

## Personal Notes

Fourth Sunday of Advent, 011B, December 18, 2011

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The Weather Channel belies the goodness of God. Earthquakes, floods, draught all are functions of the Creator. The Faithful can pray for miracles to compensate for these evil events, but, ultimately, it takes Faith to make it through the various disasters of life.

The biggest disaster for the contemporary Church is opposition to thinking. This opposition is not only present in such realities as the censure by the American Association of University Professors of the administration of The Catholic University of America, but is also present at the diocesan and parish levels. Professional Catholic clergy are afraid to think; that accounts for why they do not read.

Listen for a reference to a contemporary theologian in any Catholic sermon. Priests are afraid to think, because bishops do not read. Test that assertion about bishops and their priests and see if it holds up.

The attack by the United States hierarchy on the theologian, Elizabeth A. Johnson, illustrates the point. After such attacks on thinking, the bishops hire scholars to explain why the pews are emptying on Sunday. I suggest the reason is the pious pabulum to which the Faithful are relegated week-after-week.

Here I am not referring to explaining the Gospels in simple language that everyone can understand. No, I am referring to the study and contemplation from which that language draws. As Faithful, we are involved in great mysteries that merit recognition and presentation.

The Responsorial Antiphon for this last Sunday before Christmas acknowledges the great mysteries of life with, *Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord*. 2 Samuel is about building a tabernacle for the Almighty, an analogous reference to the souls of the Faithful. Promises, promises, promises . . . the 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm accepts these promises.

Romans writes of *the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages*. This refers to two theological elements of Christian life. The New Testament theologians begin by explaining the meaning of the First Testament, in the manner of a mystery detective explaining the clues that explained the mystery. Later theologians continue that unraveling to the present. The Gospel is about the Magnificat; *my soul does magnify the LORD*, meaning that the mysteries of the First Testament and their resolution in the New Testament find their meaning in the souls of the Faithful, particularly in individual souls, such as mine.

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## Readings

First Testament:	2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Psalm:	Psalm 89, 2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 (2a)
Epistle:	Romans 16:25-27
Alleluia:	Luke 1`38
Gospel:	Luke 1:26-38

## 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.

### 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE

Verse	<u>Lectionary</u>	NABRE
8	from the <i>care</i> of the flock	from <i>following</i> the flock
10	<i>fix</i> a place	<i>assign</i> a place
10	as they did of <i>old</i>	as they did <i>at the beginning</i> .
12	your <i>heir</i>	your <i>offspring</i>
12	<i>make</i> his kingdom <i>firm</i>	<i>establish</i> his kingdom
16	<i>be firmly established</i> forever	<i>shall stand firm</i> forever

All of the Lectionary translations connote greater Christo centricity than those in the NABRE.

#### 2 Sam 7:1-17

Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C., "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees"<sup>1</sup>

Groody argues that the covenant with David is part of the Abrahamic covenant, from a greater to a lesser party and unbreakable. The Mosaic covenant, however, is about reciprocal fidelities.

#### 2 Sam 7:4

John T. Willis, review of Wilda C. Gafney, Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel<sup>2</sup>

Willis praises Gafney for examining women prophets, at the same time Willis asserts that scholars need to do more work on all of the prophets. Willis refers to 2 Samuel 7:4 about prophecy coming in a dream to parallel dream prophecies with women prophets. Just as the research of Gafney helps understand women prophets,

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<sup>1</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 3 (September 2009) 658.

<sup>2</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 3 (July 2009) 607.

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so will more research will enable better understanding of such prophecies as those coming in dreams and yet other experiences.

2 Sam 7:5

Michael J. Chan, "Isaiah 65—66 and the Genesis of Reorienting Speech"<sup>3</sup>

Chan speculates whether the ancestors of David felt they had to wait, as he did, before building their temple.

