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# ✠Contra Mundum✠

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Volume XV, Issue 5

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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>

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## THE HIDDEN GOD

THE birth of Jesus, after an admittedly miraculous conception, was just like any other human birth since the dawn of history. In some cold and drafty cave fenced off from wild beasts the first human mother gave birth to the first human child. The Bible calls her Eve, and she named her son Cain and said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." (Genesis 4:1) The incident is a familiar one down the ages to our own day and with minor variations, and, please God, more creature comforts added in.

A priest can sometimes share the happy moment in a hospital, when a tired but radiant young mother holds up her pink and bundled baby to show through the glass window of the nursery. The mother gazes down with rapt adoration at her child and holds the baby up to attract the adoration of those looking in. It is a moment very similar to the joy expressed by our first mother, Eve. "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Every birth



is a miracle, because it never happened before.

One of the messages of Christmas is that Almighty God hides in ordinary events like the birth of a child. Why does He hide? So that when we find Him the discovery may be a memorable experience. It is the romance of finding a Person. That is more exciting than our acceding to the dull thud of obedience to some overwhelming fact. God in a manger is more exciting than a proposition in *The Catechism!*

Do you remember those games of hide and seek played as children with your parents? You tried your best, but your hiding place was obvious, and made more so by your squirming and giggles. Your father pretended he could not find you, to your great delight. But when it was *his* turn to hide, it was always a wonderful place you could not discover until you almost gave up. Then your mother would come with you and drop broad hints

about the best places, and say "you're getting warmer." It was such fun, this combination of your excitement, your father's skill and planning, and your mother's help in revealing the thrilling secret hiding place.

One special night in our history was like that. It happened when all was quiet, and in the deep stillness of a winter night Almighty God was hidden in a little country town. He hid in a manger, and He hid in the flesh of men. In medieval times the Birth of Christ at Bethlehem was sometimes called "the devil's mousetrap" because the Nativity took place under the radar screen of our old adversary.

As always in the past, God gave some momentary clues: a slight movement in the stars, the brief sound of something like flapping wings that startled shepherds who should have been asleep but were keeping their watch in the field. All through history there have been a few men and women who were ready at the slightest encouragement to take up clues

like these and begin the hunt for the God Who hides. And so it began again with the keen ears of shepherd folk and the sharp eyes of stargazers in the East. The shepherds asked in dead of night where the baby is, and the Magi in Jerusalem inquired, "Tell us, where is He born King of the Jews?" It is like the old game of hide and seek. "Am I getting warmer?"

Of course it cannot possibly lead where it does! Both the shepherds and Wise Men must have thought they had taken a wrong turn somewhere and would have to backtrack. As thanks for their efforts they find a tumbledown house or shed in a back street in a small village. Have you ever had a cab driver take you to an address and then you look out at the place and decide you don't even want to open the door? Bethlehem was probably like that. And then it gets worse. The sleepy innkeeper says "Not here, out back." So they go to a drafty cellar, and if we are reminded of the cave where Eve gave birth to Cain we are close to what is going on here. The shepherds probably had other thoughts. "No good looking in there!" Still, they opened the door, expecting nothing. A young woman, barely more than a girl, stands there, a finger pressed to her lips. "Come in quietly. He's sleeping."

And it is like our first mother Eve all over again, or the young mother in the modern hospital nursery. How simple, joyous, and happy an occasion, no matter how many times repeated. But on this particular night in our history a discovery was made by the shepherds. The God Who does not dwell in temples made with hands, the God Who neither

slumbers or sleeps, watching over Israel, the Very Same One, *was in there, asleep!*

Father Bradford

¶ *This sermon was preached at Mass on Christmas Eve, 2011, in St Theresa's Church, West Roxbury and later in St Lawrence Church, Chestnut Hill.*



## WAITING

ONE aspect of Advent is waiting, a waiting that is full of hope. In this, Advent enables us to understand the content and meaning of Christian time and of history as such. Jesus made this visible in many of the parables—in the story of the servants waiting for the return of their lord or forgetting and behaving as though they were the owners of the property; in the story of the bridesmaids waiting for or not being able to wait for the coming of the bridegroom; and in the parables of sowing and the harvest.

