
✠ Contra Mundum ✠

Volume IX, Issue 8

March 2007

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>

SELFISHNESS FOR LENT?

‘On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry’ and the Blessed Saviour’s warning ‘unless ye repent, ye shall perish as these’ both admonish us to conversion, to turning inward. And the Lenten season now upon us provides us with more than adequate opportunity to focus in upon ourselves as the ones most in need of attention.

We cannot repeat enough to ourselves that the reason for our very existence centers upon the salvation of our own immortal souls. Christian teaching answers in simple and instructive terms one of man’s greatest questions: *Why am I here?* And however much others may assist us toward saving our souls, whether unknowingly by example and general prayer or knowingly by kind and gracious direct assistance, no one else but we ourselves can effect that salvation for ourselves. At the Judgement, of which our Lenten readings, rites, and hymns make us most highly aware, we stand alone before the Throne and account for our own actions and for the extent to which we have shown what God has asked of us. And what has God asked of us? Three things: To know Him, to love and venerate Him, and to serve Him. Only so, our Catechism teaches us, can we live with Him eternally.



At very first a message like this seems to us to hold two serious drawbacks: what about the merits which come from our charitable actions toward others, something highly commendable? And doesn’t such a message set a goal of perfection unassisted, for we need others? Who indeed would deny the truth of those basic assertions? Yet, ‘being men for others’ and the merits of Christian solidarity must first stand in a healthy perspective to the prime demands of our faith, and in so doing they can then enhance the growth of that faith and practice, but ‘first things first’.

In all three synoptic gospels (Matthew 22, Mark 15, Luke 10)

our Blessed Lord teaches love of God and love of neighbor as representing the two commandments on which all the Law and the Prophets depend. Now, love of God stands at the very center of Christian teaching, and the totality which accrues to it also makes an absolute claim on every aspect of all our faculties: heart, soul, mind, strength, so much so that many believers will remain in constant denial and seek to qualify its scope. “He can’t really mean it that absolutely?” Oh yes, He does! One might even venture that all sin comes from a failure to appropriate the entirety of God’s claim on us. Also, however, in thinking about and in acting out the second great commandment, our love of neighbor, we do not consider sufficiently the kicker in the command: Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*. In order to love your neighbor, you must love yourself first. That sets the standard against which and from which our love of neighbor proceeds. The quality of our love of self follows directly from the quality of our love of God, and in turn our love of self informs our love of neighbor.

Our Holy Mother the Church, as Christ’s mystical body on earth, does not abandon us to our own resources in carrying out the injunction to love God, and ourselves, and our neighbor as ourselves. All of our Christian

tradition: the Holy Scriptures, the creeds and definitions of both silent dogma and proclaimed teaching, the Mass and the sacraments and devotions, all support us in our responsibility and direct us in the ways of knowing, loving, and serving God. And all of our neighbors, including the Holy Angels in Heaven, enter into this communion, loving us as they love themselves. So we are far from unassisted.

Do not spend this Lent asking what you can do for others. Ask rather what you, in and of yourself, can do for God, entirely, and He will give you the grace and overflowing charity against which to see yourself first and thence to do for others, according to His will.

“Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

¶ *The Revd. Dcn. Michael Connolly teaches linguistics in Boston College and serves primarily as Archdeacon at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in Belmont. He assists frequently in the Anglican Use. This is his second contribution to Contra Mundum.*

A FATHER FOR GOD'S SON

FOR four days in May 1990 I found myself as a guest in the home of Dr. & Mrs. Anene Benedict Uzuarkpunwa, in a city called Enugu. I was in Nigeria on a preaching mission, and billeted to this lovely home. Ben and Rose had five or six



Saint Joseph's Day
Monday, March 19, 2007
Solemn Mass & Sermon
7:30pm
chapel of St. Theresa of Ávila
Church
West Roxbury

children, and they all gathered at 6am daily for morning prayers, including a sermon which the father gave. After the first day he asked me if I would like to lead the service and preach. *Would I like to?* So we alternated during my time there.

This story is a reminder of the fact that in so many countries in our world, even today, the man of the house provides leadership in matters of religion. Ben's sermons were wonderful both in terms of insight and simple directness to his children, and I have an indelible visual memory of these little ones, the eldest being no more than twelve, all still half asleep and in their pajamas, kneeling into their chairs for prayer.

We wonder what St. Joseph was like. He dropped out of sight in the Scriptures after our Lord was twelve years old. By the time of the wedding in Cana, Jesus is called “the Son of Mary.” But although our fathers,

husbands, brothers, uncles, and neighbors may be quiet, gentle, and modest men, like St. Joseph, *the best* portrait of him is found in the Lord Jesus. Jesus is Son of Mary, but He was formed by St. Joseph.

