
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

Volume XXII, Issue 3

October 2019

The Congregation of St. Athanasius

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

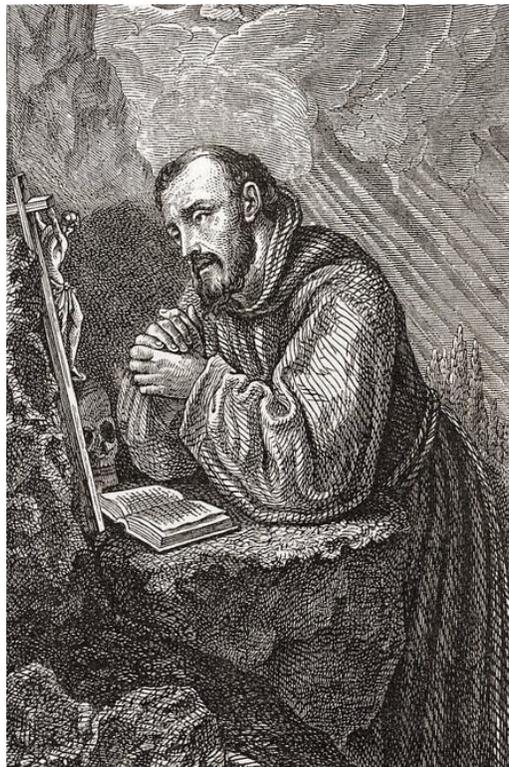
<https://congregationstathanasius.com>

THE GENUINE THING

TODAY WE COMMEMORATE and honor the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. The French historian Ernest Renan once called Francis “after Jesus, the only perfect Christian.”

As a young man St Francis set out very much alone and single-handed on a particular way of discipleship. It wasn't long before many others, including some women, felt drawn to a gospel-centered life as Francis lived it. But the rapid growth of his order contained the seeds of division, and even before the death of Francis eighteen years later, the Order of Friars Minor, now several thousand strong and scattered over most European countries, pressured the Founder to modify the Primitive Rule of 1209.

Francis resigned the leadership in 1220, but wrote rules for members of the Third Order in 1221 and a Second Rule in 1223. It was after this that the most famously known episodes in the life of Saint Francis occurred: the first Christian crèche in 1223, the receiving of the Stigmata in 1224, and the writing of the *Canticle of the Sun* in 1225. Francis went to God in 1226 and was canonized two years later.



Simply put, Francis of Assisi was convinced that to be a Christian was to be like Christ: and to be a perfect Christian was to follow Christ in every possible way. Hardly a libertine or freethinker, bedrock belief for Francis was the revelation of God as a Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And from his sense of humility and obedience before Divine Revelation, adherence to the Catholic Church was everything. For Francis the Church was the instrument through which God's

work was done, and no good work could be done without it.

Francis was convinced that if you believe in God in this way then your life must be a reflection of your faith. Because it was a gospel-centered approach, there was an evangelical aspect to the Franciscan Way. The saint desired to stir up in people a firmer belief in God. But he knew that this was not going to be done as much by powerful and moving sermons as by examples of holy lives. The phrase “preach the gospel: use words if necessary” is certainly Franciscan in approach. Francis set out to show what the full Christian life really meant.

Four qualities stand out as the foundation stones of the Franciscan way of life: humility, simplicity, poverty, and prayer.

HUMILITY in the eyes of Saint Francis had two aspects: the *inner* humility one feels in the heart in response to the great revealed love of God in Christ, and the *outer* humility the man shows to the world. To feel humble and to live humbly was why Francis called his order Friars *Minor*.

SIMPLICITY meant first of all a simple approach to the words of Christ in the Gospels. The Founder

never allowed argument over the meaning of Christ's words because he suspected that such talk would look for a diminution of the literal words. Jesus had forbidden His disciples to possess two coats, and Francis expected the same. But the rapid growth of the order took friars to places like Scotland and Scandinavia where two coats and more was necessary for survival. So some concessions had to be made. Still, Francis never liked them.