Man is always waiting in his life...

Mankind has never been able to cease hoping for better times. Christians have always hoped that the Lord will always be present in history and that he will gather up all our tears and all our troubles so that everything will be explained and fulfilled in his kingdom.

It becomes especially clear during

a time of illness that man is always waiting. Every day we are waiting for a sign of improvement and in the end for a complete cure. At the same time, however, we discover how many different ways there are of waiting.

When time itself is not filled with a present that is meaningful, waiting becomes unbearable. If we have to look forward to something that is not there now—if, in other words, we have nothing here and now and the present is completely empty, every second of our life seems too long. Waiting itself becomes too heavy a burden to bear, when we cannot be sure whether we really have anything at all to wait for.

When, on the other hand, time itself is meaningful and every moment contains something especially valuable, our joyful anticipation of the greater experience that is still to come makes what we have in the present even more precious and we are carried by an invisible power beyond the present moment. Advent helps us to wait with precisely this kind of waiting. It is the essentially Christian form of waiting and hoping.

Pope Benedict XVI  
*Seeking God's Face, 1982*

¶ *His Holiness Benedict XVI was elected to the See of Peter in 2005.*





**The  
First Sunday of  
ADVENT**

Sunday, December 2, 2012  
Litany in Procession  
Solemn Mass & Sermon  
Fourth Communion Service  
11:30 a.m.

*A Procession with Carols  
for Advent*

5:00 p.m.  
Saint Lawrence Church  
Chestnut Hill

*A reception will follow this service.*

## A TRIUMPH FOR ETHICS

Dr Shinya Yamanaka was one of the scientists featured in an article on stem cell research by Father Bradford in the February, 2009 issue of *Contra Mundum*. Dr Yamanaka was quoted (from *The New York Times*, December 11, 2007) “When I saw the embryo [through a microscope at a friend’s fertility clinic] I suddenly realized there was such a small difference between it and my daughters. I thought, we

can’t keep destroying embryos for our research. There must be another way.”

Dr Yamanaka (who teaches at Kyoto University) and another pioneer of adult stem-cell research, Dr John B. Gurdon, have received the Nobel Prize in physiology. These men have been in the forefront of scientists proving the superior potential of adult stem-cell research over experimentation on human embryonic stem cells, which results in the destruction of human embryos.

## MY JOURNEY HOME

There is a major hole in the logic of those Christians who protest against the Catholic Church: you cannot use the authority of Scripture to attack the authority of the Church when it was the authority of the Church that recognized the Scripture’s authority. The hierarchy, the sacraments, the major doctrines of the Catholic Church were all well in place—centuries in place—before the biblical canon was in place and, of course, it was the Catholic Church that authorized the biblical canon. Chesterton says he can understand someone looking at a Catholic procession, at the candles and the incense and the priests and the robes and the cross and the scrolls, and saying “It’s all bosh.” But what he cannot understand is anyone saying, “It’s all bosh—except for the scrolls. We’re going to keep the scrolls. In fact, we’re even going to use the scrolls against the rest.”

Dale Ahlquist

¶ Dale Ahlquist is a convert to Catholicism from the Baptist Church. He is president of the American Chesterton Society. This excerpt is taken from the November 2012 issue of *The Coming Home Network newsletter*.

## CARING AND UNCARING

The novelist Taylor Caldwell, in her memoir *Growing up Tough* (1967), recalls the advice her Irish grandmother gave her when she was a little girl: *Never trust anyone who weeps over the poor; Janet, unless he’s poor himself!* Her no-nonsense grandmother had taken the measure of a certain type of person whose

expressive concern for people at the bottom of the economic ladder was not matched by personal deeds of charity. In fact, it was often a cloak for the defect of real charitableness in daily life.

