

## Readings

First Testament: Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3  
Psalm: Psalm 105:1-6, 8-9 (7a, 8a) (page 97 in the Lectionary)  
Epistle: Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 (page 98 in the Lectionary)  
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

## Commentary

When these Personal Notes refer to the Lectionary, they do not assume the reader has access to the Lectionary, except as it is read during the liturgy. This is so important that I will repeat it one more Sunday (January 4), after which I will make it the first sentence in the Appendix.

When we pray about the Holy Family, we readily move from Saint Joseph to God the Father. Family life, whether the Holy Family or the Faithful Family, always involves some suffering and, sometimes, joy. Joy is a particularly Christian virtue; I can see the Holy Family with feelings of joy at the protection of God, as they sneak away off to Egypt. Then, later, they are downcast, suffering a bit, in a strange land, when Jesus first hits his finger with a hammer.

The Psalm reminds the Faithful that *The Lord remembers his covenant forever*. Genesis is about the joy of Abraham and Sarah finally having Isaac. Hebrews explains that the joy of Abraham and Sarah translated into the joy of Faith in Jesus. The Gospel is about the Fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, a time of great joy for people in the Temple recognizing the boy. The joy mixes in with a little premonition of trouble ahead.

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## Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting scholarly prayer-provoking information.

### **Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3**

Genesis 15:5

Bruce N. Fisk, "Offering Isaac Again and Again: Pseudo-Philo's Use of the Aqedah as Intertext"<sup>1</sup>

Fisk writes that, with *your descendants* is one of the blessings the LORD bestows first on the patriarchs, to which I add, and then on the rest of the Faithful. This snippet is also used in the following two articles.

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<sup>1</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 483.

Gen 15:5

Paul Niskanen, "Yhwh as Father, Redeemer, and Potter in Isaiah 63:7—64:11"<sup>2</sup>  
Niskanen argues, "The exalted father [the LORD],’ however, abdicates this title in Isaiah. Jacob, renamed Israel, the eponymous [Israel] ancestor of all the children of Israel, likewise refuses to recognize these children as his own." In other words, the idea of an everlasting covenant in the First Testament rests on shaky ground, until the coming of Jesus.

Gen 15:5b

John Paul Heil, "From Remnant to Seed of Hope for Israel: Romans 9:27-29"<sup>3</sup>  
Among others, Heil includes this verse to argue "that it is not the children of the flesh that are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed (σπερμα)." In that way, even childless people, like those taking a vow of celibacy, can have descendants.

### **Psalm 105:1-6, 8-9 (7a, 8a)**

While I do not understand why, what was explained last Sunday about the difference in numbering between the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Septuagint texts explains the Codex Sinaiticus. Psalm 105 in the Lectionary is Psalm 104 Sinaiticus. That is sufficient for now.

Comparing the Latin translation of Saint Jerome in the Vulgate with the English of the Lectionary produces some interesting results. In verse 1, the Lectionary has *Sing to him, sing his praise*, using the same word, *sing*, both times. Saint Jerome uses *cantate* and *psallite*. *Cantate* connotes an incantation; *psallite* connotes singing to a stringed instrument.<sup>4</sup>

In verse 4, the Lectionary uses different words, where Saint Jerome uses the same word, twice. The English words are *look* and *seek*; the Latin is *quaerite*. *Quaerite* carries a sense of questioning; something academics do.

In verse 6, the Latin is *seed*, whereas the English is *descendants*. The difference in words is not significant, because the Lectionary also uses *descendants* in Hebrews 11:12 and 18. Noting the differences enriches the resulting prayer. The Psalms are known as the prayer book of the Church.

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<sup>2</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 400.

<sup>3</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 718.

<sup>4</sup> Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English and English-Latin, revised by J. R. V. Marchant, M.A. and Joseph F. Charles, B.A. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1952) 82, 452.

Psalm 105:1-22

William Doan and Terry Giles, "The Song of Asaph: A Performance-Critical Analysis of 1 Chronicles 16:8-36"<sup>5</sup>

Doan argues that the Fourth Century 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 draws from Psalm 105:1-22, *the Lord remembers his covenant forever*.

Psalm 105:1

Lloyd M. Barré, "*Halelu yah: A Broken Inclusion*"<sup>6</sup>

Using Qumran Scroll 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, this is a very technical article speculating on how the psalms divided over time. Barré bases his speculation on the *Halelu yah*. Psalm 105 and seven other psalms range through the article.

Psalm 105:4

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)"<sup>7</sup>

Hamm argues from *Look to the LORD in his strength* that the Good Thief prays to Jesus as God in the same way on the cross and that is why Jesus promises the Good Thief Paradise. Hamm wrote, "Jesus was both model and object of true worship for the wrongdoer," which is how I approached obedience while growing up, in imitation of Jesus, as best I could.

## Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

The apparatus indicates there is difficulty translating Hebrews 11:11.