Under the banner of simplicity Francis fought against his friars who wanted to study in order to provide greater service to the Church. Again, the success of the order contained the seeds of division. The growing number of Franciscans included some of the most learned scholars in the world. Bonaventura, Roger Bacon, and Duns Scotus come to mind. Francis was not opposed to scholarship, but was sure it was not an essential ingredient in the Franciscan way and was a great potential threat to simplicity.

POVERTY is for most people something negative. Not so to Francis of Assisi. Ever since that memorable Feast of Saint Matthias in the little church of the Portiuncula, Francis was determined to show the world that absolute poverty could actually be enjoyed. Just as it took hard work to become rich and stay rich, it took hard work to become poor and stay poor. This was the way of life chosen by Christ. And so poverty warranted the greater effort, and would yield the greater rewards. It was the embrace of absolute

poverty that enabled Francis to grow rich in the spiritual wealth that so attracted others to his way of life.

Again as the order grew, there were complications. The growing number of friars found they had to have somewhere to live. Francis wanted them to live as he did, out of doors, or in huts made out of branches of trees. It was the same with food and clothing. Francis wanted his friars to beg for food and wear ragged habits. This would give the people the opportunity to show charity. But the ideal was not always lived as rigidly as Saint Francis would have liked.

PRAYER was not the fourth foundation stone of the Franciscan way of life, but the base upon which all else depended. Humility, Simplicity, and Poverty all demanded great effort, and there was no hope for achievement without the help of God. Prayer was the constant and continuous contact with God that made it all possible.

As a member of a religious order, Francis felt committed to the Daily Office. But absolute poverty made it impossible for the friars to own office books. And when books were given them as gifts, the friars characteristically gave them to the poor to sell for necessities. Still the Breviary was prayed, and the possession of office books was one of the permissions given in the relaxed Rule of 1221.

Because the friars were itinerant preachers, most of their praying had to be spontaneous and personal.

For Francis himself prayer was his safest haven. He would spend whole nights in prayer, after the example of Our Blessed Lord. And his retreats usually lasted five or six weeks, including the whole of Lent, and the period between the Assumption and Michaelmas. We don't have much record of authentic prayers of Saint Francis. But in every testimony about him Francis is portrayed (as Thomas of Celano tells us) "not so much praying as becoming himself a prayer."

I realize that what I have said has more the character of an address than a sermon. But I want you to know something more than Saint Francis with the animals! Francis of Assisi was not a thirteenth century misfit. He knew that Almighty God did not expect all His children to follow the Franciscan way. Each soul has its own vocation. If some are called to voluntary poverty, this is not the only path to holiness. If it were, civilization would end. Some are called to forgo the joys of family life. But if all did this the human race would end. Some are called to martyrdom, but this is a form of self-sacrifice allowed to relatively few, and Francis himself was denied martyrdom. It was the result of that series of experiences in his youth that it became clear to Francis that God had called him to a special type of Christian life, and that this life was not for everybody. But it was for the good of the Church.

Francis is both much loved and also a terrifying figure, and both

for one reason: he is the genuine thing. It is by being absolutely genuine, and without compromise, that Francis has captured the love and imagination as no other saint has ever done. His attractiveness, and His whole life, really, could be summed up in his words just before he died. That is when Francis looked up at his friars and said, ‘ My brothers, let us begin to love the Lord Jesus Christ.’”

Father Bradford

¶ *This sermon was preached at Evensong on Sunday, October 7, 2007. Saint Francis Day is Friday, October 4th this year.*

A REDEMPTIVE FUNCTION TO PERFORM

IT IS ALSO WORTH considering whether man, at his first coming into the world, had not already a redemptive function to perform. Man, even now, can do wonders to animals: my cat and dog live together in my house and seem to like it. It may have been one of man’s functions to restore peace to the animal world, and if he had not joined the enemy he might have succeeded in doing so to an extent now hardly imaginable.

Man is to be understood only in his relation to God. The beasts are to be understood only in their relation to man and, through man, to God. The tame animal is therefore, in the deepest sense, the only ‘natural’ animal.

C. S. Lewis

¶ *This excerpt is taken from The Problem of Pain (1940). A current edition is available from Harper Collins.*

SHORT NOTES

✠ A requiem Mass was offered for the repose of the soul of Carole Ann Reedy, sister of Jim Reedy, on Thursday, September 12th. Interment will be in Fairview Cemetery, Chelmsford on October 1st. May she rest in peace.

