

Personal Notes

Second Sunday in Advent, 005B, December 4, 2011

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Weekly community prayer is about forming group identity. By identifying group characteristics, historians contribute to this formation. Sometimes historians get confused, as does Anthony Burke Smith in his new book, The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> Because he leaves no room for Black Catholics, Smith misses a major group, thus, confusing his conclusions. Concentrating on Irish Catholics, Smith leaves little room for Latino, German, or Italian Catholics.

Smith notes the facts, but does not explain their significance in the larger sweep of what is happening in civil rights. The impact of the majority on Catholic minorities—is the inalienable right to think. Catholic opposition to the right to think begins with “the rigorous, antimodernist backlash in Catholic theological circles” railing of Pope Pius X (ca. 1917) (page 127) to change with the whimper of Pope John Paul II attempting “... to cultivate an image of the church focused upon papal leadership.” John Paul II, as beloved as he is, remains the “Father of the Sexual Coverup,” modernism at its most rampant evil. Smith does not recognize that “the sole model of Catholic intellectual life” (page 2) of Pope Pius X is an overt attack on the underlying inalienable right to think.

Smith, furthermore, does not understand that the inalienable axiom right to think has corollaries in freedom of the press and the right to vote. Increasing the right to vote marks the changes from the great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War—better known as the Civil Rights Era. It never occurs to Smith to place The Look of Catholics within the context of civil rights. *Civil Rights* does not even appear in the Smith index. The modern Roman Catholic Church has yet to extend the inalienable right to think to the right to vote meaningfully on such administrative matters as offices of pastors and bishops.

Smith seems unconcerned about the Gospel of Mark as part of Catholic popular culture. The Gospel of Mark is about the effort required to be disciples of Christ. “Prepare the way of the Lord.” Mark wrote so that the Faithful would think about Jesus. The idea is that in times of distress, the Faithful stay true to their focus on discipleship, raising God in the very manner in which they chose to cope.

Smith seems unconcerned about finding the presence of God in history. The Faithful mean they are not seeing the kindness of God, when they pray, “Lord, let us see your kindness and grant us your salvation” (Psalm 85:8), the Responsorial Antiphon this Sunday. To begin a search for kindness, the Faithful lack credible manuscript evidence for 2 Peter 3:10,

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Burke Smith, The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

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But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,  
and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar  
and the elements will be dissolved by fire  
and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

*Found out*, not *destroyed*. Careful thought about this verse is appropriate for the Faithful.

That *the Lord will come like a thief* has special meaning for Black, Latino, Italian, German, and other Catholics since Smith, like a thief, breaks into the history of Catholic popular culture and effectively removes Black Catholics and others from their entitlements there.

The 2011 illiterate Missal offers the following Collect (prayer). “Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company.” This Collect contrasts *earthly undertaking* with *learning of heavenly wisdom*, as if *learning heavenly wisdom* at Mass were not an *earthly undertaking*.

This is a fused sentence,<sup>2</sup> despite the fact that the two main clauses are linked with a coordinating conjunction and a comma, namely “, but.”<sup>3</sup> The main clauses have different direct objects, *undertaking* in the first clause and *learning* in the second. *Undertaking* and *learning* make a poor contrast. To improve the contrast, pray, “Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son. Grant that we may join that number, seeking your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Enable us to learn heavenly wisdom whereby to gain admittance to his company.”

The Collect continues with a sentence fragment. “Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever [forever is one word] and ever.” The Little, Brown Handbook first notes that *who* is a relative pronoun, which identifies a subordinate clause. The Little, Brown Handbook continues, “Subordinate clauses serve as parts of sentences (as nouns or modifiers), not as whole sentences...”<sup>4</sup> To improve the sentence fragment, pray, “Your Son, Jesus, lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.”

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 18, “Comma Splices, Fused Sentences,” H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 339-444.

<sup>3</sup> See Part 6, “Punctuation,” Chapter 28 e, “Comma: Phrases of contrast,” H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 432-433.

<sup>4</sup> H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 332.

### Prayer after Communion

Prayer after Communion from the Missal: “Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment (1), we humbly beseech you (2), O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery (3), you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord.

Revised: O Lord we praise you for replenishing us to go forth from this place again replenished by spiritual nourishment from your Eucharistic food. Your presence among us is a mystery in which we partake. Through this grace, teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and to hold firmly to the things of heaven above. We ask this through Christ, our Lord and God.

Comment: The three commas indicate that this is a fused sentence.<sup>5</sup> The phrase between the first two commas is a sentence within a sentence. The conjunction, *and*, requires parallel construction. The Little Brown Handbook instructs, “The coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *not*, and *yet* always signal a need for parallelism.”<sup>6</sup> In the Missal, *to judge wisely* is not in parallel construction with *hold firm to*.

The 2011 illiterate Missal would reach out more effectively by using standard American English. The Faithful can, at least, pray for that and for a better more complete history of Catholics in Popular Culture.