2 Sam 7:14

Michael Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship"<sup>4</sup>

Peppard argues,

That "[Lukan] genealogy" is not as simple as it appears, however: Jesus is a non-biological son of Joseph, whose ancestry passed through the Davidic royal line—kings who themselves were begotten-adopted sons of God (2 Sam 7:14 [used here]; Pss 2:6; 89:19-37)—and primordially originated with Adam the Created-made son of God (Luke 3:38; Gen 1:26-27). Nevertheless, the final composite text of Luke-Acts remains before us: Jesus is God's son at conception, baptism, and resurrection. What we might find to be mutually exclusive—because of our Nicene emphasis on the when of divine sonship—Luke seems to have found mutually reinforcing.

**Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 (2a)**

This is also Psalm 89 in the NABRE.

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE

Verse	<u>Lectionary</u>	NABRE
2	mercy	promises
3	kindness	mercy
3	in heaven you have confirmed	stand as long as the heavens
5	posterity	dynasty
5	for all generations	through all ages
27	shall say	shall cry
27	the Rock, my savior	the Rock of my salvation
29	kindness	mercy
29	shall stand firm forever	stands firm [no <i>forever</i> ]

<sup>3</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 3 (July 2010) 451.

<sup>4</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January 2011) 93.

## **Romans 16:25-27**

Romans 16

Bettye Collier-Thomas, Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979<sup>5</sup>

Sometime on radio station WBNX from New York City, Rosa A. Horn (1880-1976) preached on “Was a Woman Called to Preach? Yes!” She incorporates the last chapter of Romans, Chapter 16, to make her point that Paul commends Phoebe, “who is (also) a minister of the church at Cenchreae,” to the Romans. Paul mentions Phoebe in verse 1, which the Lectionary assiduously avoids for both weekdays and Sundays.

Rom 16:25-27

Casimir Bernas, O.C.S.O., review of Romano Penna, Volume 2, Rm 6—11; Volume 3, Rm 12—1<sup>6</sup>

Bernas argues that Paul is not always logical. Faced with the mystery of the plan of God, “he takes refuge . . . to the doxology at the end of the letter (16:25-27).” Bernas argues that Paul is light on morals but heavy on doctrine.

Romans 16:25-27

Richard N. Longenecker, “*Quo vadis?* From Whence to Where in New Testament Text Criticism and Translation,” in Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.)<sup>7</sup>

Longenecker points to the need for scholarship.

Some of the more obvious examples of diverse textual traditions during these first two Christian centuries have to do with . . . (2) the inclusion or omission of chs. 15—16 in Paul’s letter to the Romans; (3) the inclusion and placement of the doxology of Rom 16:25-27, whether after 14:23, after 15:33, after 15:23/24, after both 14:23 and 15:33, after both 14:23 and 15:23/24, or omitted entirely . . .

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<sup>5</sup> San Francisco, CA 94103-1741: A Wiley Imprint: 1998, 180.

<sup>6</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 836.

<sup>7</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009, 329.

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Rom 16:25-26

Gustavo Gutiérrez (tr. Robert Lassalle-Klein with James Nickoloff and Susan Sullivan), "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ"<sup>8</sup>

Gutiérrez argues that what Paul calls *the mystery kept secret for long ages*, resides in the preferential option for the poor. Gutiérrez argues, "Poverty thereby becomes a theological question, and the option for the poor makes us aware of it and provides a way to think about the issue."

Rom 16:25

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament<sup>9</sup>

*Kept secret for long ages* is the phrase in question. Wallace explains why the accusative rather than dative is used; the difference is length of time for the accusative, used here, versus point of time. The Greek and the Latin both favor *eternal* rather than the *long ages* of the *long ages* of the Lectionary.

Romans 16:25

Lectionary (1998)

secret for long ages

The Vulgate (circa 410)

temporibus aeternis taciti

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610)

secret from eternity

King James (1611)

secret since the world began

Catholic RSV (1969)

secret for long ages

New American (NAB) (1970)

secret for long ages

New Jerusalem (1985)

for endless ages was kept secret

NABRE (2011)

secret for long ages

*Secret from eternity* is what I was looking for in Douay-Rheims.