✠ Parishioner Winifred Payne died Sept 18th. At age 95, she was our oldest member. Her funeral Mass was Saturday, September 28th at St Lawrence Church. May she rest in peace.

✠ A year's-mind Mass for parishioner Terry Maltsberger will be offered on Saturday, October 5th at 8:00 AM. Saturday Masses in the Ordinariate form are offered each Saturday at the Marian altar in St Theresa of Ávila Church, West Roxbury. However, there is NO MASS on October 26th.

✠ The annual Respect Life Mass of the Archdiocese of Boston will be offered Sunday,

October 6th at 11 AM in St Camillus Church, Arlington. The celebrant will be Bishop Peter Uglietto.

✠ There is no altar flower chart for the fall season. However, if you would like to bring flowers for a Sunday Mass, please speak to the chaplain. That way we can avoid extra flowers one Sunday and none the next. Many thanks.

✠ Mid-October marks the third anniversary of the blending of the Congregation of St Athanasius and the St Gregory the Great Ordinariate Community into one parish family.

✠ Massachusetts Citizens for Life will hold its annual banquet and fundraiser on Thursday, October 24th at 6 PM at the Four Points Sheraton in Norwood. For more information, contact MCFL.

✠ All Saints Day is Friday, November 1st. It is a holy day of obligation.



HOLY DAYS IN OCTOBER

Saint Luke,
Evangelist
Friday, October 18th

SS Simon & Jude,
Apostles
Monday, October 28th

Masses in St Theresa of Ávila Church are at 6:45AM and 4:30PM



REASON FOR WORRY

THE LATE HISTORIAN and political philosopher Harry V. Jaffa noted the significance that the preamble to our Constitution concludes with the words “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

This is how the drafters of our Constitution saw its purpose.

Jaffa continues, saying, “a blessing is what is good in the eyes of God. It is a good whose possession ... belongs properly only to those who deserve it.”

In light of this, let’s consider a just-released Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll that appeared under the headline “Americans Have Shifted Dramatically on What Values Matter Most.”

“Patriotism, religion and having children rate lower among younger generations than they did two decades ago,” the headline continues.

Of all surveyed, 61% “cited patriotism as very important to them, down 9 percentage points from 1998, while 50% cited religion, down 12 points. Some 43% placed a high value on having children, down 16 points from 1998.”

Among those ages 18-38, 42% cited patriotism as “very important”; less than one-third cited having children; and 30% cited “religion, belief in God.”

The founders of the country saw the nation’s existence, its faith and its posterity as a package deal. It all went together.



Now we have a young generation, our future, that dismisses the importance of all the elements of that package. What might this tell us about where we’re headed?

The operative questions are: Does the country have a future, a posterity, without children? And will there be children if there is no marriage and family? And will there be marriage and family if there is no religion and God?

Recent statistics provide pretty gloomy answers to these questions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the lowest birth rate in 32 years last year. It was the fourth consecutive year with a decline in the U.S. birth rate.

And the fertility rate, the number of births per 1,000 adult women, has been dropping every year and is well below the replacement rate—the fertility rate needed to keep the population from shrinking.

Regarding marriage, over the last half-century, the percentage of U.S. adults who are married has dropped 31%.

According to the Pew Research Center, in 1960, 72 percent of adults in the U.S. were married. By 2016, this was down to 50%.

The decline in the percentage of Americans saying religion is “very important” in their life is identical to the decline in the percentage of married Americans.

In 1960, 70% said religion was “very important,” and by 2018, this was down to 50%, a 20% decline.

Although Americans continue to feel free—87%, according to Gallup, are satisfied that they can freely live as they choose—a minority now sees this liberty as a blessing, in the sense that Harry Jaffa explains the word in our Constitution. That is, “what is good in the eyes of God.”

As the sense of the importance of faith and religion diminishes, the values and behaviors that go with them—marriage and children—also diminish.

There are important practical implications on our posterity.

Fewer children means an aging population. More retirees per everyone working means more pressure on the payroll tax, each dollar of which must be distributed to more and more retirees.

