
✠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>

(AD)VICES FOR LENT

Remember, Christian soul, that thou hast, this day and every day of thy life... sins to repent of, virtues to acquire.

The word *sin* has fallen out of fashion: At school or scouting events everyone wins a prize, and we live in a social environment where the positive reigns supreme. “You can be anything you want to be—just try hard enough!”

Holy Church teaches, and we must accept as a matter of our faith, that every person, unaided, has a tendency to sin.

Just as our first parents, Adam and Eve, rejected God’s simple command and tried to cover up their disobedience, so we too can easily, on reflection, find times in our lives when we have failed God, when we have let some action or thought stand between us and Him, when we realize the truth behind the simple statement:

‘I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed’.

Our difficult Christian duty demands of us that we examine our consciences every day—some would say examine our *consciousness* or *awareness*—to see in what ways we may have failed God in thought, word, or deed. And we must remember that we can also sin by *not* doing things we should do, by ‘things left undone’



Lent

When we repent of our sins and are forgiven, when we say in the creed ‘*And I believe in... forgiveness of sins*’, we return to God’s favor and goodness and we live in His light, because we believe in Him fully and thus gain eternal life.

Because of our human nature we cannot do this entirely on our own but we require God’s grace and mercy. Whoever denies this shows the capital sin of *pride*, denying God by thinking one knows more than God or than His Mystical Body, the Church, like the sin of Satan and his fallen angels.

To stay out of sin we must work to acquire good habits so that we always do the right thing as a matter of course. These habits we call *virtues*. Some virtues, the *human* virtues, come to us through education and practice, and grace from God nourishes them. Other virtues, the *theological* virtues, God

infuses in us and through them lets us share in the life of the Most Holy Trinity. In all cases we must study and examine and pray for divine assistance to avoid sin and to obtain virtue. Every day.

1. Pride

We Christians should be living according to the first and greatest commandment: to love God completely, and secondly to love our neighbor as ourselves.

If we deny God the honor that is due to Him, then we show the same hatred and contempt as did Satan and his fallen angels: the overbearing and first sin of *pride*.

If we deny God’s goodness and challenge the rightness of His judgements, if we challenge the teachings of His holy Church, if we try to find fault with the teachings of Jesus, if we ‘know better’ than God, we sin through *pride*, the root of Adam and Eve’s disobedience.

If we fail to show full respect for others, if the love we should have for them appears only negatively as gross dislike, if we think ourselves better than others, we sin through *pride*.

Seen in this way, *pride* lies at the root of all other sins: they all start with *pride*. Work at conquering pride and you will vanquish all other sins.

So if we are going to avoid sin and acquire virtue, ‘today and every day of our life’, as our Christian obligation

requires of us, we should actively seek the virtue that opposes pride: *humility*.

Remember that a virtue like this comes to us from *education* and *practice* and that God's grace nourishes and assists us in our search for virtue.

Some ways to start:

—When you see someone doing something well and succeeding, do not surrender to envy, but rejoice in what they are doing and thus you will praise God.

—Pray to your heavenly Father with the simple heart of a child, recognizing that you have failed at times in His sight but that you cherish the fatherly love which He has and shows for you. Consider the core meaning of the *Our Father*.

—Reflect on and learn from the humility of Mary in being the Chosen One of God but proclaiming herself the 'handmaid of the Lord'. And learn from the humility of our Blessed Lord, God of Gods, but who humbled Himself to take on human form and to die an ignominious death out of pure love for us.

2. Envy

The tenth commandment enjoins on us: *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods...or anything that is of thy neighbor*.

Envy, the second of the capital sins, usually begins with *pride*, thinking ourselves better than others. From that one can come to the conclusion that one also deserves better than others and that rightfully (actually, of course, wrongfully) we should have good things and prosperity, and that they shouldn't.

Envy thus violates the charity and love of neighbor which we owe to all our fellow human beings, even to our enemies. This diabolical sin can begin with something seemingly as simple as

what the Germans call *Schadenfreude*, taking pleasure in other people's misfortune, and it can run all the way to inflicting harm on someone else just to get what he has. Theft and adultery and spreading bad rumors about others and many other sins have their beginning in *envy*.

How can we save ourselves from this feeling and temptation to which we have all at some time fallen prey?

—The virtue of *brotherly love* (the virtue from which the city of Philadelphia received its name) teaches us to rejoice in the progress and merits of others.

