
✠Contra Mundum✠

Volume XIV, Issue 5

December 2011

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>

IN THE FULNESS OF TIME

HERE is God then, deliberately entering our life as the last little helpless infant born into the world. He stretches out His hand to Mary in imploring dependence; His voice cries with cold in the manger stall. What did we say of the Incarnation? It expresses God's character in terms of human life. Jesus is the mirror of what human life can and ought to be. If as God we worship Him, as man we must take Him as our pattern, and, especially at Christmas, the example He gives is His great humility.

That is why the earthly life of Jesus begins not in a palace but in a manger. He determined to be laid in that lowly crib that He might win you and me to the practice of humility by His own beautiful example. It is a lesson each of us needs to learn. Pride is the parent stem on which all the other deadly sins are grafted, and pride is in all of us. It will mean a real step forward



on our Heavenward path if we make it our Christmas resolution that so often as we are tempted to puff ourselves up on our talents, accomplishments, positions, successes and all that, we pay a visit in spirit to the manger. Gaze at the Eternal Son of the Father born in poverty and nakedness, and pray for grace to follow the example of His most blessed life. Have the courage to do what you see, won't you?

How great the sacrifice may be on your part only you and He will know. The world will only know that, strangely enough, you are having a happy Christmas. The world will not quite know what to do with that. It's been that way since the first Christmas Eve when the shepherds told their story!

Father Bradford

¶ This is an excerpt from a Christmas Eve sermon from 1996, when the congregation was meeting in the convent chapel at St Mary's Church, Dedham.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

WHEN I was Parish Priest of a Parish with a Junior School, at the end of a visit to a class I would often suggest that we say a prayer together I used to ask the children themselves—probably a mistake!—whether they would like to say a long prayer or a short one. Inevitably they would choose a short prayer—and we would say the ‘Hail Mary’ together. It was always said with great gusto. For many of us—especially those of us brought up as Catholics from our earliest days—the ‘Hail Mary’ was one of the first prayers we learned to say in our mother tongue. A short prayer—but one which actually for many years in the Church’s history was even shorter! We have just heard the first part of this prayer in our Gospel reading: ‘*Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum*’ the salutation of the angel Gabriel to Mary—added to a short time later in the Gospel pages of Luke with that of her cousin Elizabeth: ‘*Benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui*’. For centuries this was the ‘Hail Mary’—notice that Mary is not greeted by name, and neither is her son Jesus mentioned—nor the bit about praying for us sinners nor the hour of our death. These additions were to be made later. I read somewhere the other day that the ‘Angelic Doctor’—Saint Thomas Aquinas—once preached in Rome for forty days on this ‘Hail Mary’—forty consecutive days! And I would hazard a guess



SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Wednesday, December 7, 2011

VIGIL MASS

7:30 P.M.

Holy Day of Obligation

that he did so without hesitation or repetition. But he, after all, was the Angelic Doctor and perhaps could have spoken for longer. I do not intend doing so this evening.

The very nub, the kernel of our Christian faith in God made man in Jesus proceeds from the angel’s surprising greeting to Mary. As Advent unfolds we will reflect on this again. An angel—a higher being—sent from the very presence of Almighty God to a lower being—a young maiden in Galilee. This seems unbelievable. Surely this greeting should be the other way round—the angel should be hailed because the angel certainly has the Lord with him. But no, the angel greets Mary in this remarkable way and does so because she has been chosen to perform a key role in the history of our being saved—that of being the mother of our Saviour—Jesus. Mary is deeply

troubled at these words. Blessed John Henry Newman says that we can only imagine ‘how many and complicated are the feelings in Mary’ and yet she, from her innate goodness and openness to God’s will in her life declares her whole-hearted ‘Yes’, her ‘Fiat’. All generations have called her blessed—and all generations have known that the Virgin Mary must surely have been profoundly graced from the very beginning of her life.

For many centuries the Fathers and great Doctors of the Church debated the exact role of Mary in what we call the ‘History of Salvation’. I remember once hearing a description of the early history of our Church as being rather like a walk through a cemetery of heresies and lost arguments’. From time to time the Church has had to

intervene and settle matters by making definitions. We move forward to 1854—coincidentally the year that Fr Faber and his merry band of brothers came here to Brompton, at the leafy edge of London, and some of the locals were concerned that the neighbourhood might ‘go down’! Mercifully that proved to be quite wrong. Anyway, on this date, 8th December, in 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, adding that anyone who did not agree to and believe this had—and these are not his words—‘lost the plot’. For centuries it had been the common feeling of the faithful—a true ‘*sensus fidelium*’—which would have pleased Blessed John Henry—that logically of course Mary must have been sinless from the outset. A happy confluence of this ‘*sensus fidelium*’, the lived tradition of the Church and the Magisterium brought about this defining moment.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. Amen.

