
✠Contra Mundum✠

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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>

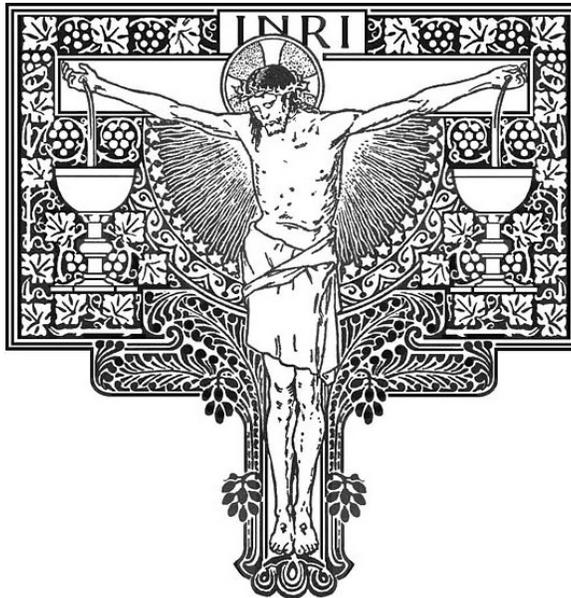
COVID-19 UPDATES

“As of May 29th masks are no longer required for vaccinated people in the State of Massachusetts. The State does advise that non-vaccinated people continue to wear masks.” (From the Archdiocese of Boston) The dispensation from Sunday Mass obligation remains in effect within the Archdiocese of Boston. The Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter has *lifted* the dispensation, putting the Sunday Mass obligation back into effect for its parishes and people, with provisions for those at risk. (See Father Bradford’s message on page 85.)

THE EUCHARIST AS LOVE STORY

THERE IS A LOVE STORY placed right in the middle of the Old Testament. (If you grew up going to summertime Bible school you might remember that the middle of the whole Bible is the *Book of Psalms*. The *Song of Solomon* is close by.) It is a collection of stories by and about young lovers, and it has absolutely nothing to do with theology! In fact there is a great difficulty in translating these stories because many of the words employed in this poetry are rarely used elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew.

The drama in part of the story is that the girl has been pressed into service in King Solomon’s harem. She remains true to her lover, however, and he comes to rescue her. This story line has all the makings of a Disney movie, and you might ask why such a collection should be a part of Sacred Scriptures.



The answer is that holy men and women have found in the *Song of Solomon* language supporting the expression of their love for Almighty God and His love for them. And more specifically, when Catholic saints have read this love poetry they have connected it to their experience of the Lord Jesus Christ coming to them in the Blessed Sacrament

of the Altar. Listen to it in that light. “Behold, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. My beloved speaks and says to me ‘Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.’” (*Song of Solomon 2.9*)

Where secular readers might enjoy the drama of the ardent young lover in pursuit of his love, standing outside the wall of the harem and whispering encouragement through the window to her, Catholics have seen Christ speaking to the faithful soul in the Blessed Sacrament, a window in the wall of our corrupt nature, a nature which has shut us off from breathing the free air of Heaven.

Why do Christians do such things as appropriate secular love poetry to their own use? The answer is this is part of a Christian character trait! Holy Church looking everywhere in God’s creation,

often sees signs or reflections of Blessed Lord Jesus and the paramount drama of redemption.

Let's go back to the arrangement of the Scriptures we were taking about earlier, you know, the business about *Psalms* being at the center of the Bible. But this time consider the remarkable thing the Church has done with her New Testament Scriptures. When you add up the total pages of all four Gospels, you come to the realization that these books are about Holy Week *with a preface attached*. After an overview of the Lord's ministry and teaching (and remember that both St John and St Paul attest that it is not *all* recorded here) the brakes are applied and the pace slows down for the events of Holy Week. At first we are concerned with *daily* developments. Then later on in Holy Week we ponder the action *hour by hour* until, on the Friday afternoon of that week, it is *minute by minute* as we are told to reflect on the seven last words of Christ from the Cross. What all this means is that Christ came to die for our sins, and He accomplished something for us by so doing.

The Catholic Church has made much out of Holy Week, and this is reflected in the Scriptures. And she has made much out of a few figurative words and manual acts used by Christ when He last had dinner with His disciples. Out of the total teaching and preaching of a three-year ministry, these words amount to a very few. But the Catholic Church asserts that these words are of more concern to us than any other Christ ever spoke. "This is My

Body. This is the cup of the new covenant in My Blood."

