

Personal Notes  
080427 Sixth Sunday of Easter 55A  
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“... you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you” (John 14:20). A tremendous Trinitarian Faith is involved in this Lectionary reading. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, namely God the Son, is the Father, beholding himself. In that way, God the Son receives God the Father in a way analogous to how the Faithful receive the Father.

As David M. Coffey explains, the Faithful go to the Father, through the Son. When the Father beholds the Son, that relationship of love, becomes the Holy Spirit, not in a sequence of time, but in an analogy of relationship. From this, it follows that when the Faithful and the Father, behold one another, the ultimate relationship is one of love, of the Christian Spirit, of the Holy Spirit.

The Catechism uses a passage from the Gospel of Saint John to reflect on the Blessed Trinity. “Christ’s Last Supper Discourse (Jn 14:1—17:26) reflects Eucharistic themes of divine love, a union with Christ as intimate ...” The point is that there is more than one-way to view the Trinity. The view of Saint John, reinforced by Saint Thomas Aquinas, has held sway as developed from the early Church. A richer, more complete view arises by incorporating what is in the synoptic Gospels, as I am doing in these ruminations. Vatican II fostered this fuller use of Sacred Scripture, used above.

The role of the Holy Spirit in history continues to entice historians. Christopher Grasso, a distinguished historian, writes of how Eighteenth Century Protestant thinkers pondered the role of grace and the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Faithful. Grasso lists, by date, sermons delivered by Ezra Stiles, President of Yale University, on the subject. Ezra Stiles used the scripture the Liturgy uses today to recognize that everyone has access to the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> The role of the Holy Spirit is the role of grace in the Faithful.

With the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, my friend, Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J. works miracles within the institutional Church. At one of his healing services, for example, Karyn Sharkey, of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, suffered from astigmatism since birth. The result was blurred vision. Then a miracle occurred, which Father DeGrandis announced and Robert Baum, of Lake Park, Florida, an eye doctor, later confirmed that her sight was completely normal, just as she said it was.<sup>2</sup>

The Sunday I prepared these Notes, I was praying about how DeGrandis gets involved in such practical things *within* the Church, the Holy Spirit was telling me that I was doing things *for* the Church, with such services as these Notes. This is the

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Grasso, A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 240, fn. 15.

<sup>2</sup> James McCandlish, “Girl Can See Without Glasses After Faith-Healing Service: It’s a Miracle, She says—My Vision Is Perfect,” National Enquirer, February 25, 1985, n.d, n.p, copy. Too bad the mainstream media, including Catholic media, shies away from reporting on miracles, like this.

type of functioning of the Holy Spirit expressed in the first paragraph. I expected that idea to be all there would be to it, until Sister Carolyn Bouchard, S.P. asked if I would administer the parish home visitation program. So, with all of my highfalutin ideas about contributing to the institutional Church, I wind up ministering to those ministering to shut-ins. On top of that Sister Carolyn said she did not particularly want me doing the visiting myself, but she wanted me involving others. The point is that the Holy Spirit is not static in relation either to Jesus or to the Faithful. The effectiveness of the Holy Spirit will be tested, as I work my way through this human relations assignment.

The Holy Spirit also works through the Faithful to develop his institutional Church. One of my highfalutin ideas in this regard is concern about the Catechism,<sup>3</sup> where it proclaims a right to know the truth on page 434; without any reference to the earlier-mentioned seal of Confession on page 241. The material on page 434 is in reference to the Lectionary 1 Peter 3:15-16, about always being “ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope ...” The Catechism, earlier, explains, “He [the confessor] can make no use of knowledge that confession gives him about penitents’ lives.” First, the English is improper. The priest *can* reveal what is told in confession, but he *may* not.