Msgr Seamus O’Boyle, V.G.

¶ *This is an excerpt from a sermon preached in the Brompton Oratory (London) on December 8, 2010. It was published in The Oratory Magazine, January 2011 edition, Vol. 88, No. 1076.*

SHORT NOTES

✠ Many thanks to Fr Brian Clary for being our celebrant and preacher at Sunday Mass on October 23rd. Fr Clary is Pastor of St. Mary’s Church, Brookline, which includes St Lawrence Church, Chestnut Hill.

✠ There is Saturday Anglican Use Mass at 9 A.M. in the St. Theresa Convent Chapel. Entrance is through the side door nearest the school.

✠ Bishop Robert Hennessey will observe the fifth anniversary of his ordination as a bishop on December 11th. Congratulations and best wishes from all of us.

✠ The Fourth Communion Service, the Plainsong setting, is in use during the Advent Season. We will return to the Second Communion Service, by Healy Willan, for Christmas.

✠ A book of *Advent Meditations* by Fr Peter Stravinskis is available for purchase (\$3.00) in the book stall where you find service leaflets and the alms basin.

✠ Our Every Member Canvass materials were mailed out in late October. Please return your filled in pledge card. Knowing about available income greatly helps us plan a program for next year. Many thanks.

✠ A reminder that the Christmas collection benefits the clergy retirement fund of The Archdiocese of Boston. These funds provide stipends, housing, and insurance for our retired priests. Please be generous.

✠ Our annual Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols will take place on Wednesday evening, December 28th at 7:30 P.M. You might consider signing up to be a reader. There are nine lessons read, and copies are available with a sign-up sheet at Sunday coffee hours.

✠ Our observance of The Solemn-

nity of The Epiphany will take place on Friday, January 6th. A Solemn Mass will be offered at 7:30 P.M.

✠ Congratulations to friend of the parish Imelda Bougue & her husband David on the birth of a son, Dominic Sebastian, on October 18th.

✠ The schola is happy to welcome a new chorister, Ian Faley, to its ranks. Ian has been visiting the parish for several months, and joined the schola for both Mass and Evensong on the feast of Christ the King.

CONCERTS DURING ADVENT

Some concerts in the Boston area you may want to attend during the Advent season include:

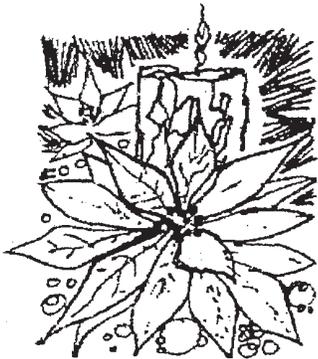
🎵 The Handel and Haydn Society will present *The Messiah* at Symphony Hall in Boston on Friday, December 2nd at 7:30 P.M., on Saturday, December 3rd at 3:00 P.M. and on Sunday, December 4th at 3:00 P.M.

🎵 St. John’s Seminary in Brighton will host its annual Service of Lessons and Carols on Saturday, December 3rd at 7:30 P.M. and on Sunday, December 4th at 3:00 P.M. (free of charge)

🎵 The Boston Boy Choir of the Archdiocesan Choir School will host several concerts this season. On Friday, December 9th and Friday, December 16th, the choir and men’s schola will present a Ceremony of Carols by Candlelight at 7:00 P.M. On Sunday, December 11th and Sunday, December 18th at 3:00 P.M. they will sing Carols in the Square. On Saturday, December 17th the group Stile Antico will present *Puer Natus Est—Tudor music for Advent and Christmas* at 7:30 P.M. On Thursday, Decem-

ber 22nd at 7:00 P.M. director John Robinson and the men's schola will present an Organ Recital: *La Nativité du Seigneur* by Olivier Messiaen with "The Great O Antiphons". On December 24th at 3:00 P.M., a Service of Lessons and Carols will be presented, and in the new year, on January 7th at 7:00 P.M. *Monteverdi Vespers*, sung by the Green Mountain Project will be presented. To finish out the holiday season, the St. Paul's Adult Choir will present Lessons and Carols for the feast of the Epiphany on January 8th at 3:00 P.M. All concerts and services will be at St. Paul's Church in Cambridge, Mass. See www.boston-boychoir.org for more details.

On Thursday, December 15th, the Handel and Haydn Society will present *A Bach Christmas* at Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory at 8:00 P.M. The concert will be repeated on Sunday, December 18th, at 3:00 P.M. in Jordan Hall.



