

Personal Notes
070506 Fifth Sunday of Easter 54C
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The gist of the scripture passages is the preservation of life. There are many political issues involved in taking lives as matters of self-defense. In the United States keeping politics and religion separate, is something that I respect; without ever forgetting that conscience always trumps politics. The difficult issue for me in these musings occurs when truth confronts Church politics.

The United States is presently a nation divided over the Iraq War. There are many other issues of life and death, some of which are mentioned below. Because I find some of the use the Catechism makes for Revelations 21:4 unconvincing and unpersuasive, I find my reflections difficult. I fear the Magisterium actively undermining good that is present in these musings, yet I fear my own conscience worse. While spelling out why I am unconvinced and unpersuaded seems inappropriate in this forum, passing over the matter, as if I were convinced and persuaded, seems even more inappropriate. I simply, therefore, mention my difficulty and pass on, without further explanation.

First Reading: Acts 14:21-27

Politics are present in Acts 14:23, when Paul and Barnabas “appointed elders for them in each church.” Appointing is a political act, an act of power. In Acts 14, 27, “they called the church together,” is another exercise of Church politics. These readings demonstrate that there has been such a thing as Church politics from the very beginning of Christianity.

Acts 14:21

Daniel W. Ulrich, “The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew”¹

Acts 14:21 emphasizes the initial call of Paul and Barnabas to discipleship. In Matthew 13:52, which the Lectionary uses in Cycle A, the emphasis is on training. The point is that Christian development requires training and does involve an exercise of power by the Church, i.e., Church politics.

Acts 14:23

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., “The Structured Ministry of the Church in the Pastoral Epistles”²

Distinguishing elders from bishops is a “notorious problem” in the structure of the early Church. The problem is over who exercises which power. Although Luke uses the term *elder*, here, the Greek term for “elder” does not appear in any of the uncontested letters of Paul. The controversy is over whether bishops and elders constitute one or two offices in the early Church. The *elders* translation in the Lectionary favors one office, bishop; thereby excluding priests. Were the Greek translated *presbyter*, one office would be less clear.

¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 71.

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 590.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

The Church uses this Psalm in its care for the sick.³

The Responsorial Antiphon, praising God as king, is political praise emanating from the Church.

Psalm 145

Aelred Cody, O.S.B., review of Markus Witte (ed.), Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag, Volumes 1-2⁴

Among the last Psalms written, Psalm 145 asserts that God is king of all kingdoms, everywhere. This political assertion is not found elsewhere in the Psalter. Reinhold G. Kratz, one of the unnamed co-editors of the assembled essays, writes the article making this assertion.

Psalm 145:13a

Karl A. Kuhn, "The 'One like a son of Man' Becomes the 'Son of God'"⁵

Your kingdom is a kingdom for all ages is parallel to Daniel 7:27b. The traditional view is that Daniel was written in the Sixth Century B.C. Alternative modern views have the book written or redacted (i.e. put in final form) in the mid-Second Century B.C.⁶ I am inclined toward the alternative modern view.

Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-5a

The Faithful frequently use this passage for funerals.⁷ This passage is also appropriate in ministering to the sick.⁸

³ 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) 328.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 578.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 28.

⁶ <http://www.answers.com/topic/book-of-daniel-1> 070410.

⁷ N.a., 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, 253.

⁸ 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

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The political message in these readings resides in the fact that the original manuscripts have at least twenty-five marks indicating differences. I draw some comfort from the fact that the original manuscripts of the Bible disagree with themselves.

Revelation 19-22

Kevin E. Miller, "The Nuptial Eschatology of Revelation 19-2"⁹

The reign of God consists of the nuptial union of Jesus and the Church. The first form the reign of God takes, is a political battle, in which the Church participates, mainly through prayer. The final form is political victory, when prayer will be only the prayer of worship.

Rev 12:1—22:17

John J. Pilch, review of Stephen S. Smalley, The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse¹⁰

Smalley regards Revelation as organized according to a cosmic drama, a cosmic drama that would include tectonic plates, when they became known.

Revelation 21:1

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy¹¹

Barker regards the phrase *and the sea was no more* as referring to Noah. For Barker, the New Jerusalem means reveling in the confines of the Holy of Holies. The meaning is political, away from the scattered focus of what humans want, however, toward the pinpoint focus of what God wants. God brings order out of chaos.

Rev 21:2

Bruce J. Malina, "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean?"¹²

Revelation writes of the New Jerusalem, to come, as if it were already present; something a First Century Jew would say, but not anything a Twenty-first Century Christian would say about anything to come in the future.

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) 175, 280.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 60, No. 2 (October 2006) 301-318.

¹⁰ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 924.

¹¹ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003 272.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 1 (January 1989) 10.

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Revelation 21:2

Hugh Rowland Page, "A Case Study in Eighteenth-Century Afrodiasporan Biblical Hermeneutics and Historiography: The Masonic Charges of Prince Hall"¹³

Prince Hall founded the Black Masons in the United States. Hall constructed the Masonic charge to enable all humanity to work together while awaiting the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:2.

Revelation 21:3

Mark F. Whitters, "Jesus in the Footsteps of Jeremiah"¹⁴

The First Testament uses "I will be their God and they shall be my people," and its equivalent, eleven times, five in Jeremiah. Revelation 21:3 is emphasizing a traditional theme.

Revelation 21:4

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults¹⁵

The Bishops use Revelations 21:4, "... and there shall be no more death ..." to support meditation on such contested political issues as abortion, the death penalty, avoiding scandal, bigotry and hatred, physical or emotional abuse, violence of any kind against another person, and the like. The first two paragraphs of these Notes describe personal problems with this.

Rev 21:5 246.

Denis Edwards, "Resurrection and the Costs of Evolution: A Dialogue with Rahner on Noninterventionist Theology"¹⁶

Edwards views the God of the new creation as inherently present in all of creation, revealing himself through secondary causes. Edwards looks for "an alternative to the model of a God who can be thought of as freely modifying the dynamics of tectonic plates to save some from a tsunami, while causing others to suffer it." Trying to fathom how God permits evil, Edwards concludes, "Only an omnipotent love can give itself away in radical vulnerability." The vulnerability is letting God appear unable to control his own creation.

¹³ in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 110.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 246, fn. 31.

¹⁵ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006 401-402.

¹⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 817, 818.

Alleluia: John 13:34

The emphasis on love relates to not killing.

John 13:34

Kelli S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric"¹⁷

Discipleship requires action. O'Brien's translation, *Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another*. The Lectionary does not use the word *Just*.

John 13:34

C. Clifton Black, review of George Keerankeri, S.J., The Love Commandment in Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 12, 28-34¹⁸

The meaning of divine love is obedience to the command of Jesus to love.

John 13:34

Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists"¹⁹

The problem is the inefficaciousness of the First Testament. The New Testament solves that inefficaciousness with the command to love.

Gospel: John 13:31-33a, 34-35

John 13:34 presents the new commandment, to love one another.

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

¹⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67 No. 2 (April 2005) 291.

¹⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 4 (October 2005) 717.

¹⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 20.