—If we live in *humility*, which conquers *pride*, we will also remove all tendencies toward *envy*.

—And if we can learn—in a society which worships material goods—to detach ourselves from riches, to find ourselves content with whatever God has given us without immoderate striving, we will be living what the Beatitude teaches us: poverty of spirit.

—Envy comes from the refusal to love as we should. So cultivate love and good will toward all.

3. Anger

We have seen that *pride* and *envy* hold first place among the cardinal sins against which we must guard ourselves—today and every day—by cultivating the virtues of *humility* and *fraternal love*.

Pride makes us think ourselves better than others, sometimes even God included.

Envy makes us wish to have and to take away from our neighbor the things which those we consider inferior to ourselves 'do not deserve'.

But with *anger* the evil moves into action: Our lack of humility and love for others now leads us to wish to do

them evil by desiring and pursuing revenge for some perceived wrong.

One sin leads to another: If you have not conquered and managed pride and envy, you will find yourself unable to cope with whatever does not fit into your scheme of things. This can end in violence and even murder.

As the second sin reported in the Bible we see Cain, Adam and Eve's son, slaying his brother Abel out of anger because God accepted Abel's sacrifice but rejected his own. And our Blessed Lord tells us in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 05.22f) that whoever is angry with his brother is liable to judgement, and whoever insults his brother out of anger is liable to the fires of Gehenna.

How can you come to Communion on Sunday if you hate or have anger toward someone?

Indeed our Blessed Lord commands us to go first and to make peace with our brother.

But, you say, didn't Jesus get angry at the money lenders in the Temple and drive them out?

Yes, because anger as a passion can work for good or for evil. If one acts in all humility and love, free of pride and envy, to correct a vice and to maintain justice then we speak of a *just anger*.

The virtue of *meekness* works against *sinful* anger. The same God who says "Vengeance is mine. I will repay" (Romans 09.19) and who appears with a flaring and angry countenance in many icons of the Last Judgement, also says (Matthew 11.28): "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am *meek* and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Do not pray for vengeance, to 'get even'—pray instead for *meekness* and *gentleness*.

4. Sloth

We should see *sloth* (accidy, by its fancy name) not just as laziness or idleness but as what some today would call a form of depression: knowing full well what we must do to secure the eternal life which our Blessed Lord has made available to us, and yet failing to do it. Whereas *anger* and *jealousy* make us abandon love and gentleness and go after the things which do *not* belong to us, in the sin of *sloth*, on the other hand, we reject God's love and we neglect to strive for the one important thing, to which we have an unquestioned right: the eternal life which continuing belief in Jesus Christ as Son of God has brought us. Our work, our hobbies, our possessions, our family and friends, all become more important to us than what really matters. When we are slothful we will do anything other than what we are supposed to be living for.

Like a beacon at the terminus of this Lenten period, the Holy Cross signals to us and reminds us where our hearts really belong.

Diligence, fasting, and spiritual discipline help to guard us from sloth. Neglect God at your peril.

5. Avarice

Greedy, covetousness, selfishness, even stubbornness, the unwillingness to let go of what one has, accompanied by the desire to get even more of whatever else one can: all these lie at the heart of the capital sin called *avarice*.

We could think of avarice as three of the other preceding capital sins (pride, envy, anger) gone wild.

We have all heard stories about *misers*, unfortunate people who gather money, gold, riches, and sit there all day long counting their possessions and scheming ways to get more.

Avarice deals not only in *wealth*, but also with *power*: Politicians, executives,

professionals, even clergymen, persons in authority, can find themselves tempted and infected by avarice, unwilling to admit to wrong decisions, willing to do whatever they find necessary to hold on to their positions of power. Lying and corruption do not lie far off from people whom avarice has seized.

The Pharisees in Mark's Gospel (e.g. 11.27–33) feel themselves and their privileged positions threatened by this upstart carpenter's son from Galilee. They challenge our Blessed Lord to tell them where His authority comes from.

He gently but firmly puts them in their place: 'Tell me, does John the Baptist's power come from man or from God?' —Oops! If we say—they reason among themselves—that John's power comes from man, the crowds will tear us to pieces because they consider him a prophet from God. If we admit that he has power from God, then our own authority is shot because we do not follow him. Clever fellow, this rabbi from Nazareth!

All their rich garments and fancy learning and the privileges they amass and increase in their avarice rest on nothing, and Jesus leaves them with nothing, no answer. They have answered their own question: our Blessed Lord has the only true authority and power, that of divine wisdom and goodness.

