*

This sermon was preached by Father Bradford on Saint Athanasius Day in 1997, five months prior to the reception of the congregation into the Catholic Church.

SHORT NOTES

Bishop Richard Lennon becomes 10th Bishop of Cleveland at a Mass of Installation on May 15th. There is an appreciation of Bishop Lennon elsewhere in this parish paper.

Please return Lenten Coin Folders now. These folders were filled during Lent, and proceeds benefit Catholic Charities. By the end of 2005 the Archdiocese of Boston had contributed \$1,877,992.20 to Catholic Charities USA's hurricane relief fund.

Ordinations to the priesthood take place in Holy Cross Cathedral on Saturday, May 27th with the Mass beginning at 9:00am. The Rev'd. Deacon Christopher Palladino, a member of St. Theresa's Parish,

will be ordained to the sacred priesthood.

Easter thanks from the Bradfords to all who remembered them with cards. And thanks to all who contributed to the Easter flower fund for the congregation.

Father Charles J. Higgins will be our celebrant and preacher at Mass on Sunday, May 14th.

Memorial Day is Monday, May 29th. The priests of St. Theresa Parish offer Mass in the morning on that day in both St. Joseph Cemetery and Mt. Benedict Cemetery. You are invited to attend.

The Revd. Anthony Aarons, MSM has been ordained a transitional deacon by the Bishop of Mandeville, Jamaica. A former Anglican priest, Fr. Aarons and Fr. Bradford became friends in northern Indiana. Some of our readers may remember Fr. Aarons from his visits as a guest preacher in All Saints' Ashmont in the early 1990s. Fr. Bradford conducted a Lenten retreat for Fr. Aarons' parish in Jamaica in 1993. The bishop has set August 1st for his ordination as a Catholic priest. Congratulations and very best wishes!

MARRIAGE AMENDMENT UPDATE

Last year over 170,000 signatures were gathered in an effort to put an amendment on traditional marriage on the 2008 ballot. Now the amendment must pass two critical votes in a joint session of legislature meeting as a constitutional convention. At least fifty out of the 200 legislators must vote "yes" at the convention

tentatively scheduled for May 10th this year. It will have to happen again in 2007-08. The work of the official ballot committee, VoteOnMarriage.org has been endorsed by the Massachusetts Catholic Conference.



Father Bradford will celebrate Mass on Tuesday, May 30th at 10am in observance of the eighth anniversary of his ordination as a Catholic priest. He was ordained by Bernard Cardinal Law in St. Mary's Church, Dedham, on May 30, 1998.

VISITATION

JESUS speaks: "I had scarcely taken flesh when I asked my Mother to take me to the house where John was to be born, so that I might sanctify him before his birth. In the Incarnation, I gave myself to the

world for its salvation. Even before my birth I was working at my task, the sanctification of mankind—and I moved my Mother to work at it with me. She is not the only one I have ever moved to work at the sanctification of souls from the first moment of being given to them: I do the same in every soul to which I give myself. On one occasion I said to my apostles, ‘Preach,’ and I gave them their mission and laid down rules for their fulfillment of it.

“Here and now I am saying to other souls—to all those who have been given me and now lead hidden lives, possessing me without having been given a mission to preach—I tell them to sanctify souls by silently carrying me among them. To souls in silence, leading the hidden life in solitude far from the world, I say, ‘All, all of you, work for the sanctification of the world; work in the world as my Mother did, wordlessly, silently; go and set up your devotional retreats in the midst of those who do not know me; carry me among them by setting up an altar among them, a tabernacle, carrying the Gospel to them not by word of mouth but by the persuasive force of example, not by speaking, but by living; sanctifying the world, carry me into the world, all you pious souls living a hidden and silent life—as Mary carried me to John.’”

BLESSED CHARLES DE FOUCAULD

Spiritual Autobiography

VISITATION
of the
B. V. M.
to S. Elizabeth



The Visitation is May 31st.

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 WILLIAM HARRINGTON *Priest and Martyr (1566-1594)*

When in 1581 the famed English Jesuit Saint Edmund Campion lodged at the home of the Harrington family of Mount Saint John, England, he left a lasting impression upon the Harringtons’ fifteen-year-old son, William. Three years later, acting upon his desire to imitate Father Campion, William journeyed to Reims France, to study for the priesthood. He thereafter entered the Jesuit novitiate in Tournai, Belgium, but health troubles soon compelled him to return to England. About six years later, William returned to Reims to resume his seminary studies, and was ordained in 1592. That same year, he re-entered England to begin his priestly ministry. In May of 1593, he was captured by the Elizabethan Protestant authorities. During his questioning, Father Harrington declared that he had come back to England “to give testimony of God’s truth,” albeit aware that in England “most priests were executed.” He was ultimately sentenced to death by drawing and quartering for his priesthood. At his execution, he declared, “I hope my death will do more good than ever my life would have done.”

