
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

Volume XIX, Issue 12

July 2017

The Congregation of St. Athanasius

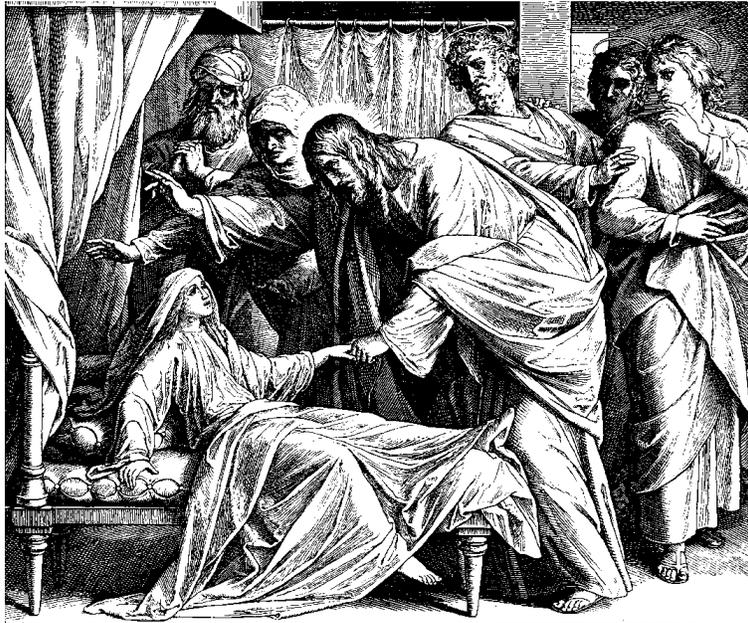
A Parish of the Archdiocese of Boston Serving the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter

<https://congregationstathanasius.com>

SIDING WITH THE LORD

ANY TIME WE CONNECT with Almighty God in a direct and personal way we can expect obstructions and roadblocks to develop and threaten the relationship. The source of these roadblocks can be pride within us, or it can be the ignorance of the world attempting to pull us along with it away from Christ. So be warned! It's going to happen! This is the message of today's gospel. It is more about Jairus and his perseverance than about his daughter and her return to life.

Jairus is no great model of Christian virtue and discipline. In point of fact he is no Christian at all but a ruler of the local synagogue. And there is nothing particularly noteworthy about a father seeking help for his child. Most any father will do this. So Jairus comes to Jesus believing only that Jesus has the reputation of helping those in need. And the Lord doesn't need any more than that! We are told that as soon as Jesus stepped off the boat and heard the plea He set out for the home where



the sick girl was lying in bed.

On the way, the Lord was detained. He healed the woman with the issue of blood. During the delay the little girl died. And this is where the conventional wisdom put up its first obstruction. Whoever it was bringing the bad news summed it all up: "Alas, we must not trouble the Rabbi any further. It's too late now." Conventional wisdom is that the case does not merit further attention, and that if Jairus persists in his grief and sticks to his request, it is *Jairus* who becomes the problem, Jairus

who becomes the pain in the neck and an embarrassment. "He's not facing reality." So says the world.

And it is here, right here, and *quick as a flash*, that Jesus says words which get to Jairus' mind before despair can set in and paralyze his will. The Son of God says, "Do not be afraid. Only believe."

Did you notice that the Lord, who also must have heard the news of the death of the little girl, did not seek to console the father? Rather, in order for the relationship and connection between God and this soul to continue, in some way faith needed to be kept alive in Jairus. We get the feeling that Jairus has a crucial role to play and that without *his* faith the little girl will not be restored to life. How easily this could be a story with a tragic ending because the great possibilities for faith were not grasped. How many stories end that way? It would have been so easy for Jairus to turn and say to Jesus "Sorry, Lord, it's too late. I know you have other things to

do. I guess I had better go bury my daughter.” Had we ourselves been there, none of us would have faulted the logic.

But this story is not about a miracle. It is about this soul who had made contact with his Creator and now had to overcome those obstacles that inevitably try to block that relationship. So Jesus gives a word not of consolation but *an electric thrill of hope* so that Jairus will go on. “Do not fear, only believe.” It is easy here to see Jairus, probably at the very end of his emotions, going silently and trembling behind an encouraging and confident Jesus. And looking on this procession, everybody laughs: “Jairus, you poor sad fool!”