The population over the age of 55 accounts for more than half our health care expenditures. As the percentage of the population over 55 increases, our health care expenditure burden will increase proportionately.

And, with the collapse of family, more elderly Americans will be living alone.

If you think this picture is gloomy, the good news is nothing is inevitable. We're still free, and we can change course.

Different discourse in the public square, policies consistent with seeing liberty as a "blessing," can be advanced. But the starting point must be seeing something wrong with the status quo.

Star Parker

¶ *The author is a nationally known black conservative activist, author, and columnist, and founder of CURE (Center for Urban Renewal and Education). This article appeared in the August 29, 2019 issue of the Boston Herald.*



THE CONGREGATION will be conducting an Every Member Canvass during October. Your contributions support our parish program. We will be soliciting funds for both the operating budget and the Ordinariate savings fund and your support by making a pledge of the amount you plan to contribute makes it easier for the parish finance committee to properly allocate disbursements in a timely manner. The continued existence of the St Athanasius/St Gregory witness in the Boston area depends on your support. Please be generous.

At Fr Bradford's request, the parish finance committee endorsed the regular reporting of parish income to the members and friends of the congregation. These amounts are total weekly income for the operating budget only. The finance committee estimate is that our income should average approximately \$1000 per week in order to pay our bills in a timely manner.

- August 11 \$950.00
- August 18 \$455.00
- August 25 \$2823.00
- Sept 1 \$598.00
- Sept 8 \$175.00

Members of the parish finance committee are Stephen Cavanaugh, Kevin McDermott, Margaret Evers, Evelyn Theriault, with treasurer Bruce Rand and chaplain Father Bradford as *ex-officio* members.



BRITISH MARTYRS

Saint Philip Howard

Martyr (+ 1595)
Feast: October 19th

PHILIP, THE EARL OF Arundel, was raised Protestant. At twelve he was wed to Anne Dacre, a Catholic. Three years later, Philip's father was executed for treason, and

Philip became a ward of Queen Elizabeth. At eighteen he went to court, where he sought in every way to ingratiate himself with Elizabeth, at Anne's expense.

But, in 1581, Philip witnessed the defense of the Catholic Faith given before Protestant scholars by Saint Edmund Campion. Edmund was weak from torture on the rack, but his words touched Philip's heart. Philip reconciled with Anne, and in 1584 he was received into the Church. A year later, as Elizabeth's purges of Catholics intensified, he fled England, only to be captured at sea and put in the Tower of London.

As a nobleman, Philip was treated mildly in prison. He took on his own penances: prayer, fasting, devotional reading, and translating Catholic works. He wrote to Anne of his sorrow for his sins against her—"a nail in his conscience." He was buoyed by secret communications from the poet-priest Saint Robert Southwell, also in the Tower. After ten years of imprisonment, Philip developed dysentery. He died alone, unable to see his wife or son. He left an inscription on the wall of his cell: "The more affliction we endure for Christ in this world, the more glory we shall obtain with Christ in the next."

*Merciful Father, through the
intercession of Saint Philip
Howard, help me to suffer
for the sake of your glory.*

¶ *Reprinted from the 2018 Magnificat Holy Week special edition. With permission of Magnificat® USA, LLC, Dunwoodie - 201 Seminary Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10704 or Web site: www.magnificat.net. All rights reserved.*

OPEN WIDE THE DOORS FOR CHRIST

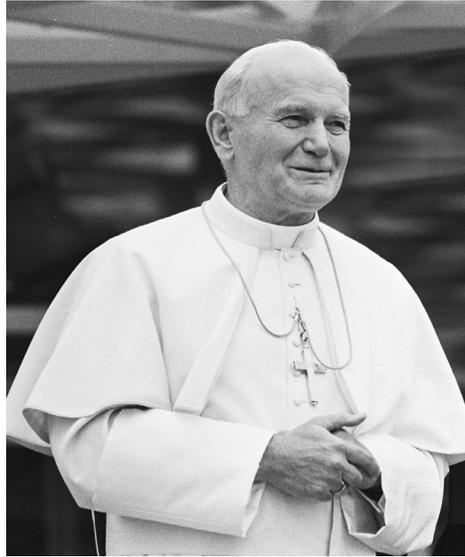
PETER CAME TO ROME! What else but obedience to the inspiration received from the Lord could have guided him and brought him to this city, the heart of the Empire? Perhaps the fisherman of Galilee did not want to come here. Perhaps he would have preferred to stay there, on the shores of Lake of Genesareth, with his boat and his nets. Yet guided by the Lord, obedient to his inspiration, he came here!

