

Personal Notes
080413 Fourth Sunday of Easter 49A
© 2017
Raymond J. Jirran

These Personal Notes have long been about prioritizing truth over politics, in that truth should determine politics, not politics truth. Saint Augustine makes a different prioritization, by substituting justice for truth. What Sacred Scripture means by *righteousness* or *justification* mystifies me. How can one be self-assuredly righteous or just, without being self-righteous in a negative sense? This seems to be a double-bind, while trying to be humble and non-judgmental. I can understand what righteousness means, if it means truth speaking to power, which I think it may. Understanding justice as truth makes sense to me.

Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J. brings his usual sense of Eucharistic intimacy to bear on these readings and, indirectly, on justification. Citing John 10:10,¹ DeGrandis urges the Faithful not to be afraid to ask for things, such as freedom from guilt, at the Eucharistic table. DeGrandis does not say to pray to be free from whatever is causing guilt, but to be free from guilt, whether the guilt is justified or not. That makes a good personal prayer for Bette and me in whatever it may be that causes us to be nervous.

At the canon of the Mass, the Faithful ask for relief from anxiety. One of the priests at Our Lady of Mount Carmel used to make it *useless* anxiety. Being relieved from guilt is different from being relieved from anxiety, whether useful or not. DeGrandis urges the Faithful to pray for their needs, such as freedom from guilt and anxiety, in Eucharistic intimacy. The Lectionary readings for this Sunday are Eucharistic.

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:38 promises the gift of the Holy Spirit. Psalm 23:4 proclaims *you are at my side*, especially in the Holy Eucharist. Psalm 23:5, *the table spread before me*, is the Eucharistic Table. 1 Peter 2:24, which I translated from the Greek, urges the Faithful that *we might live for righteousness*. At John 1:10 Jesus explains, "... I came so that they [the Faithful] might have life and have it more abundantly."

From the Ordo,² the Faithful learn that today is "Vocations Sunday" for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. I note that we are not praying for vocations to the episcopacy, that is, bishops. Evidently, the hierarchy does not feel

¹ Fr. Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., The Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist (Texas: Praising God Catholic Association, 1998) 10.

² The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist: 2008: Year A: Sunday Cycle: Year 2: Weekday Cycle: Archdiocese of Louisville: Dioceses of Arlington, Covington, Lexington, Owensboro, Richmond; Wheeling-Charleston, Rev. Peter D. Rocca, C.S.C. (comp.), (Mahwah, New Jersey 07430: Paulist Press Ordo, 997 Macarthur Boulevard, 2007) 99.

that the Faithful need to concern themselves with either better or more bishops. With the cover-up scandals continuing, the Faithful certainly do need better bishops. Whether the Faithful need more bishops, I leave to others to decide.

Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from and is based upon material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some of the interesting details scholars and others are presenting.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

At 2:38, Peter explains how the Faithful are to act. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you ..." Acts 2:40 goes on to note that Peter "testified with many other arguments," giving support to the education of the Faithful. One should, therefore, expect insights at the time of receiving the Eucharist.

Acts 2:1-41

Thomas Hughson, S.J., "Interpreting Vatican II: `A New Pentecost'"³

Hughson uses this section of Acts to cite Leon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens, that "he interpreted the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41) by recourse to Paul's insight into how one and the same body of Christ has many parts, how one and the same Spirit gives many gifts and ministries (1 Cor 12:4-11)," which is how I pray the Holy Spirit regards these Personal Notes.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults⁴

In their Catechism, the U.S. Bishops include Acts 2:36 as "God has made him both Lord and Messiah," whereas in their Lectionary they have "God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus ..." I think this divergence is a sign of internal difference between the U.S. Bishops and the Vatican. The U.S. Bishops ironically cite this verse in Chapter 9, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

³ Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2008) 17.

⁴ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006 109.