St Paul puts the significance of that event in very simple language. "The Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed." It is the Lord God Who is at work here. It is Jesus, God in the flesh, who is at work here. And it is "on the night in which He was betrayed," in other words, work done on the occasion of His death for our sins.

Remember that it was *our* wall that is described in the *Song of Solomon*. God didn't raise the wall; our sins did. And God stands behind that wall. And through that wall created by us, the coming of Christ, and *specifically His death*, has made a great window. It is through that window that the light and air of Heaven can come into our walled prison of sin and sight and sense. St Paul says "He made both one, breaking down the wall that was a barrier between us." (*Ephesians 2:14*) And the Blessed Sacrament is the fruit of that perfect sacrifice of Christ made present for all time.

Just as a window belongs both to the room and to the fresh air outside, so too the Blessed Sacrament belongs to historical time and to eternity. The Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is our window into the sight and air of eternal life, a glory our human eyes cannot now bear to see, but to which Christ Jesus, our great lover and friend, beckons us every time we come into His Real Presence.

Father Bradford

¶ This sermon was preached on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. May 25, 2008.

THE TRUTH CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED



IN HER VOYAGE ACROSS the ocean of this world, the Church is like a great ship being pounded by the waves of life's different stresses. Our duty is not to abandon ship but to keep her on her course.

The ancient fathers showed us how we should carry out this duty: Clement, Cornelius and many others in the city of Rome, Cyprian at Carthage, Athanasius at Alexandria. They all lived under emperors who were pagans; they all steered Christ's ship—or rather his most dear spouse, the Church. This they did by teaching and defending her, by their labors and sufferings, even to the shedding of blood.

I am terrified when I think of all this. *Fear and trembling came upon me and the darkness of my sins almost covered me*. I would gladly give up the task of guiding the Church which I have accepted if I could find such an action warranted by the example of the fathers or by holy Scripture.

Since this is the case, and since the truth can be assaulted but never defeated or falsified, with our tired mind let us turn to the words of Solomon: *Trust in the Lord*

with all your heart and do not rely on your own prudence. Think on him in all your ways, and he will guide your steps. In another place he says: The name of the Lord is an impregnable tower. The just man seeks refuge in it and he will be saved.

Let us stand fast in what is right and prepare our souls for trial. Let us wait upon God's strengthening aid and say to him: *O Lord, you have been our refuge in all generations.*

Let us trust in him who has placed this burden upon us. What we ourselves cannot bear let us bear with the help of Christ. For he is all-powerful and he tells us: *My yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Let us continue the fight on the day of the Lord. *The days of anguish and of tribulation* have overtaken us; if God so wills, *let us die for the holy laws of our fathers*, so that we may deserve to obtain an eternal inheritance with them.

Let us be neither dogs that do not bark nor silent onlookers nor paid servants who run away before the wolf. Instead let us be careful shepherds watching over Christ's flock. Let us preach the whole of God's plan to the powerful and to the humble, to rich and to poor, to men of every rank and age, as far as God gives us the strength, in season and out of season, as Saint Gregory writes in his book of Pastoral Instruction.

Saint Boniface

¶ *Saint Boniface (c.675-754) was an outstanding member of the Anglo-Saxon evangelism mission to Germany. He was Archbishop of Mainz and martyred in Frisia. His feast day is June 5th.*

TO LIVE WITH JESUS

WHAT TEXT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT tells about the ordination of the apostles? Some people who know their Bible well answer right away. *Mark 3:14*. We are told the Lord ordained Twelve and gave them power; that He chose them to be founders of His Church, and that He ordained them to preach the gospel.

All of these would be true answers. But all would still not get to the heart of the matter. In *Mark 3:14* it first says "He ordained Twelve that they should be with Him." That is the whole secret of the apostolic life. The apostles were given power, they were sent to preach, and they did become the founders of the Catholic Church. But all those things happened because of that first thing: they knew a life of union with Jesus.

In today's gospel we have another indication of this close union, a union not just open to the apostles but to all Christians. Our Lord says, "I solemnly assure you, he who accepts anyone I send accepts Me, and in accepting Me, accepts Him Who sent Me." That shows just how close is to be our union with Our Lord Jesus and Our Heavenly Father, made possible by the work of God the Holy Spirit.

Saying the creed is easy to do; making all sorts of professions of faith is often not very hard. But none of it is worth anything if we do not live with Jesus. But if we live a life of union with Our Lord, it will be very much

like the apostleship to which the Twelve were called.

The secret of our religion is not in the things we say or do, but in the reasons and motives we have for saying or doing them. If we love God we will desire to live with Him. And then everything good will follow.