According to an ancient tradition, Peter tried to leave Rome during Nero's persecution. However, the Lord intervened and came to meet him. Peter spoke to him and asked: "Quo vadis, Domine?" — "Where are you going, Lord?" And the Lord answered him at once: "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." Peter went back to Rome and stayed here until his crucifixion.

Our time calls us, urges us, obliges us, to gaze on the Lord and to immerse ourselves in humble and devout meditation on the mystery of the supreme power of Christ Himself.

He who was born of the Virgin Mary, the carpenter's Son (as He was thought to be), the Son of the living God (as confessed by Peter), came to make us all "a kingdom of priests."

The Second Vatican Council has reminded us of the mystery of this power and of the fact that Christ's mission as Priest,



Prophet-teacher, and King continues in the Church. Everyone, the whole People of God, shares in this threefold mission. Perhaps in the past the tiara, that triple crown, was placed on the Pope's head in order to signify by that symbol the Lord's plan for his Church, namely that all the hierarchical order of Christ's Church, all "sacred power" exercised in the Church, is nothing other than service, service with a single purpose: to ensure that the whole People of God shares in this threefold mission of Christ and always remains under the power of the Lord; a power that has its source not in the powers of this world, but instead in the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection.

The absolute, and yet sweet and gentle, power of the Lord responds to the whole depths of the human person, to his loftiest aspirations of intellect, will, and heart. It does not speak the language of force, but expresses itself in charity and truth.

The new Successor of Peter in the See of Rome today makes a fervent, humble and trusting prayer: Christ, make me become and remain the servant of your unique power, the servant of your sweet power, the servant of your power that knows no dusk. Make me a servant: indeed, the servant of your servants.

Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to welcome Christ and accept His power. Help the Pope and all those who wish to serve Christ and with Christ's power to serve the human person and the whole of mankind.

Do not be afraid. Open, I say open wide the doors for Christ. To His saving power open the boundaries of states, economic, and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization, and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows "that which is in man." He alone knows it.

So often today, man does not know that which is in him, in the depths of his mind and heart. So often he is uncertain about the meaning of his life on this earth. He is assailed by doubt, a doubt which turns into despair. We ask you, therefore, we beg you with humility and with trust, let Christ speak to man. He alone has words of life, yes, of life eternal.

Pope St John Paul II

¶ *This is an excerpt of the sermon preached by the Holy Father at the Inauguration of his pontificate, October 22, 1978. That day has become an optional memorial in the Church calendar. It is a Tuesday this year.*

ANOTHER SAINT FRANCIS

MAY OUR Lord Jesus Christ, a most generous giver, reward you for your labor.

Avoid evil, cast danger aside. Though we are unworthy, we and your brothers never cease to pray to God the Father and to His Son Jesus Christ and also to the Virgin Mary that you may receive everything you need for your spiritual and physical well-being.

I earnestly admonish you, therefore, my brothers, to look after your spiritual well-being with judicious concern. Death is certain; life is short and vanishes like smoke.

Fix your minds, then, on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Inflamed with love for us; He came down from heaven to redeem us. For our sake He endured every torment of body and soul and shrank from no bodily pain. He himself gave us an example of perfect patience and love. We, then, are to be patient in adversity.

Put aside your hatred and animosity. Take pains to refrain from sharp words. If they escape your lips, do not be ashamed to let your lips produce the remedy, since they have caused the wounds. Pardon one another so that later



on you will not remember the injury. The recollection of an injury is itself wrong. It adds to our anger, nurtures our sin, and hates what is good. It is a rusty arrow and poison for the soul. It puts all virtue to flight. It is like a worm in the mind: it confuses our speech and tears

to shreds our petitions to God. It is foreign to charity: it remains planted in the soul like a nail. It is wickedness that never sleeps, sin that never fails. It is indeed a daily death.