## Readings

First Testament:	Isaiah 40:1-5
Psalm:	Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 (8)
Epistle:	2 Peter 3:8-14
Alleluia:	Luke 3:4, 6
Gospel:	Mark 1:1-8

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 18, “Comma Splices, Fused Sentences,” H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 339-444.

<sup>6</sup> H. Ramsey Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, Eleventh Edition: The Little, Brown Handbook (New York: Longman, 2010) 399.

## Annotated Bibliography

Musings above the solid line draw from material below the line. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting details.

### Isaiah 40:1-5

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE.

Verse Lectionary

NABRE

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem

Speak to the heart of Jerusalem

*Speaking to the heart* can be far different from *speaking tenderly*.

3 In the desert

In the wilderness

Considering Las Vegas, Nevada, *desert* and *wilderness* have different connotations.

4 Every valley shall be filled in

Every valley shall be lifted up

Which is it, *filled in* or *lifted up*?

5 ... all people shall see ...

... all flesh shall see ...

*People* includes the living and the dead; *flesh* does not.

9 ... glad tidings ...

... good news ...

*Tidings* and *news* in this age of the internet share little meaning together.

9 fear not to cry out

Cry out, do not fear!

*To cry out* connotes purpose; simply *crying out* connotes more of a joyful explanation.

Isaiah 40:1-11

Gregory J. Polan, O.S.B., review of Oystein Lund, Way Metaphors and Ways Topics in Isaiah 40-55<sup>7</sup>

Polan points out that Isaiah 40:1-11 is the prologue to Second Isaiah, written in Exile. Polan likes the way Lund brings the themes of Second Isaiah together, but regards the work as overly ponderous.

Isaiah 40:1-11

J. L. Manzo, review of Marta García Fernández, "Consolad, consoled a mi pueblo": El tema de la consolación en Deuteroisaias<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 2 (April 2009) 379.

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Manzo reports that Fernandez argues “The most important criterion for understanding the process of consolation, however, is the reference to Yhwh: consolation is a theological enterprise by which the afflicted one orients life to Yhwh.” Manzo regards the study as an “informative and valuable resource.” Such an orientation is essential for Black Catholics and others.

Isaiah 40:1-4

Clifford M. Yeary, Pilgrim People: A Scriptural Commentary<sup>9</sup>

The Evangelists and Christians ever since their beginning have used the Greek translation of the Hebrew. The Hebrew originated during the Exile, but Greek translation came after the Exile and gained new meaning with John the Baptist. The point is “... what is known as the living word of God. Prophetic utterance, proclaimed once to a people in a particular historical circumstance, becomes engraved as Sacred Scripture and speaks anew to generation after generation.” I worry about German and Italian Vatican officials dictating English translations for the Lectionary and Missal.

Isaiah 40:3

C. Clifton Black, “Mark as Historian of God’s Kingdom”<sup>10</sup>

Black argues from *prepare the way of the Lord*, as used by the Gospel of Mark, to authentication for the Gospel. Black argues that Mark is not concerned about explaining his presentation.

Isaiah 40:3

Reed Lessing, review of Bo H. Lim, The “Way of the Lord” in the Book of Isaiah<sup>11</sup>

Lessing tends to agree with the Lim argument that the “Way of the Lord” is spiritual and eschatological, rather than a hard road leading from Babylon out of the Exile. Lim is breaking new academic ground.

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<sup>8</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 2011) 350-351.

<sup>9</sup> Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010, 46, 59.

<sup>10</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (July 2009) 77.

<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (July 2011) 126.

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Isaiah 40:9-31

Eugene Hensell, O.S.B., Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., The Majesty of God in the Old Testament: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching<sup>12</sup>

Hensell concludes, "The OT texts that K. presents are rich and complex. Much of their meaning lies in grappling with their complexity. K.'s approach will not satisfy those who want that complexity more fully examined." Concerning the readings for today, Hensell reports, "A solid guide to how K. will deal with the ten passages can be found in the title he gives to each chapter. Each begins with the word 'magnifying': 'Magnifying the Incomparability of Our God (Isaiah 40:9-31)' ..."

Isaiah 40:10-11

Michael J. Chan, "Isaiah 65—66 and the Genesis of Reorienting Speech"<sup>13</sup>  
Chan argues,

Both tender and violent metaphors provide a theological collage of images whose meanings must be discerned dialectically. Such tension between metaphors of tenderness and violence is not foreign to the Book of Isaiah (see, e.g., 40:10-11 [used here]) and acts as an invitation to inquire concerning the implications of a God whose character is of such depth that both categories can serve as faithful renderings.

In other words, God expects the Faithful to think.

**Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 (8)**

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and new Missal.

Verse Lectionary

Missal

8 Lord, let us see your kindness ... Let us see, O LORD, your mercy ...

*Kindness* connotes something different from *mercy*. *Kindness* is something extra; *mercy* is something needed.

Verse Lectionary

NABRE

9 Omitted!

May they not turn to foolishness!

11 Kindness and truth

Love and truth

*Kindness* and *love* represent different core values.

The Lectionary also uses Verses 8, 9 and 11 at Readings 104B and 115A.