The second intervention or obstacle comes when Jesus says that the girl is not dead but only sleeping. Now the bystanders begin to laugh *at the Lord*. Here is some homework! Look up the word “laughter” in your concordance. You will get an appreciation of all the times when laughter follows Jesus in the gospel accounts, all the way to the Cross. This laughter represents the world’s jeering ignorance and pride in the face of God’s limitless mercy. And every Christian, and those on the way to becoming Christian, learn first to stop making that noise, and then stop being influenced by it.

It is here that the grieving father could once again have said “Master, never mind. Thanks for coming, and for caring. But they’re right. I shouldn’t have bothered you further.” Here is the great triumph of this scene. The

man bites his lip and says *nothing*. He has sided with the Lord against the world and its conventional wisdom. And if we could see the angels at this moment they would be doing hand stands for joy! And the next thing Jairus knows is that he is holding Jesus’ hand and being led into the death room.

For the rest, we can just hear St Peter preaching many years later, describing the stillness of the death room one moment and then this little girl on her feet the next, blinking at everyone there as her brain cleared and she became herself again. And Peter would remark how simply, how *very simply*, Jesus observed that she must be hungry, so give her something to eat. “He made nothing of it” Peter would say, and add slowly “but the girl had been *cold stone dead*.”

When we seek Jesus as Jairus did, we will face the same obstacles and contempt. Twice at least Jairus could have excused the Lord from any further involvement. And Jesus would have gone His way and there would have been no return to life for the little girl. Like Jairus, we are encouraged to be brave enough and to persevere. And then, having placed ourselves in Jesus’ hands let Him do with us as He wills. That will mean life for us, and as with Jairus, it just might mean life for someone else too.

Father Bradford

¶*This sermon was preached on The Third Sunday after Trinity, July 2, 2006. The gospel was Mark 5:21-43.*



A PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

With firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, let us pray:

Almighty God, father of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus, we beg your continued blessings on this sanctuary of freedom, and on all of those who proudly call America home. We ask your benediction upon those yet to be born, and on those who are about to see you at the end of this life. Bless those families whose ancestors arrived on these shores generations ago, as well as those families that have come recently, to build a better future while weaving their lives into the rich tapestry of America.

We lift up to your loving care those afflicted by the recent storms and drought and fire. We ask for the grace to stand in solidarity with all those who suffer. May we strive to include your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, in the production and prosperity of a people so richly blessed

Almighty God, who gives us the sacred and inalienable gift of life, we thank you as well for the singular gift of liberty. Renew in all of our people a respect for religious freedom in full, that first most cherished freedom. Make us truly free, by tethering freedom to truth and ordering freedom to goodness. Help us live our freedom in faith, hope, and love; prudently; and with justice; courageously, and in a spirit of moderation. Enkindle in our



hearts a new sense of responsibility for freedom's cause. And make us ever-grateful for all those who, for more than two centuries, have given their lives in freedom's defense; we commend their noble souls to your eternal care, as even now we beg your mighty hand upon our beloved men and women in uniform.

May we know the truth of your creation, respecting the laws of nature and nature's God, and not seek to replace it with idols of our own making. Give us the good sense not to cast aside the boundaries of righteous living you first inscribed in our hearts even before inscribing them on tablets of stone. May you mend our every flaw, confirming our soul in self-control, our liberty in law.

We pray for all those who seek honest labor, as we thank you for the spirit of generosity to those in need with which you so richly blessed this nation.

We beseech your blessing...on all those, in every land, who seek to

conduct their lives in freedom.

Most of all, Almighty God, we thank you for the great gift of our beloved country.

For we are indeed "one nation under God."

And "in God we trust."

Dear God, bless America. You, who live and reign, for ever and ever, Amen!

Cardinal Timothy Dolan

¶ *Cardinal Dolan is Archbishop of New York.*

RUNNING ALONG THE WAY

WHEN WE CONSIDER, dearly beloved, the ineffable generosity of God in his gifts to us, we should be "cooperators" with the grace of God "working in us." Not into the possession of those who sleep does the kingdom of heaven come, nor is the beatitude of eternity bestowed upon those who are sluggish with idleness and laziness. Instead, as the Apostle says, "if we suffer with him, we will also be glorified with him." We must run along the "Way" which the Lord has told us he himself is. He saw to our interests both with the objective mystery and with the example he provided, without any merits recommending us—in order to bring those who have been called into adoption to salvation through the former, and, through the latter, to encourage their labors.

