

Personal Notes
071230 Sunday within the Octave of Christmas: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary,
and Joseph 17A
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The picture in the imagination featured for this Sunday is the Blessed Virgin Mary sewing on the temple veil as a child. This is the expensive veil torn in two at the time of the crucifixion (Matt 27:51; Mk 15:38, Lk 23:45).¹ Scholars have unsuccessfully tried to trace the history of that veil.

W. E. B. Du Bois writes of the veil separating White and Black in the United States. Similarly, the ancient Jewish temple veil separated the Faithful from the High Priest who entered the sanctuary, where the Jews kept their Ark of the Covenant, to offer sacrifice. By the time of Mary, the Ark was no longer there. In our imagination for this Sunday, Mary not only helped sew that temple veil, but she also shows the Faithful how to unravel separations one from another and from God.

If Mary knows how to sew up the veil, Mary also knows how to loosen the threads of the veil to permit the Faithful entrance into the hidden life of Jesus. The hidden life of Jesus includes standing in for Israel, in a way similar to how parents stand in for their children in order to protect them. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus takes the place of the First Testament Israel. Jesus is the mediator between the Faithful and the Father.

As the Son of God, standing in for the prophetic Sons of God, namely Israel, Jesus mediates the authority of God the Father. Sirach is about the importance of how the sons behave toward their fathers for the authority of fathers. Jesus, through his life in the Holy Family, in establishing the authority of Saint Joseph, establishes the authority of God the Father, as well. Similarly, the Faithful who establish the authority of their earthly fathers out of regard for the commandments of God, also establish the authority of their heavenly Father, as well. As the Responsorial Antiphon puts it, "Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways."

Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some of the fun stuff scholars are digging up.

¹ Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006) 132.

First Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Sirach

Richard A. Horsley, "Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth"²

Horsley argues that development of eloquent speech is part of First Testament wisdom, extending into the New Testament. In other words, education, reading, and speaking helps with the spiritual life. By implication, Mary read, studied, and participated in temple life. Also by implication, sermons that do not exhibit education and reading are unworthy of the altar.

Sir 1:1—42:14

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)"³

Hamm argues that Sirach 1:1—42:14 is a synthesis of Jewish wisdom and piety, before explaining Jewish salvation history, upon which Mary taught Jesus to meditate.

Sirach 3:11-16

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J., "'I Am the Door' (John 10:7, 9): Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel"⁴

Neyrey develops the relationship between how children honor their fathers and the authority of their fathers. Here Neyrey uses Sirach 3:11-16; below he uses Colossians 3:21.

Sir 3:12-16a

Robert H. Grundy, "Mark 10:29: Order in the List"⁵

Grundy argues that in the divine order the implication of the Sabbath commandment requires the Faithful "provide care for a man in his old age, when he most needs economic assistance (Sir 3:13-16a) ..." That would be Jesus, caring for Joseph, before Jesus began his public life.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 (cf. 1)

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 39, No. 2 (April 1977) 225.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 220.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 275.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997) 470.

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

Colossians 3:12-13

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults⁶

The Bishops inadvertently present Colossians 3:12-13 one way in their Catechism and another way in their Lectionary. Their Lectionary is closer to the original Greek.

Lectionary ... heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility ...

Catechism ... heartfelt compassion, ... humility ...

The Bishops omit *kindness*.

Lectionary ... bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance ...

Catechism ... bearing with one another. ... If one has a grievance ...

The Bishops omit *and forgiving one another*.

Col 3:19

The Greek for "Husbands ... avoid any bitterness toward [your wives]" connotes *sharpness*.

Col 3: 21

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J., "'I Am the Door' (John 10:7, 9): Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel"⁷

Neyrey develops the relationship between how children honor their fathers and the authority of their fathers. How children honor their fathers determines the authority of their fathers.

Alleluia: Colossians 3:15a, 16a

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Matt 2:15

Mark J. Goodwin, "Hosea and 'the Son of the Living God' in Matthew 16:16b"⁸

Goodwin argues that Hosea is the prophet to whom Matthew refers.

⁶ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006 196.

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 275.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 2005) 274, 277, 278.

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Matt 2:19

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy⁹

Develops the possibility that, as a young girl, the Blessed Virgin Mary helped to sew the temple veil.

Matt 2:23

Mark F. Whitters, "Jesus in the Footsteps of Jeremiah"¹⁰

Matthew expects his readers to know what the prophets had said. This understanding is fundamental to the thesis Whitters develops that Matthew presents Jesus in the footsteps of Jeremiah.

For more on sources see the Appendix file on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes

⁹ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003 210-212, 319, fn 15.

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (July 2006) 238.