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<sup>12</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 140.

<sup>13</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 3 (July 2010) 456.

## **2 Peter 3:8-14**

2 Peter 3:10

Maurice A. Robinson, "Rule 9, Isolated Variants, and the 'Test-Tube' Nature of the NA<sup>27</sup>/UBS<sup>4</sup> Text: A Byzantine-Priority Perspective," Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.)<sup>14</sup>

*But the day of the Lord will come ...* is one of the rare places where one needs caution accepting Nestle-Aland.<sup>15</sup> Robinson asserts that 2 Peter 3:10 exemplifies a verse that has no historical existence to justify its presence in the Greek, yet, the verse remains, nonetheless.

2 Peter 3:13

Paul Lakeland, Engaging Theology: Catholic Perspectives: Church: Living Communion<sup>16</sup>

*We await* refers to the pilgrim church, making its way through this life toward what native Americans call the happy hunting ground, i.e. *new heavens and a new earth*.

## **Luke 3:4, 6**

## **Mark 1:1-8**

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<sup>14</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009, 29, 51.

<sup>15</sup> Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum: Graece et Latine: Textum Graecum post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Barbara et Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger: Textus Latinus Novae Vulgatae Bibliorum Sacrorum Editioni debetur: Utriusque textus apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII, 614.

<sup>16</sup> Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, A Michael Glazier Book, 2009, 15.

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Mark 1:1

C. Clifton Black, "Mark as Historian of God's Kingdom"<sup>17</sup>

Black argues,

The authentication of Mark's Gospel extends no further than its claim to present "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ" (1:1 [used here]); its only supporting corroboration lies in a suggested correspondence (1:2) of the Gospel's earliest narrative segment (1:4-11) with Jewish Scripture Exod 23:20; Mal 3:1; Isa 40:3 [again used here]. One might say that, with this evangelist, we encounter a pure instance of Collingwood's idea of the historical imagination as "self-dependent, self-determining, and self-justifying," save for the fact that the *author* of Mark fades entirely from the scene, being present throughout the narrative only as an unidentified narrator. The one figure in the Second Gospel who, indisputably, is self-dependent, self-determining, and self-justifying is God, who privately, albeit infrequently, acclaims Jesus as his Son (1:11; 9:7).

Above the solid line, I express concern that Anthony Burke Smith overdoes the self-justifying prerogatives Collingwood sets forth.

Mark 1:1

Leif E. Vaage, "An Other Home: Discipleship in Mark as Domestic Asceticism"<sup>18</sup>

Vaage explains how to read Mark.

Whatever else the Gospel of Mark may be as a narrative, it certainly invites the reader to join with various characters in the text struggling to find and to follow Jesus of Nazareth. In this regard, the Gospel definitely is about "discipleship." What does it mean, inquires the evangelist through his account, to be a follower of Jesus? Who does so properly? How is it accomplished? To what end? Only by answering such questions does it become possible, in Mark, to grasp "the gospel of Jesus Christ son of God" (1:1).

The Gospel of Mark invites the Faithful to think.

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<sup>17</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 78-79.

<sup>18</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 4 (October 2009) 741, 746.



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Mark 1:2-3

Clifford M. Yeary, Pilgrim People: A Scriptural Commentary<sup>19</sup>

Yeary points out that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all translate from the Greek, rather than Hebrew Isaiah.

Mark 1:2-3

Reed Lessing, review of Bo H. Lim, The "Way of the Lord" in the Book of Isaiah<sup>20</sup>

Lim argues that *the way of the Lord* never was real road, leading back to Jerusalem. *The way of the Lord* is spiritual and eschatological. Lessing concludes his review, "I believe that L. succeeds admirably in tracing the development of the way of the Lord through the Book of Isaiah and into the NT.

Mark 1:2

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament<sup>21</sup>

Wallace comments on *as it is written*. "This common introductory formula to OT quotations seems to be used in the sense that 'Although this scripture was written long ago, its authority is still binding on us.'"

Mark 1:4

Ithamar Gruenwald, review of Ephraim Richard E. Demaris, The New Testament in Its Ritual World<sup>22</sup>

Gruenwald concludes his review, "...baptism in the Corinthian case cannot stand for baptism in the NT. D. and his readers have challenging work still ahead." Gruenwald is unimpressed with Demaris. Gruenwald has an interesting observation on baptism.

Although the title of the book mentions the NT, D. does not substantially consider the Gospels. Whereas Mark 1:4 [used here] and Luke 3:2 speak of John the Baptist as preaching "a baptism of repentance," Matt 3:1-3 quotes the words John used. Thus, Matthew tells the story, while Mark and Luke create a notional [sic] theologoumenon. Clearly, this represents a different way of thinking from the one presented

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<sup>19</sup> Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010, 46.

<sup>20</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January 2011) 126.

<sup>21</sup> Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 576.

<sup>22</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 2 (April 2009), 400.

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by Paul. It sheds a different light on baptism in the context of the NT in general.

For my background and more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at [www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes](http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes).