

Personal Notes
040229 First Sunday of Lent 24C
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Accepting and dealing with difficulties marks the theme for these readings. All three readings describe difficulties. All three readings delineate a prudent way out toward the Father. These readings outline that, to remain devout, the Faithful must distinguish between relying on and trying to manipulate the fact that God loves them.

The three temptations of Jesus described here in Luke can be understood in parallel with difficulties the Faithful encounter as they advance in wisdom and age. The first temptation is about pleasures of the flesh, against which the vibrant young are more susceptible. The second temptation is about pleasures of power, against which the more mature are more susceptible. The third temptation is about pleasures of abandonment and not taking responsibility for dealing with the other two temptations. The devoted Faithful themselves are especially susceptible to this temptation.

Sports help describe the first temptation, pleasures of the flesh. Secular sports language highlights the difficulty. For example, when tennis players lose their verve, game television announcers begin to refer to interior *demons* of the players, something the players must overcome if they are to succeed.

The devoted Faithful can look at their lives and accuse themselves of not living up to their Faith, for example as present in their sports potential. The interior life itself is susceptible to such self-accusatory difficulties. The spiritual fathers know the way through the confusion. Prudence is the virtue through all accusatory temptations. The readings show that the template for overcoming the trials of the First Testament leads to the template overcoming the trials of Jesus.

Outsiders can accuse the Faithful of inordinate appetites because of the second temptation of Jesus, pleasures of power. The Faithful can exemplify such pleasures in such possessions as a luxury car or a luxury education or a luxury way of life. Saint Paul brings the matter to the fore, by insisting interior faith, not the exterior law, is the lodestar for holiness. Some level of pleasure and power are there for all. The difficulty is handling them. The human heart determines how they are handled and accounted for.

This leads to the third temptation that is especially dangerous for the devoted Faithful. This is the temptation of abandonment to the will of the Father, without accepting full responsibility for one's own actions. In the First Testament, accounting begins with the Exodus as a symbol of the devout life.

Deuteronomy is about the Exodus that leads to the Law, which, in turn, leads to the all-important interior life of faith. The Responsorial, "Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble," is about continuing with a right heart, in abandonment to the Father. Romans is theologically centered on the superfluity of the Law in the

context of the essence of a right conscience. Abandonment includes interior abandonment, only available after one has utilized all interior resources. Finally, in the Gospel of Luke, the tired human Jesus demonstrates how to react to the demons within and without, by keeping the Father in focus always.

Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, S.T.D., S.S.L, D.D.: in the Lectionary, Deuteronomy 26:11 is cited, though only 11a is used from the Nova Vulgata. The quotation marks do not follow the Nova Vulgata either. The book used for visiting the sick, which I identify as Care here, uses the upper case for the first word, *Say*, of Psalm 91:2, though the Lectionary uses the lower case. Similarly, verse 7, *For*.

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

This prayer is ancient, something external, the Law, an opening to the interior life. The difficulty is enslavement in Egypt. Abandonment to Providence and accepting responsibility for leaving is the difficulty involved.

Verse 4

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	basket
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	cartallulm
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	basket
<u>King James</u> (1611):	basket
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	pannier
<u>New American</u> (1970):	basket
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	basket

This basket is a reminder of the way in which the Faithful present the offertory collection at Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC) parish.

Verse 5

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	declare ... Aramean
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	loqueris ... Syrus
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	shalt speak thus ... Syrian
<u>King James</u> (1611):	shalt speak ... Syrian
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	make this pronouncement ... Aramaean [<i>sic</i>]
<u>New American</u> (1970):	declare ... Aramean
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	pronounce these words ... Aramaean

Aramean is not the same as Syrian. Two of the wives of Jacob, Rachel and Leah, were daughters of Aram, considered Gentile. The Covenant was with Abraham, not his uncircumcised brother, the father of Rachel and Leah.

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In Verse 5, Aramean is used for Abraham himself. Later Jews found the mention of Gentiles offensive. The Septuagint changes verse 5 from “An Aramean was my father” to “My father left Syria.” The Lectionary translators went back to Aramean.¹

Changing the language resulted only from an accusation of some sort. Prudence helps the Faithful wend their ways through the difficulties inherent understanding Scripture. Accepting and dealing with the difficulties is a way of abandonment to God almighty.

Verse 7

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	affliction
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	humilitatem
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	affliction
<u>King James</u> (1611):	affliction
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	misery
<u>New American</u> (1970):	affliction
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	misery

Verse 7 describes the nation Israel as lowly and oppressed. In other places, the Bible describes the individual poor in the same way. In the Magnificat, Mary describes herself as lowly, but with a reversal of fortune; parallel with what is prophesized of Israel.²

This reading is reason for the Faithful to do Lenten penance for their sins. With repentance, God is a forgiving God. With repentance, the accuser can rant and rave with no effect on the Faithful in the embrace of the merciful love of God. Pride that one cannot be forgiven, thereby, becomes the only unforgivable sin. Prudence shows that anything humans can foul up, God can rectify.

Verse 8, “with his strong hand and outstretched arm,” appears just that way eleven times in the First Testament, except for the ironic Jeremiah 21:4, “with outstretched hand and mighty arm.” Jeremiah reverses the hand and the arm. This Deuteronomic verse means that Jeremiah was taken from and written after

¹ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 30-31, footnote 33.

² Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 69-70.

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Deuteronomy and that this particular section of Deuteronomy is more ancient than Jeremiah.³

As difficult at the resolution may be, understanding the order in which things were written helps wisdom and understanding. The Magnificat also mentions God, in the might of his arm. Observing how scripture develops historically enables the Faithful to observe how the scripture develops spiritually within them, through one temptation after another.

Psalm 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15 (cf. 15b)

The Lectionary uses Psalm 91 only here.

Care for the Sick uses all of Psalm 91 in Part II: Pastoral Care of the Dying: Chapter Six, Commendation of the Dying, Reading D, pages 173-174.⁴

Bishop Serratelli: Care uses the upper case for the first word, *Say*, of the second verse, though the Lectionary uses the lower case. Similarly, in verse 11, Care uses the upper case for the first word, *For*, of the eleventh verse, though the Lectionary uses the lower case.

The final verse used in the Lectionary is about God honoring the devout Faithful.⁵ Care uses the whole Psalm, including the final verse, "with length of days I will gratify him and will show him my salvation."⁶ What a verse to include for the

³ William L. Holladay, "Elusive Deuteronomists, Jeremiah, and Proto-Deuteronomy," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 59-60, 69-70, 73, 77.

⁴ 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 VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: 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 York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1983) 296.

⁵ Louise Joy Lawrence, "For truly, I tell you, they have received their reward' (Matt 6:2): Investigating Honor Precedence and honor Virtue," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 692.

⁶ 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 VI:

dying in Care but not for the living in the Lectionary. This Psalm is not used in Funerals,⁷ though verse twelve about the angels guarding lest one bump one's foot against a stone is frequently sung at OLMC funeral Masses. This Psalm is appropriately read with a twinkle in the eye. "Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble" (cf. Psalm 91:15b), which is the responsorial antiphon.

Romans 10:8-13

Dealing with self-righteousness, Paul gets to the third temptation of false abandonment to the Father. As a devout, law-abiding Jew, Paul loved God, without loving either Christ or the cross. The readings from Romans link self-righteousness with the cross, not in a masochistic self-flagellation sense, but in a prudent sense of accepting what God sends.

In Romans, Paul is working out the theology of Christianity within the context of the prior Judaism. Paul is trying to figure out how the Messiah winds up on the cross. Paul himself was a very faithful Jew, first. Paul was in no position to abandon himself to God, without taking responsibility for his very persecution of Christians.

Paul finally came to accept the Christian revised notion of the Messiah. Penance, Lent, and repentance suit the Messianic promises. The covenant is not a license to sin, but an invitation to love with responsibility, without rancor or denigration.

Neither does the covenant exculpate the Faithful from personal responsibility for behavior, whether their own behavior or the behavior they enable. For Paul lack of Faith and lack of works are in a causal relationship.⁸ Paul's is not a pay, pray,

Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: 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 York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1983) 173-174.

⁷ 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).

⁸ Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 13.

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and obey passive Christianity. Paul's is a spirituality of responsibility not only for the Gospel message, but also for personal sinfulness.

Verse 9

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	that Jesus is Lord
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	"Dominum Iesum!"
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	the Lord Jesus Christ
<u>King James</u> (1611):	the Lord Jesus
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	that Jesus is Lord
<u>New American</u> (1970):	that Jesus is Lord
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	that Jesus is Lord

This use of *Lord* is one of two ambiguous uses of the word in Romans, whether to God the Son or God the Father. Twenty-two other times in Romans, *Lord* unambiguously refers to Jesus. In addressing the weak at Rome, Paul is allying fear that because Jesus was crucified as a criminal, Jesus was not worthy to be the Messiah. Paul insists that the crucified Jesus is Lord.⁹ Since Jesus died for the sins of the Faithful, the Faithful can have confidence that their penance and repentance will reach the Almighty favorably.

The accusation of the world associated with the crucifixion relates to similar accusations against the Faithful. The meaning of the readings is that the Faithful should cave into neither peer pressure nor pressures emanating from lack of self-esteem. The Church is trying to direct the Faithful toward a life of grace within a spirit of repentance for sin. Just as the northern hemisphere experiences a winter of apparent desolation of vegetation during Lent, so ought the Faithful to accept a winter of desolation due to sin. Luke writes that Jesus was in the desolate desert fasting for forty days. Spring and Easter will come, but the winter must be recognized and endured.

Lord appears in verse 9a. Verse 9b contains one of the early formulas describing the Resurrection, simply *from the dead*, rather than *on the third day*. In the very beginning, there was some fluctuation in the way the Resurrection was preached.¹⁰ When the Faithful get out of step with one another, a prudent assessment can guide them through the difficulty.

⁹ Robert A. J. Gagnon, "Why the 'Weak' at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000), 69.

¹⁰ John Kloppenborg, "An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula 1 Cor 15:3b-5 In Light of Some Recent Literature," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 3 (July 1978) 364.

In verses 11-13, Paul tests the righteousness of God. Paul asserts that the Jews err by limiting the covenant to themselves. Paul insists that Christ is the purpose or end of the Law and that God can and does include the Gentiles in the covenant. When Paul writes that no one who calls upon Christ will be put to shame, Paul is citing Isaiah 28:16 and Joel 3:5.¹¹

In verse 12, when Romans says there is no difference between Greek and Jew, Paul does not mean that we all worship the same God, so there is no difference. Paul means, for the Faithful, that anti-Semitism is wrong, because the Jews truly are the Chosen People. Paul does not mean that the Jews are not *chosen*, but that now, so are the Gentiles also chosen.¹²

Separatism was an issue for Paul, “but the *primary* problem was the theology that lay behind it and gave it its power.”¹³ Paul did have a theological difference with Judaism, grasping a purpose for a season such as Lent. Paul had a different vision of what the Messiah meant.

Paul did not mean that the Jews killed God and therefore merited anti-Semitism, as historically developed. As one student of anti-Semitism put it, “The most effective deterrent to Christian anti-Semitism remains sound teaching about the faithfulness of God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and in Romans 9—11.”¹⁴

Matthew 4:4b

The Greek is the same for Matthew 4:4b and Luke 4:4b. This verse is also used in Reading 22A for the First Sunday in Lent.

¹¹ Steven Richard Bechtler, “Christ, the Τελος of the Law: The Goal of Romans 10:4,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 1994) 298.

¹² Jeffrey S. Lamp, “Is Paul Anti-Jewish? *Testament of Levi* 6 in the Interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 412, 424, 427. Also see Brendan Byrne, S.J., “The Problem of Νομος and the Relationship with Judaism in Romans,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000), 308.

¹³ Vincent M. Smiles, “The Concept of ‘Zeal’ in Second-Temple Judaism and Paul’s Critique of It in Romans 10:2”, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 299.

¹⁴ Douglas R. A. Hare, “How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000) 276.

Luke 4:1-13

Where the English uses devil the Latin uses Diabolus, derived from the Greek meaning accuser, the one who accuses human beings to God and seeks to cause them to give grounds for accusation, see Job 1:6 (LXX). The implied accusations of these temptations are that the Messiah is not acting like the Messiah.¹⁵ The devoted Faithful can relate to this whenever they are not making full use of their talents. The criteria for accountability is to do the will of the Father rather than what counts in the eyes of either the devil, personal self-esteem, or others. Accusers can readily misinterpret, misunderstand, and falsify accepting difficulties. Faithful responsibility includes looking past the exterior into the heart toward the Father.

