

Repentance is the theme for these readings. One reason to repent is for sins with roots in the unconscious mind. Parents, who are not perfect to begin with, do not raise children who are perfect either. My focus, without benefit of specific age-related scientific research, is on what happens about the age of three, as the infant distinguishes self from others. My suggestion is that identity tends to become mixed with unholy destruction, at the level of the unconscious, in later life.

Isaiah is not only about Messianic prophecy, but also about the ransom for sin the Messiah brings (verse 10). Psalm 146 is a royal psalm, proclaiming the Messiah as King of kings. Psalm 146 is one of the psalms surrounded with alleluias at the thought of the coming kingdom of God.¹ James is no-nonsense,² intolerant of excuses because of unconscious drives, demanding holiness, holiness rendered virtually impossible at the level of unholy destruction at the unconscious level. In other places, Saint Paul points out that grace makes possible what is otherwise impossible.

Daniel 4:14 prophecies that the Lord will exalt the humble, in this case, John the Baptist, the great prophet of repentance. In Matthew 11:11, Jesus proclaims John the Baptist as the greatest person ever born; yet not so great as Jesus, the Messiah; yet not so great as *the least in the kingdom of God*, where the destructive forces of the unconscious are rendered creatively conscious.³

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

The exultation of the desert and the parched land, verse 1 and all of Chapter 35,⁴ refers to the salvation of the Exodus out of Egypt. The splendor of Carmel in verse 2 refers to the Promised Land, the joy of salvation from slavery. The weak knees of verse 3 call to mind those suffering from arthritis at Sunday Mass, as well as the need to buckle up those wanting in courage. Isaiah 35:1-10 is included in Readings from Sacred Scripture in Pastoral Care of the Sick.⁵ Verse 10 to the LORD

¹ Lloyd M. Barré, "Halelu yah: A Broken Inclusion," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 195-200.

² Donald J. Verseput, "Genre and Story: The Community Setting of the Epistle of James," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 103.

³ Benedict T. Viviano, O.P., "The Least in the Kingdom: Matthew 11:11, Its Parallel in Luke 7:28 (Q), and Daniel 4:14," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 49.

⁴ Richard J. Clifford, S.J., "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and Its Cosmogonic Language," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 1993) 3-4.

ransoming the Faithful so they can enter Zion singing, has a special meaning once Zion is understood as the souls of the Faithful. The meaning of verse 10 is the cleaning of the unconscious, thereby permitting full rejoicing on the part of those repenting material sins, rooted in the unconscious mind.

Isaiah 35:6, the leaping lame, symbolizes atonement, healing.⁶ Such healing suits the unconscious mind. Healing the unconscious mind enables the person to enter the soul, Zion, *singing, crowned with joy and gladness* (verse 10).

Psalm 146

The Faithful can readily apply the Responsorial antiphon, adapted from Isaiah 4, *Lord, come and save us*, to unconscious destructiveness. The Lord will come to save the Faithful from their unconscious destructive forces, forces sometimes only seen in what their children learn from them. My heart aches for parents and grandparents at Daily Mass whose children have drifted from Catholicism. Though some of the drifting may have nothing to do with the way their children were raised, such a scenario seems less likely than those unconscious destructive forces within the parents realigned in a destructive way in their children. My sense is not to do away with the individual responsibility each one has. My sense is to accept the reality of destructive unconscious drives for which repentance is appropriate. The plea of the antiphon, then, is for the Lord to free the Faithful from unconscious destructive drives.

In verse 10, Psalm 146 mentions Zion, an analogy for the souls of the Faithful. The verse proclaims that the LORD will reign forever, from generation to generation, in the souls of the Faithful.

This Psalm is used in the Funeral Rites on page 307, one of the Second Psalms for Morning Prayer. This Psalm is also used in the Lectionary as follows:

⁵ Old Testament Readings, G, Part III: Readings, Responses, and Verses from Sacred Scripture. The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: Approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 257-259.

⁶ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts: The Cultic Background behind Luke's Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5-25; 18:9-14; 24:50-53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 222.

