

## Readings

First Reading:	Acts 9:26-31
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32 (26a)
Second Reading	1 John 3:18-24
Alleluia	John 15:4a, 5b
Gospel:	John 15:1-8

## Commentary

The Easter Season realizes the fulfillment of the Old Law. Somewhat similarly, the Easter Season also realizes the fulfillment of the Natural Law. In the Old Dispensation, religious leaders imposed burdens on the Faithful, without lifting a finger to help. In the New Dispensation, religious leaders impose similar burdens (pelvic politics) on the Faithful without lifting a finger to help, under the guise of being helpful, but really being arrogant.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul symbolizes the Old Law turned New. Paul also symbolizes throwing off the burdens of the Old Law in favor of the New Dispensation in the love and words of Jesus. In the New Dispensation, life is eternal.

That is how Jesus understood the Twenty-Second Psalm, that he recited on the Cross. In verse 30, the Psalmist sings, "To him alone shall bow down all who sleep in the earth." That means God sustains the Faithful in the afterlife. Both the Natural Law and the Old Law seem irrelevant there. In the next life, even Faith and Hope no longer exist, because everything is realized and there is nothing left for which to believe or hope. Only the Word remains, the Word of Love.

The First Letter of John says, "... let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth," music to the ears of this old retired professor. All truth is truth in the life of Jesus. For Christians, at least, all truth expresses itself and is expressed in love. Where both the Old Law and the Natural Law facilitate love, they facilitate the life of the Faithful; otherwise not. The nit-picking burdens of both laws frustrate, rather than enhance the ability to love. That is what it means to *remain in* Jesus, like the branch in the vine.

All of the above is somewhat removed from the realities of life, realities that civic legislators confront. It is one thing to preach about Natural Law in the abstract; it is something else to run for public office on a platform of putting the Natural Law into common everyday practice, as developed below.

The following is the promised continuation and conclusion for developing a relationship between Raymond Arroyo, "The World Over," on EWTN and these Personal Notes. On March 22, when the preparation for these remarks began, Arroyo

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featured the Three Priests and did not report on any other news.<sup>1</sup> Maybe these remarks are getting through. I cringe in anticipation of how Arroyo will treat the news about the bishop disinviting himself from attending graduation ceremonies at the University of Notre Dame, because he does not like the pelvic politics of Barack Obama.

A Civic Political Solution to the Dilemmas Associated with Abortion.

Catholics are going to be involved with whatever civic remedies legislatures develop for abortion. Roman Catholics are 30.1 per cent of all members of Congress. The 111<sup>th</sup> United States Congress has 161 Roman Catholics, 135 Representatives and 26 Senators. In 2008, Roman Catholics were 70.2 percent Democrat, up 3.7 per cent from 2006.<sup>2</sup> The new Congress gained fifteen more pro-choice members.<sup>3</sup> Between 1971 and 2006, the largest demographic change occurred among Roman Catholic Democrats, from thirty-two to sixty-seven percent pro-choice.<sup>4</sup>

These Catholics have abandoned the idea that they are under siege as Catholics in favor of the idea that they competently bring Catholicism into the public square with truth and transparency. Because of their political power and influence, Catholics are immune to unsophisticated approaches to morality. They must deal with issues substantively, either with or without the guidance of Holy Mother the Church, with truth, compassion, and sophistication.

One does not get into the Congress without being a good speaker. As Dean R. Hoge of The Catholic University of America writes,

Unlike church politicians in Protestant denominations, those in the Catholic Church do not play to the masses of laity, since a popular following is of no particular value. Being a beloved man of the people is not a qualification for higher office, certainly at the present

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Arroyo, the Encore Presentation on ETWN, "The World Over," Sunday, March 22, 2009. I do not own the technology required to record this program, and accept the risk associated therewith.

<sup>2</sup> N.a., "Congressional Religious Affiliations Reveal Greater Diversity," Voice of Reason: The Journal of Americans for Religious Liberty, Vol. 106, No. 1 (2009), 3.

<sup>3</sup> N.a. "Updates: Obama Reaffirms Support for Choice," Voice of Reason: The Journal of Americans for Religious Liberty, Vol. 106, No. 1 (2009), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Al Menendez, review of Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese (eds.), Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power, Voice of Reason: The Journal of Americans for Religious Liberty, Vol. 106, No. 1 (2009), 19.

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time. No bishops are charismatic preachers. Indeed there are no nationally-known Catholic preachers today, and no TV preachers.<sup>5</sup>

This means that Catholic legislators approach their constituents with a different mind-set from that of their Bishops. Legislators need sound reasons to support the authority of their Bishops. Otherwise, their constituents will turn them out of office. Our focus now turns to such legislators.

So far, these Notes first developed abortion as a moral problem and a dilemma. Last Sunday, these Notes considered abortion from the point of view of the Bishops. This Sunday, the Notes look at civic considerations.