Rom 16:26

Thomas D. Stegman, S.J., "Paul's Use of *Dikaio*- Terminology: Moving Beyond N. T. Wright's Forensic Interpretation"<sup>10</sup>

Wright depicted righteousness as something judges had and were able to bestow on the accused before them. Stegman adds that the judgment of God not only bestows righteousness but also, through grace, Righteousness, that is Divine Life.

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<sup>8</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 319.

<sup>9</sup> Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 156.

<sup>10</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 2011) 511.

## **Philippians 2:15d, 16a**

### **Luke 1:26-38**

Luke 1:30b-33

Richard P. Thompson, review of Nils Neumann, Lukas und Menippos: Hoheit und Niedrigkeit in Lk 1, 1—2,40 und in der menippeischen Literatur<sup>11</sup>

Thompson reports that Neumann “fairly assesses the evidence while not forcing conclusions.” The evidence is that “the opening chapters of the Gospel of Luke have long been noted for the inclusion of grand, poetic materials (Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria, Nunc Dimittis)” in a pattern of verse and narrative. The purpose of the pattern causes “the reader to rethink and move toward a new standard of living. The tension in the Gospel arises from proclaiming Jesus both Christ for the Jews and savior for the Romans, all the while, “none of these statements appears to come true in these [first two] chapters or in the entire narrative,” except through Divine promise.

Luke 1:26-38

Virgilio Elizondo, “Jesus the Galilean Jew in Mestizo Theology”<sup>12</sup>

Elizondo observes that “Luke places the Annunciation (1:26-38) and the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee (4:14-21).” From this and other evidence, Elizondo argues that Jesus being a Galilean Jew enables Mestizos to identify with him.

Luke 1:28-37

Daniel A. Smith, “Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body): The Apologetic Interests of Luke 24:36-43”<sup>13</sup>

The problem that concerns Smith is the corporality of Jesus. Here Smith refers to “two sayings” that I am not able to identify. Smith regards Luke 28-30 as in the original Luke and not from the hand of some other redactor.

Luke 1:26-38

Thomas M. Finn, “Sex and Marriage in the Sentences of Peter Lombard”<sup>14</sup>

The question for Peter Lombard concerned the marriage of Mary and Joseph; without sexual intercourse, could it have been a real marriage? As expected, Peter

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<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 834.

<sup>12</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 270.

<sup>13</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October 2010) 765.

<sup>14</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 72, No. 1 (March 2011) 62, 68-69.

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Lombard taught that Mary and Joseph had a real marriage. I found the end of the article the most interesting.

. . . The subsequent history and theology of sex and marriage, as has been frequently noted, reflected the influence of the *Sentences* on church thinking and practice for centuries, in fact, until Vatican II, when the picture begins to change. As Lisa Sowle Cahill observes in her commentary on marriage in the *Catechism*, “Under the influence of the ‘personalist’ philosophies of the 1930s, the Roman Catholic Church comes to recognize the foundational nature of the interpersonal relationship in marriage, the intimate relationship of spouses as a community of life and love begins to make inroads into the procreative, institutional, and contractual understanding of marriage favored by canon law up to 1917. A new language of marital union begins to emerge and is incorporated into the 1983 code without completely transforming it.” Cahill cites Gratian and Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) as the sources of primary influence on Catholic practice even into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Clearly, the *Sentences* should be added as a major source of influence on Catholic thought and practice.

From the above, it looks as if Finn wants to reconsider the indissolubility of the marriage bond.

Finn is Chancellor Professor of Religion (Emeritus) at the nearby The College of William and Mary. I have never met him nor known him to be invited to any event in the Richmond Diocese, of which I have been a member for over forty years. I suspect the Diocese is unwilling to recognize a thinker independent of the Diocese.