These labors, dearly beloved, are not only far from harsh and burdensome to loyal sons and good servants, but are even pleasant and light, as the Lord said: "Come to me, all you who labor and are

burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is pleasant and my burden light." Nothing, then, poses any difficulty for the humble, dearly beloved, or any harshness for the gentle. All commandments are easy to carry out when grace provides help and obedience softens authority.

Saint Leo the Great

¶ *Saint Leo reigned as pope from 440–461. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1754.*

THE FOUNT OF JOY

“NATURE WARNS US by a clear sign that our destination is attained. That sign is joy. I mean joy, not pleasure. Pleasure is only a contrivance devised by nature to obtain for the creature the preservation of its life; it does not indicate the direction in which life is thrusting. But joy always announces that life has succeeded, gained ground, conquered. All great joy has a triumphant note. Now, if we take this indication into account and follow this new line of facts, we find that wherever there is joy, there is creation; the richer the creation, the deeper the joy" (Henri Bergson). Joy is perfectly compatible with moral excellence; it is a sign of this excellence and contributes to its perfection. The fount of joy lies in the inner depths of our being, at the roots of our freedom, when this freedom is open to the outpourings of goodness and love.

Yet, in order for the waters of this fount to pour forth within us, we

have to make a personal choice of great price: When we receive the call to a greater good, a good that will reveal to us the true joy at the core of our lives, will we know how to break free from the charms of pleasure through a liberating renunciation? The discovery of joy beyond our trials is a decisive step on the way to moral maturity. One even comes to perceive, upon fulfilling its requirements, that joy does not destroy, but rather refines and rightly orders, pleasure.

Father Servais Pinckaers, OP

¶ *Father Pinckaers was professor of moral theology at Freiburg. This excerpt is taken from Morality, The Catholic View, 2001.*

SHORT NOTES

✠ Congratulations to Jeremy Kappenman on his formal enrollment as a candidate for confirmation and communion. Jeremy, supported by his sponsors, Tristan MacDonald and Kevin McDermott, and the whole congregation, made his profession and declaration of intent at Mass on Pentecost. God willing, his confirmation will follow shortly.

✠ At the Mass on Pentecost our custom is to have the Acts 2:1-11 lesson read in foreign languages. This year's readers were David Burt, Steve Cavanaugh, Kevin McDermott, Clare Kappenman, Susan Russo, and John Covert.

✠ Later in the day on Pentecost, several members of the congregation joined for evensong at St Paul's Anglican Church, Brockton as part of its festival weekend dedicating a new church building. Steve Cavanaugh and David Burt sang in choir, James Reedy was organist,

and Father Bradford the officiant, assisted by Steven Hardy. Our host and the parish pastor is Anglican Bishop James Hiles.

✠ We have begun singing the Sowerby Mass setting at Sunday Masses. This is the Fifth Communion Service, nos. 747–749 in *The Hymnal 1940*, and using the Old Scottish Chant Gloria, no. 739.

✠ Many thanks to Fathers James J. O'Driscoll and Jurgen Liias, who were our celebrants for Sunday Mass on two Sundays in June. Both are longtime friends of the congregation and its members.

✠ Congratulations to Fr. Frank E. Lioi who observed his 50th anniversary of ordination as a priest on Trinity Sunday. He is pastor of St Mary's Church, Auburn, N.Y. While he was pastor of St Anne's Church, Rochester he was very supportive of efforts to begin the Anglican Use in the Diocese of Rochester and he and his parish hosted several Anglican Use Masses and evensongs. To Fr Lioi, *ad multos annos*.

✠ The Feast of St Thomas the Apostle is Monday, July 3rd. The Feast of Saint James the Great is Tuesday, July 25th. Regular weekday Masses in St Theresa of Avila Church are at 6:45 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

✠ In the plan ahead department: we will offer Solemn Evensong & Benediction in St. Theresa's Church on The Solemnity of the Transfiguration, Sunday, August 6th, at 5:00 P.M. St. Theresa's is air conditioned!

TO BELIEVE WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED

WE DO NOT NEED religion to tell us that there is a God. The Church teaches that the existence of the Creator can be known with certainty through His works by the light of natural reason. Furthermore, our unaided human intellect can and should lead us to the knowledge of important truths about God's nature and about our relationship with Him. We can know that God must be infinite, that He is perfect and that He knows His creation. Our very experience of being human should lead us to the conclusion that man is free and responsible for his actions, and that he has a soul which is spiritual and therefore potentially immortal.