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	—and Sarah herself was sterile—
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	—et ipsa Sara sterilis—
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	being barren,
<u>King James</u> (1611)	also Sara herself ... when she was past the age ...
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	Sara herself... even when she was past the age
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	—and Sarah herself was sterile—
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985)	Sara, in spite of being past the age,

As best I can tell, the problem with the Greek is *herself*. My sense is over the reflex emphasis.

There is another difficulty at Hebrews 11:12.

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<sup>5</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 31, 36, 37, 38.

<sup>6</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (July 1983) 195-200.

<sup>7</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (July 2003) 229.

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<u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	... that there came forth ...
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	... orti sunt ...
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	there sprung
<u>King James</u> (1611)	sprang there
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	were born
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	... that there came forth ...
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985)	there came from

I sense a feminine bursting forth from Abraham, rather than planting his seed. I wonder whether that is what is causing trouble with the Greek. Why the Latin is plural escapes me.

Heb 11:1—12:24

Craig R. Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity"<sup>8</sup>

Koester argues that Hebrews presents a series of arguments that return "to the contradiction between the hope of glory in God's kingdom and the inglorious experience of life in the world." Bette words it pithily, "life is hell, and then you die." Faith is the link to hope for the joy of better things to come.

Heb 11:7, 10, 14

James W. Thompson, "Outside the Camp: a Study of Heb 13:9-14"<sup>9</sup>

Thompson observes that "Esau's worldly behavior is ... to be contrasted to the men of faith who gave up earthly assurances in favor of the heavenly reward (cf. 11:7, 10 [used here] 14)." Thompson concludes by arguing that Faith offers "the grounds for the [Christian] community to find the 'stability' necessary to continue the Christian pilgrimage."

Heb 10:19—12:29

Alan C. Mitchell, S.J., "The Use of *πρεπειν* in Hebrews 2:10"<sup>10</sup>

*πρεπειν* means *propriety*. Mitchell argues that Hebrews 10:19—12:29, of which Hebrews 11 [used here] is part, contains the main point of Hebrews. That main point is that the death of Jesus has lasting quality that does not require repetition, in contrast to the ritual requirements for the Day of Atonement. In other words, the Holy Family is a model for all times.

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<sup>8</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002:) 112.

<sup>9</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 1 (July 1978) 58-59, 63.

<sup>10</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 4 (July 1992) 690.

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Hebrews 11:8

Scott W. Hahn, "A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15-22"<sup>11</sup>

Hahn uses Hebrews 11:8 *by faith Abraham obeyed* as part of "the model of the process of inheritance in the Epistle to the Hebrews [that] has little in common with testamentary practice." In other words, Faith in and of Christ brings an inheritance of a different quality than anything that came before. This inheritance in the next life is received "through suffering, death, and resurrection" in this life. Hahn goes on,

this [Christian inheritance] runs counter to a testamentary model, in which only God (the Father 1:5) could function as the testator, since he dispenses the inheritance. Yet it is impossible for God to die. Ironically, it is not God, the "testator," but Christ the *heir*, who must die to receive the heavenly inheritance.

The wonders of the Holy Family are unceasing.

Heb 11:17-19

Scott W. Hahn, "A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15-22"<sup>12</sup>

Hahn writes, "It is significant that each of the biblical covenants that concern the author of Hebrews involved a *Drohritus* [?] symbolizing the curse of death. ... implying, 'As was done to the animals, so may it be done to us if we fail to keep the covenant.'"

Heb 11:17-20

Robert J. Daly, S.J., "The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac"<sup>13</sup>

This article affects me as the most significant one I have read in the forty-one years I have been receiving the Catholic Biblical Quarterly. This article helps me grasp at the idea that *salvation* means salvation from the inevitability of death. At this point, Daly has two paragraphs, citing Hebrews 11:17-20 as "the clearest and most complete reference" to the Akedah ["Binding of Isaac"] in the New Testament."

Hebrews 11:17-19

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy<sup>14</sup>

Barker links the survival of Isaac past the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice him, with the survival of Jesus through the Resurrection. We are now finished with Barker.

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<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 421.

<sup>12</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 429.

<sup>13</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 39, No. 1 (July 1977) 66.

<sup>14</sup> London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, 362, fn 62.

## Hebrews 1:1-2

### Luke 2:22-40

Luke 2:22-40

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.<sup>15</sup>

The Alands refer to manuscripts containing the Gospel of Luke on three pages: 98, 122, and 126. These references give authenticity to the words present in the Lectionary.

Luke 2

Alexander Globe, "Some Doctrinal Variants in Matthew 1 and Luke 2, and the Authority of the Neutral Text"<sup>16</sup>

This article about textual criticism challenges the Codex Vaticanus (B), which scholars used to think was significantly more authentic than other manuscripts. Present scholars recognize that the early scribes replaced Koine Greek with literary Attic forms. Globe argues for the eclectic text, focusing on parallel passages in Matthew 1 and Luke 2, used here. In a footnote, Globe asserts, "The first unambiguous statement of Mary's *virginitas in partu* does not occur until Zeno, 362-72 A.D."

