

Personal Notes

120101 The Octave Day of Christmas:
Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God 018B
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Raymond J. Jirran, Ph.D.

This feast is about the humanity that Jesus shares with the Faithful. After eight days, as responsible parents, Mary and Joseph present Jesus at the Temple for the grisly circumcision operation. Crucifixion will come later.

At the Temple were a prophet and a prophetess. They must have seemed off-center to anyone watching. Probably no one paid attention when the quiet prophet expressed the sentiment that his life was a success that he met the Messiah. He was now ready to pass on to the next life. The Prophetess was less sanguine as she warned that a sword would pierce the heart of Mary. At Holy Love Ministries

<messages=holylove.org@mail120.us2.mcsv.net>; on behalf of; Holy Love Ministries
messages@holylove.org Mary continues her care for Jesus in the hearts of the Faithful.

The Collect (prayer) in the Missal¹ consists of a run-on sentence followed by a sentence fragment:

O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, through whom we were found worthy to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever [sic] and ever.

Mary did not *bestow*. God bestowed. A sentence begun with *Who lives . . .* should end with a question mark, rather than a period. Nonsense. Gibberish.

The Prayer over the Offerings is just as irresponsible. *God . . . begin . . . and bring* lacks basic noun-verb agreement. This prayer also concludes with a sentence fragment.

O God, who in your kindness begin all good things and bring them to fulfillment, grant to us, who find joy in the Solemnity of the holy Mother of God, that, just as we glory in the beginnings of your grace, so one day we may rejoice in its completion. Through Christ our Lord.

The Prayer after Communion is worse. What does *for* mean, in *for we rejoice*. Does *for* refer to a causal relationship with receiving Holy Communion, after the fact; or to a causal relationship with eternal life, before the fact; or both; or something else?

¹ n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 182, 183.

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We have received this heavenly **Sacrament** with joy, O Lord: grant, we pray, that it may lead us to **eternal life**, **for** we rejoice to proclaim the blessed ever-Virgin Mary Mother of your Son and Mother of the Church. Through Christ our Lord.

The hierarchy is responsible for this unruly mess. The Faithful address God in confusing non-standard English. The Missal dictates the norms in the March 28, 2001 Liturgiam authenticam. The following facts underlie my opinion that the English text of my new (\$179.89) Missal² is a compound, complex, convoluted, confounding conundrum—gibberish dressed in Italian grammar—that only arrived Thursday, October 20, 2011, a month before it went into use, November 27. By then it was too late effectively to object to the actual product and insist on responsible leadership. The Faithful do better to pray with Psalm 67:2a in the Lectionary, “May God bless us in his mercy.”

“The General Instruction of the Roman Missal” does not get a pass when it proclaims,³

. . . the Eucharistic Sacrifice is in the first place the action of Christ himself, whose inherent efficacy is therefore unaffected by the manner in which the faithful participate in it. The Council [of Trent] for this reason stated in these firm and likewise measured words: “Although the Mass contains much instruction for the faithful people, it did not seem to the Fathers expedient, however, that it be celebrated in the vernacular.”

To insist that every action of Christ was efficacious because he did it, is patently nonsensical gibberish. If everything Christ did had been efficacious, the Faithful of his own

² n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011).

³ N.a., “The General Instruction of the Roman Missal,” in n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 21.

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time would not have crucified him. To pretend that the Faithful cannot judge whether the liturgy is efficacious for themselves or not is beyond absurd.

With the likes of the current Roman Catholic hierarchy, the Faithful need to join the Psalmist, *May God bless us in his mercy*. The Wall Street Journal and others, on Friday, October 14, 2011, reported that Jean Peters Baker, prosecutor for Jackson County, indicted the bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, Robert Finn, for sexual coverup.⁴ Finn is liable for a fine of up to a thousand dollars and a year in jail.⁵

John L. Allen, Jr., of the National Catholic Reporter, places the indictment in the context of what the headline calls “the temper of the times.” In other words, Finn is acting in the spirit of Vatican culture, where he studied. Finn received a Master’s Degree in Theology in 1979 from the Angelicum University.⁶

The Faithful want *God to bless us in his mercy*. The Faithful can own and take responsibility for the behavior of their bishops. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) likes to hold the Faithful responsible for elected civic officials. With the temper of these times, the Faithful might well hold themselves responsible for irresponsible non-elected Church officials, in the same way that citizens around the world are holding irresponsible non-elected officials responsible in the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) endeavors.