What a shrewd, psychologically-astute observer of human behavior this old lady was! In late twentieth century political life in America we actually developed a term for it: the liberal guilt-complex. In the liberal guilt-complex, a person enjoying the standard of living in the U.S. feels guilty about having so much in a world where many people still struggle for existence. In order to assuage this guilty feeling he adopts political opinions that say how much he cares for the poor and downtrodden—without, of course, having to give up what he has and become poor himself. He is caring. Anyone who disagrees with his solution is, by definition, uncaring.

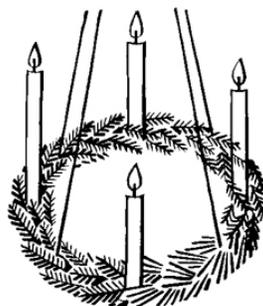
The Christian ideal of charity is supremely personal. Christ says: *As long as you did to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me (Matthew 25:40)*. Implicit in it is the idea of personal self-sacrifice for the good of one's neighbor. And the more unnoticed it is in the sight of men (*But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and Thy Father Who seeth in secret will repay thee. Matthew 6:3-4*); or the less chance there is for the giver to personally benefit (*And when thou makes! a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense: for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of*

*the just. Luke 14:13-14*), then the more pleasing it is in the sight of God, and the more perfect it is as an act of charity, a deed of mercy. Both the ideal and virtue of charity are over and above any stance a person might take on, say, tax policy or level of public spending on social welfare programs. A person may be politically liberal or conservative and charitable or uncharitable as the case may be. But being politically liberal can not count towards being a charitable person.

Sometimes people who see very clearly the evil of abortion nonetheless consistently support the most pro-abortion candidates for elective office on the grounds that these candidates are more caring about the poor. Also, Catholic candidates for elective office of the “personally-opposed-but” variety justify their indifference to the slaughter of the unborn on the excuse that they care so much for the have-nots who are already born. We might expand a little on Taylor Caldwell's grandmother's wisdom: *Never trust anyone who weeps over the poor...as an alibi for being uncaring about the killing of the unborn.* “

Father Charles J. Higgins

¶ This article appeared in the journal *Helpers of Precious Infants, Issue 15, p. 2*. Fr Higgins is Pastor of *Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Parish in Newton*.



## SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Friday, December 7, 2012  
VIGIL MASS

7:30 P.M.

*Holy Day of Obligation*

¶ On Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> there is an Anglican Use Mass in St. Theresa of Avila Church 8:00 A.M.

¶ On Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> there is Mass in the Ordinary Form at 10:00 A.M. in St. Lawrence Church.

## HOLY OBEDIENCE

**O**BEDIENCE led the royal daughter of the house of David to the simple little house of the poor carpenter of Nazareth. Obedience led both of these most holy people away from the secure enclosure of this modest home onto the highway and into the stable at Bethlehem. It laid the Son of God in the manger. In freely chosen poverty the Savior and his mother wandered the streets of Judea and Galilee and lived on the alms of the faithful. Naked and exposed, the Lord hung on the cross and left the care of his mother to the love of his disciple. Therefore, he demands poverty of those who would follow him. The heart must be free of ties to earthly goods, of concern about them, dependence on them, desire for them, if it is to belong to the divine Bridegroom exclusively, if the will intends to follow every suggestion of holy obedience in unreserved readiness.

St Edith Stein

¶ Edith Stein was a Jewish convert to Catholicism in 1922 and became a Carmelite nun, taking the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Trained as a philosopher, her writings include *The Mystery of Christmas*, *Eternal Infinite Being*, *The Science of the Cross*, and *The Prayer of the Church*. She was killed at Auschwitz in 1942.

## SHORT NOTES

✠ A reminder that there is Saturday Anglican Use Mass at 8 A.M. in St Theresa's Church, West Roxbury. It is celebrated at the Marian altar in the main church.