Think of many of the great scandals which we have seen in our time, in Washington, say, and also in the Church, and realize that whatever lying and sexual perversion and deceit we may see on the surface all go back to a sick need to keep whatever power one thinks one has amassed, not to admit mistakes which could cost one's privileged position.

Two important virtues counteract avarice: *liberality* and *generosity*. As true followers of Christ we must strive to share openly, freely, and without selfishness. We hold whatever privilege and wealth that God has granted us so

that we can do good and glorify His name, not our own.

6. Gluttony

Excessive and inordinate eating and drinking—What can we say about those who have abandoned the God and Creator of all and who instead have made their bellies their God?

Saint Paul tells us (Philippians 3.18) that gluttons like this 'live as enemies of the Cross of Christ' and that 'their end is destruction'.

Why such strong words for what we today might dismiss as just a little overindulgence?

It all comes back to where we belong and to where we are heading: We Christians, we who have committed ourself to faith in our Blessed Lord, have our true commonwealth not in Massachusetts but in Heaven, and this requires us to look at things heavenly and not for the things of this earth. Those who think to themselves, even in carelessness, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' have already fully lost sight of the eternal life that lies beyond tomorrow.

The other capital sins which we have considered so far: pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, all involve mental aberrations where sinners set themselves up against God, think themselves better than God, better than their neighbors, more deserving than others of some of the good things of life, even to the point of using violence to grab them for themselves. They neglect the things they should be doing in loving their neighbor. Sinners like that grasp at material possessions and power to fill their souls, which they have emptied of divine love.

We have bread to strengthen us and wine 'that maketh glad the heart of man' [Psalm 103.14f], good things in themselves. Gluttons and drunkards,

Continued on page 48.

A SERMON ON CANDLEMAS

In honor of the divine mystery that we celebrate today, let us all hasten to meet Christ. Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light.

Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ.

The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the true light as we hasten to meet him.

The light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.

The true light has come, *the light that enlightens every man who is born into this world*. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness. Let us be shining ourselves as we go together to meet and to receive with the aged Simeon the light whose brilliance is eternal.

Rejoicing with Simeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God the Father of the light, who sent the true light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in his splendor.

Through Simeon's eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which he prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves. As Simeon was released from the bonds of this life when he had seen Christ, so we too were at once freed from our old state of sinfulness.

By faith we too embraced Christ, the salvation of God the Father, as he

came to us from Bethlehem. Gentiles before, we have now become the people of God. Our eyes have seen God incarnate, and because we have seen him present among us and have mentally received him into our arms, we are called the new Israel. Never shall we forget this presence; every year we keep a feast in its honor.

Saint Sophronius

¶ Saint Sophronius (c. 560–638) was an Egyptian monk who was Patriarch of Jerusalem for the last four years of his life.

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



Friday, February 1, 2008
Blessing of Candles, Procession
Solemn Mass & Sermon
Saint Theresa of Avila Church
7:30 P.M.

A reception follows this service.
You may bring unused household candles for blessing.

The first day of Lent
commonly called
ASH WEDNESDAY

February 6, 2008
Imposition of Ashes, Liturgy of
Penitence
Solemn Mass & Sermon
Saint Theresa Convent Chapel
7:30 P.M.

Repentance opens heaven.
(Saint John Chrysostom)



Remember O man
that dust thou art,
and unto dust shalt
thou return.

FORTY DAYS OF POTENTIAL

For Christians, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, that most sacred and solemn time of fasting, sacrifice and introspection. It parallels the 40 days and 40 nights that Christ spent in the desert, preparing himself for crucifixion and resurrection. Catholics, in particular, wear ashes on our foreheads as a symbol of mortality, and to remind us that while our bodies are temporal, our souls are infinite.

You don't need to be Christian to appreciate the importance of Lent. Atheists and secularists could also



"Begone Satan, for it is written, 'The Lord thy God shalt thou worship and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

February 10, 2008

Litany in Procession

Exhortation

Solemn Mass & Sermon

Fourth Communion Service

10:30 A.M.



Solemn Evensong and Benediction

5:00 P.M.

Chapel of Saint Theresa Church

stand to look into the mirror and examine whether they are truly fulfilling their mission as human beings.