Readings

First Reading:	Numbers 6:22-27
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 (2a)
Second Reading:	Galatians 4:4-7
Alleluia	Hebrews 1:1-2
Gospel:	Luke 2:16-21

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.

⁴ Douglas Belkin and Kevin Helliker, “Missouri Bishop Is Charged, The Wall Street Journal, Saturday/Sunday, October 15-16, 2011, page A 5, col. 1.

⁵ Joshua J. McElwee, “KC bishop charged with failure to report child abuse” and comments at <http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/kc-bishop-charged-failure-report-child-abuse> (accessed October 16, 2011).

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Finn_%28bishop%29 (accessed October 16, 2011).

Numbers 6:22-27

Num 6:24-26

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History⁷

Lawrence reports,

In 1979 archaeologists were excavating a tomb on the western edge of Jerusalem. It was a site partly occupied by the Scottish church of St. Andrew, known to Arabs as Ras ed-Dabbous and to Jews as Ketef Hinnom. A small shiny object, 2.7 cm (12 in.) long to be exact, caught the eye of one of the excavators. The object was 99 per cent silver, but there was something about it more significant than that. It was a rolled-up sheet of thin silver, 9.7 by 2.7 cm (3 ¼ by 12 in.), with writing scratched in the Old Hebrew script. The writing suggested a date in the seventh or sixth century BC.

It was soon clear that this tiny sheet of silver contained most of the words of the priestly blessing from the Old Testament book of Numbers 6:24-26. A second, shorter, text was also found. They were not just quotations from the Bible; the silver sheets contained other words too, suggesting they were amulets, worn to give protection and to ward off evil. Strictly speaking, the amulets are not a biblical text, since the texts do not exclusively contain passages from the Old Testament, but they are the oldest citation—by several hundred years—of any part of the Old Testament.

Num 6:24-26

J. Gerald Janzen, "Qohelet on Life `Under the Sun'"⁸

Janzen pushes the interpretive envelope as follows.

Elsewhere I have argued for a close thematic connection between the high priestly blessing in Num 6:24-26 [used here]—in particular, the clause "Yhwh shine his fact on you—and the first creative words in Gen 1:3, "let there be light." The semantic inversions between . . . and . . . , in which the noun . . . becomes the blessing, suggests that the high priestly blessing, in this clause, has the effect of renewing the lives of those over whom this blessing is pronounced, as though they were taken back to the very beginning of the divine creative process. In the context of the present article, this movement may be said to bring the worshipers—in virtue of the

⁷ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 134.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July 2008) 473, 467.

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dynamics of a “time warp” not unusual in cultic experience—under the direct rule of the God of the first three days of creation, prior to the delegation to the sun of the power to rule the day by the light it sheds. One implication of “seeing the face of God” in the temple, or of hearing the priestly blessing with its invocation of God’s shining face upon the worshiper, is that, in this experience, the Sabbath day, the priestly blessing renews time as lived under the sun by connecting it back to time as informed by God.

As a professional historian, anything to do with time fascinates me.

Num 6:24

Scott C. Jones, "Qohelet's Courtly Wisdom: Ecclesiastes 8:1-9"⁹

Jones explains,

. . . a person’s wisdom brings enlightenment, or, literally, causes one’s face to shine: This is often taken to mean that one’s wisdom makes one cheerful, or, more cynically, that if one is wise, one will put on a cheery face in the presence of a superior. In Biblical Hebrew, the shining countenances of both the divine and human king symbolize favor and mercy toward their subjects (e.g., Num 6:24 [used here] . . .).

The Jewish blessing in Numbers has, “The LORD let his face shine upon you.”

Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 (2a)

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE (New American Bible Revised Edition).

Verse Lectionary

NABRE

2 have pity

be gracious

3 your salvation

your victory

5 exult . . . with equity

rejoice . . . with fairness

8 fear him!

revere him.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 215.

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Psalm 67

William P. Brown, review of Theodore Mascarenhas, The Missionary Function of Israel in Psalms 67, 96, and 117¹⁰

Brown reports that the Missionary Function of Israel “ultimately serves to undermine the mystery of the election.” That notwithstanding, Psalm 97 is about God ultimately choosing all of humankind to be his own.

Galatians 4:4-7

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE.