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Reading	Page	Antiphon	Verses	Sunday
7A	34	cf. Isa 35:4	6-7, 8-9, 9-10	Advent 3 = Today
70A	533	Matt 5:3	6-7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 4
128B	817	1b	7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 23
138C	865	1b	7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 26
155B	947	1b	7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 32

The translation that the LORD God keeps *faith* forever in verse 6c is rendered with *veritatem* or *truth* by Saint Jerome. Faith is less secular than truth; yet truth is the term Jerome uses. Referring to verse 6c simply as verse 6, as the Lectionary does, calls to mind the need to hold the Church itself accountable according to standards of both truth and faith.

Psalm 146:3, which the Lectionary does not use, challenges the world directly, admonishing not to trust in humans. God creates and deserves the credit, a credit the world tries to take to itself.⁷ That is how God can love the world, though not when the world takes Divine creation unto itself. In the matter of the unconscious mind, creativity is Divine, destructiveness is Satanic and, thereby worldly. The world does not create itself, but is created. Recognizing such is the essence of holy humility.

Saint Augustine (354-430), referring to Matthew 11:2-10, writes of *the disordered appetite of the user*.⁸ Disordered appetites can and do sometimes become unconscious. Within the context of John the Baptist, the right order of appetites includes repentance.

Saint John Chrysostom (354-407) writes in the same vein that “we are hindered by our too great love of self from seeing what is just.”⁹ What I label *unconscious*, Chrysostom labels *shadows*. Chrysostom goes on to write “our sins deserve, not one, but many deaths.” Chrysostom means atonement and repentance is appropriate.

⁷ Stanley B. Marrow, “*Κοσμος* in John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 98, footnote 36.

⁸ Augustine, *De Doct. Christiana*, 3; 12 Exposition from the Catena Aurea in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume One: From the First Sunday of Advent to Quinquagesima, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 34.

⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *On the Gospel*, PG 57: hom. 36, 37. col. 413 in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume One: From the First Sunday of Advent to Quinquagesima, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 38.

James 5:7-10

In verse 7, James directs the Faithful to *be patient*. Lack of patience can be a sign of destructive unconscious forces. Patience and endurance can overwhelm those forces, especially when hammered with the Cross of Christ on the anvil of the new-born Christ Child.

That the endurance and patience James mentions in verse 7 included two thousand years, would come as a surprise at the time James wrote. The general thinking at the time expected Christ's Parousia, or Second Coming, within their own lifetimes.¹⁰ This expectation explains why eye-witnesses took so long to make a written record.

Immediate eye-witnesses did not expect later generations to need their accounts. In verse 7, James continues admonishing the Faithful to wait for the precious fruit, ultimately the precious fruit of repentance. Repentance can be understood as doing something constructive to offset something else destructive. Repentance can be understood as self-denial, not in any masochistic sense, but in the sense of containing evil forces of destruction in the unconscious.

Poor Clare nuns exemplify such penance, mostly in holy obedience to the Abbess. Obedience as repentant penance is a worthy consideration. The Faithful must cope with such obedience relative to the Church hierarchy. The parallel is direct. The Abbess is no more going to require a nun to sin than is a bishop or pastor, the Faithful. There are certain exceptions as the current sexual scandals illustrate. Secular life also requires obedience, under the mantra of *teamwork*.

Isaiah 61:1

Bringing glad tidings to the poor, rather than the rich, can be a wonderful act of repentance and penance. Bishop Walter F. Sullivan, the former ordinary for the Diocese of Richmond, titled his newspaper column, Tidings.

¹⁰ Randall E. Otto, "The Prophets and Their Perspective," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 2001), 234.

Matthew 11:2-11

The Matthew, 1:1—4:16, establishes that Jesus is the Messiah. Matthew 4:17—16:20, here, concerns the public ministry of Jesus to Israel.¹¹

Saint John Chrysostom contends that John knew who Jesus was, but (verse 2) that John wanted his disciples to hear it for themselves, ridding themselves of any unconscious resistance they may have had. Something dear to the heart of a retired professor, Chrysostom observes “that from a comparison of opinions, the truth may be evident.”¹² Chrysostom goes on to cite Col. 2:14, Luke 3:16 to support his comparison contention

My reason for not condensing the following two pages is to offer a type of annotated bibliography against the web site index and the other references. Feedback would help me figure out how to proceed in the future. Thank you.

