

Readings

First Reading:	Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17 (cf. 3a)
Second Reading:	Romans 5:12-19
Verse before the Gospel:	Matthew 4:4b
Gospel:	Matthew 4:1-11

Commentary

The readings for this Sunday mark the beginning of Lent. These readings help the Faithful reflect on the meaning of life. Genesis indicates that humans have a responsibility to maintain the earth. That reading can also be taken to maintain personal, physical health. Personal health is particularly meaningful when secular observers see obesity as an epidemic leading to diabetes and all sorts of other maladies. Where is the preacher with the courage to take on that subject?

That brings the Faithful to the Responsorial Antiphon, *Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned*. Despite the fact that the Faithful have sinned, Romans 5:15 is full of hope for *the gift is not like the transgression*. Paul means that Jesus will take care of the sins of the faithful.

Matthew is about the temptations of Jesus. These temptations explain the meaning of life. Humans do not live by bread alone; God is not to be tempted; and God alone is worth worshipping.

Writing offers readers opportunities to argue with authors; no matter how lowly the reader (in this case me), nor how lofty the author (in this case the scholars). I am leaving my arguments below the double line.

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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 material.

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

For this Reading in 2005, I noted:

The Lectionary uses 1 Cor 15:45 for the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time C, to cite *The first man, Adam, became a living being*.¹ The Lectionary, thereby, implies a Christology flowing out of Genesis 2:7.²

¹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 590.

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Genesis 2 also applies to monotheism. Adam of Genesis 1 is a spiritual androgyne, neither male nor female. The division into male and female in Genesis 2 was the beginning of the fall. The monotheistic Adam falls into a less worshipful stance.³ The implications for such divisiveness for humanity invite issues of sexism and racism.

Try as it might, the Magisterium has not been able to duck these issues: racism with the new efforts to canonize the African-American Father Augustus Tolton and sexism with persecution of the holy sisters with unholy investigations of how they live their lives in the United States ... or is the real investigation a ruse to take over their finances?

For this Reading, in 2008, I wrote:

I began developing these reflections Sunday, January 20, [2008] when the Diocese of Richmond ordered a second collection for Respect Life Advocacy. Genesis is about respecting life. Genesis is about life equating with love and life with God and death with separation and life without God. The philosophical cosmological applications of that reality are political, contemporary, and urgent.

Since writing the above, I have not heard the Diocese or anyone else claim the Book of Genesis as support for political "support life" activity.

Gen 2:7-8

Richard J. Bautch, "An Appraisal of Abraham's Role in Postexilic Covenants"⁴

Although the word *potter* is not used, God is portrayed as a potter, forming "man out of the clay of the earth." The Exile forces the Israelites to rethink the goodness of God, especially with Isaiah and Jeremiah. The conclusion is that God has both a radical freedom and paternal love in a combination that humans are not going to understand. Penance, then is an appropriate way both to stay in the good graces of God and to return to those good graces after falling away.

² Jeremy Corley, "The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 264.

³ Demetrius K. Williams, "The Bible and Models of Liberation in the African American Experience," in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 46-47.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 51.

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Gen 2:7

Tobias Hägerland, "The Power of Prophecy: A Septuagintal Echo in John 20:19-23"⁵

After his resurrection, Jesus breathed on his disciples to impart the Holy Spirit and the ability to prophecy. Hägerland argues, God blowing into the nostrils of Adam imparted life in a similar way.

Gen 2:7

Wolfgang Vondey, "The Holy Spirit and the Physical Universe: The Impact of Scientific Paradigm Shifts on Contemporary Pneumatology"⁶

I explain the arguments of Vondey as follows. Isaac Newton said that whatever goes up has got to come down. By adding a fourth dimension, that of time, to reality, Einstein led to the realization that whatever goes up does not necessarily have to come down. Those who understand Einstein, therefore question the very principle of causality. Theologians, then, are having to deal with new scientific realities. This tension has been going on since the time of Galileo.

