

061203 First Sunday of Advent 3C
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The prayer for this Sunday is for a superabundance of love. Love offers the safety promised in Jeremiah 33:10. Love is what the Faithful learn from the Wisdom Psalm 25. The Faithful are encouraged in 1 Thessalonians to follow the way of love, while the Gospel warns of the dangers of not loving. The promised coming of the Son of Man is Christmas, the exemplar of love in the Christian calendar. Easter is an exemplar of power.

The prophet Jeremiah 33:16 is in exile, promising, "Jerusalem shall dwell secure." This is only one of six places in the First Testament to use these words.¹ One would think Sacred Scripture would mention a secure dwelling more frequently. While Jeremiah may have been promising security of external place, I think of security as security of heart. When the Faithful love God and neighbors, they are secure.

The psalmsinger is teaching the Faithful how to live. Psalm 25 is a Wisdom psalm. Psalm 25 is an acrostic psalm, using one more than the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The extra letter, combined with the first and middle letters, spell a Hebrew verb meaning either "to learn" or "to teach," in other words, wisdom.² The psalmsinger, using an explicit alphabetic pattern,³ regards the alphabet and language as gifts of God.

Frank Moore Cross links the alphabet first with logic and Greek skepticism and then with "the prophetic principle" in Israel.⁴ In the words of Cross, "The older elitist and relatively static and hierarchical societies of the Near East gave way to new, dynamic societies, alphabetic societies which reached their pinnacle in the ancient world in Israel and Greece."⁵ A new pinnacle of literacy is in the present age.

¹ William L. Holladay, "Elusive Deuteronomists, Jeremiah, and Proto-Deuteronomy," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 74.

² Anthony R. Ceresko, O.S.F.S., "Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking and the Shaping of Psalms 106 and 150," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 33.

³ Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P., "The Use of "Panels" in the Structure of Psalms 73-78," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No 4 (October 2004) 537.

⁴ Anthony R. Ceresko, O.S.F.S., "Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking and the Shaping of Psalms 106 and 150," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 44.

⁵ Frank Moore, Cross, "Early Alphabetic Scripts (1975)," in Frank Moore Cross, *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy* (HSS; 51; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 341 in the *Post scriptum* (1993), in Anthony R. Ceresko, O.S.F.S., "Endings

Psalm 25, as an acrostic, contains an all-encompassing sense of God. As Victor Avigdor Hurowitz words it, "(T)he alphabet in its entirety can be symbolic of YHWH, expressing his infinity, all inclusiveness, omnipresence, and omniscience."⁶ Hurowitz goes on to relate the acrostic psalms to the alpha and omega of Revelations 1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13.

In recognition of these gifts, the Responsorial antiphon, Psalm 25:1b, announces, "To you, O Lord, I lift my soul." The Lectionary may use Psalm 25 for verse 5, "teach me your paths," 8, "he shows sinners the way;" and 9, "teaches the humble his way."

1 Thessalonians 4:1 becomes more specific, instructing, "how you should conduct yourselves to please God." One should conduct oneself with abounding love. The Greek for *abound* in 3:12 and *do so* in 4:1 derive from the same Greek stem.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 and 4:1

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	abound	do so
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	superabundare	abundetis
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	abound	may abound
<u>King James</u> (1611):	abound	would abound
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1966):	abound	do so
<u>New American</u> (1970):	abound	do so
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	enrich	make ... progress

Saint Jerome, with his *abundare et superabundare* for *increase* and *abound* is changing the Greek. The word for *abound* in Greek connotes *more than enough*, *abundance*, *to be gifted with abundance*. *To be gifted with abundance* is the literal Greek,⁷ which Saint Jerome changed from the passive to the active voice. The difference between active and passive voice is as follows. In the active voice, *you do*. In the passive voice, *it is done to you*. The idea in 1 Thessalonians 3:12 and 4:1 seems to be so full of love that the cost never becomes an issue. The gift of Christ at

and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking and the Shaping of Psalms 106 and 150," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) footnote 35, page 44.

⁶ Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, "Additional Elements of Alphabetical Thinking in Psalm xxxiv," VT [I lack a key to this abbreviation] 332 in Anthony R. Ceresko, O.S.F.S., "Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking and the Shaping of Psalms 106 and 150," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) footnote 40, page 45.

⁷ William D. Mounce, Zondervan Greek Reference Series: The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House: A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 370.

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Christmas exhibits that kind of superabundant love. The Faithful are to imitate Christ in that love.

In the context of the Lectionary, 1 Thessalonians 3:13 "... at the coming of our Lord Jesus ..." refers to abounding love at Christmas. In the context of 1 Thessalonians and the New Testament Epistles, however, "the coming of our Lord Jesus," refers to the Parousia, or second coming at the end of the world.⁸ The Lectionary is adapting the Scripture to the hearts of the Faithful for the season of Advent.

The First Sunday of Advent is about preparing the soul for the coming of the Savior at Christmas. Jeremiah promises a safe dwelling place, a place that turns out to be in the hearts of the Faithful. Psalm 25 looks to God for a sense of direction, for the Wisdom needed to live a good life. 1 Thessalonians is about that superabundance of love exhibited by God at Christmas for humanity; a love that the Faithful also have in their hearts for all humanity.

In the last three years, I indexed nothing for the Gospel. Luke is developed at 003C 031130. Luke 21:27 does mention "the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." For more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes

No changes, except this, from 2006 to 2009.

⁸ Lee A. Johnson, "Paul's Epistolary Presence in Corinth: A New Look at Robert W. Funk's Apostolic *Parousia*," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 485, 487.