ABOUT

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Altar flower envelopes are available in the Church for your donations as memorials or thanksgivings. The Church looks lovely at holiday time thanks to the care of George Gannon, Jr., who purchases and arranges the décor. We will pool our funds with those of the Saint Lawrence congregation but list our own memorials in our service leaflets as usual. Please be generous.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY OFFERS LOVE AND ETERNAL HOPE

SUPPOSE what some call the "Christmas story" is true — all of it, from the angels, to the shepherds, to the virgin birth, to God taking on human flesh. By this, I don't mean to suggest it is true only for those who believe it to be true, but what if it is objectively true, no matter what the deniers say? What difference would it make? Should it make any difference?

The narrative and the quotations written by the physician named Luke and by John, the closest disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, are unique and exclusive. The genealogical line of Jesus compiled by Matthew the tax collector is impressive and compelling. The words spoken by Jesus and recorded by these men are phenomenal. They expose the inner darkness of Man, offering a roadmap out, while also revealing the light of God, offering directions into His presence.

The information provided by witnesses to these events are either true, or not. The claims leave no room for middle ground, despite what some "theologians" claim. If they are not true, one must conclude "the greatest story ever told" was the result of the greatest conspiracy in history from which not a single "conspirator" later recanted. The one who spoke such heartwarming words, as C.S. Lewis has noted, was either a liar, a fool, or he told the truth. There are no other options.

The "conspiracy" would have to have stretched over thousands of years, from the time of the prophets to the modern era when millions con-

tinued to claim their lives have been transformed by this carpenter with no formal training, no college degree and no influence with the reigning religious and secular authorities of His day.

Among other things skeptics have to contend with is why would so many people claim the story is true, including what would occur at the end of Jesus' life on Earth, when they had nothing to gain in this life by promoting a lie? In fact, they invited persecution from the religious authorities, along with imprisonment and death from the Roman rulers, who treated any perceived or actual challenge to Caesar as a capital offense.

Of course the story is fantastic. But who would want to follow a God that can be defined and understood by human logic? Such a God would not be worth knowing because He would be created in our image.

I suspect even those who don't believe the story secretly wish it were true. Who, or what else, offers the hope, cleansing and purpose for this life — as well as eternal life — like that presented by this child-man-God? In an age when love means lust and is too often conditional, this story offers a love that is personal, redemptive and unconditional. Christmas is the great story of God becoming human in order that humans might dwell with Him. It is about the helper helping those who cannot help themselves no matter how hard they try.

It is a gift better than anything the fictional Santa Claus could give. And it is a gift that keeps on giving into

eternity, never losing its value, unlike stock portfolios.

Come on, what have you got to lose—only everything—by considering this greatest of all stories? Maybe you believed the story as a child, but with maturity came skepticism and later unbelief. Try reading it again as an adult. It truly is the ultimate gift and it has your (and my) name on it. It fits all who try it on and has the additional benefit of having been paid for by someone else. This gift never wears out. Once accepted, it so satisfies that people rarely return it. For what could it be exchanged?

Can anyone name a better gift that has produced more positive and welcome results around the world for more than 2,000 years?

Cal Thomas

¶ Mr. Thomas writes for Tribune Media Services.

GAUDETE SUNDAY (THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

TODAY, the mid-point of the Advent season, is called Gaudete Sunday, from the opening word of the Latin Introit, which is taken from the fourth chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: *Gaudete in Domino semper* [Rejoice in the Lord always], *iterum dico, gaudete* [and again I say, rejoice]. *Dominus enim prope est* [for the Lord is near].

The first two readings from today's Mass sound the same theme: from Isaiah, *I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul*, and from St. Paul's first

letter to the Thessalonians, *Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.*

One of my first Christmas cards, received last week from a friend who is retired, carries the following message: *I find it harder and harder to rejoice as the world gets sadder and sadder.* But my friend goes on to say, *I had two successful cataract surgeries in April, [which] brightened up the external world amazingly.* Evidently, while her mental world was darkening, her physical world was brightening. Retirement can be dangerous for those who are inclined to brood, for they have so much extra time to do it!

Today's scriptures speak imperatively: *Rejoice...and again I say, rejoice; Rejoice always ...[and] in all circumstances give thanks.* That does seem odd, because in actual experience, joy is so dependent upon circumstances. How can we be commanded to be joyful?