There are so many questions to ask:

Are we our brothers' keepers? Do we hear the cries of the dying in Darfur, the dispossessed Iraqis, the homeless in our own cities, and the women and children trafficked across our borders? Is there space in our hearts for unborn children, victims of a regime that recognizes a mother's preference as being superior to a baby's right to live? Can we see the danger in allowing people to play games with phrases, labeling infanticide as "late term abortion" or adding the word "mercy" to "killing" so we don't feel too bad about eliminating our inconvenient sufferers?

STATIONS OF THE CROSS & BENEDICTION

7:00 P.M.

Chapel of Saint Theresa of Avila Church

Friday, February 15th

Friday, February 29th

Friday, March 14th



We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee.

Because by thy holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

Can we consider ourselves Americans, not Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives saddled with the back-breaking baggage that comes with those labels? Are we tired of blaming this president or that senator or those judges for being human, not divine, for making mistakes or exercising profoundly poor judgment? Can we acknowledge that no one welcomes the death of innocents, good intentions are sometimes fatal and blood is often the price we pay for freedom?

Are we able to step back from the hateful name-calling in the anonymous blogosphere, the bigoted rants against people of faith or political dissenters, the lies and misrepresentations for which no one is held accountable but have the power to destroy reputations and well-being?

Lent is a time when we must stop running through our daily lives and pause, breathe slowly and reflect on the things that define our worth as human beings. We are imperfect, but filled with great potential. Christians believe that the Holy Spirit empowers us to change the world for the better. Others are animated by respect for simple human dignity and think that mountains can be moved and wars won without superhuman efforts.

In either case there is greatness. And grace.

This op ed piece is by Christine Flowers, who is an attorney and freelance writer. It appeared in the Wednesday, February 21, 2007 edition of Metro Boston.

(Ad)vices for Lent - Continued from page 45.

however, do not just greedily go after God's riches, but actually then *abuse* them, and the glutton and drunkard fails to praise God for the gifts of food and drink.

In many medieval manuscripts one can see the image of Hell at the Last Judgement swallowing up the condemned gluttons in the same way in which they thoughtlessly devoured their substance.

In order to counter the serious and undisciplined sin of gluttony in all its aspects we have the virtue of *temperance*, of balance and moderation in all things. In *all things* because just as we speak metaphorically of someone as a 'glutton for punishment', so gluttony can apply to overindulgence in entertainment, sport, hobbies, in all the things which can also otherwise serve as useful activities.

The laudable habit of saying a blessing before and after every meal can also serve as a safeguard against excess in eating and drinking.

Likewise make your every pleasurable activity begin and end in God's name.

7. Lust

One can often hear it said that the Church has a hangup about sexual behavior. But if we reflect even just a little, how many of the seven capital sins which we have been speaking about involve sexuality in any direct way? Only one: *lust*, the final capital sin, and even then lust refers by extension to the inordinate love of *all* pleasures, not just sexual ones. The lustful soul loves pleasure more than it does God.

Of the Ten Commandments given to Moses how many legislate directly on sexual matters? Two at most.

No, the Church requires a balanced and moderated approach to sexuality, but that does not constitute a hangup

or an obsession. The obsession lies in the modern world which surrounds us, a world which scoffs at virtues like modesty and chastity and virginity, and a world which lives for the pleasure of the moment with little thought for the near future and with none at all for the life to come.

God has ordained for us one of the most profound and beautiful mysteries in the union of husband and wife within Holy Matrimony. Through this sacramental life and in this noble vocation man and woman create more souls for the glory of God, they educate them in the ways of salvation, and they work together for their own mutual salvation.

A married couple shares in the act of creation which God the Father has effected, they participate in a miraculous incarnation which God the Son deigned to undergo, and together they inspire and illumine their children and others in the work of God the Holy Spirit.

The Church teaches without exception that the pleasures of sexual activity belong to husband and wife and to them alone. Whoever appropriates them outside of marriage, or whoever abuses them within marriage, brings great disorder into the divine plan.

Sadly, the sexualization of relations in our society has gone so far as to pervade every aspect of human activity. Godless scholars and practitioners even attribute a vast majority of our ills to deeply seated sexual urges while at the same time themselves preaching and urging undisciplined sex: *lust* of the highest order.

The virtues of *chastity* and *moderation* most oppose lust, but we should also keep in mind that all the sins, including lust, go back ultimately to pride, the first and foremost of the faults that afflict us: the sinfully proud person knows better than God does, and in despising God the prideful soul has misplaced its love, perverted the entire course of nature.

Make correcting that your real hangup. This day and every day.