Acts 2:36

Robert C. Tannehill, review of Robert F. O'Toole, S.J., Luke's Presentation of Jesus: A Christology⁵

Tannehill asserts that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, is an indication that Jesus is not coequal with God. In their Catechism, the Bishops seem unaware of any problem when they quote the verse.

Acts 2:37

Gregory R. Perry, review of Filip Noel, The Travel Narrative in the Gospel of Luke: Interpretation of Lk 9:51—19:28⁶

Noel asserts that Luke is concerned about, "What must I do to inherit eternal life" (Luke 10:25). At Acts 2:37, Luke reports "... and they asked Peter and the other apostles, 'What are we to do, my brothers.'" The answer is "Repent and be baptized."

Acts 2:37

Joseph Plevnik, "'The Eleven and Those with Them' According to Luke"⁷

Plevnik writes, "the expression *hoi loipoi* in the sense 'the rest' (of them) occurs in Acts 2:37 [in the readings for this Sunday]; 5:13; 17:9; 27:44; 28:9, which demonstrates Luke's familiarity with, if not preference for, this word." In English, *hoi polloi* means 1. ordinary people; 2. people of distinction.⁸ Acts 2:37 uses *hoi loipoi* to refer to *the other apostles*, in other words, not limiting *apostles* to twelve.

Acts 2:37

Richard J. Dillon, "The Benedictus in Micro- and Macrocontext"⁹

Dillon observes that Luke takes his time mentioning that Jesus forgives sins. The reason seems to be that Luke is separating Jesus from John the Baptizer, whose disciples seem to have tracked Luke and Paul in their missionary activities.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2006) 773.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 478.

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 2 (July 1978) 208.

⁸ *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Merriam-Webster, 2002. <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com> (29 March, 2008).

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 478.

Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (1)

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy¹⁰

Barker makes the point about the Eucharistic Table, mentioned above the double line.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults¹¹

The Bishops link the Twenty-third Psalm with John 10:10, which DeGrandis used above. In line with my concern for being relieved of guilt, the Bishops write of “the need of calming down.” The Bishops have this section in Chapter 19, “Anointing the Sick and the Dying.”

1 Peter 2:20b-25

The Lectionary uses *suffered* at 1 Peter 2:20b and 21. The Greek uses two different words, the first one meaning suffered in the ordinary sense, but the second one connoting beaten upon with fists. The Greek for the *example* Jesus left, connotes a template. 1 Peter 2:22, “no *deceit* was found in his mouth,” connotes baiting language,” rather than an outright lie. 1 Peter 2:25 mentions Jesus as the Good Shepherd, which, in turn, relates to Psalm 23 (*The Lord is my shepherd*) and Saint Peter, the episcopal shepherd, in Acts.

When John refers to Jesus as a Shepherd, the meaning is an analogous one, opening up many interpretations. Scholars below help bring the metaphors of John into clearer focus.

1 Peter 2:22

Richard Clifford, S.J. and Khaled Anatolois, "Christian Salvation: Biblical and Theological Perspectives"¹²

1 Peter 2:22 is about Jesus having no sin. The context for calling this verse to mind is a section titled, “Augustine as an Exponent of the Sapiential Model (*De Trinitate*). This is the cause for the reference to Saint Augustine, above the double line.

¹⁰ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003 90, 243, 248.

¹¹ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006 258-259.

¹² Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2005) 766.

1 Peter 2:13—3:7

John H. Elliott, review of Kenneth J. Thomas and Margaret Orr Thomas, Structure and Orality in 1 Peter: A Guide for Translators¹³

Elliott faults the Thomases for not realizing that this section of 1 Peter is about restoring order.

1 Peter 2:18-25

Todd D. Still, "*Christos as Pistos: The Faith(fulness) of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews*"¹⁴

Todd Still observes that this section of 1 Peter is about the faithfulness of Jesus, a faithfulness upon which Hebrews focuses. The author of Hebrews, perhaps, worried that 1 Peter, "Rocky," lacked sufficient details for good understanding.