But the scriptures are quite realistic. They never portray joy apart from sorrow: the joy of Israel's deliverance follows the sorrow of her enslavement; the joy of Israel's return to Zion follows the sorrow of her exile; the joy of the disciples when they meet the risen Lord follows the sorrow of his crucifixion. Like the morning sun that follows a dark night, joy is as inseparable from sorrow as light from darkness. How could we know light apart from darkness? No more can we know joy apart from sorrow; happiness apart from sadness. No more can we give thanks except

with an awareness that there have been—and still could be—reasons to lament.

That is our human condition in this fallen world—but it is quite the opposite with God, in God's world. God, who is all-good, all-true, and all-beautiful, has joy as the essential quality of his existence. God has joy in his creation, as it says in Genesis, *God saw all that he had made, and indeed it was very good.* [Gen. 1] The persons of the Trinity have perfect joy in one another, joy that they wish to communicate to us. Jesus said to his friends on the eve of his Passion, *As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love* [that is, in their Holy Spirit]. *I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you, and your joy be complete.* [Jn. 15]

The Gaudete Introit gives a reason to be joyful: *Dominus enim prope est*—for the Lord is near. The Lord, in whom is perfect joy, who wishes to communicate his joy to us, is near.

Human beings must have reasons to rejoice—tangible, concrete reasons that touch us inwardly, which we can actually feel. God knows that, of course; he does not command us to be joyful without reasons. And the Bible's story of salvation is one long testimony to God giving reasons for his people to rejoice. He comes to them: in the sorrow of their enslavement; in the sorrow of their exile; in the sorrow of their sin and sickness; in the sorrow of death. God comes in our sorrow. He gives us signs to recognize his coming, and he, in whom is perfect joy, gives us by his very presence reason to rejoice.

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CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 24, 2011

CHRISTMAS EVE

8:00 P.M.

Procession and Blessing of the Creche
Solemn Mass & Sermon

Sunday, December 25, 2011

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sung Mass & Sermon at 11:30 A.M.

Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation

Wednesday, December 28, 2011

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

A FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS

7:30 P.M.

A reception follows this service

Sunday, January 1, 2012

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Octave Day of Christmas

Solemn Mass and Sermon at 11:30 A.M.

Holy Day of Obligation

BRITISH MARTYRS & CONFESSORS

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.

EDMUND CAMPION, the brilliant Oxford scholar, orator, Anglican deacon, convert—“one of England’s diamonds”—was done to death in London on 1 December 1581 at the age of about forty. His tempestuous career as one of the first two Jesuit priests in England had lasted but fourteen months; then came betrayal, the rack in the Tower, the Tyburn gallows. He was brought out from his cell, in an old frieze gown, in the splash and mud of a wet morning. Cheerfully he saluted the crowd of spectators: “God save you all, gentlemen! God bless you and make you all good Catholics!” After kneeling in prayer, he was strapped on the hurdle, his companions Sherwin and Briant being together bound on a second hurdle. They were dragged at the horses’ tails through the gutter and filth, followed by a jeering rabble, sobered somewhat to see how gladly these men died. Some Catholics present were consoled by a word from him, and one gentleman wiped his face all spattered with mire and filth. Passing under the arch of Newgate, whereon still stood an image of our Lady, Campion raised himself and saluted her whom he hoped so soon to see. At the gallows he began with a sweet firm voice, “Spectaculum facti sumus Deo angelis et hominibus,*” but the sheriffs interrupted him, and urged him to confess his treason. He maintained his innocence, declined to join in prayer with the ministers, and asked all Catholics to say the Creed on his behalf. His last audible words were for “Elizabeth, your queen and my queen, unto whom I wish a long reign with all prosperity.”

*“We are made a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men.”—1 Cor. 4,9 (quoted by Campion on the scaffold).

THREE seminary priests and a layman were martyred at Canterbury 1 October 1588, on Oaten Hill, outside the city walls on the south side. Bd. Robert Wilcox and Bd. Edward Campion had ministered in Kent for a short period; but Bd. Christopher Buxton was taken almost immediately after setting foot in England, and never reached his destination in his native Derbyshire, where the martyred Nicholas Garlick had been his schoolmaster. Bd. Robert Widmerpool, an Oxford man from Nottinghamshire, was a schoolmaster by profession; his offence was that he had found shelter for a priest in the house of the Countess of Northumberland, to whose children the martyr had been tutor. All suffered with cheerfulness and composure; Wilcox was the first, and he told the others that he would “take to Heaven the tidings that they were following him”. Widmerpool publically thanked God that he was dying for faith and truth in the same place where St. Thomas of Canterbury had shed his blood.

“I will not obey the commandment of the king, but the commandment of the law which was given us by Moses.”—2 Mach. 7:30.