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Saint CUTHBERT MAYNE *Priest and Martyr (1544-1577)*

Cuthbert Mayne, of Youlston, England, an Anglican minister, was drawn to Catholicism while studying at Saint John’s College, Oxford. Here he befriended the future Jesuit martyr Saint Edmund Campion, who afterwards maintained a regular correspondence with him. Cuthbert became a marked man after one of these letters fell into the hands of the Anglican bishop of London, who called for his apprehension. Cuthbert escaped to France and, after entering the Catholic Church, became a priest. In 1576, he returned to England. A year later, during a house search in Cornwall, the Elizabethan authorities took Father Mayne into custody after they discovered an Agnus dei (a wax disk bearing the image of the Lamb of God, blessed by the pope) hanging about his neck revealing his Catholic identity. He was subsequently sentenced to death. The day before his execution, he was offered a pardon if he would profess the supremacy of Queen Elizabeth over the English Church. Father Mayne replied by taking a Bible, kissing it, and declaring, “The queen never was, nor is, nor ever shall be the head of the Church of England.”

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SAINT OF THE MONTH



St. Augustine of Canterbury
May 26 (died 604)

SAINTE Augustine is a name familiar to most Anglicans, Episcopalians, and Anglophiles. He is considered a patron saint of England and was the first archbishop of Canterbury. Even today the archbishop of Canterbury occupies the “Chair of Augustine.” The best source of information on him is by St. Bede the Venerable (672-735), who chronicled what was known at that time in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. (To read this text on the web, see www.fordham.edu/Halsall/basis/bede-book1.html, chapters XXIII-XXX and [bede-book2.html](http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/basis/bede-book2.html), chapters I-III, about Augustine.)

Little is known of Augustine’s origins and early life. He was a Benedictine prior in the monastery of St. Andrew in Rome and is best known for his role as a missionary bishop to the English.

He was first sent by Pope Gregory the Great in 596, with a group of priests and other missionaries, to

Britain to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons. Apparently Augustine and his fellow missionaries got cold feet (“seized with a sudden fear,” as Bede recorded in chapter XXIII) because of the stories of dangerous territory through which they would have to pass, the journey across the Channel, and the fact that previous efforts to evangelize that territory had failed. However Pope Gregory insisted that they continue, and King Ethelbert, ruler of Kent (one of seven kingdoms on the island), did receive them, first on the island of Thanet, and was among the earliest converts. In the first meeting with the king, “they came ... bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board, and singing the litany, they offered up their prayers to the Lord for the eternal salvation both of themselves and of those to whom they were come.” It was known at the time that the king’s wife Bertha was already a Christian, had her own bishop (Ludhard), and had been worshiping at a local church honoring St. Martin. It was noted that Augustine and his fellow missionaries adopted a simple life among their new neighbors, being frequent at prayer and fasting and preaching and “being always disposed to suffer any adversity, and even to die for that truth which they preached.” (Chapter XXVI)

Augustine was consecrated a bishop not long after his arrival in England. As one source indicated, he had to return to the continent (Gaul) to Arles for the consecration. Pope Gregory eventually conferred upon him the archbishop’s pallium, which indicated a certain independence from the bishops in Gaul.

Bishop Augustine’s accomplish-

ments were establishing the see of Canterbury, building a monastery (The Abbey of SS. Peter & Paul) just outside the walls of the city and near the Cathedral, and rebuilding the ancient church upon which site much later (ca.1070) was built the great Cathedral. He eventually set up sees at London and Rochester, which is how Pope Gregory had expected him to begin.

A miracle is recounted in Bede’s history (chapter II), the healing of a blind man during efforts of Augustine to persuade some of the English bishops of a neighboring kingdom to conform their practices to those of Rome. Even though the man’s sight was restored, differences between the these groups persisted.

St. Augustine died of natural causes on May 26th, 604 and was buried in the abbey (SS. Peter and Paul, renamed St. Augustine after his death) in Canterbury.



BISHOP

RICHARD G. LENNON

*an appreciation by Father
Bradford*

Father Lennon was secretary for canonical affairs for the Archdiocese of Boston when I went to see him one winter day in 1996. I was probably that day’s problem sent down to Fr. Lennon from the Cardinal’s

Residence! Father Lennon more than likely did not know much about Episcopalians at that time, but here I was, a married Episcopal priest, and with a small group of forty people who were ready to become Catholics. We needed a shepherd, and the Cardinal sent me to Fr. Lennon. It had been agreed that the group would remain together for preparation. Later in the spring the Cardinal granted our request to become an "Anglican Use" congregation (and for me to be ordained a priest). Father Lennon began a year long process of catechizing our small flock and meeting with individuals in order to get all documentation ready for the great day we would be received and confirmed. There were some members of our flock whose marriages needed to be brought into conformity with canon law. And even a case or two involving annulments which meant the couple was not ready to be received when the great day arrived in September, 1997. But Father Lennon handled all of this with great pastoral care and sensitivity. No one was left behind or ever made to feel unwelcome.