✠ Several booklets of Advent Meditations are available for purchase. These will help you keep

the integrity of the season. There are offerings by *Magnificat* magazine, and by Fr. Peter Stravinskias.

✠ Christmas Lessons and Carols (Sunday December 30<sup>th</sup> at 5 P.M.) needs nine readers. You may sign up at coffee hour and take a copy of your reading home with you.

✠ Christmas Flower Fund envelopes are available for your contributions to the greening of St. Lawrence Church for the season. Make your gifts payable to St. Athanasius and we will forward one combined contribution to St. Mary's Church, Brookline. We all appreciate the lovely way St. Lawrence is adorned for the Christmas Season.

✠ 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.

✠ Bishop Robert Hennessey observes the sixth anniversary of his ordination as a bishop on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations and best wishes from all of us.

✠ The Fourth Communion Service, the plainsong setting, is used during Advent. We return to the Healy Willan setting (Second Communion Service) during the Christmas Season. Both are found in *The Hymnal 1940*.

✠ Every Member Canvass materials were mailed to parishioners and friends in early November. Please return your filled-in pledge card at your early convenience. Many thanks.

✠ Our parishioner Steve Cavanaugh received the Bishop Cheverus

Award from Cardinal O'Malley in recognition of his active lay leadership in the parish and church. Awards, given at a Vespers service in the Cathedral on November 18<sup>th</sup>, are named for Bishop John Cheverus, first Bishop of Boston. Congratulations to Steve.

✠ The Solemnity of The Epiphany falls on a Sunday, January 6, 2013. Procession, Solemn Mass & Sermon is at 11:30 A.M. Solemn Evensong & Benediction is at 5:00 P.M.

✠ The St. John Seminary schola and guests present a Festival of Lessons and Carols on Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M. and on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 P.M. The schola will present a selection of Advent and Christmas music along with Biblical readings. This year's theme is "Christmas in the Western Hemisphere," featuring music from the Americas.

✠ The Handel and Haydn Society will host its annual Bach Christmas celebration, featuring three cantatas from Bach's Christmas Oratorio. The program will be presented in the New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall on Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 8 P.M. and on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 3 P.M. For more information and tickets, visit <http://tinyurl.com/c8rldn5>.

✠ The Boston Boy Choir at St. Paul's Church, Cambridge will present Christmas concerts on Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 P.M. On December 21<sup>st</sup> at 8:00 P.M. the choir will present A Choral Celebration of Christmas, including Britten's Ceremony of Carols. To purchase tickets call (617) 868-8658 or visit [www.bostonboychoir.org](http://www.bostonboychoir.org).



## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Monday, December 24, 2012

### CHRISTMAS EVE

8:00pm

Procession and Blessing of the Creche  
Solemn Mass & Sermon

Wednesday, December 25, 2012

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Sung Mass & Sermon at 10:30 A.M.

*Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation*

Sunday, December 30, 2012

### THE HOLY FAMILY

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

A FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS

5:00 P.M.

*A reception follows this service*

Tuesday, January 1, 2013

### MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Octave Day of Christmas

Sung Mass & Sermon at 9:00 A.M.

*Holy Day of Obligation*

## 29<sup>th</sup> S. THOMAS of Canterbury



### SAINT THOMAS BECKET

**K**ING Henry II of England thought he was putting the Catholic Church in his hip pocket when he obtained the election of his close friend and servant Thomas Becket as Archbishop of Canterbury. But Thomas immediately adopted an austere way of life and resigned his position as Chancellor of England. That was the beginning of trouble.

You can read about the dispute. The lasting impression is of two strong willed men who were sensitive and intransigent. There is a lesson against rash words, and the king probably did not intend his words to be taken as license to kill. Thomas, for his part, had not always lived like a saint, but he certainly died like one: commending his cause to God and His saints, accepting death “for the name of Jesus and for the Church.”