Father Bradford

¶ *This sermon was preached in St Theresa of Ávila Church on Thursday, May 19, 2011. The text was John 13:16-20.*



ORDINATIONS

Two men who have occasionally attended our services are being ordained this spring. Deacon Steven Lewis will be ordained to the sacred order of priests in Rochester, New York, on June 5th. Mr Nathan Sanders will be ordained to the transitional diaconate in Holy Cross Cathedral Boston on June 12th. May Almighty God continue to bless and nourish them and all who are called to any holy office in the Church.

THE APOSTLES HAD FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST himself declared what he was, what he had been, how he was carrying out his Father's will, what obligations he demanded of men. This he did during his earthly life, either publicly to the crowds or privately to his disciples. Twelve of these he picked out to be his special companions, appointed to teach the nations.

One of them fell from his place. The remaining eleven were commanded by Christ, as he was leaving the earth to return to the Father after his resurrection, to go and teach the nations and to baptize them into the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The apostles cast lots and added Matthias to their number, in place of Judas, as the twelfth apostle. The authority for this action is to be found in a prophetic psalm of David. After receiving the power of the Holy Spirit which had been promised to them, so that they could work miracles and proclaim the truth, they first bore witness to their faith in Jesus Christ and established churches throughout Judea. They then went out into the whole world and proclaimed to the nations the same doctrinal faith.

They set up churches in every city. Other churches received from them a living transplant of faith and the seed of doctrine, and through this daily process of transplanting they became churches. They therefore qualify



as apostolic churches by being the offspring of churches that are apostolic.

Every family has to be traced back to its origins. That is why we can say that all these great churches constitute that one original Church of the apostles; for it is from them that they all come. They are all primitive, all apostolic, because they are all one. They bear witness to this unity by the peace in which they all live, the brotherhood which is their name, the fellowship to which they are pledged. The principle on which these associations are based is common tradition by which they share the same sacramental bond.

The only way in which we can prove what the apostles taught—that is to say, what Christ revealed to them—is through those same churches. They were founded by the apostles themselves, who first preached to them by what is

called the living voice and later by means of letters.

The Lord had said clearly in former times: *I have many more things to tell you, but you cannot endure them now.* But he went on to say: *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you into the whole truth.* Thus Christ shows us that the apostles had full knowledge of the truth, for he had promised that they would receive the *whole truth* through the Spirit of truth. His promise was certainly fulfilled, since the Acts of the Apostles prove that the Holy Spirit came down on them.

Tertullian

¶ *Tertullian (c.155-200) has been called "the father of Latin Christianity" and was the first Christian author to produce an extensive body of literature. This excerpt is taken from his Prescription Against Heretics.*

"Life on earth is not an 'ultimate' but a 'penultimate' reality; even so it remains a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters."

St John Paul II
Evangelium vitae

"We must not surrender our religious liberty to the voices that seek the destruction of our public presence."

Bishop Donald Hying
of Madison, Wisconsin

A MESSAGE FROM FATHER BRADFORD

MY DEAR PEOPLE,

Neither testing nor vaccinations are a substitute for physical distancing and mask wearing in public places. These are two different categories which have in common the goal of minimizing the spread of the highly contagious Covid-19 virus. Testing and vaccination are *optional* for most people, and parishes will not be policing people arriving for Mass. But masks and social distancing are observable.

In light of these facts, and out of consideration for anyone who has ongoing health issues, *we will continue to wear masks at Mass and practice social distancing.*

Some other developments include:

- It is no longer necessary to regularly disinfect surfaces.
- Missalettes and hymnals may be used and kept in the church.
- Permission for congregational singing resumed on May 23rd. Continue to wear a mask while singing. This is important! The Covid-19 virus spreads especially through airborne vapors.
- Altar servers may be used.
- Regarding the Mass offertory collection, we will continue to have an alms basin for contributions, or you may send them by mail.
- At the exchange of peace in the Mass, the rubrics have always made any greeting of fellow parishioners *optional*.

- Communion continues to be *in one kind only*.
- Although permission will now allow for food and drink to be served at parish activities, we will *not* begin coffee hours until consideration has been given to address issues such as volunteers to do the set up and clean up, location (i.e. in the undercroft, or out-of-doors in good summer weather), and the types of food (including packaging) and beverages to be served.

We will continue to follow contact tracing protocols. As at any time, parishioners who feel sick should stay at home. If after attending Mass, a worshipper has Covid-19 symptoms, that person is asked to notify the priest. Notice of possible infection (but not the name of the person) will be posted on our parish websites.

