

The post Vatican II liturgy has changed from a contemplative “He is risen as he said” to meditation that such a thing could happen. Both are valid ways to find God. The one is more direct, the other more reliant on reasoning. Saint Gregory Nazianzenus, bishop and doctor (329-390), may explain the liturgists where he writes, “ ... as I understand contemplation, safe only for those to attempt who have arrived at a more perfect manner of life, not good for the more simple souls, not for those yet strong in earthly appetites ... ”¹

Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, S.T.D., S.S.L, D.D.: no Liturgy comments for these readings, except to see above.

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

This first reading is available for Funerals, Part III. Texts of Sacred Scripture: 13 Funerals for Adults: New Testament Readings, pages 212-213. This reading uses verses 34-43. Verses 34-36, largely omitted in the Easter readings, portray Peter as the pioneer missionary to the Gentiles.² Funerals are a good time to find the resurrected Jesus in the lives of the Faithful, almost if not all of whom in the parish are Gentiles.

Luke, who wrote Acts, emphasizes how God acts through Jesus. Verse 38, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth.” As a result, the Faithful can meditate that Jesus rose from the dead. The wonder is different for the Faithful who begin contemplating Jesus as God in the first place. For them, “He has risen as he said.”

Luke pits Jesus against the devil,³ “healing all those oppressed by the devil.” Modern psychoanalysis offers a secular healing side to this devil. Modern psychoanalysis demonstrates how the human mind shields itself from painful memories, memories that then, demon-like surface unaware in behavior. Whatever Peter may have been hiding from himself in his impetuosity is dissolved in his later tears as he meditates on the fact that he betrayed his Christ. Such is the healing power of the Mass.

¹ XI. St. Gregory Nazianzenus, Bishop and Doctor, “On The Holy Pasch II,” The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 249.

² William O. Walker, Jr., “Galatians 5:7b-8 as a Non-Pauline Interpolation,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2003) 570.

³ Susan R. Garrett, “Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 4 (October 1990) 659.

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The greatest degree of agreement between John and the Synoptics is with Luke.⁴ The Lectionary does a service in bringing these texts together for the Faithful. Luke portrays Jesus as the source of divine benefactions on those who are afflicted or in need.⁵ The need is recognizing Christ as the Messiah. Contemplating Christ as the Messiah is one aspect of Easter. Another aspect of Easter is meditating on the wonderment of what happened. Both meditation and contemplation include recognizing Christ as the Messiah.

This wonderment includes an exodus from this life to the next. The notion of crossing over is contained in the word *Galilee* where Jesus began his public life, as mentioned by Peter in verse 37. Gregory (the Great?) writes, "For Galilee is interpreted as meaning, *passing-over (transmigration)*."⁶ Exodus is inherent in the public life of Jesus as brought out in this reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Verse 40 is part of the way the Apostles preached salvation through Jesus Christ. Verse 40 is not a particularly theological statement about salvation as effected by Christ.⁷ Verse 41 goes on to describe those to whom the risen Christ was visible. "Witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead," something the Faithful do at Mass.

⁴ Robert H. Stein, "The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July, 1992) 493.

⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Observations on the "Miracle Chapters" of Mathew 8-9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 563.

⁶ Exposition from the *Catena Aurea*, V. 7. "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he Goethe ... ", Gregory, The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 217.

⁷ 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) 361.

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 (24 or alleluia)

The Lectionary uses this Psalm as follows.

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in</u> <u>Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>		
41ABC	341	1-2, 16-17, 22-23	(alleluia)	Easter vigil
42ABC	346	1-2, 16-17, 22-23	(24 or alleluia)	today
43A	350-351	2-4, 13-15, 22-24	(1 or alleluia)	Easter 2
44B	356-357	2-4, 13-15, 22-24	(1 or alleluia)	Easter 2
45C	362-363	2-4, 13-15, 22-24	(1 or alleluia)	Easter 2
50B	394-395	1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29	(22)	Easter 4

Psalm 118 is a Pascal psalm, sung at the Pascal meal.⁸ *Alleluia* was in an original version of Psalm 118.⁹ The Lectionary places Psalm 118 here, even though John did not consider the Last Supper a Pascal meal.¹⁰ John writes that the Last Supper was before the Passover in verse 13:1. That notwithstanding, John uses Passover vocabulary to describe what happened. Jesus *passed over* from this world to the Father. Psalm 118 is about the Exodus, though this time not from the slavery of Egypt land to the freedom of the Promised Land but from the slavery of sin to the freedom of Everlasting Life. Easter is about the joy of arrival in the Promised Land of grace.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, verse 22, calls for a new foundation and, possibly, a new temple. Because the religious establishment knew Psalm 118 well, when Jesus told the parable of the Wicked Vineyard Tenants, the religious establishment got the point.¹¹ The Faithful also get the point of the need for repentance and change of life from sin to grace.

