

The key line for these Lectionary readings is “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5bc). The key wonderment is how this happens, how God, who is perfect in all things, can do anything that has not already been done? This is beyond me, but scholars struggle with the problem, a problem rooted in the Protestant Revolt. As for me, from personal experience, I know that God does things, but I have little idea how God does them.

In the Lectionary, Saint Paul is concerned about why God does what God does. In general, Paul is exercised over Jewish law, where Paul was an expert. As Paul expresses it for me in this reading, “we have been justified by faith” (Romans 5:1a). John, on the other hand, seems to care less about Jewish law, simply pointing out the power Jesus exercises in the name of God. Such is my attitude, as expressed this Sunday in John’s Gospel concerning living water for the Samaritan woman at the well.

Since the Holy Spirit acts through truth, there are several special verses in this Gospel for an old professor who is spending his life seeking truth. Truth is mentioned in verses 23-24, with the words of Jesus, “... the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth ... God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The reading concludes in verse 42, with the words of the Samaritans “... this is truly the savior of the world.” The countervailing weight of political pressures is the main reason truth is difficult to find. Truth means change and people are reluctant to change. Accepting truth often means giving up power, making change difficult.

In that vein, I continue to look for what the JustFaith apostolate is doing. So far there are no changes from the Fall 2007 program.¹ I would like to see them become more involved with racism.

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Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some of the fun stuff scholars are digging up.

Exodus 17:3-7

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

The Church uses this Psalm in Care for the Sick.²

¹ <http://www.justfaith.org/JM125.html> 080205.

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy³

Barker looks back to the Hebrew to interchange the word *Rock* as in *Rock of our salvation*, as “but a way of describing the invisible divine ‘form’ ...” Rock, then, is a divine title.”

Psalm 95:7-11

Todd D. Still, "*Christos as Pistos: The Faith(fulness) of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews*"⁴

Hebrews draws on these verses to excoriate “the wilderness generation’s infidelity to God.” Christ makes up for that lack of faith.

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

By mentioning *hope* twice, in verses 2 and 5, this reading gains political relevance in this season of Presidential Primary voting for who will be the nominees for President of the United States of America.

Romans 5:1

R. Barry Matlock, "*Even the Demons Believe*": *Paul and πιστις Εριστου*⁵

Matlock refers to several verses, including Romans 5:1, about being justified by faith, as a use of the term *faith* as a verb, to believe, and as a noun. There is no argument about how the term is used in this verse.

² 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: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 34, 38.

³ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, the quotation is from page 184, 192.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 753.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 313.

Rom 5:5

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., “Bernard Lonergan at the Service of the Church”⁶

Writing about the well-respected Bernard Lonergan, the Cardinal relates, “First, I was struck above all by a certain ‘mystical’ vision of human existence, which set out in first place the love of God poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Finally I had found a theologian who gave primacy to the experience of God ...”

Rom 5:5

Jill Raitt, review of Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mars S. Burrows (eds.), Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality⁷

According to Raitt, Dreyer “... suggests that the heart of Augustine’s theology of reconciliation is the love poured forth into hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5) (186).” The point that Dreyer is making is that “... by providing a different perspective, spirituality can inform theology.”

That is what I mean above the double line with “From personal experience, I know that God does things, but I have little idea how God does them.” We must also note that Protestant theology prefers Platonic philosophy and Augustine, where Catholic theology prefers Aristotelian philosophy and Aquinas. Dreyer is giving space to both approaches.

Romans 5:5

Neil J. Ormerod, “Two Points or Four?—Rahner and Lonergan on Trinity, Incarnation, Grace, and Beatific Vision”⁸

Ormerod asks, “is the life of grace sufficiently accounted for by the divine self-communication of the Holy Spirit?” Ormerod answers by distinguishing between created and uncreated grace, actual and habitual grace, and operative and cooperative grace. This is the article referenced above the double line, where scholars wonder how God can be involved with such activities as the Incarnation, grace, the beatific vision, and the Trinity. Ormerod is responding to Cardinal Martini, whose article is annotated at the top of this page.

Cf. John 4:42, 15

⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 2005) 519.

⁷ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 915.

⁸ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 3 (September 2007) 667.