Think of the way small boys live and play beside their fathers. Boys easily imitate what their fathers say and do (sometimes to the fathers' embarrassment!) Jesus would have heard and watched St. Joseph lead the family's morning and evening prayers and tell Bible stories. Joseph took Jesus to the synagogue where they sat together. Something is made of the fact that Our Lord learned His craft from Joseph. But there is much more to say! Our Lord's Human Heart must have learned a proper attitude towards work and workers, a love for the poor, for justice, and for freedom, from the attitudes and conduct of His foster father.

It is a strange and wonderful thing, then, that what God needed for His Beloved Son was a *father*. It was not a role Almighty God would entrust to just anyone. And what a shock it must have been for Joseph, not only to discover he is betrothed to one who would be Mother of God, but also called to be “father” to a Child Who *is* God! Yet Joseph's role as father was never preempted. Apart from some early angelic encouragement (and advice on how to avoid King Herod!) no divine revelations told Joseph how to father the Christ Child. And if Joseph waited for some sign from this Boy that He could do His growing up and learning without any help, it never came. Again and again when Jesus had something to learn, or sought-counsel, we can easily see Him coming to Joseph.

Blessed Jesus, Who is Son of the omniscient Father, never gave a sign that He already knew what St Joseph was advising, Because in a marvelous way, God was an ordinary son of an ordinary father, except that each, in his own way, was God's special work.

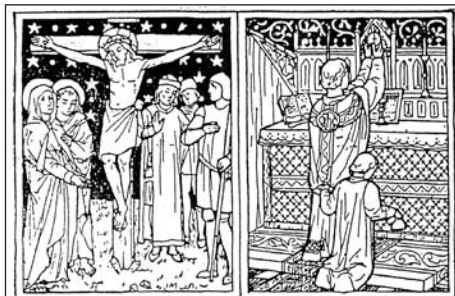
One day many years after Joseph had died, Our Lord Jesus spoke to a crowd about prayer and the loving goodness of God. He said "but if one of you asks his father for a loaf, will he hand him a stone? or for a fish, will he for a fish hand him a serpent? or if he asks for an egg, will he hand him a scorpion? If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." (Luke 1:9-13),

That instruction came out of Our Lord's personal experience. Jesus had received good gifts from St. Joseph. It was Joseph who was first to inspire in the Boy Jesus the thoughts of His Heavenly Father. Good St. Joseph, by his life, by his faith, and by his love, is the man who left his mark on the Son of God.

¶ a sermon by Father Bradford
Saint Joseph's Day, 2005

SHORT NOTES

Many thanks to Deacon Michael Connolly for being our preacher at Evensong on February 25th. The leader in this month's parish paper is provided by Dr. Connolly. He will preach at Stations on March 16th as well.

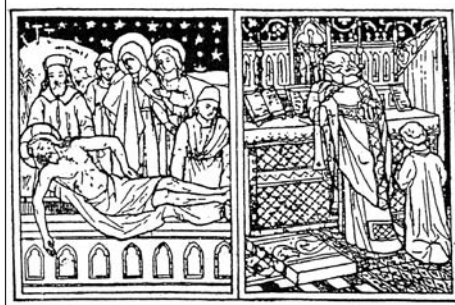


WEEKDAY MASS IN LENT

Tuesday at 10am

Saturdays at 9am

in the Convent Chapel



During Lent the Litany or Decalogue begins Sunday Masses prior to Palm Sunday. Copies of these devotions are provided in the chapel.

The *Magnificat Lenten Companion*, available for purchase at \$3.00 per copy, contains meditations for every day of Lent.

Many thanks to those who provided for a reception following the Candlemas service February 2nd. People seem to enjoy this period after evening services. About forty attended the Mass.

Lenten coin folders have been mailed to parishioners. Extra folders are placed in the rear of the chapel. Proceeds benefit the work of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Boston

The Saturday March 10th Mass will be a year's-mind Mass for pa-

rishioner Marysia Swanberg. Mass is at 9am.

Confessions are heard in St. Theresa of Ávila by the parish clergy every Saturday from 3:00-4:00pm in the chapel. Fr. Bradford hears confessions on Thursdays before first Fridays after the 4:00pm Mass. Next scheduled is March 1st

Holy Week is April 1-8

Easter flower envelopes will be available Sunday March 4th. Please contribute to the cost of decorating the chapel for Easter.



