

Personal Notes
031214 Third Sunday of Advent 9C
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The Gospel of Luke is about concern for the poor. Luke has a sense of the hidden life of Mary. The repentant tend to join a hidden rather than braggadocio life, tend to be the victims rather than the perpetrators. These readings mean that the Faithful can **rejoice** that their perpetrators can find repentance and reconciliation with their God. Abuse makes a reasonable focus for these readings.

The readings for this Sunday suit an examination of various vocations. One vocation, that of the military, is particularly striking. While some of the Faithful may have little or no contact with soldiers, everyone has contact with the police, a type of local soldier. I do have a professional interest in police work in Black communities.

The term *police brutality* connotes a bias against the police, whereas *excessive use of force* is the language the police themselves would use. What if the Faithful are the police? Can the Faithful recognize themselves using excessive force, for example in child or spousal abuse? Alternatively, in the abuse of those whom they are trusted to serve as healers or teachers or builders or sales people?

This is the only place in scripture that gives directions for how the police and military are to act. The context is repentance, repentance required to stay among the People of God and to enter the Kingdom. Since the Faithful frequently confess to having lost their tempers, a meditation on excessive use of force seems appropriate.

In pre-Vatican II, this was known as *gaudete Sunday*, *gaudete* meaning *rejoice*. Advent is past the mid-point. To translate this for the Faithful via the police, a rejoicing police officer has no time to complain or feeling sorry for himself. A rejoicing police officer has no time or need for extortion, false accusation, or dissatisfaction with wages.

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

Zephaniah means *whom God has hidden or protected, mystery of secret of God.*¹

verse 17 The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
 a mighty savior;
 he will **rejoice** over you with gladness,
 and renew you in his love
 he will *sing* joyfully because of you,
 as one sings at festivals.

The Vulgate (circa 410): 17 Dominus Deus tuus in medio tui,

¹ General Editor, The Reverend Cain Hope Felder, Ph.D., The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing Company, 1993) 18.

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18 fortis ipse salvabit;
gaudebit super te in laetitia,
commotus in dilectione sua;
exultabit super te in laude
sicut in die conventus.”
“Auferam a te calamitatem,
ut non ultra habeas super ea opprobrium.

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610): (17) The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save: he will **rejoice** over thee with gladness, he will be silent in his love, he will *be* joyful over thee in praise. (18) The triflers that were departed from the law, I will gather together, because they were of thee: that thou mayest no more suffer reproach for them.

King James (1611): (17) The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will **rejoice** over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will *joy* over thee with singing. (18) I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

Jerusalem (1966): (17) Yahweh your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior.
He will exult with joy over you,
he will renew you by his love,
he will *dance* with shouts of joy for you,
(18) as on a day of festival.

I have taken away your misfortune,
No longer need you bear the disgrace of it.

New American (1970): (17) The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
A mighty savior;
He will **rejoice** over you with gladness,
And renew you in his love
He will *sing* joyfully because of you,
(18) as one sings at festivals.

I will remove disaster from among you,
So that none may recount your disgrace

New Jerusalem (1985): (17) Yahweh your God is there with you,
The warrior-Saviour.

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He will **rejoice** over you with happy song,
he will renew you by his love,
he will *dance* with shouts of joy for you,
(18) as on a day of festival.

I have taken away your misfortune,
No longer need you bear the disgrace of it.

Dance catches the spirit of the verse.

Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 (6)

The Lectionary uses this passage in the following places:

Readings	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>	Verses used	
9 C	45	2-3, 4, 5-6 (6)	The readings for today.
21 B	130	2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 (3)	The Baptism of the Lord
41 ABC	332	2-3, 4, 5-6 (3)	Easter Sunday—Easter Vigil

Only the reading for The Baptism of the Lord recognizes that verse 4a is missing.