Even if he possesses the brains and the time to arrive at such knowledge, however, the thinking man will then find himself troubled by questions that he cannot answer with any certainty. If God is perfect, how can there be such imperfection in the universe that He has created? What is the source of sickness, natural disasters and moral evil? If man is free and responsible for his actions, then where do we find justice in a world where the oppressed often die in wretchedness while their oppressors seem to escape scot-free? And if man's soul is immortal, then where does it go when body and soul are separated at death?

The answers to such questions lie beyond the grasp of human reason. The likelihood is that, left to his own devices, man will formulate his own responses. Perhaps that which

is evil in the universe is the creation of a lesser god, or ‘demiurge’? And when a man dies, why should his soul not take up residence in another body—perhaps in a fruit fly, if his conduct in his last body has left much to be desired? Thus we have the birth of man-made religions based on speculation and myth.

Often these home-made religions will contain valid insights. With the hindsight of Calvary we might concede that the Aztecs were on to something with their cult of human sacrifice; but the torrents of blood from thousands of victims that flowed down the steps of the Mexican temples illustrate the grotesque fruits that come from a skewed appreciation of religious truth.

Having created man with the capacity to ask questions about his own origin and destiny and about the meaning of life, it surely makes sense for a good God to provide some answers, in order to save His creature from stumbling into the blindness of mythology and paganism. Throughout the Old Testament we see God gradually revealing these answers, and revealing Himself, to His Chosen People. After the Fall of Adam and Eve the human intellect becomes clouded, and so God reveals even truths that man could in theory know by the unaided light of natural reason. He constantly reminds His people that He is One, and He reveals the core of the ‘natural law’ in the Ten Commandments. He also reveals His name - “I Am Who Am” - which allows a glimpse into His Nature. Through His prophets He reveals the coming of a Messiah who will save His people.

It is with the arrival of this Messiah that Divine Revelation reaches its climax, when God comes to us as one of us in the Incarnation. The Incarnate Word founds His Church on St. Peter and the Apostles, and gives to this Church the mission to transmit the Gospel to all nations and all generations henceforth. With the death of the last Apostle, the Deposit of Faith is sealed, meaning that there will never again be any public Revelation until Our Lord’s return in glory at the end of time. Henceforth, it is the task of the popes and bishops, as successors of Peter and the Apostles, to guard, unpack and teach in all its fullness this Deposit of Faith, which contains all we need to know and to do to be saved.

In Divine Revelation, then, God intervenes in history to answer those questions that rise up from the depths of the human soul. He tells us the purpose of life, He reveals the source of suffering and death, and He gives us the blueprint for and the means to achieve eternal salvation. He reveals that within the substance of His perfect oneness there are Three Divine Persons, whose life is characterised by an eternal outpouring of perfect knowledge and love; and He reveals to us the wonderful truth that we have each been created to participate in this Divine Life, through Baptism in this life and through the Beatific Vision in the life to come. He also reveals how, at the end of time, our bodies will be raised from the dust and reunited With our souls to participate in our eternal destiny.

Faith is our response to this marvellous gift of Revelation. And Faith itself is a gift. According to

the old Penny Catechism, which contains some of the most eloquent and concise definitions ever crafted, “Faith is a supernatural gift of God which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed”.

The fact that Faith is a ‘supernatural gift’ means that we cannot manufacture it for ourselves. We cannot argue ourselves, or anyone else, into the Faith. We may prepare the ground by means of rational deliberation and prayer; but ultimately Faith must be freely offered by God, and freely received by us. When a small child is Baptised, his parents make that decision on his behalf, and the ‘theological virtue’ of Faith is planted in his heart like a tiny seed that needs to be nurtured and nourished as he grows up. Once he reaches the age of reason it is then up to him to decide what to do with that gift. It is in the nature of a gift that it must always be free, so the possibility of rejecting or losing the Faith always remains.