STATIONS OF THE CROSS & BENEDICTION

Fridays in Lent at 7:00pm
chapel of

St Theresa of Ávila Church
West Roxbury

March 2 Fr. Bradford, preaching
March 16 Dcn. Michael Connolly,
preaching

March 30 Fr. Romanus Cessario,
OP, preaching

special service
March 23 Fr. Bradford, preaching
Saint Mary's Chapel,
Boston College



SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION

Sunday, March 25, 2007

5:00pm

chapel of

St. Theresa of Ávila Church

West Roxbury

Father Bradford, preaching



The Annunciation of the Blessed
Virgin Mary

Commonly called Lady Day

Monday, March 26, 2007

(transferred)

Low Mass & Sermon at 10am
convent chapel

THE BRITISH MARTYRS

OVER the years 200 men and women have been beatified for

their heroic witness to the Catholic Faith in the British Isles during and after the Protestant Reformation. Here we continue brief mention of some of these individual martyrs.

Blessed ROBERT THORPE *Priest and Martyr (†1591)*

Robert Thorpe, of Yorkshire, England, went abroad to study for the priesthood at the English College in Reims, France. Following his ordination in Reims in April of 1585, he returned to Yorkshire a month later to minister to his fellow English Catholics being persecuted under Queen Elizabeth I. After nearly six years spent serving the faithful in secret, Father Thorpe was roused from his sleep early on Palm Sunday morning of 1391 by Elizabethan agents who had come to arrest him. An informer had provided to them incriminating testimony: he had observed Father Thorpe the night before gathering palms to be blessed on Palm Sunday. Blessed Thomas Watkinson, the owner of the home where Father Thorpe had been found, was also arrested, and was later condemned to death for sheltering priests. Father Thorpe was executed by drawing and quartering for being a priest.

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Blessed ROBERT SUTTON *Priest and Martyr (c. 1545-1588)*

Robert Sutton, of Burton-on-Trent, England (as distinguished from another beatified English martyr of the same name from Kegworth), an Anglican minister, was converted to the Catholic faith by his

younger brother William. Thereafter, Robert studied for the priesthood in Douai, France, together with another of his brothers, Abraham. The two were ordained together, celebrated their first Masses on the same day, and returned to England together. The third brother, William, entered the Jesuit Order. Father Robert Sutton served in Staffordshire from 1578 until his arrest in 1585. After being banished from the country, he secretly returned. Captured a second time, Father Sutton was sentenced to death for his priesthood and suffered execution by drawing and quartering. His brother, Father Abraham Sutton, rescued a portion of Robert's body, including a thumb presently kept as a relic at Stonyhurst College.

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SAINT OF THE MONTH



Saints Perpetua and her slave
Felicitas (d.203)

A SAINT for March 7th, Vibia Perpetua of Carthage (north Africa), was martyred along with her slave Felicitas and several others in 203. She was a young noblewoman's

wife, with an infant son, and her own mother had been a Christian. Her father was a pagan and tried to dissuade her from her Christian faith.

Her servant Felicitas was pregnant and gave birth to a daughter while in captivity awaiting death.

African-born Emperor Septimius Severus (reigned 193-211) was trying to suppress Christianity by making it illegal. He arrested this family group and several others and sentenced them to be attacked by wild beasts in the amphitheater. During their captivity Perpetua experienced powerful visions depicting heaven and the struggle with the evil one.

We recognize their names in a list of martyrs in the Canon of the Roman Mass. Their day has been celebrated and recorded on early Roman and Syriac calendars since the 4th century. Their story, in Latin, also represents another early recorded account of martyrdom (recall Polycarp, 1st century, for example). The account is in part autobiographical, contributed by her catechist Saturus (one of the martyrs) and by another eyewitness.

Her faith is clear by this excerpt: "What happens will be what God desires. We are in the power of God, not in our own power." (See www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html.)

Their burial place is beneath a later-built basilica of Carthage.

Boston Catholic Men's Conference
Saturday, March 17, 2007

Boston Catholic Women's Conference
Sunday, March 18, 2007

617-977-0916

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION AND OURS

IT was by Christ's own will that he was exposed to the temptation by the devil, as it was also by his own will that he was exposed to be slain by the limbs of the devil. Had he not so willed, the devil would never have dared to approach him.

The devil is always more disposed to attack those who are alone, because, as is said in Sacred Scripture, "if a man shall prevail against one, two shall withstand him easily" (Eccl 4:12). That is why Christ went out into the desert, as one going out to a battle ground, that there he might be tempted by the devil. Whereupon Saint Ambrose says that Christ went into the desert for the express purpose of provoking the devil. For unless the devil had fought, Christ would never have overcome him for me.