Luke 1:26-27

Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Galilee: A Critical Matrix for Marian Studies”<sup>15</sup>

In a section called “Theology with a [sic] Historical imagination, the famed Elizabeth Johnson writes,

The virgin’s name was Mary (Lk 1:26-27); “On third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there” (Jn 2:1). Entering through the door of Galilee allows theology of Mary to construe her as an actual historical woman in the concrete. In turn, this insight guides interpretation of her significance within the revelatory narrative of God’s self-gift in history.

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<sup>15</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 329.

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In other words, Jesus finds his identity in an out-of-the-way place, in a topsy-turvy world.

Luke 1:28

John D. Dadosky, "Woman without Envy: Toward Reconceiving the Immaculate Conception"<sup>16</sup>

Dadosky argues that the Greek, upon which the early church built the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, does not hold up. "Hail, full of grace!" is better translated as favored of God. The Lectionary uses *full of grace*. The NABRE has *hail favored one*.

Luke 1:35

Michael Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship"<sup>17</sup>

Peppard speculates,

One might find an *adoptive divine sonship* to be suggested by the resurrection (Acts 13:33) and the baptism (Luke 3:22), a proximate *divine begetting* to be secured in the infancy narrative (Luke 1:35 [used here], while a distant *divine genealogy* is also delineated after that (Luke 3:23-38).

The article elaborates on each: *adoptive*, *begetting*, and *genealogy*.

Luke 1:38

Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Woman of Many Names: Mary in Orthodox and Catholic Theology"<sup>18</sup>

Daley makes the point that honoring Mary historically moved from the East to the West and that Orthodox and Catholics have much in common. Daley makes no mention of honoring Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces, though he does mention development of the Litany of Loreto. Though some want to track the Litany of Loreto back to the Fifth Century, historical criticism only allows the early Sixteenth Century.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 72, No. 1 (March 2011) 19, 22, 39.

<sup>17</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (March 2011) 93.

<sup>18</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 71, No. 4 (December 2010) 849.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09287a.htm> (accessed September 30, 2011) from the Catholic Encyclopedia.

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Luke 1:38 is *Be it done unto me according to your word*. The point is that Mary “asks hard questions,” but gives an equally hard answer of acceptance.

Luke 1:38

Richard Rohr, Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life<sup>20</sup>

Rohr writes, “Our life will be ‘done unto us,’ just as happened to Mary (Luke 1:38). Although on another level, we are doing it too. Both are equally true.” Luke 1:38 is a touchstone verse for femininity. Rohr is treating the Magnificat in a solidly feminist manner. Not pointing out the feminist side of his approach, perhaps, is what Rohr means when he writes in his Introduction, “(Women will want to find their own counterparts here.)”

Luke 1:35

Margaret R. Pfeil, “Oscar Romero’s Theology of Transfiguration”<sup>21</sup>

Pfeil notes that *overshadow in the power of the Most High will overshadow you* also appears in the synoptic Gospels at the Transfiguration and in the healing power of the shadow of Peter. Her point is that doing the will of God takes what she calls “Contemplation as Loving Attentiveness: ‘Listen to him!’”

I have developed a pattern for revising these Personal Notes. First, I write a new set each week, on Sunday. Second, on Wednesday, I revise the material, print it for mailing, upload it to my web site (<http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes/Personal%20Notes.htm>), and distribute it by email. Third, the Sunday before the Sunday for which the material is written, about six weeks later, I send the material to [www.jamesriverjournal.com](http://www.jamesriverjournal.com) for publication there. Fourth, on the Sunday for which the material is written, I use the printed version personally in my own preparation for Mass, and usually make some corrections, which I then transfer to my web site. My intention is to repeat this announcement for the next two Sundays, before relegating it to the Appendix. Since it has been a year since I last revised the Appendix, I intend to redistribute the Appendix after the forthcoming revision.

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).

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<sup>20</sup> San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Imprint, 2011, xxxv, 92.

<sup>21</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 72, No. 1 (March 2011) 99.