

Personal Notes
061231 Holy Family 17C
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This week the Faithful celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. Sometimes presiders do not follow the readings recommended in the Ordo. This year is Cycle C for which the recommended reading is the Finding in the Temple. Cycle B is the Presentation, while Cycle A is the Flight into Egypt. If the presider were unprepared, the Flight into Egypt would offer the most-readily available reading.

This is the first time the format is changing from a narrative with footnotes toward an annotated bibliography. This format does not require grammatically complete sentences. The main reason for the change is to eliminate the need to impose a unifying theme on all the readings. This way the reader will not expect a smooth flow of thought, but rather disjointed Personal Notes based on scholarly resources. When no pertinent information is available, readings will be skipped.

Before examining the readings in Sacred Scripture, an article of a more general nature merits consideration. The theme of this particular issue of the History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History is religion and history. Since I am an historian, all of the articles in the journal merit consideration. As might be expected, I have my own strongly held opinions about the relationship between religion and history. Those opinions are briefly developed below and are elaborated on my website, www.western-civilization.com

Wesleyan University in Middletown Connecticut publishes the scholarly journal. While scholarly, therefore, the Journal is not secular. Volume 45, No. 4. (December 2006) is the Theme Issue, titled "Religion and History." The key article on pages 10-26, is "History and Religion in the Modern Age," by Constantin Fasolt.

The question posed is the relationship between religion and history. That is the wrong question to pose. The issue is between the political institutions that support history and religion, basically church and state. Once the issue is settled, the intellectual facts turn on what it means to be modern. My working definition of modernism is acceptance of the astronomy of Galileo, the evolution of Darwin, the psychology of Freud, as included in the inductive reasoning associated with the scientific method.

Because institutional religion historically fought all three, Galileo, Darwin, and Freud, historians find it difficult to explain how religion survives. The reason is that historians have substituted secular politics for religious politics. The Sacred Scripture readings for this Sunday help describe my point. Luke 2:46-47 presents Jesus in the temple, listening and asking questions "and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers." Galileo, Darwin, and Freud also astounded their listeners.

At age twelve, Jesus posed no political threat to the teachers mentioned in Sacred Scripture. Later, when he did, they crucified him in the name of institutional religion. Beginning with modern times, at least since the time of Galileo (1564-1642), the state

contested the dogmatism of institutional religion. Currently in the United States, the institutional state devotes more resources pursuing truth than does institutional religion, though both compete in their efforts. Because the state devotes more resources to searching for the truth, the state has the upper hand determining what may be politically correct.

Fitting in with the flow of what people are accepting, suits this Feast of the Holy Family. In their Flight into Egypt, the Holy Family endured the hardships associated with challenging what everyone else was doing. Leaving the Promised Land for Egypt was not in the spirit of what their neighbors expected of them.

The First Reading: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

1 Sam 1:3-22

Adrian M. Leske, "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9"¹

Going to Shiloh to celebrate the Feast of Booths. The article draws a parallel between the Presentation of Jesus at the temple and the presentation of Samuel.

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy²

At Shiloh, the parents of Mary offered her at the temple at the age of three, like the parents of Samuel. There are serious reservations about the value of the research of Margaret Barker. Reading 14B, page 2, documented with footnote 6, December 25, 2005 and Reading 18B, pages 5 and 6, documented with footnotes 20, 21, and 22, January 1, 2006, describe these reservations.

The Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24

1 John 2:28—3:10

Urban C. Von Wahlde, "The Stereotyped Structure and the Puzzling Pronouns of 1 John 2:28—3:10"³

Jesus is the model for the Faithful, with the hope of better things to come. The article only catches two verses, 1 and 2, from the Lectionary 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24.

I have already done the Greek for this reading, as follows:

Reading	Chapter	verse	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>
17C	1 John 3:	1-2, 21-24	105
50B	1 John 3:	1-2	395
53A	1 John 3:	1-2, 18-24	410

¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 4 (October 2000) 669.

² London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, 211, 257.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 336.

1 John 3:1 in Reading 17C translates the *Yet* in 50B as *And*.

There is another difference between the readings. 1 John 3:2, in Reading 17C, does not break the verse at the first *and*, like Reading 50B. This unexplained lack of consistency is but one more sign of sloppy scholarship in the Lectionary.

1 John 3:2

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"⁴

Paul begins with the Cross to portray Jesus as revealing God to humanity. John begins with the Incarnation to portray God as revealing himself to humanity. Christology shifts. Back to Paul, the Faithful reveal the Father to humanity through how they bear their various crosses. Back to Luke, God reveals himself to humanity through the way the Faithful live. The Holy Family is the First Family of the Faithful.

John 3:18-22

Casimir Bernas, O.C.S.O., review of Angelo Scarano, Storia dell'interpretazione ed esegesi di 1 Gv 3, 18-22⁵

A doctoral dissertation in theology from the Biblical Institute in Rome. Verses 18-20 (used in Reading 53A) belies a false mysticism with a proper activism. Verses 21-24, used here, belie a false activism with a proper mysticism. In other words, going to Daily Mass without social engagement is as wrong as social engagement without a fervent prayer life.

The Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

Luke 2:41-48

Alexander Globe, "Some Doctrinal Variants in Matthew 1 and Luke 2, and the Authority of the Neutral Text"⁶

In the beginning, differences in Biblical texts were relatively easy to manipulate. The first statement of Mary's *virginitas post partem* occurred with Zeno, 362-372 A.D., something about which Luke does not worry, though Matthew does.

⁴ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 255.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 157

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 1980) 59, fn 26, 71-72.

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Luke 2:46

Terence J. Keegan, O.P., "Introductory Formulae for Matthean Discourses"⁷
Jesus is teaching, seated, in the proper posture of the rabbis of the time.

Luke 1:27

Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Feminist Mariologies: Heteronomy/Subordination and the Scandal of Christology"⁸
Accents liberation rather than virginity.

Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, "'Let My People Go! Threads of Exodus in African American Narratives"⁹

Not to over-read the social activism of liberationist theology into Luke 1.

Please pass along suggestions you may have for improving the changed format. Thank you. For more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 44, No. 3 (July 1982) 418.

⁸ Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 2005) 539.

⁹ Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 140.