In some religious systems faith and reason are presented as unrelated and even incompatible. Faith without reason, however, gives us fundamentalism, and the Catholic Church does not ‘do’ fundamentalism. God is the author of all truth, whether we are talking about those truths which may be established by natural reason or the great Mysteries of the Faith that He reveals to us. The gift of Faith does not supersede our human reason or leave it behind. Rather, it elevates the faculty of reason to the level of supernatural truths, so that by God’s grace we can now apply our intellect to exploring the inexhaustible Mysteries of Divine Revelation that

He has made accessible to us.

In the words of the *Penny Catechism*, Faith is a gift which enables us to believe “without doubting, whatever God has revealed.” This might strike a jarring note in modern ears that are used to hearing that doubting is a sign of maturity and humility, and is therefore virtuous. Today it has become fashionable to say that Faith is a personal encounter with Christ, rather than an assent to a list of ‘propositions’. The result of this is that the contents of Divine Revelation have taken on a secondary importance, and so there are now whole generations of otherwise well-educated Catholics who are surprisingly ignorant of Catholic doctrine.

For our Faith to be genuine it must include both the inter-personal aspect and our assent to the contents of the Faith. Yes, my act of Faith consists in a personal adhesion to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But it must also embrace everything that my Saviour teaches, as expressed in the doctrines of the Church which He endowed with His authority to teach all nations. If I knowingly deny a single doctrine that the Church proposes as *de Fide*, or binding on the faithful, then I am essentially saying that Our Lord’s promises to His Church—that the gates of hell will never prevail against Her, for example—are false. This is a breach of faith. I can now no longer be said to hold the Faith as a theological virtue (a supernaturally infused habit inhering in the soul). I am a heretic.

As Bl. John Henry Newman wrote in his *Apologia pro vita sua*, “Ten

thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.” Newman’s lifelong quest for religious truth is perhaps one of the greatest examples of Faith seeking understanding that we have in the English-speaking world. Newman was forever searching and forever questioning. Once he had acknowledged that the Catholic Church was instituted by Christ for the salvation of all men, however, he never again expressed any doubt about Her divinely-invested authority to teach the Gospel. Having been received into the Catholic Church, never once did he utter a hint of doubt towards anyone of the Articles of Faith that She proposes as *de Fide*.

Blessed John Henry Newman would be a good patron to guide us through the coming Year of Faith that His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI will inaugurate on the 11th of this month. Do you have any difficulties with certain aspects of Catholic teaching on faith and morals? Then please use this coming Year of Faith as an opportunity to address them. You are very welcome to come and talk about them with a priest. An important ‘charism’ of the Oratory is the availability of the Fathers for those who seek guidance in the Christian life.

Perhaps there was a time when western society provided structures that supported the Faith, so that it was almost possible to take it for granted. In this post-Christian age those props no longer exist. The apostles of militant secularism look forward to a religion-free future in which society is organised on purely ‘rational’ principles. What we actually find, however, is that man’s irrepressible appetite for the

transcendental increasingly finds expression in the weird and not-so-wonderful world of New Age superstition and other manifestations of neo-paganism. We should use this Year of Faith as an opportunity to refresh our knowledge of the contents of the Faith and to deepen our practice of the Faith. We should be willing to tell anyone who will listen that our Catholic Faith is the most enriching and the most beautiful thing in our lives. Modern society is actually thirsting for Divine Truth. We must be willing to share this extraordinary gift of our holy and life-saving Faith.

The Provost

¶ This article is taken from the October, 2012 (Vol 89, No. 1097) issue of The Oratory Magazine, the parish paper of the Brompton (London) Oratory

THE CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE

POPE BENEDICT XVI has launched a surprise attack on climate change prophets of doom, warning them that any solutions to global warming must be based on firm evidence and not on dubious ideology.

The leader of more than a billion Roman Catholics suggested that fears over man-made emissions melting the ice caps and causing a wave of unprecedented disasters were nothing more than scare-mongering.

The German-born Pontiff said that while some concerns may be valid it was vital that the international community base its policies on science rather than the dogma of the environmentalist movement.

His remarks ... were released as delegates from all over the world convened on the Indonesian holiday island of Bali for UN climate change talks.

The 80-year-old Pope said the world needed to care for the environment but not to the point where the welfare of animals and plants was given a greater priority than that of mankind.

“Humanity today is rightly concerned about the ecological balance of tomorrow,” he said in the message entitled “The Human Family, A Community of Peace”.

“It is important for assessments in this regard to be carried out prudently, in dialogue with experts and people of wisdom, uninhibited by ideological pressure to draw hasty conclusions, and above all with the aim of reaching agreement on a model of sustainable development capable of ensuring the well-being of all while respecting environmental balances.