The Protestant Revolt over Catholic dogma seems relevant to studying Sacred Scripture.

Luke 2:22-40

Hanan Eshel and John Strugnell, "Alphabetical Acrostics in Pre-Tannaitic Hebrew"<sup>17</sup>

Eshel argues for a possibility that "Anna and the people she spoke to belonged to a group of pious ones who dwelt in the temple and yearned for Zion's redemption ..."  
What the Lectionary translates as *after her marriage*, Eshel translates *from her virginity*. This article helps place the prayer-life of the Holy family in the context of what was going on in their lives.

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<sup>15</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 98, 122, and 126.

<sup>16</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 1 (July 1980) 52-72, fn 26 .

<sup>17</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 453.

Luke 2:23—24:53

Robert F. O'Toole, S.J., review of Douglas S. McComiskey, Lukan Theology in the Light of the Gospel's Literary Structure (Because of the long span for Luke 2:23--24:53, this reference is only indexed here.)<sup>18</sup>

While O'Toole congratulates McComiskey for developing his theoretical structure, O'Toole concludes with "We will all want to know how accurate his theory is ..." As best I can tell, O'Toole did not think it worth his while to do the "heavy going" required to do justice to his review. In other words, O'Toole did not evaluate what McComiskey wrote.

Luke 2:29-35

Richard J. Dillon, "The Benedictus in Micro- and Macrocontext"<sup>19</sup>

Dillon argues that the aorist tense does not disqualify either Mary's cousin Elizabeth, Simeon, or Anna from prophesying.

Luke 2:26

Stephen L. Cook, "The Metamorphosis of a Shepherd: The Tradition History of Zechariah 11:17 + [sic] 13:7-9"<sup>20</sup>

Cook writes of the "... extra character in the story, the expectant people, whose experience of a doubtful future at the beginning of the narrative awaits the resolution of the doubt in the lyrical statement of what this preternatural childbirth finally means." In other words, the people, the Faithful, matter.

Luke 2:28

Warren Carter, "Getting Martha out of the Kitchen: Luke 10:38-42 Again"<sup>21</sup>

Carter translates *he took him into his arms as he received him into his arms* to concentrate on how Martha *received* Jesus signifying "her commitment to Jesus' mission and to the God who sent him ..." Adult discipleship results in making difficult decisions in the context of social expectations.

Luke 2:35

Pierre Benoit, "Et toi-me, un glaive te transpercera l'ame!"<sup>22</sup>

This article is in French, which I lack the time and energy to translate.

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<sup>18</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 548.

<sup>19</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 469, 474.

<sup>20</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July 1993) 465.

<sup>21</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (July 1996) 268, 274

<sup>22</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 25, No. 3 (July 1963) 251-261.

Luke 2:30

Charles H. Talbert, review of Hans Jorg Sellner, Das Heil Gottes: Studien zur Soteriologie des lukanischen Doppelwerks<sup>23</sup>

Sellner has a chapter to include Luke 2:30, *my eyes have seen your salvation*. Sellner writes nothing new, but leaves the reviewer, Talbert, with the question, "How are God's saving acts related to this period between beginning the Christian walk and departing this life?" That is exactly what these Notes are trying to address.

Luke 2:32

Matthew Goff, review of Hubert Frankemolle, Fruhjudentum und Urchristentum: Vorgeschichte—Verlauf—Auswirkungen<sup>24</sup>

Contrary to what is commonly understood, Frankemolle argues, unconvincingly, that Jews and Christians split over the use of Hebrew and Aramaic in Palestine and Greek in the Diaspora. Frankemolle contends that various "Jewish-Christian" groups existed up until the Fourth and Fifth centuries. The more common understanding is that the separation never happened.

Luke 1:27

Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Feminist Mariologies: Heteronomy/Subordination and the Scandal of Christology"<sup>25</sup>

McDonnell explains,

In Luke 1:27, [*when the parents brought in the child*] the accent is not on virginity as liberation, but functions as a declaration that the child conceived is God's Son and the conception is "totally God's work." Unfortunately in the postbiblical tradition, especially around the fourth century, the attention was turned to biologism [limited to the biological point of view], making physical details seem an important theological issue. Even today biologism is a significant problem. But in reaction to the denigration of sexuality, and in order to promote the wider value of "integrity" and insure [*sic*] women "do not live `a derivative' life as mother, daughter, spouse," [Catherina?<sup>26</sup>] Halkes wants a definition of virginity that would not include sexual abstinence.

Biologism is one of the factors causing suffering in the Holy Family of the Faithful.

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<sup>23</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July 2008) 622.

<sup>24</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 150.

<sup>25</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 2005) 539.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.spiritualitytoday.org/spir2day/884033halkes.html> 081116