Verse	<u>Lectionary</u>	NABRE
5	adoption as sons.	adoption.
6	that you are sons	that you are children
7	son . . . son	child . . . child

Galatians 4:4-7

Alain Gignac, “A Translation That Induces a Reading Experience: Narrativity, Intratextuality, Rhetorical Performance, and Galatians 1—1;” Luke Timothy Johnson, “Hebrews 10:32-39 and the Agony of the Translator;” Edith M. Humphrey, “On Probabilities, Possibilities, and Pretexts: Fostering a Hermeneutics of Sobriety, Sympathy, and Imagination in an Impressionistic and Suspicious Age” in Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.)¹¹
Gignac warns,

When translating Paul, it is particularly difficult to follow along with the subtleties of semantic cross-references within a single paragraph or even between two chapters that are quite far apart. Let’s give a few examples.
. . . What is the difference in shade of meaning between παραλαμβανω [you received . . . receive it] (1:9, 12) and απολαμβανω [receive adoption] (4:5)?
. . . stumbling blocks for translators.

Later in the same article, Gignac struggles,

. . . the observations concerning “mediation” and “extraction” in Galatians. Horizontally, Paul is moved on a trajectory from Judaism (of his fathers and of his peers) to the new fraternity of the gospel. Vertically, he is

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 518.

¹¹ Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009, 159, 164, 256.

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brought apart, severed from his mother, to receive directly from above the revelation of the Son that makes him become a son. The gospel is not transmitted horizontally by human beings, nor vertically by angels, but only by God.

In sum, these few observations show that the translator must try not to betray the text and the reader, even to gain some apparent clarity. Here is the challenge: to render, in the target language, not so much the text's ideas as its images and semantic potentialities, so that readers can, in their own language, do the same work as they would on the Greek. What on one side remains an impossible objective must on the other side become a motivational ideal.

Humphrey digs into the Greek.

. . . To “translate” this little phrase [from Romans 8:19] into the correct language of our day (“children” rather than “sons”) too hastily is to miss Paul’s deepest point in the passage: our suffering is parallel to that of the Sufferer *par excellence*, and our anointing is informed by his anointing. The illustrious translators of the NSRV [and the NABRE, see above] have unfortunately silenced the overtones of this passage, along with a similar argument in Gal 4:4-7; unsatisfied with removing “Son of Man” from the Old Testament, they have removed “sons of God” from the purview of the New Testament reader as well. The text has been flattened and our imagination clipped.

How to remedy this situation is beyond me.

Galatians 4:4

The New Roman Missal has:

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son” (Gal 4:4).

The Lectionary and the NABRE have:

“When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son” (Gal 4:4) [omitting the first word, *But*].

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Galatians 4:4

Martin Luther (1483-1546) in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament X: Galatians, Ephesians, (ed.) Gerald L. Bray.¹²

Martin Luther observes, "Paul does not leave Mary's virginity unimplied, since everyone else comes from both a man and a woman, but Christ came from a woman only." *Born of a woman.*

Galatians 4:4

Olevianus (1536-1587) in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament X: Galatians, Ephesians, (ed.) Gerald L. Bray.¹³

Olevianus writes, "The Word did not come with a heavenly body but was made a man by taking flesh from the seed of a woman."

Galatians 4:6

Martin Luther in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament X: Galatians, Ephesians, (ed.) Gerald L. Bray.¹⁴

Luther explains, "Note that because the apostle has spoken about the children of God he calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Son in order to show that the same Spirit who is in Christ has been given to believers."

Olevianus explains, "Note that Paul does not say that God has sent the flesh of his Son into our hearts, but rather that he has sent the Spirit of his son . . ." Quoting Tertullian, Olevianus goes on, "He [Christ] has left us a deposit of the Spirit and taken the deposit of flesh away from us and back up to heaven as the guarantee of the sum which will one day be repaid."

Rudolf Gwalther (1519-1586) uses some words that resonate. "How could he [God] not take pity on us, when his love for us is far greater than the affection of parents, as Isaiah testifies? . . . or they repent and call on him [God] only when they are in serious trouble."

William Perkins (1558-1602), because he explains the role of the church, is worth quoting at some length.

¹² Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2011, 134.

¹³ Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2011, 136.

¹⁴ Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2011, 137, 139, 140.

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. . . But he [the Holy Spirit] is said to be sent forth when he manifests his presence by his divine operation or by special and supernatural gifts in the hearts of believers, as by the gift of illumination, faith, regeneration, life, sense and motion are the gifts of the Spirit and so are civil [sic] virtues, but the sending of the Spirit is only in respect of such gifts as are bestowed in the church, in the receiving of which the Spirit is acknowledged.