⁸ Mark Kiley, "'Lord, Save my Life' (Psalm 116:4) as Generative Text for Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer (Mark 14:36a)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 4 (October 1986) 655.

⁹ Lloyd M. Barré, "*Halelu yah*': A Broken Inclusion," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 195, 196, 197.

¹⁰ Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 206.

¹¹ Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 1989), 240, 244.

The Faithful when they discover they are not as good as they want to be, can find themselves in a situation similar to the religious establishment. The need is to prevent the mind from shielding itself from painful truths, thereby giving those truths the opportunity to work their wrath subconsciously and unconsciously. In a more positive sense, the need is to face up to and endure unpleasant truths in order to love with a clean heart.

Colossians 3:1-4

Amazingly, Paul insists that Jesus is not the only one to rise from the dead, but the Faithful are to rise as well. In thinking past the demons of life, Paul urges concentrating on eternal rather than earthly Life. Verse 3, "your life is hidden with Christ in God," may mean hidden from the devil and even from oneself. In other words, Paul admonishes not worrying about unintentional sinfulness, but concentrating as best one can on doing the right thing. The new promise is to rise again with the glory of Christ.

1 Corinthians 5:7b-8a

1 Corinthians reflects on Christ as the Pascal Lamb. The idea of my sins killing the Christ bespeaks a love from God to me beyond imagination. The love of God is not quite unconditional. The condition is Faith and faithfulness as best one can do. Paul wants the Faithful to rejoice in the Lord, rather than in human honors.

John 20:1-9

The synoptic parallels with John 20:1-13: Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; and Luke 24:1-12.¹²

Mary of Magdala portrays a primacy of Faith. Mary of Magdala of the Lectionary is the same as Mary Magdalene, more commonly known. The Evangelist only portrays Mary of Magdala not finding the body. I like to think that she realized that Christ had risen from the dead, but that Peter and John would not react to that reality, but to the reality that the body was now missing. Consequently, the Evangelist simply records that Mary of Magdala said the body was missing.

The Evangelist is careful about human precedence, showing how Peter went into the tomb first. Precedence belongs to Mary of Magdala, who certainly went into the tomb to make sure the body was missing. Peter probably asked her if she was

¹² Robert H. Stein, "The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July, 1992) 489, footnote 23.

certain she was not hallucinating. The Evangelist never says that Mary of Magdala did not understand what had happened, only that Peter and John had not yet figured it out.

Mary of Magdala is linked with Joanna the apostle in Luke 8:1-3.¹³ In verse 2, Mary of Magdala reports, “we don’t know where they put him,” meaning more than Mary made the original discovery.¹⁴ Perhaps Peter and John needed Mary of Magdala to point out the exact tomb in which Jesus was laid.¹⁵ Richard Bauckham writes, “... Mary Magdalene ... John 20:1, was the one woman disciple of Jesus who was universally known in the early church and most tenaciously remembered in the traditions as a witness of the empty tomb.”¹⁶

Figuring out the meaning of Jesus Christ entering history is important for John who structures his Gospel according to signs found in the Book of Wisdom. The Resurrection is the final sign for John, corresponding to the resurrection out of slavery depicted in the Exodus.¹⁷

Easter is about the Exodus from earthly to heavenly life. Saint Bede writes, “This rolling back of the stone mystically suggests the unlocking of the Mysteries of Christ, which were concealed by the covering of the Law: for the Law was written on stone.”¹⁸

¹³ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 110.

¹⁴ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 222, 267.

¹⁵ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 283.

¹⁶ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 237.

¹⁷ Douglas K. Clark, “Signs in Wisdom and John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 205 and 208.

¹⁸ Exposition from the Catena Aurea, V.4. “And looking, they saw the stone rolled back from the door.” Bede, The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume

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The motion through these readings is through reason and meditation. The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles is a speech by Saint Peter proclaiming what has happened. The Psalm is an exclamation of joy at what has happened. Colossians explains that what has happened enables the Faithful to live the very life of God. The Gospel is about Mary Magdalene immediately understanding what she contemplates in the empty tomb, something Peter and John have to spend some time figuring out. The Lectionary invites the Faithful to relax with Mary Magdalene to enjoy their life in Christ.

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

Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 215.