John 10:14

John 10:1-10

John 9:1—10:20

Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., "The Gospel of John as Scripture"¹⁵

Moloney observes that John 10:1-10 is part of the "journeys of faith" in which the Faithful grow in their understanding of God.

Daniel Liderbach, S.J., review of Ruben Zimmermann, Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: Die Christopoetik des Vierten Evangeliums unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung von Job 10¹⁶

Of Zimmerman, Liderbach writes,

The "sheep" metaphor in John 10 includes the contrast between the shepherd and the thief that, again, points to something else. The sheep—that is believers—know the voice of the shepherd by keeping their eyes upon the wholly trusted Lord, while those who reduce Jesus to logic or science are followers of the thief. John drew his Christology from the first-century interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The images of shepherd, sheep, and thief stood for realities within the

¹³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2007) 596.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 754.

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 2005) 465.

¹⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 2006) 669.

world and the community in John's own day, as they can for realities within our own day.

This comment about logic and science leaves this retired college professor with a felt need to be more humble.

John 10:8

Richard I. Pervo, review of Scott Shauf, Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19¹⁷

As I do my own academic work, revising my dissertation on the history of Cleveland, Ohio and African-Americans, I am struck by the following comment by Pervo.

Granting that most dissertations could take John 10:8 [All who came before me are thieves and robbers ...] as an epigraph [a statement encapsulating an attitude or theme] S.'s review of research pursues only perceived weaknesses rather than noting which questions various scholars were attempting to answer and the merits of their individual contributions.

This is something about which to pray to the Holy Spirit. I hope I am not overlooking the merit in the scholars about whom I am commenting in my present academic work.

John 10:7, 9

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

This article develops the metaphor Jesus used to describe himself, the metaphor translated as *gate*, rather than *door* in the Lectionary.

John 10:10

David G. Schultenover, S.J., "From the Editor's Desk"¹⁹

Schultenover is the Editor in Chief of Theological Studies. Commenting on John 10:10, Schultenover writes,

Several articles in this (June 2007) issue of *Theological Studies* prompted in me the realization that at the root of all my teaching is the

¹⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (July, 2007) 166.

¹⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 271-291.

¹⁹ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 2 (June 2007) 229.

Personal Notes
080413 Fourth Sunday of Easter 49A
© 2017
Raymond J. Jirran

concept and reality of Christian conversion: of conversion from being born in God's image to actually, in the process of maturation, embracing the implications of that reality—after Paul's already-but-not-yet injunction that I paraphrase as *You are Christian (by baptism), now act like it!* You may yet *become* what you *are*.

This attitude is present among the Faithful in my parish, especially with regard to racism, which seventy-five percent of adults in the United States regard as sinful. The only more sinful act is adultery at eighty-one percent. The next least sinful act is using "hard" drugs such as cocaine, heroin, meth, LSD, at sixty-five percent. Only eighteen percent regard not attending church or religious services regularly as sinful. The research had nothing about ignoring the Magisterium of the Church.

USA Today used this as an inside front-page story, with the following headings: "Is sin dead? No, not by a long shot. Yet as Easter approaches [this was written the Thursday before Easter], some pastors and theologians worry: How can Christians celebrate Jesus' atonement for their sins and the promise of eternal life in his resurrection if they don't recognize themselves as sinners." Ellison Research did the research in August 2007, with a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent. Ellison defined sin as "something that is almost always considered wrong, particularly from a religious or moral perspective." The article concludes, quoting Mark Driscoll, "Without an idea of sin, Easter is meaningless."²⁰

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

After-action Report

Reading 42ABC 080323, for Easter is a four-page model of what I am trying to do. Those Personal Notes make particularly good use of history.

²⁰ Cathy Lynn Grossman, "Is sin dead?" USA Today, Thursday, March 20, . 2008, Life: Section D, page 1 column 5 and page 2, columns 1-2.