David Dickson (1583?-1663) has something to say about clergy all dressed in silk and lace. “. . . except (that) you would carry yourselves as unworthy of this privilege, you must renounce the childish and servile yoke of ceremonies.”

Galatians 4:7

Johannes Brenz (1499-1570) in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament X: Galatians, Ephesians, (ed.) Gerald L. Bray.¹⁵
Brenz has an interesting explanation for suffering.

“. . . It seems that we are heirs of death more than of life, but what happens to us is like what happens to some wanderer who has inherited an overseas kingdom. Here he roams about among strangers, covered in old clothes and concealing his true nobility and inheritance so as to avoid capture. Do you think that he is upset about his tattered rags? Not at all.”

Galatians 4:7

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament¹⁶

Wallace observes, “Only once is $\delta\iota\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ [through God] used in the NT (Gal 4:7 (the *v.l.* $\delta\iota\alpha\ \chi\rho\iota\varsigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ [through Christ] found in numerous last MSS, indicates a scribal tension over the expression . . . “

¹⁵ Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2011, 141.

¹⁶ Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 434.

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Gal 4:1, 7

Russell Morton, review of Ulrich Heckel, Der Segen im Neuen Testament: Begriff, Formeln, Gesten¹⁷

Above I reported that Janzen “pushed the interpretive envelope.” Here, Morton reports that Heckel “attempts too much.” Morton comments on how Heckel develops the blessing.

In contrast to Luke’s understanding, the blessing of Gal 3:64:7 relates to the promise of God to Abraham found in Gen 12:1-3; 17:16. H. observes how Christian interpretation of the LXX influenced the understanding of promise. In Genesis God promises Abraham an heir who will inherit the land. Paul applies the promise to Christ, through whom God’s blessing extends universally (Gal 4:1, 7 [used here]; see also Rom 4:13). This rereading is developed in Ephesians, where blessing becomes more spiritualized (Eph 1:3). In Hebrews, on the other hand, blessing refers to God’s eschatological gift to those who remain steadfast (Heb 6:7-8).

The back-and-forth between Genesis and Galatians is what Translating the New Testament describes above.

Gal 4:4

C. Clifton Black, “Mark as Historian of God’s Kingdom”¹⁸

Black argues that Paul needs contextualization. “‘Born of woman, born under the law’ (Gal 4:4) is inadequate as the story of Jesus’ life that Mark, in sharp contrast, very much wants and considers it necessary to tell.”

Like this feast of the Solemnity of Mary, the Gospels fix the life of Jesus in time and place.

¹⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 544.

¹⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 66.

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Gal 4:4-5

Michael Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship"¹⁹

With his own translation and versification of Galatians 4:4-5, Peppard argues, "Jesus is God's son for the purpose of making other sons of God, of gathering up the rest of humanity into a divine family under the paternal God. Paul understands Jesus' divine sonship as primarily soteriological [saving] and eschatological. He expresses it eloquently in Gal 4:4-5:

When the fulness of time had come,
God sent his son,
 born of woman,
 born under the law,
so that he might redeem those under the law,
so that we might receive adoptive sonship.

[The Greek does not indent the text]

Throughout his writings, Paul is concerned with proclaiming that God sent Jesus not to be incarnated and born but rather to be crucified and resurrected. God sent him to Golgotha—not Bethlehem.

This argument, that God sent his Son to Golgotha, rather than Bethlehem, helps make suffering palatable and bearable. God also sent his son to make other sons, like himself.

Gal 4:6

Nijay K. Gupta, "Which 'Body' Is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul beyond the Individual/Communal Divide"²⁰

Gupta reminds the Faithful, "After all, he [Saint Paul] is quite fond of speaking of Spirit endowment as occurring in the hearts of believers (Gal 4:6 [used here]; Rom 5:5; 8:27; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:3)."

¹⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January 2011) 98.

²⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 3 (July 2010) 530.

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Hebrews 1:1-2

Meaning changes significantly between the Lectionary and NABRE.

Verse Lectionary

NABRE

1 spoke to our ancestors

spoke in partial and various ways to our
ancestors

Luke 2:16-21

Luke 2:21-38

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History²¹

Lawrence offers archaeological details from the Temple at the time of Jesus. “The first of the inner courts was the Court of Women. This was entered through a bronze gate, probably the beautiful Gate of Acts 3:2. Jesus, aged eight days, was presented at the Court of Women [refers to the Presentation, does not name the Gate or Court].”

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.

²¹ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 133, 137.