The great day arrived for our reception, and Fr. Lennon presided at the Mass in St. Mary's Church, Dedham. He read a formal letter from Cardinal Law announcing the erection of The Congregation of Saint Athanasius, and appointing him, Fr. Lennon, as the first pastor. For the next eight months Fr. Lennon said the Anglican Use Mass, with some coaching and encouragement from me as his altar boy! And then, after taking canonical exams at Fr. Lennon's office desk in the chancery, and having him present me to the Cardinal for ordination, I succeeded him as pastor of the congregation.

That spring of 1998 was a busy time! Fr. Lennon became Msgr. Lennon in the same month as my ordinations as deacon and priest. And in the years following we watched as Msgr. Lennon became Rector of St John's Seminary, was ordained a Bishop, served as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Boston for fourteen months, and most recently as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia. Bishop Lennon's most recent visit to the Congregation was on Saint Michael's Day in 2003, the sixth anniversary of its founding. And more recently he came to bless a new rectory for the Bradford family in West Roxbury. Now he is to have his own diocese.

All the members of the Congregation of St. Athanasius consider Bishop Richard Lennon a great and good friend from an important and very happy time in their lives, and we wish him every blessing from the Lord in his new diocese. May Almighty God continue to accept and nourish the ministry of Richard G. Lennon.

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

Saint Theresa Convent Chapel
10 St. Theresa Ave.

West Roxbury, Mass.

Sundays 10:30am. Sung Mass,
followed by coffee and fellowship
in the convent solarium.

Rectory

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THE ASCENSION,

THE important point to recognize is that once the body of the Lord has been laid to rest in the sepulchre, we are dealing with 'events' which are never mere events in the ordinary earthly sense. They are always something more than events; describable partly (but only partly) in everyday narrative; expressible ultimately only in symbolic or theological language. Not being events in the ordinary sense, they are, moreover, no longer subject to the logic of a time sequence. These 'events' represent for us the overlapping of the eternal with the temporal. The Lord is Risen, Ascended, Glorified, Sitting at the Right Hand of the Father-and all these assertions of faith stand together. Taken together, as a single assertion, they are the only alternative to a body lying in a tomb. Together, they express the ultimate truth about Jesus of Nazareth. They express the significance of what He accomplished on earth; and His eternal relationship to the Father. The doctrine of the Ascension is ultimately an assertion about the status of the Risen Christ.

EDWARD YARNOLD

Risen Indeed

Ascension Day is May 25th. It is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Anglican Use Mass is at 7:30 in Saint Theresa of Avila Church Chapel.



The 2006 Anglican Use Conference,
Monday, June 5th, Tuesday June 6th
2006 in Scranton Pennsylvania. In-
quiries and registrations: Call (570)
343-0634, or visit either of the websites
listed below.
www.stthomasmoresociety.org
www.anglicanuse.org

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.

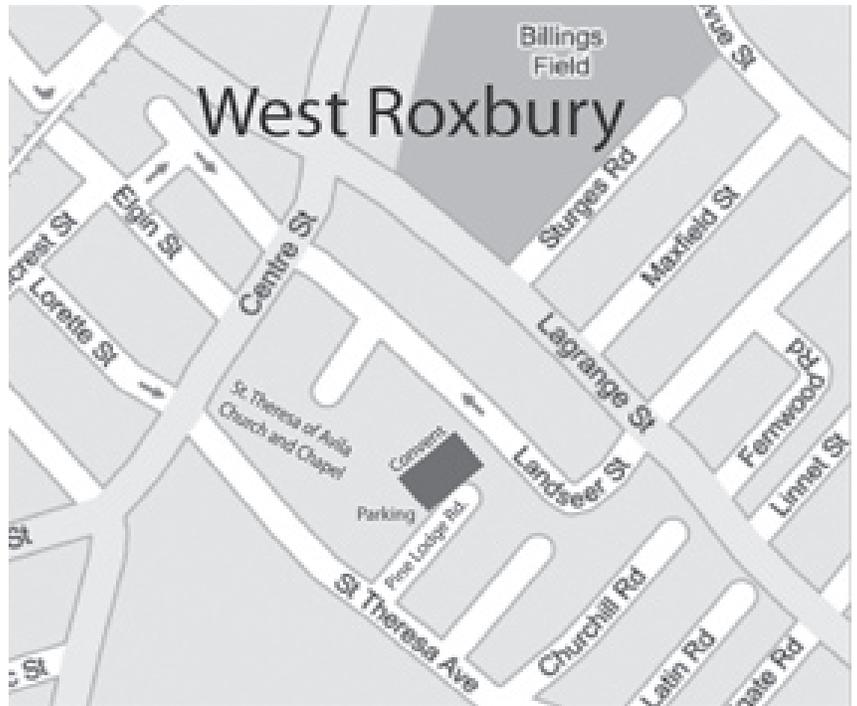
From the South: Route 1 north through Dedham
to Spring Street. Turn right onto Spring Street then
follow the directions above.

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