It is understood some people are ready to take off their masks and sit near one another while others are not ready to do so. Although the ever-increasing number of vaccinated people and the current downward trend in infections certainly are a light at the end of the tunnel, we must not be blinded by the light. With this highly contagious virus, still spreading rapidly in many parts of the world, we have learned to be cautious.

As we have updates, we will post them on our parish websites under Worship.

Faithfully yours in Christ,
Father Bradford

SHORT NOTES

✠ Fr Peter Stravinskas will be the preacher at a series of services in The Cathedral of the Holy Cross for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. Check the Cathedral's website for details.

✠ A year's-mind Mass for Dr Philip Crotty will be offered on June 10th and a year's-mind Mass offered for Frederick Jillson on June 15th. May they rest in peace.

✠ The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart is Friday, June 11th. The next day, Saturday, June 12th, is the observance of The Immaculate Heart of Mary. (On Saturdays, Mass is offered by Fr Bradford at 8 AM in St Theresa of Ávila Church, West Roxbury.)

✠ Congratulations to parishioner Marco Vargas who received his undergraduate degree in Computer Science at a Boston University Commencement on May 23rd.

✠ Fathers' Day is Sunday, June 20th.

✠ The Feast of SS John Fisher and Thomas More is Tuesday, June 22nd.

✠ The Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul is Tuesday, June 29th.

✠ On Sunday, July 11th we will begin singing the Fifth Communion Service composed by Leo Sowerby and found at #747-749 in *The Hymnal 1940*. With it we sing the *Old Scottish Chant Gloria*, #739.

WHO IS TO BE THE DOCTOR?

IF YOU SAY, “Show me your God,” I will say to you, “Show me what kind of person you are, and I will show you my God.” Show me then whether the eyes of your mind can see, and the ears of your heart hear.



cannot be seen in it. In the same way, no one who has sin within him can see God.

But if you will you can be healed. Hand yourself over to the doctor, and he will open the eyes of your mind and heart. Who is to be the doctor? It

is like this. Those who can see with the eyes of their bodies are aware of what is happening in this life on earth. They get to know things that are different from each other. They distinguish light and darkness, black and white, ugliness and beauty, elegance and inelegance, proportion and lack of proportion, excess and defect. The same is true of the sounds we hear: high or low or pleasant. So it is with the ears of our heart and the eyes of our mind in their capacity to hear or see God.

God is seen by those who have the capacity to see him, provided that they keep the eyes of their mind open. All have eyes, but some have eyes that are shrouded in darkness, unable to see the light of the sun. Because the blind cannot see it, it does not follow that the sun does not shine. The blind must trace the cause back to themselves and their eyes. In the same way, you have eyes in your mind that are shrouded in darkness because of your sins and evil deeds.

A person’s soul should be clean, like a mirror reflecting light. If there is rust on the mirror his face

is God, who heals and gives life through his Word and wisdom. Through his Word and wisdom he created the universe, *for by his Word the heavens were established, and by his Spirit all their array.* His wisdom is supreme. *God by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding he arranged the heavens, by his knowledge the depths broke forth and the clouds poured out the dew.*

If you understand this, and live in purity and holiness and justice, you may see God. But, before all, faith and the fear of God must take the first place in your heart, and then you will understand all this. When you have laid aside mortality and been clothed in immortality, then you will see God according to your merits. God raises up your flesh to immortality along with your soul, and then, once made immortal, you will see the immortal One, if you believe in him now.

Saint Theophilus of Antioch

¶ *St Theophilus was Patriarch of Antioch from c.169-182. His only surviving writing is his apology to Autolytus (who seems to be a pagan friend.) This is an excerpt from that series of books.*

THE ACCESSABILITY OF JESUS CHRIST

JESUS CHRIST DWELLS in our tabernacles today as surely as he dwelt in Nazareth, and in the very same human nature; and he dwells there, largely, for this very purpose: that he may make himself accessible to all who know him interiorly and desire to know him more perfectly. ... The mourners and the happy, the philosopher and the fool, the old man and the child—persons of every temperament, every range of intellect, every nationality—all these unite in that which alone can unite them: the friendship of the Lover of their souls. Could there be anything more characteristic of the Jesus of the Gospels than this accessibility of his, by which he stands waiting for all who desire to come to him? ...