My reaction to the difficulty is twofold. As an historian, I realize that what people think happened is more important, in many ways, than what actually happened. Yet, especially in the United States, we say we want to know what really happened.

I used to express fear of getting into trouble with my students, were they to perceive me as encouraging them to check their DNA to see if who they thought was their father, really was. I heard a so-called expert on television say that whenever such research was done, a third of the time the supposed father was not the real father. The anthropologist concluded that evidently women are willing to have babies with men with whom they do not wish to live.

So far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, my point is that I enjoy a real sense of the presence of God. I marvel at the findings of Newton, who, with his law of gravity, explained what seemed unexplainable. I also marvel at the findings of Einstein and his cosmological scientific followers, who explain that total reality is far different from the relatively limited experience of the Faithful.

The theological problem is between truth and politics. If the Faithful want to insist that Church politics predetermines the truth, then there is a human problem, which arises when scientists find facts, which do not fit such predetermination. Otherwise there is no problem, except that of possible crucifixion by those in political power; but persecution is an expected part of Christian living.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 96.

⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 1 (March 2009) 32.

Gen 2:15

Alfio Marcello Buscemi, "The Evil of Self-Will Admonition II of Saint Francis," translated by Edward Hagman, O.F.M.⁷

Saint Francis draws ecological understanding from the fact that God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden and gave Adam the charge to cultivate and keep the Garden. This means not only that humans participate in the creative activity of God, but that humans receive a charge from God to preserve the earth that they are obliged to fulfill.

Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17 (cf. 3a)

Funerals uses Psalm 51:3-21, 347 #4 in Part III: Texts of Sacred Scripture, 16. Antiphons and Psalms and 376 in Part IV: Office for the Dead, 17. Morning Prayer.⁸

Romans 5:12-19

Funerals uses Romans 5:17-21, 345 #3 in Part III: Texts of Sacred Scripture, 13. Funerals for Adults.⁹ The Lectionary uses Romans 5:12-19 for the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Reading 94A.

Rom 5:12

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History¹⁰

Lawrence reproduces a photograph of "one of the nearest nebulae to Earth, the coil shaped Helix Nebula, as viewed through the NASA Hubble Space Telescope. NASA has nicked named it 'the eye of God.'"

⁷ Greyfriars Review Vol. 19, Issue 1 (2005) 6.

⁸ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 271-272, 304-305.

⁹ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 214.

¹⁰ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 14.

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Rom 5:12

John E. Thiel, "Time, Judgment, and Competitive Spirituality: A Reading of the Development of the Doctrine of Purgatory"¹¹

Paul makes no mention of a final judgment of hell. Paul presupposes that all human activity is sinful, because no human activity emanates from pure love of God. Jesus redeems human sinfulness and is the cause for the Christian emotion of joy. So if the grace of God overwhelms the need for hell; the early Christians still saw a need for Purgatory as a place for purely human expiation for sin.

Rom 5:12

Theodore Hiebert, review of Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical Study of Genesis 2—3¹²

Hiebert reports that Mettinger places Genesis within the context of other contemporary literature. Other contemporary literature, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, posit wisdom and immortality as two characteristics of the divine. Wisdom humans can achieve, but not immortality. The Christian understanding, expressed in Romans 5:12 is that mortality is a result of disobedience.

Later Judaism abandoned that idea for the idea that God created humans to be mortal, from the beginning. Hiebert ends his review by wondering whether Mettinger thinks that knowledge is too heavy a burden for humans to bear. For me, this wonderment extends to the Magisterium of the Church, which seems determined to place its own perceived notion of Church politics over any other notion of perceived truth.

Rom 5:14

Florence Morgan Gillman, "Another Look at Romans 8:3 'In the likeness of Sinful Flesh'"¹³

Gillman translates Rom 5:14 differently from the Lectionary.