“If the protection of the environment involves costs, they should be justly distributed, taking due account of the different levels of development of various countries and the need for solidarity with future generations.

“Prudence does not mean failing to accept responsibilities and postponing decisions; it means being committed to making joint decisions after pondering responsibly the road to be taken.”

Efforts to protect the environment should seek “agreement on a model of sustainable development capable of ensuring the well-being of all while respecting environmental balances”, the Pope said.

He added that to further the cause of world peace it was sensible for nations

to “choose the path of dialogue rather than the path of unilateral decisions” in how to cooperate responsibly on conserving the planet.

The Pope’s message is traditionally sent to heads of government and international organizations. His remarks reveal that while the Pope acknowledges that problems may be associated with unbridled development and climate change, he believes the case against global warming to be over-hyped.

A broad consensus is developing among the world’s scientific community over the evils of climate change. But there is also an intransigent body of scientific opinion which continues to insist that industrial emissions are not to blame for the phenomenon.

Such scientists point out that fluctuations in the earth’s temperature are normal and can often be caused by waves of heat generated by the sun. Other critics of environmentalism have compared the movement to a burgeoning industry in its own right.

In the spring, the Vatican hosted a conference on climate change that was welcomed by environmentalists.

But senior cardinals close to the Vatican have since expressed doubts about a movement which has been likened by critics to be just as dogmatic in its assumptions as any religion.

Simon Caldwell

¶ *This article was published in the December 13, 2007 issue of The Daily Mail.*

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius

The Revd.

Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

Saint Lawrence Church
774 Boylston St.

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

congregationstathanasius.com

SUMMER ALTAR FLOWERS

You may sign up now for a Sunday to provide flowers for the high altar, or the Marian altar. The high altar requires two arrangements of an ample nature, the Marian altar one smaller arrangement. The flowers may be from your own garden, or your florist. We do have a variety of vases at the church should you need one or two. After Mass you may take your flowers home. But do sign up. The flower chart will be available after Mass at coffee hour.



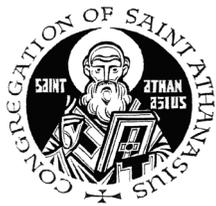
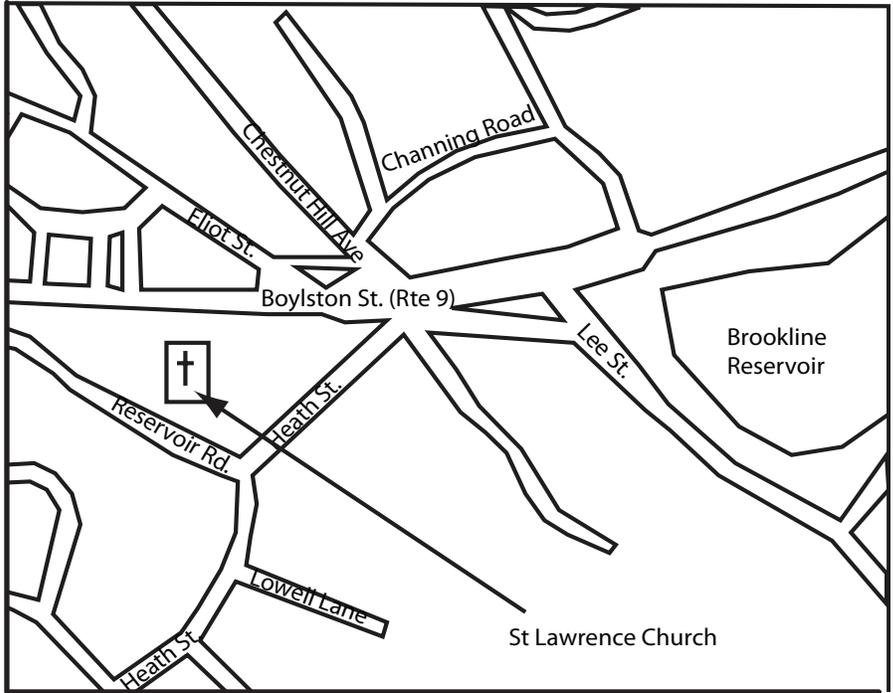
St. Lawrence Church, 774 Boylston Street (Route 9).

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