A philosophical reason for wanting a more sophisticated explanation about when the fertilized cells become human is that Saint Thomas Aquinas said that whenever they became human, it was not at the moment of conception. When and which organisms are human is a philosophical question. Philosophy is not a particularly strong suit in the United States. To my dismay, Charles E. Curran writes,

The doctrine of natural law has no Catholic presuppositions about it, but, unfortunately, American universities and intellectuals no longer accept it. The principles of the American consensus belong to the remote principles of natural law, which is the task not of the people as a whole but of the wise. [John Courtney] Murray [, S.J. (1904-1967)] maintained, somewhat audaciously, that not only can Catholics accept the American consensus, but, on the basis of natural law, Catholics are the only ones with the ability to rebuild and to rearticulate the consensus.<sup>6</sup>

That is the type of political nonsense with which Catholic legislators are dealing.

A medical reason for wanting a more sophisticated explanation about the humanity of a fertilized human egg is that between thirty and ninety percent of fertilized eggs discharge from the mother without her ever knowing it. A friend pointed out that during the 1940s, even at a secular hospital associated with a Yale University, the medical profession had distain for abortionists and regarded the aborted fetus as human.

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<sup>5</sup> Dean R. Hoge, "Interpreting change in American Catholicism: The River and the Floodgate," Review of Religious Research: Special 50th Anniversary Edition, Vol. 50 (October 2008) 56.

<sup>6</sup> Charles E. Curran, Catholic Moral Theology in the United States: A History (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008) 78.

At that time, performing an abortion was illegal and unsafe for both mother and incipient life. With abortions legal, at least the physical health of the mother is safer. Without professional medical care, the damage to the mother and her surviving children is incalculable. No one ever wants an abortion. Like suicide, abortion is a proportionate-reason way out of a moral dilemma. The better approach is making it something no one wants to do, rather than something illegal.

Arroyo is pressuring the National Council of Catholic Bishops to take the stance Arroyo thinks it should. Arroyo does not admit any Catholic mantle legitimacy to those who may disagree with his Republican Bush-adulating politics. Arroyo would rather see a non-Catholic (than a Catholic) in the Obama administration, an administration Arroyo treats, on the face of it, as immoral.

By not sharing how our fellow Catholics who evidently disagree with their local Ordinaries think, Arroyo does a disservice both to himself and to the community, both Catholic and non-Catholic, at large. Arroyo is following a “pay-pray-and-obey” Catholicism. What we need is thinking, charitable, compassionate, truthful Christian leadership. Instead we get “judge, condemn, and punish,” as if we were merely penitents in need of absolution. What some of us are seeking is truth in a fog of dictatorship. That calls for prayer, which is the purpose of these Notes. These Notes are designed to furnish topics for prayer.

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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 scholarly prayer-provoking information.

#### **Acts 9:26-31**

Acts 9:27

*He had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus* presents a difficulty in the Greek manuscripts at *the name of Jesus*. Some manuscripts have *the name of the Lord*. I do not regard this difficulty as causing a particular problem. The continuing point of the exercise reaching into the original manuscripts is to shake confidence in which words belong in Sacred Scripture, thereby, bringing some humility into the self-righteousness required to lead a Christian life.

Acts 9:1-31

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults<sup>7</sup>

The Bishops use these verses in Chapter 18, “Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.” The Bishops associate conversion with the sacrament. The Bishops write, “Paul was converted from persecuting Christians to becoming one of the greatest disciples of Christ who ever lived (cf. Acts 9:1-31).”

### **Psalm 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32 (26a)**

Codex Sinaiticus<sup>8</sup>

I found no problems with the Greek text.

Psalm 22:30

Richard J. Bautch, “An Appraisal of Abraham’s Role in Postexilic Covenants”<sup>9</sup>

The Covenant means, “the immanent God is both personal and constant. That is the divine life giver who fashions all creatures is constantly within them, to enliven and if need be protect them on an ongoing basis.”

### **1 John 3:18-24**

1 John 3:19, 21

There are two difficulties in the Greek manuscripts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, *Now this is how* is missing from some important manuscripts. In the 21<sup>st</sup> verse, *Beloved* is in difficult contention with *Brothers* as the better word.

1 John 3:18-24

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr. [“tr.” Is an abbreviation for translator.]<sup>10</sup>

There is a Seventh Century parchment in the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Cologne. Selly Oak College, Birmingham has a Sixth Century manuscript.

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<sup>7</sup> Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 236.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/manuscript.aspx?book=26&chapter=22&inputControl=420&lid=en&side=r&zoomSlider=0> 080817 Psalm 22 in the Lectionary is Psalm 21 in the Codex.

<sup>9</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 56.

<sup>10</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 101-126.

1 John 3:18

Dino Dozzi, "'Thus Says the Lord' The Gospel in the Writings of Saint Francis"<sup>11</sup>  
*Deed and truth* Saint Francis took to mean how Jesus lived his life. Dozzi explains

We cannot follow the way pointed out by Jesus in the Gospel without "doing the truth" in the Johannine sense, that is, without making God's project revealed by Jesus in the Gospel our own through faith. That is why the *Earlier Rule XI*, 5 also cites 1 John 3:18: "Let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth."