John 4:5-42

John 4:1-42

Craig L. Blomberg, review of Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda, The Johannine Exegesis of God: An Exploration into the Johannine Understanding of God⁹

Sadananda asserts that John 4:1-42 reflects “the dialogues between the Johannine community and crypto-Christians and Samaritan believers, respectively.” Sadananda goes on, “... ‘Savior of the world’ is a better title than ‘Messiah’ to help Samaritans understand Jesus.” Blomberg asserts that if Sadananda “wants to argue that the Fourth Gospel does not view Jesus as preexistent and divine, he fails to convince.” In other words, Blomberg has reservations about the book he is reviewing.

John 4:5, 9

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History ¹⁰

Sychar, the place of the well, is near Shechem, which, in turn is north of Hebron. On the map, Shechem is on the route Abraham took from Ur to southern Turkey, to Egypt.

The maps also show how the Assyrians moved exiles both from and into Samaria. The Samaritans were exiled to Ecbatana, north of the Zagros Mountains, which, in turn, is north of Susa, about two hundred miles north of the Persian Gulf.

John 4:9

Charles H. Cosgrove, "Did Paul Value Ethnicity?"¹¹

Cosgrove uses this verse, *Jews have nothing to do with Samaritans*, to comment on the “cognitive map” of contemporaries of Saint Paul. This means that Paul was not predisposed to visit the Gentiles. Without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul would not have taken Jesus to the Gentiles.

John 4:13

Kyle Keefer, review of Herman Waetjen, The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple: A Work in Two Editions¹²

Keefer writes that Waetjen “... asserts that the living water of 4:13 refers back to Jer 2:13, then states that the woman’s five husbands correspond to the cults of 2 Kings 17, and concludes that the Samaritan woman eschatologically fulfills Isa

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July, 2005) 541

¹⁰ Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006, 25, 89.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 273.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (July 2007) 381.

52:6.” In other words, Waetjen exhibits great erudition. For this disappointed historian, Keefer writes, “that the tie between history and theology seems slim.”

John 4:23

Edward L. Bode, review of Alberto Casalegno, "Perché Contemplino la Mia Gloria" (Gv 17, 24): Introduzione alla teologia del Vangelo di Giovanni¹³

From this verse, Bode asserts that the Johannine community included Samaritans, a community “proven in hostility,” recognizing its universal mission.

John 4:26

Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., "The Gospel of John as Scripture"¹⁴

Moloney writes that “The narrative and discourse material throughout the Gospel claim, in various ways, that Jesus ‘utters the words of God’ ... revealing a teaching that is not his but comes from the one who sent him.” John 4:26 is one of the verses Moloney uses to support his position.

John 4:34

Mary L. Coloe, P.B.V.M., “Welcome into the Household of God: The Foot Washing in John 13”¹⁵

This essay is difficult because Coloe writes that “... Jesus’ deeds are termed *σημεία* (2:11; 4:34) ... “ I am unable to find *σημεία* in the Greek.¹⁶

John 4:34

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"¹⁷

Matera points out that Jesus is revealing the Father to the world.

¹³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2007) 574.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 2005) 462.

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 402.

¹⁶ 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 recensuerent et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII. 257.

¹⁷ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 250.

John 4:34

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J., "I Am the Door' (John 10:7, 9): Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel"¹⁸

Neyrey observes that a broker is one who does "the will of him who sent me." In this case, water is the inducement for brokerage between the woman and the well and her God.

John 4:34

Fr. Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., The Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist¹⁹

DeGrandis observes, "All of us have received work from the Lord; all of us have a ministry in life, even if it's only to our family and friends and parish. All of us make a difference. We have a distinct contribution to make. The world is better or worse depending on how we respond to God's grace."

John 4:39-45

Debbie Hunn, "Who Are 'They' in John 8:33?"²⁰

Hunn uses this verse as one of several to assert that Jesus does not immediately test the faith of his followers. That is a good thing, because I would just as soon not have my Faith tested.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

After-action Report

The sentence in Reading 70A, the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, February 3, 2008, "There is an aspect of life that Bette expresses as follows, 'Life is hell, and then you die.'" can be off-putting. The reference is to *an aspect* of life, not the totality of life. The term *hell* is meant in its colloquial sense of *difficult*, rather than its theological sense of eternal damnation.

¹⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (July 2007) 281, 282, 287.

¹⁹ Texas: Praising God Catholic Association, 1998, 17.

²⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 391.