¶ *The Revd. Dcn. Michael Connolly teaches linguistics in Boston College and serves primarily as Archdeacon at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in Belmont. He assists frequently in the Anglican Use. His most recent contribution to Contra Mundum was in October 2007.*

SHORT NOTES

¶ Bring palms for burning prior to Ash Wednesday. Last year's Palm Sunday palms are burned for use in the liturgy on the first day of Lent.

¶ The Blessing of Throats will be offered after Sunday Mass on February 3rd. (For this custom and something about Saint Blaise, see *Contra Mundum* Volume III, Issue 7, February 2001.)

¶ Ordinations to the Diaconate take place on Saturday, February 2nd in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. One of Saint Theresa's parishioners, William Lohan, will be ordained a transitional deacon at the service, which begins at 10:00 A.M.

¶ Saturdays in Lent Mass is offered in the convent chapel at 9:00 A.M. The February 23rd Mass is a year's-mind for Janet Ray.

¶ *The Magnificat Lenten Companion* is a collection of meditations for every day of the season, Stations of the Cross, and other helpful devotional material. Available in the rear of the chapel at a cost of \$4.00.

¶ Holy Week is March 16–23.

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 CONOR O'DEVANY
Bishop and Martyr (c. 1533–1612)

On February 2, 1583, the feast of Candlemas (the Presentation of the Lord), the Irish Franciscan priest, Father Conor O'Devany, then in Rome, was consecrated bishop of the Irish dioceses of Down and Connor. Twenty-nine years later, in the early evening of February 1, 1612, the eve of Candlemas, Bishop O'Devany was taken by the English authorities to a scaffold in Dublin to be executed on a trumped-up charge of treason. Having been offered a pardon at his trial if he would deny his faith, he had answered that he was resolved to die in defense of the Catholic faith. On the way to the scaffold, the bishop said to a priest facing martyrdom together with him (Blessed Patrick O'Loughran), "Come, my brave comrade, noble soldier of Christ, let us imitate as best we can the death of him who was led to the slaughter as the sheep before the shearer." As the bishop passed through Dublin's streets, Catholics emerged from their homes to kneel in reverence to their prelate. Follow-

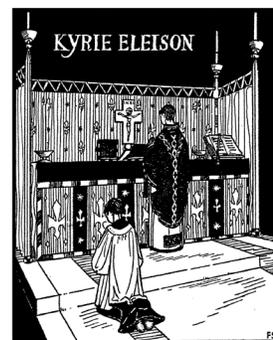
ing Bishop O'Devany's execution, a paralytic who had crawled to the scaffold to venerate his body was instantaneously cured.

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BLESSED ROBERT DRURY
Priest and Martyr (1567–1607)

After studying for the priesthood in Reims, France, and Valladolid, Spain, Robert Drury, of Buckinghamshire, England, was ordained at the age of twenty-six. Returning to England, he labored largely in London. Father Drury was arrested in the summer of 1606. After being condemned to death for his priesthood, he was offered a pardon if he agreed to take a new oath of allegiance, proffered by the regime of King James I, with subtle wording tailored to deceive Catholics. The oath had been formulated in part by an apostate Jesuit. Father Drury refused to take the oath, and in fact carried in his pocket a letter from another priest condemning it. On February 26, 1607, Father Drury was put to death by drawing and quartering at the London execution site of Tyburn. The thirty-nine-year-old priest is said to have exhibited great fortitude in his final agony.

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Kyríe eleíson, Chríste eleíson, Kyríe eleíson is the Greek for "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy." Most of the first Christians spoke Greek. We keep these words as a link with them.

The Commandments are sometimes said in place of the Kyrie at Mass. It is our parish custom to sing the Decalogue every other Sunday during Lent.

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

Saint Theresa Convent
Chapel

10 St. Theresa Ave.
West Roxbury, Mass.
(Enter through the side door.)

Sundays 10:30 A.M.
Sung Mass
Fellowship and Coffee in the
Lounge 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.

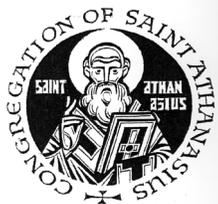
Directions by Car: From the North: Route 128 to Route 109, which becomes Spring Street in West Roxbury. Spring Street ends at a traffic light at Centre Street in sight of the church. At this light bear left onto Centre St. and immediately turn right at the next light onto St. Theresa Ave.

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 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