## John 15:4a, 5b

### John 15:1-8

The Church makes this Gospel available for visits to the sick.<sup>12</sup>

John 15:8

The Greek is difficult with the word *become* in *become my disciples*. The difficulty is with the tense, whether future middle or aorist, i.e. already accomplished.

John 15:1-8

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.<sup>13</sup>

The Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Cologne has a parchment dating from about 200.

John 15:13

Richard A. McCormick, S.J., The Critical Calling: Reflections on Moral Dilemmas Since Vatican II<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, Supplement (2004) 106.

<sup>12</sup> 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) 67, 158.

<sup>13</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 100, 101.

<sup>14</sup> Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1989, 2006, 202.

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McCormick uses John 15:13 to write,

... life is a basic good but not an absolute one. It is basic because it is the necessary source and condition of every human activity and of all society. It is not absolute because there are higher goods for which life can be sacrificed. Thus in John (15:13): "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." Therefore laying down one's life cannot be contrary to the faith or [Christian] story or meaning of human persons.

This value judgment (theme) has immediate relevance for care of the ill and dying. It issues in a basic attitude or policy: not all means must be used to preserve life. Thus in bioethics, the Catholic tradition has moved between two extremes: medico-moral optimism (which preserves life with all means, at any cost, no matter what its condition) and medico-moral pessimism (which actively kills when life becomes onerous, dysfunctional, boring). Merely technological judgments could fall prey to either of these two traps.

I pray that Arroyo's programs, sermons from the altar, Catholic publications, and the Campus Ministry would more frequently use such a level of sophistication.

John 15:1-8

Alice L. Laffey, review of Maurizio Marcheselli, "Avete qualcosa da mangiare?" Un pasto, il Risorto, la comunità<sup>15</sup>

Lafferty reports that Marcheselli explains.

A group of disciples, representing all who have already come to the faith, experience the failure of their own missionary efforts. They initially work at night, under the conditions of those who do not have the light of the world, verifying existentially the truth of Jesus' word given at the moment of his farewell: "Without me you can do nothing" (15:5). ... The works, by which people become attracted to the Lord, bring them into community and keep them in unity (10:16; 11:52; 17:20-23; cf. 15:1-8 [used here]).

John 15:3, 4

Dino Dozzi, "'Thus Says the Lord' The Gospel in the Writings of Saint Francis" <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 159.

<sup>16</sup> Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, Supplement (2004) 27, 74.

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Saint Francis accepted the approach, *Remain in me, as I remain in you*. Dozzi writes, "... purification of the heart through the word recalls the words from John: 'You are already clean because of the word I spoke to you' (Jn 15:3)." The Lectionary uses the word *pruned*. The Vulgate *mundi*, suits *cleaned*. The Greek καθαροι also suits *clean*. I wonder where *pruned* comes from.

John 15:3

Lectionary (1998)                      You are already pruned  
It could appear that *pruned* sounded like a fruit, the prune, turned into a verb, making one *full of prunes* as it were.

The Vulgate (circa 410)              lam vos mundi estis

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610)        Now you are clean

King James (1611)                Now ye are clean

Catholic RSV (1969)              You are already made

New American (NAB) (1970)      You are already pruned  
A footnote explains, "Or 'have been pruned'. The same root denotes in Gk 'pruning' and 'cleansing'. Cf. 13:10. [about washing the feet of the disciples *clean*.] William D. Mounce does not show this root including the sense of *prune*.<sup>17</sup>

New Jerusalem (1985)            You are clean

This is one of the few places where the New American agrees with the New Jerusalem versus the other translations.

John 15:4-5

Tobias Hagerland, "The Power of Prophecy: A Septuagintal Echo in John 20:19-23."<sup>18</sup>

The identity of the Faithful with Jesus makes them prophets.

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<sup>17</sup> William D. Mounce, Zondervan Greek Reference Series: The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House: A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 257.

<sup>18</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 95.



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John 15:5

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J., "'I Am the Door' (John 10:7, 9): Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel"<sup>19</sup>

The idea of the vine suits the idea of a broker, Jesus, between the Faithful and the Father. A vine brokers the nutrients of the soil to the branches. Neyrey argues, "Not only does the broker belong to both worlds; he bridges them in his own person."

John 15:6

Edward F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., "Teaching in Parables: (Mk 4:10-12; Lk 8:9-10; Mt 13:10-15)"<sup>20</sup>

The phrase, *throw them into a fire* means that people should not trifle with Jesus.

John 15:18-27

Craig R. Koester, review of Francisco Lozada, Jr., and Tom Thatcher (eds.), New Currents through John: A Global Perspective<sup>21</sup>

Koester reports that one of the contributors, Yak-hwee Tan, "explores the way the image of the vine and the branches develops a sense of Christian identity (John 1:1-17) in relation to a hostile world (15:18-237)."

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

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<sup>19</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 284, 289.

<sup>20</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January 1961) 4.

<sup>21</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 203.