These accounts are taken from *Mementoes of the Martyrs and Confessors of England & Wales for Every Day of the Year*. The author is Henry Sebastian Bowden of the Oratory. Edited and revised by David Attwater, and published by Anthony Clarke Books, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, n.d.

Now, the reason for God’s perfect joy is simple: it is love. As John says, *God is love, and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him.* [1 Jn. 4] The Lord does not command us to be joyful, after all. His command is, *love one another, as I have loved you*, in that perfect act of laying down his life for us. [Jn. 15] Joy is what God promises—not commands, but promises—to those who love. In this fallen world, God knows, love can bring much sorrow. But sorrow is the price we pay for love, and joy is love’s reward.

Fr. Carleton P. Jones, OP

¶ This sermon was preached in 2005 when Fr. Jones was Pastor of St Vincent Ferrer Church, New York City. He is now Pastor of SS. Philip & James Church, Baltimore. Fr. Jones observes his ordination anniversary Dec 19th.

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius

The Revd.

Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

Saint Lawrence Church
774 Boylston Ave.
Chestnut Hill, Mass.
(Parking lot behind church.)

Sundays 11:30 A.M.

Sung Mass

Fellowship and Coffee in the
Undercroft after Mass

Rectory:

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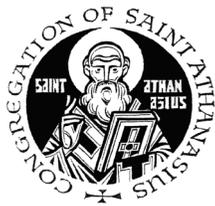
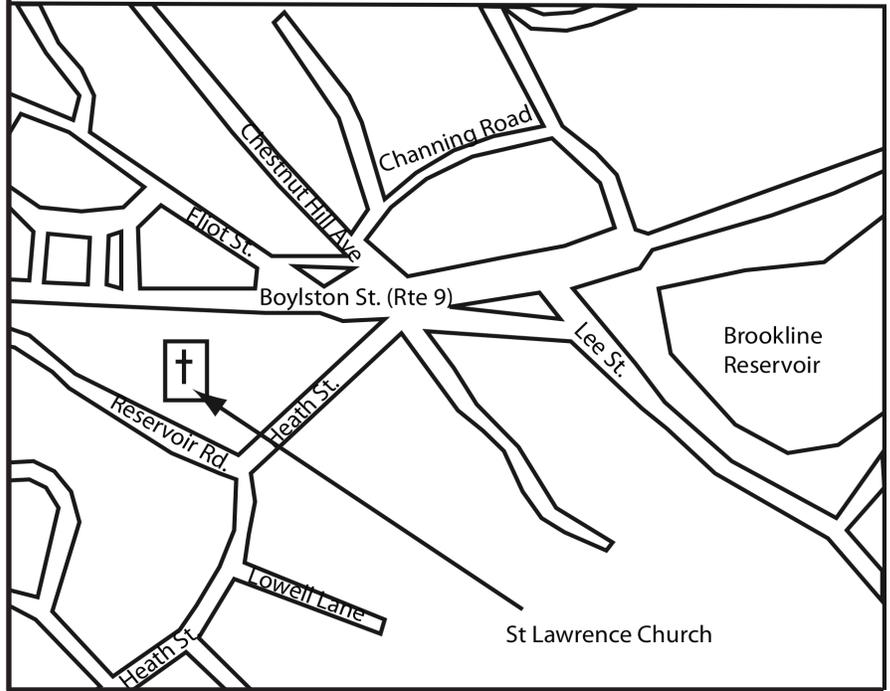
St. Lawrence Church, 774 Boylston Street (Route 9).

Park in the church parking lot behind the Church, off of Reservoir Rd.

Directions by Car: From the North or South: Route 128 to Route 9. At signal for Reservoir Road, take right; Church parking lot is a short distance on left.

From Boston: From Stuart/Kneeland St., turn left onto Park Plaza. Drive for 0.2 miles. Park Plaza becomes St James Avenue. Drive for 0.3 miles. Turn slight left onto ramp. Drive for 0.1 miles. Go straight on Route-9. Drive for 3.5 miles. Turn left onto Heath Street. Drive for 0.1 miles. Go straight on Reservoir Road. Drive for 0.1 miles. Parking lot is on your right.

Directions by Public Transportation: Green line to Kenmore Square terminal. Bus #60, has a stop in front of the Church. The Church is a 15-minute walk from the Cleveland Circle Green Line station. On weekdays and Saturdays only the #51 bus route which runs from Cleveland Circle to Forest Hills via Hancock Village is a 3-minute bus trip from Chestnut Hill/Reservoir, which stops at Lee St.



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 10 St. Theresa Avenue
 West Roxbury, MA 02132

