

The meaning of the following readings is of things to come. While suffering is not a necessary precondition to the New Covenant, love, of which suffering is often evidence, is necessary. Love without worrying about suffering is the meaning of these readings. In a more selfish sense, these readings are about Faith in the Promise of eternal life with the Father. In a less selfish sense, these readings are about the love of God for his people and the love of the People of God for their God.

### **Acts 14:21-27**

Almost as an act of suffering, these readings in Acts describe exercise of power. Within the Church, Ordination is one of those exercises. The language of Ordination is not as evident in the Lectionary as in the Nova Vulgata.

Verse 23

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	They appointed ...
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	ordinassent ...
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	ordained (verse 22)
<u>King James</u> (1611):	ordained
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	appointed
<u>New American</u> (1970):	appointed
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	appointed

The readings teach the Faithful to love one another without worrying about any inadvertent suffering involved with such issues as Ordination and other exercises of power within the Church.

### **Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13 (cf. 1)**

The Lectionary uses this Psalm as follows.

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in</u> <u>Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>	
54C	414	8-9, 10-11, 12-13	(cf. 1) Today
100A	678-679	1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14	(cf. 1) Ordinary 14
110B	430	10-11, 15-16, 17-18	(cf. 16) Ordinary 17
112A	741	8-9, 15-16, 17-18	(cf. 16) Ordinary 17
133A	840	2-3, 8-9, 17-18	(18a) Ordinary 25
153C	938	1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14	(cf. 1) Ordinary 31

The antiphon, "I will praise your name forever, my king and my God" is about loving without worrying about any suffering involved. Appropriately, Pastoral

Care of the Sick, Part II: Pastoral Care of the Dying, Chapter Eight: Rites for Exceptional Circumstances, Continuous Rite of Penance, Anointing, and Viaticum, Responsorial Psalms E, uses Psalm 145.<sup>1</sup>

Two more points complete these observations. Psalm 145 is an alphabetical acrostic, i.e. developed verse by verse according to the Hebrew alphabet. Acrostic psalms, therefore, favor the rational over the emotional,<sup>2</sup> which is the human way to cope with suffering. That is the first observation.

The second observation arises from the translation

Verse 12

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	children of Adam
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	filiis hominum
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	sons of men (Psalm 144)
<u>King James</u> (1611):	sons of men
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	mankind
<u>New American</u> (1970):	all
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	children of Adam

Since Jesus refers to himself as “son of man,” the translation of the Psalm takes on a new meaning. The meaning is that God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world as a demonstration of that love, a demonstration accepting suffering as a means to eternal glory with the Father.

## **Revelation 21:1-5a**

In a similar vein to “I will praise your name forever, my king and my God,” Pastoral Care of the Sick, Part III: Readings, Responses, and verses from Sacred Scripture, holds up verses 1-7<sup>3</sup> for New Testament Readings: Easter Season, V. Part II: Pastoral Care of the Dying, Chapter Six, Commendation of

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<sup>1</sup> 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) 328.

<sup>2</sup> Hanan Eshel and John Strugnell, “Alphabetical Acrostics in Pre-Tannaitic Hebrew,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 444.

<sup>3</sup> Pastoral Care, page 280.

the Dying holds up verses 1-5a, 6-7<sup>4</sup> as Reading D. Funerals uses verses 1-5a, 6b-7<sup>5</sup> in Part III: Texts of Sacred Scripture: Funerals for Adults, New Testament Readings 19. Funerals also uses Verses 1a, 3-5a<sup>6</sup> in 14. Funerals for Baptized Children, New Testament Readings 253.

Revelation is about the excitement of understanding the meaning of the New Covenant. John charges the situation with marital happiness, relating the Faithful as brides of God via Jesus.<sup>7</sup> The New Jerusalem is about worldly<sup>8</sup> things entering the reign of God; the New Jerusalem is about rectifying human misadventures from the natural order. The readings are also about a battle groom and bride fight and eventually win against evil, including the inadvertent bad things the Faithful do to themselves. Revelation is overwhelmed with joy and happiness.

### **John 13:34**

Happiness is not only about loving “one another as I have loved you,” but about the ability to do so. Sometimes the Faithful so mess up their lives and the lives of those about them that love becomes a wonder of Faith. The Greek for this commandment of the New Covenant<sup>9</sup> can be placed in the imperative, Do it!

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<sup>4</sup> Pastoral Care, page 173.

<sup>5</sup> 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) 222-223.

<sup>6</sup> Funerals, page 253.

<sup>7</sup> Kevin E. Miller, “The Nuptial Eschatology of Revelation 19—22,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 60, No. 2 (April 1998) 301-318.

<sup>8</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, “*Κοσμος* in John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 95.

<sup>9</sup> Charles H. Talbert, “Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 20.

mood.<sup>10</sup> Jesus leaves the Faithful no choice but to fight through suffering with love.

### **John 13:31-33a, 34-35**

In this passage, John joins the Faithful in their love of God and neighbor to the love of God towards them. With that accomplished, the song, “Don’t worry, be happy” fits the Christian life through whatever evil may happen. Chapter 13 is part of the Book of Glory in John, the glory of an Exodus from sin into a Promised Land of the love of God.<sup>11</sup>

When Jesus refers to himself as “son of man” in verse 31, Jesus is combining the Cross with his glorification.<sup>12</sup> Jesus commands other children of Adam to do likewise.

These readings for the Fifth Sunday of Easter are about happiness in the midst of suffering. In Acts, Paul proclaims, “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” Psalm 145 is like the new song, “Alleluia, anyway”. Revelation tells about a new vision of the meaning of life, a vision that describes how to overcome suffering. The Greek in this passage from the Gospel of John regards the Passion, Death, and Resurrection as a totality of foregone conclusions. The message is to hold one’s head up high as one copes with the vicissitudes of life with Christian Catholic hope. Love without worrying about suffering is the meaning of these readings.

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

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<sup>10</sup> Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., *Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 142.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas K. Clark, “Signs in Wisdom and John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 205.

<sup>12</sup> Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., “Raymond Brown’s New Introduction to the Gospel of John: A Presentation—And Some Questions,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003) 9.