Be peace-loving. Peace is a precious treasure to be sought with great zeal. You are well aware that our sins arouse God's anger. You must change your life, therefore, so that God in His mercy will pardon you. What we conceal from men is known to God. Be converted, then, with a sincere heart. Live your life that you may receive the blessing of the Lord. Then the peace of God our Father will be with you always.

St Francis of Paola

¶ *St Francis (1416-1507) founded an order called the Hermits of Saint Francis of Assisi, later renamed the Minim friars, i.e. the least of all the friars, because of their humility. Francis became famous for prophecy and miracles even during his lifetime. He was canonized in 1519 and his commemoration is April 2nd.*

THE CONGREGATION OF SAINT ATHANASIUS

The Revd.

Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

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

Sundays 11:30 AM

Sung Mass

Fellowship and Coffee in the
Undercroft after Mass

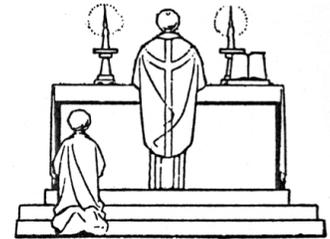
Rectory:

767 West Roxbury Pkwy.

Boston, MA 02132-2121

Tel/Fax: (617) 325-5232

congregationstathanasius.com



SATURDAY MASS IN THE ORDINARIATE FORM

is celebrated each week at 8:00 AM at the Marian altar in St. Theresa of Ávila Church, 2078 Centre St., West Roxbury. Enter the main church via the pavilion or the St. Theresa Avenue side doors.

CONTRA MUNDUM

is the name of our parish paper, which comes from the Latin phrase, "*Athanasius contra mundum*," meaning "Athanasius against the world." Our patron saint stood firmly for the fullness of the faith. Fr. Bradford and the Congregation of Saint Athanasius have published this paper monthly since 1998. To receive it by mail, send your address to the editor, Susan Russo, at sjrusso@icloud.com or write to Fr. Bradford at the rectory. All issues are also on our website.

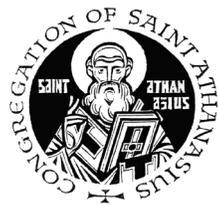
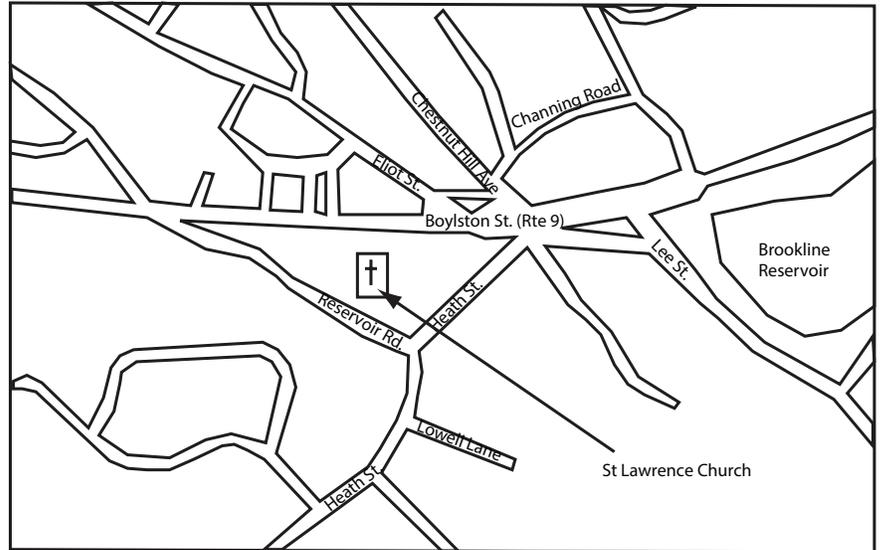
St. Lawrence Church
774 Boylston Street (Route 9)
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Parking is in the church parking lot behind the Church. Use 30 Reservoir Road, Chestnut Hill 02467 for your GPS.

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

Directions by Car 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. The 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