In verses 7-8, the devil invites Jesus to *worship* him. This Greek is significant, because in another place the New American Bible, for the same Greek, uses *did him homage* at the time of the Ascension (Luke 24:52). Luke 24:52 will be used at readings 58C on the feast of the Ascension, an option for May 23 in the Richmond Diocese in 2004. The true meaning is *worship* as found in the other six uses of that word by Luke: (1) Luke 4:7-8; (2) Acts 5:27; (3) Acts 7:43; (4) Acts 8:27; (5) Acts 10:26; (6) Acts 24:11.¹⁶

Both Matthew and Luke narrate the three temptations of Jesus. Matthew and Luke differ in tone with regard to the second temptation, the temptation toward power. In Luke, the assumption is explicit that the devil can make the offer of "all the kingdoms of the world" within a context of the greater conflict with the kingdom of God. The presentation by Matthew 4:8-9 especially would not be a valid temptation, were the devil unable to make a valid offer.¹⁷ Matthew contains the Magi narrative and is more concerned with royal lineage than Luke. Luke is more concerned with the poor.¹⁸

¹⁵ Brendan Byrne, S.J., "Jesus as Messiah in the Gospel of Luke: Discerning a Pattern of Correction," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003), 86-88.

¹⁶ 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)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 230.

¹⁷ Mark Allan Powell, "The Magi as Kings: An Adventure in Reader-Response Criticism," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 468.

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In verse 3, Luke uses the singular, *stone* to become bread where Matthew 4:3, uses the plural, *stones* to turn into loaves.¹⁹ Such lack of concern on the part of the Evangelists is occasion for the Faithful for similar lack of concern in their understanding. Paul, in Romans, disagrees with the Jews for reading the Scriptures too closely.

An interesting difference is present between the *thou's* in the King James Version and the *you's* of the Lectionary. Scholars developed the King James Version between 1539 and 1604, at the very time standard English moved from *thou* to *you*. The problem was that the king directed the scholars not to depart from a Bishops' Bible of 1568 that relied on the Great Bible of 1539 a revision of the 1525 translation of Tyndale.²⁰

The further difficulty remains that people commonly use different syntax to address different people, from members of the family to those of greater and lesser social status, to the very God above. This sense of reverence challenges translators at the same time it challenges the devout Faithful not to confuse abandonment to the will of the Father with abandonment to outmoded ways of expression. Continuing with the trials and tribulations of the translators:

Verse 9

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	made him stand
The Greek means to make to stand, to set. The <u>Lectionary</u> implies <i>force</i> .	
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	statuit eum
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	set
<u>King James</u> (1611):	set
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	made him stand
<u>New American</u> (1970):	made him stand
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	set him

The temptation does not involve force, but enticement.

¹⁸ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Observations on the `Miracle Chapters' of Mathew 8-9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 563.

¹⁹ Neil J. McEleney, C.S.P., "Peter's Denials—How Many? To Whom?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 1990) 468.

²⁰ Alister McGrath, In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture (New York: Anchor Books: A Division of Random House, Inc., 2001) 268-269.

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Verse 13

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	every temptation ... for a time
The Greek means <i>every kind of</i> temptation...the Greek means for a more suitable occasion.	
The <u>Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	omni tentatione ... usque ad tempus
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	all the temptation ... for a time.
<u>King James</u> (1611):	all the temptation ... for a season.
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	all these ways of tempting him...to return at the appointed time.
<u>New American</u> (1970):	every temptation ... for a time
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	every way of putting him to the test ... until the opportune moment.

This final verse about returning at an opportune time means that the Faithful must always be on guard, in imitation of Christ. To recapitulate, the Exodus is not so much about leaving Egypt as leaving sin behind. The Psalm is about the Faithful accepting rather than abandoning responsibility and difficulties within the loving embrace of God. That acceptance becomes the glory of the Faithful. The Epistle implicitly accepts both the difficulty of the Christian cross and the need for penance and repentance. Finally, the Gospel spells out how Jesus accepted responsibility for his own difficult Messiahship, turning down every enticement with a view from the desert toward Jerusalem, the Cross and resurrection.

The most dangerous of the three temptations for the devout Faithful is the temptation toward *putting the Lord your God to the test* by abandoning available interior and exterior resources. Such abandonment is close to if not blasphemy. To remain devout, the Faithful must distinguish between relying on and trying to manipulate the fact that God loves them.

For more on sources, besides the footnotes, see the Appendix file.