Saint Ambrose gives other reasons too. He says that Christ chose the desert as the place to be tempted for a hidden reason, namely that he might free from his exile Adam who, from paradise, was driven into the desert, and again that he did it for a reason in which there is no mystery, namely to show us that the devil envies those who are tending towards a better life.

We say with Saint Chrysostom that Christ exposed himself to the temptation because the devil most of all tempts those whom he sees alone...

Not only Christ was led into the desert by the Holy Spirit, but all the children of God who possess the Holy Spirit are led in like manner. For God's children are never content to sit down with idle hands, but the Holy Spirit ever urges them to undertake for God some great work. And this, as far as the devil is concerned, is to go into the desert, for in the desert there is none of that wickedness which is the devil's delight. Every good work is as it were a desert to the eye of the world and of our flesh, for good works are contrary to the desire of the world and of our flesh.

To give the devil such an opportunity of temptation as this is not dangerous, for it is much more the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is the promoter of every perfect work, that prompts us than the working of the devil who hates them all.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, OP
Meditations for Lent

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius,

The Revd. Richard Sterling Bradford,
Chaplain

Sunday Mass 10:30am
St. Theresa Convent Chapel
10 St. Theresa Ave.
West Roxbury, Mass.

Fellowship and Coffee in
the Lounge after Mass

Rectory:
767 West Roxbury Pkwy.
Boston, MA 02132-2121
Tel/Fax: (617) 325-5232
<http://www.locutor.net>

St. Theresa Church and Convent Chapel,
West Roxbury, MA 02132 Pine Lodge
Road (off St. Theresa Avenue)

Park either in the church parking lot or on Pine Lodge Road. The side door of the convent is open during the time of our services.

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

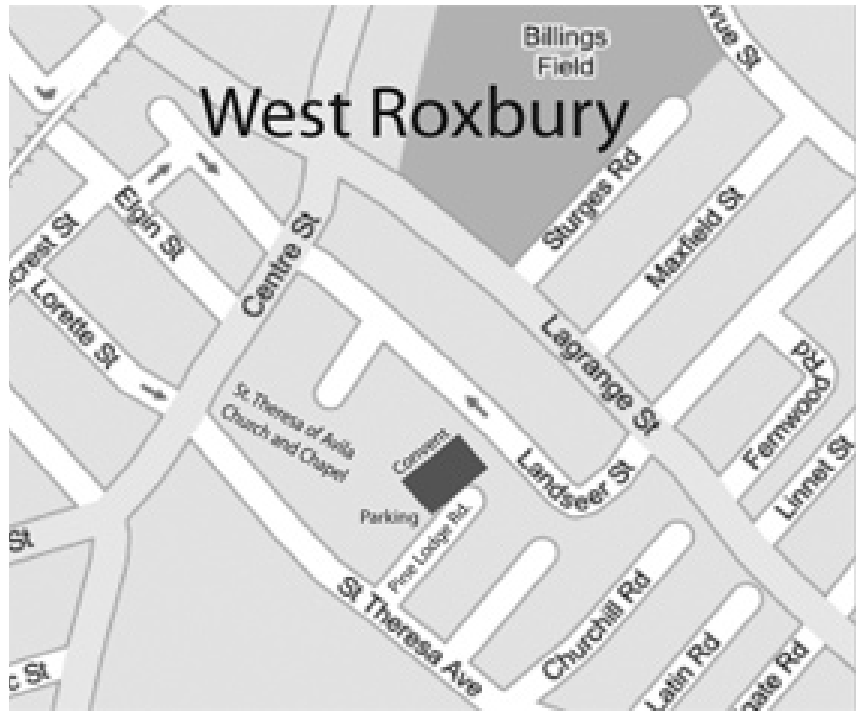
From the South: Route 1 north through Dedham to Spring Street. Turn right onto Spring Street then follow the directions above.

From Dorchester and Mattapan: Cummins Highway to Belgrade Avenue to Centre Street left on St.. Theresa Ave.

From Boston: VFW Parkway to LaGrange Street. Turn left onto LaGrange Street, crossing Centre Street and turn right onto Landseer Street. Turn left into the church parking lot.

Directions by Public Transportation: Orange line to Forest Hills terminal. Bus to West Roxbury. #35 bus to Dedham Mall. #36, #37, and #38 also stop at St. Theresa's.

Commuter train to West Roxbury Station is a short walk to St.. Theresa's. Departs from South Station, but no Sunday service is available.



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