Gillman:

Who had not sinned on the basis of the likeness of the transgression of Adam

The Lectionary:

Who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam

¹¹ Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 4 (December 2008) 748.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 2 (April 2009) 385.

¹³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 4 (October 1987) 597, 599.

The key difference that Gillman explores is over the word *likeness*, for which the Lectionary substitutes *pattern*. I am not arguing, just pointing out that there is a difference.

Matthew 4:4b

Matthew 4:1-11

Matt 4:5

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History¹⁴

Lawrence describes the parapet of the temple. "On the south-east corner was the 'highest point of the Temple'. The Gospels record that Jesus was tempted to jump off from here into the Kidron Valley some 130 m (426 ft.) below." Lawrence also offers a picture of a reconstruction of that temple.

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

Recurring Themes

For recurring themes in Sacred Scripture, see the following, taken from the Nestle-Aland Greek.¹⁵ The exclamation point (!) indicates where a principal reference list of passages related by a common theme or expression found. Italics of the same verse indicates a special relevance; italics of a different verse or book, indicates a direct quote. With this material, I am trying to lay a foundation for developing Biblical themes the next time through the Cycles, when I intend to add in which Lectionary readings the relevant passages are found.

¹⁴ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 133.

¹⁵ Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum: Graece et Latine: Textum Graecum post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Barbara et Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger: Textus Latinus Novae Vulgatae Bibliorum Sacrorum Editioni debetur: Utriusque textus apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII.

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Themes for the following readings are developed at Romans 5:

- Verse 12 Genesis 2:17; Romans 3:19; Apocalypse of Baruch 54:15; Romans 23:4;
4 Esther 3:21 f., 26; Romans 6:23; Wisdom of Solomon 2:24.
Verse 13 Romans 3:21!; Romans 4:15 !; Philemon 18.
Verse 14 1 Corinthians 15:21 f. 45.
Verse 15 1 Timothy 2:5.
Verse 16 Isaiah 53:11 f.; 4 Ezra 7:118 f.
Verse 17 Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2.
Verse 18 1 Corinthians 15:21 f.
Verse 19 Isaiah 53:11.

Themes for the following readings are developed at Matthew 4:

- Verse 1 1-11: Mark 1:12 f.; Luke 4:1-13; Hebrews 4:15!
Verse 2 Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9; 1 Kings 19:8; Genesis 3:1-7;
1 Thessalonians 3:5. The manuscripts are difficult at *and forty
nights*.
Verse 3 Matthew 6:27, 40, 43 parallel, Psalm 2:7.
Verse 4 *Deuteronomy 8:3*; Wisdom of Solomon 16:26. Nestle-Aland use
Deuteronomy 8:3 to explain, "Direct quotations are indicated by italics (cf.
Mch 5, 1.3 at Mt 2,6), and allusions by normal type (cf. references at Mt 4.4
to both a direct quotation, Dt. 8.3, and an allusion, Sap. 16.26)." The last
time through (March 13), I missed the Lectionary reference to Matthew
4.4. On April I corrected that omission for the web site, which was
temporarily down.
Verse 5 Matthew 27:53; Isaiah 48:2; Matthew 52:1; Daniel 3:28 LXX; Matthew
9:24; Revelation 11:2; Matthew 21:2, 10; Matthew 22:19; Daniel
9:27.
Verse 6 Matthew 4:3!; *Psalm 91:11 f.*; Deuteronomy 6:16 f LXX; Isaiah 7:12.
Verse 7 1 Corinthians 10:9; Acts 15:10.
Verse 8 Deuteronomy 3:27; Matthew 34:1; Revelation 21:10.
Verse 9 Matthew 16:26.
Verse 10 Matthew 16:23; *Deuteronomy 6:13 LXX* [there is reference to this citation
in Reading 22A, February 13, 2005, page 10/11.]; *10:20; 32:43
LXX*.
Verse 11 1 Kings 19:5 ff.; Matthew 26:53; John 1:51 Hebrews 1:6, 14.