In verse 4, Jesus tells the disciples of John to report what they have *heard and seen*. The bishops of the United States wrote a letter to the Faithful on what they had *seen and heard* about racism. This verse does tie in with unconscious social sins against holy charity. Seeing is primary. Women saw the risen Christ and as such were probably primary witnesses for the Evangelists.¹³

Verses 4-6 portray Jesus as free from evil and free to worship God; free to disregard tradition and free to identify with the poor. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan of the Graduate Theological Union writes that “Black biblical religious experience embraces this Jesus and the religiosity of people who have ancestry, physical traits, and /or self-understanding and identity within the Black race.”¹⁴

¹¹ Jack Dean Kingsbury, “*Observations on the ‘Miracle Chapters’ of Mathew 8-9,*” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 565; Raymond E. Brown, S.S., The Anchor Bible Reference Library: An Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Doubleday, 1997) 183.

¹² St. John Chrysostom, *On the Gospel*, PG 57: hom. 36, 37. col. 413 in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume One: From the First Sunday of Advent to Quinquagesima, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 38.

¹³ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 297.

¹⁴ Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, “Let My People Go! Threads of Exodus in African American Narratives,” in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric

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In verse 5, the lame walking reflects on Isaiah 6a,¹⁵ the lame leaping like a stag. Lameness can be understood not only as a physical handicap, but also as psychological handicap. The psychologically lame, Israel, relieved, jumping with joy, is the meaning here.

Verse 6, not taking offense at Jesus, is a reference back to Isaiah 42:1,¹⁶ about the servant coming to judge the Gentiles. Verse 6 implies that some did take offense at Jesus, as some still do. Accepting Jesus in the depths of the unconscious mind is the point. Sometimes the Faithful, such as Poor Clare nuns, accept their own penance as suffering for others. A prior concern for me is accepting suffering emanating from the unconscious as repentance for one's own sins as well as for the sins of others.

Verse 6, about not taking offense at Jesus, is about how Israel responded to the miracles. Israel repudiated Jesus.¹⁷ Later, Jesus would ask forgiveness, *for they know not what they do*, something the Faithful can take as a reference to the unconscious mind at work. Political reality, especially for a three year old, can submerge truth into the unconscious, sometimes never to reemerge again in this life. In such a way, politics can substitute for truth at the unconscious level, a reality toward which repentance is due.

Verse 7, *a reed shaken by the wind* may allude to Herod Antipas, whose symbol, a reed, appeared on his coins. This is the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus makes the point that he is not siding with luxury.¹⁸

Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 126.

¹⁵ Joseph A. Comber, C.F.X., "The Composition and Literary Characteristics of Matt 11:20-24," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 39, No. 4 (October 1977) 502.

¹⁶ Jeffrey A. Gibbs, "Israel Standing with Israel: The Baptism of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 3:13-17)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 3 (July 2002) 522-523.

¹⁷ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: a Literary-Critical Study," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 1987) 69.

¹⁸ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 149, 314.

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Jesus quotes Sacred Scripture in verse 10; *this is the one about whom it is written*. Luke and Mark also offer the Scriptural reference, making this verse one of the most authentic references to Jesus.¹⁹ Jesus, therefore, holds up the repentant preaching of John the Baptist for the Faithful. Repentance is an appropriate reaction to destructive unconscious drives.

Repentance as a theme in Isaiah becomes apparent with the reference by Matthew to the lame walking as a sign to the disciples of John the Baptist, the prophet of repentance. Psalm 146 calls Israel back to itself, from worldly concerns, to rejoice in worshiping God. James accepts no excuses for Christians not loving one another as a form of atonement and repentance before the Lord.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

¹⁹ P. M. Casey, "Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 1997) 317-318.