Verse 6 sets the tone for these readings.

verse (6) Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

Philippians 4:4-7

verse 4 **Rejoice** in the Lord always.
I shall say it again: **rejoice!**

verse 5a Your *kindness* should be known to all.

The Vulgate (circa 410): *Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus.*

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610): Let your *moderation* be known to all men.

King James (1611): Let your *moderation* be known unto all men.

Jerusalem (1966): Let your *tolerance* be evident to everyone:

New American (1970): Your *kindness* should be known to all.

New Jerusalem (1985): Let your *good sense* be obvious to everybody.

Good sense makes the most sense.

A scholar cites this verse as part of a peroration, or staccato conclusion, looking for a decision based on the previous argument.² **Rejoice.**

Isaiah 61:1 (cited in Luke 4:18)

verse 3:4 *Prepare* the way of the Lord, make straight his paths

Luke 3:10-18

Luke, in this Advent Season, writes of good works emanating from repentance rightly placed. Being of the Chosen People or of the Elect is not enough either to remain among the Chosen People or to enter the Age to Come. The sense of repentance bears scrutiny.³

These directions of John the Baptizer may be taken as from Jesus too because a scholar regards it as likely that, for a time, Jesus was a disciple of John. The scholar also regards what happened as historically accurate, rather than a Christian interpolation into the original event. John seems to come from the tradition of the Pharisees and Essenes, people displeased with how the Jewish priesthood maintained the Temple. Later, when Jesus cleanses the Temple of the moneychangers, the clergy plot to kill him.⁴ The possibility of forgiveness through repentance is reason to **rejoice.**

verse 10 The crowds asked John the Baptist,
"What should we do?"
He said to them in reply,
"whoever has two *cloaks*
should share with the person who has none.

² Craig R. Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 122.

³ Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 8.

⁴ Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 1989), 246-247 and 261-262; Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 8-9.

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The grammarian points out that those better off did have *two cloaks* that they used as undergarments. *Tunics* may be a better translation.

The Vulgate (circa 410): tunicas

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610): tunics

King James (1611): coats

Jerusalem (1966): tunics

New American (1970): cloaks

New Jerusalem (1985): tunics

verse 12a Even *tax collectors* came

The Vulgate (circa 410): Venerunt autem et *publicani*

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610): And *publicans* also came to be baptized

King James (1611): Then came also *publicans* to be baptized

Jerusalem (1966): There were *tax collectors* too who came for baptism

New American (1970): Even *tax collectors* came to be baptized

New Jerusalem (1985): There were *tax collectors*, too, who came for baptism

The different translations indicate that the translators did not think their readers would grasp that publicans were tax collectors.

verse 14 Soldiers also asked him,
“And what is it that we should do?”

verse 13 He told them,
“Do not practice extortion,
do not falsely accuse anyone,
and be satisfied with your wages.”

Those are three very specific directions for fulfilling one’s vocation in the military, a vocation many on this Virginia Peninsula engage.

Knowing how to repent and having specific directions would be the reason to **rejoice** in these readings. Knowing that God will accept repentance is reason to **rejoice**.

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Zephaniah brings on the sense that God is glad to know the Faithful, one by one, a reason to **rejoice**. *Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel*, Isaiah 12: (6), the responsorial, means that, in the new dispensation, God takes up his abode in the New Jerusalem, the individual souls of each of the Faithful, reason aplenty to **rejoice**. Not only is God present subjectively, but also objectively in the souls of others. That objective presence, mainly in the Church, helps subjects ground their connection with God realistically. Luke, like an old friend, is there to tell the Faithful how to go about their hidden lives, **rejoicing** in the Lord who takes delight in the hidden recesses of souls.

The Faithful cannot avoid sin and can hardly avoid sins of excessive use of force, even passive-aggressiveness. Sorrow for sin, even at the end of life, when nothing else but sorrow can serve as a remedy is an acceptable repentance. That is reason to **rejoice**.

For more on sources, besides the footnotes, see the Appendix file.