Thomas Becket was killed in 1170, and canonized in 1173. Representations of his martyrdom appeared in various art forms all across Europe from Iceland to Armenia, and the popular pilgrimage



to his shrine was immortalized by Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

Holy Thomas, pray for us.

Father Bradford

¶ This sermon was preached in St Theresa of Avila Church on December 29, 2000.

## BRITISH MARTYRS & CONFESSORS

### KEEPER OF THE VINEYARD

**Bd John Beche**

*Abbot of Colchester*

**A**BBOT BECHE was a friend of Fisher and More and in repute as a devoted monk; but like his brethren of Glastonbury and Reading he took the oath of supremacy on it being tendered him in 1534. When called upon to surrender the abbey he refused, denied the king’s right to take it, and asserted his loyalty to the Holy See: for this he was committed to the Tower. Later he endeavoured to explain away what he had said, asserted the king’s supremacy against the pope’s “usurped authority,” and made a piteous appeal for mercy. But however lamentable this defection, he atoned for it by shedding his blood in the event. He was sent down to Colchester and tried there

by a special commission, and he appears to have acknowledged the charges made against him. He was hanged, drawn and quartered at Colchester on 1 December 1539. On his pectoral cross, still preserved, is inscribed: “May the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ bring us out of sorrow and sadness. This sign of the cross shall be in the heavens when our Lord shall come to judgement. Behold, O man, the Redeemer suffered for thee. He that will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me.”

This account is 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.

## 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:

767 West Roxbury Pkwy.

Boston, MA 02132-2121

Tel/Fax: (617) 325-5232

<http://www.locutor.net>

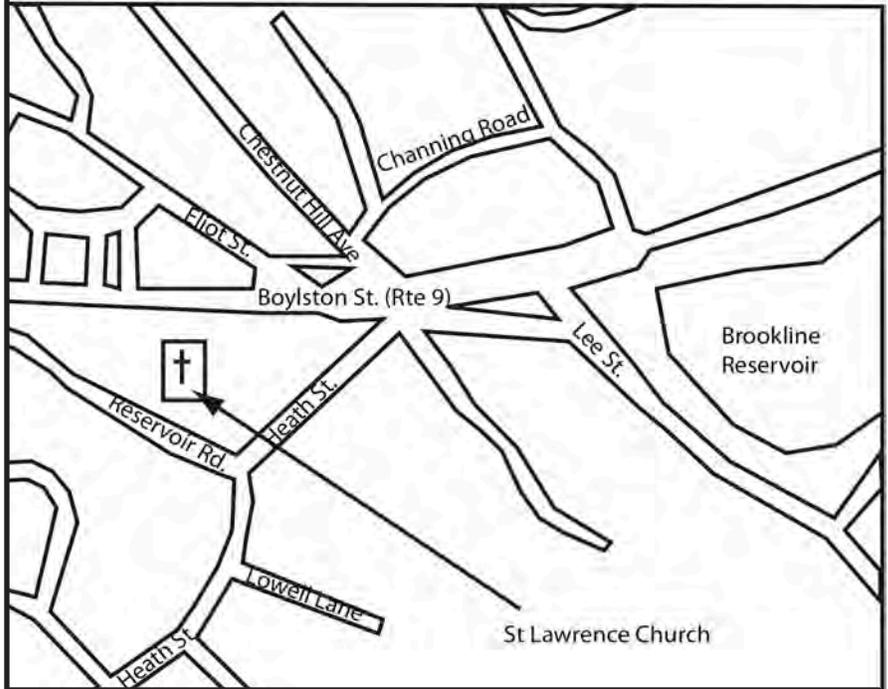
St. Lawrence Church, 774 Boylston Street (Route 9).

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: From Kenmore Square station board Bus #60, which stops in front of the Church. Alternatively, the Church is a 15-minute walk from the Cleveland Circle station on the Green Line C-branch.



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