It is in this manner, then, that he fulfils that essential of true friendship, which we call humility. He places himself at the mercy of the world whom he desires to win for himself. He offers himself there in a poorer disguise even than in the days of his flesh, yet, by the faith and teaching of his Church, by the ceremonies with which she greets his presence, and by the recognition by his friends, he indicates to those who long to recognize him and who love him that it is he himself who is there, the desire of all nations and the Lover of every soul.

Yet he does not enter the tabernacle direct. He first becomes

present on the altar, at the word of his priest, in the form of a Victim. In the Sacrifice of the Mass he presents himself before the world, as well as before the eyes of the Eternal Father, in the same significance as that in which he hung upon the cross, performing the same act which he did once for all, the same act by which he

displayed that passion of friendship in whose name he claims our hearts, the climax of that Greatest Love of all by which he laid down his life for his friends.

Robert Hugh Benson

¶ *Msgr Benson (1871-1914) was a British convert to Catholicism who was a notable writer of novels on a wide variety of subjects. His many devotional and apologetic works were published by Longmans, Green & Co.*

24th Nativity (Birth) of S. JOHN the BAPTIST



“His name is John”

SO EVIDENT A SIGN OF GOD’S FAVOR

THE DOUBT OF ZACHARIAS is, like the doubt of St Thomas the apostle, an indirect testimony: it brings out a supernatural fact. In this case the supernatural fact is the miraculous character of John’s birth. With Elizabeth we are not, of course, in the presence of a miraculous phenomenon of transcendent glory as in the case of Mary’s motherhood: Zacharias is truly the father of John the Baptist. Yet it was at the same time so evident a sign of God’s favour to Elizabeth that Mary no longer hesitated in her mind as to the possibility of her own motherhood, the moment she heard the news from the angel that Elizabeth was with child.

Elizabeth’s motherhood may be considered as a term of com-

parison, to enable us the better to understand and measure the excellence of Mary’s motherhood. With Elizabeth’s motherhood God’s action and grace surround, as with an odour of heavenly life, the laws of created life. With Mary it will be all heavenly life. God’s action is not merely the companion of created causality; it is supreme, exclusive, absolutely unconditioned by the created laws of life.

Anscar Vonier

¶ *Anscar Vonier O.S.B. was born in Württemberg in 1875 and became Abbot of Buckfast Abbey in Devon. His A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist, written in 1925, is a classic and is available through Ignatius Press. Abbot Vonier died in 1938.*

¶ *The Solemnity of the Baptism of Saint John the Baptist is Thursday, June 24th.*

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
Fellowship and Coffee in the
Undercroft after Mass

(Fellowship suspended for now)

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congregationstathanasius.com



SATURDAY MASS IN THE ORDINARIATE FORM

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

The name of our parish paper 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 on our website under Parish Paper.

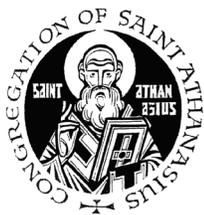
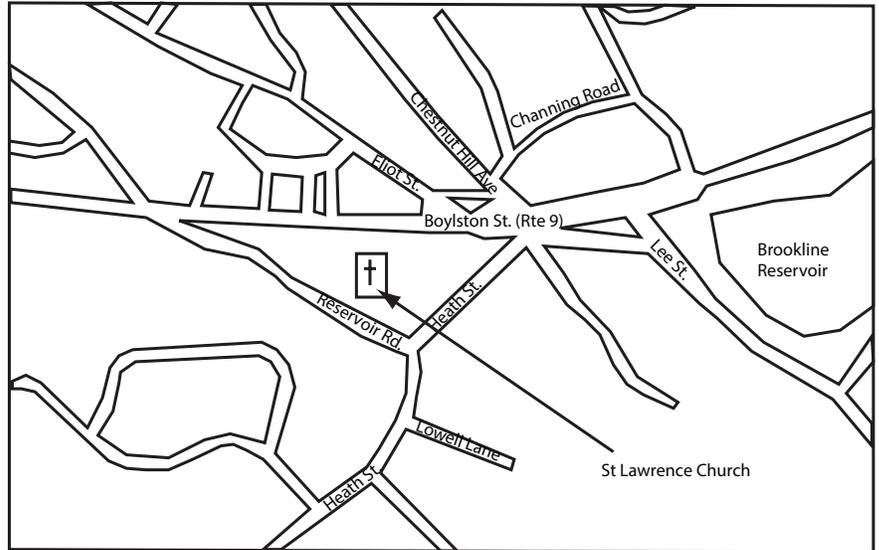
St. Lawrence Church
774 Boylston Street (Route 9)
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

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