A second problem exists with the seal of Confession, for me at least, in the right of the bishop to reserve forgiveness of certain sins to himself. “Reserved cases” is the term used for sins whose absolution is not within the power of every confessor.<sup>4</sup> Assaulting a bishop is an example of a reserved sin, this sin is reserved to the Pope for forgiveness.<sup>5</sup> To illustrate from an example about 1962, Fidel Castro may have committed such a sin “for laying violent hands on a bishop.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1234, my patron saint, Saint Raymond of Penafort,<sup>7</sup> organized the laws of the Church, which remained the foundational “body” of canon law, until the

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<sup>3</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12785a.htm> 080408.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm> 080407.

<sup>6</sup> Gene O’Grady, 2/11/05 11:18 and 18:15, <http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com/2005/11/and-well-know-that-they-are-catholics.html> 080408.

<sup>7</sup> The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary, Commissioned by The Canon Law Society of America, James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Donald E. Heintschel (eds.) (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 3 spells the name with a double “n”. It is spelled both ways, with single and double “n.”

<http://www.answers.com/Saint%20Raymond%20of%20Penafort> 080408.

<http://www.answers.com/Saint%20Raymond%20of%20Pennafort> 080408.

promulgation of the 1917 Code.<sup>8</sup> The latest Code dates from 1983, after the 1962 blog, cited above.<sup>9</sup>

Even though the revised 1983 Code dropped the term “reserved sins,” the concept remained, as does my concern about breaking the Seal of Confession. The Canon Law Commentary explains,

... five penalties are reserved to the Holy See: canon 1367, paragraph 1 (physical attack on pope; canon 1378, paragraph 1 (absolution of accomplice); canon 1382 (unauthorized episcopal consecration); and canon 1388, paragraph 1 (direct violation of confessional seal by confessor.)<sup>10</sup>

Evidently, an *indirect* violation of the Seal of Confession is not reserved—and that continues to bother me.

In a similar way, in order to direct a penitent to the bishop, it seems to me that the confessor must “make use of knowledge that confession gives him about penitents’ lives.” That use seems contrary to the Catechism. I continue to look for the Holy Spirit in the midst of what the official Church proclaims. My quest for the Father, through the Son, therefore, leaves me with the Holy Spirit, trying to do good for the institutional Church.

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### 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.

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<sup>8</sup> The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary, Commissioned by The Canon Law Society of America, James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Donald E. Heintschel (eds.) (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.answers.com/%22Code%20of%20Canon%20Law%22> 080408.

<sup>10</sup> The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary, Commissioned by The Canon Law Society of America, James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Donald E. Heintschel (eds.) (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 916.

## **Acts 8:5-8, 14-17**

Acts 8:6-8

Gregory E. Sterling, "Jesus as Exorcist: An Analysis of Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43a"<sup>11</sup>

Acts 8:6-8 is one of several places providing miracles, such as those in the ministry of Father DeGrandis, in association with preaching.

Acts 8:14

Reinhard Pummer, "New Evidence for Samaritan Christianity?"<sup>12</sup>

Plummer reports on archaeological evidence to support Acts 8:14, about Samaritan Christians. The scientists have found the remains of an early Samaritan Christian church building.

Acts 8:17-18

Russell Morton, review of Ulrich Heckel, Der Segen im Neuen Testament: Begriff, Formeln, Gesten<sup>13</sup>

Heckel, who wrote for the Protestant Theology Faculty of the University of Tübingen, explained the act of laying on of hands, "... not [originally] understood as it would be in later centuries, as a means to transmit authority ... in the Pastorals, laying on of hands becomes more a symbol of ordination by community members than a transmission of charismatic gift."

Acts 8:17

Michael J. McClymond, "Through a Glass Darkly: Biblical Annotations and Theological interpretation in Modern Catholic and Protestant English-language Bibles"<sup>14</sup>

McClymond shows that the notes by Richard Challoner (1691-1781) in the Douai version of the Bible defended Roman Catholic dogma, sometimes at the expense of the original meaning of texts. McClymond, who is the Clarence Louis and Helen Irene Steber Professor in the Department of Theological Studies at St. Louis University, writes that for Challoner, "... Peter's act of laying hands on the early disciples so that they might receive the Holy Spirit is an instance of the sacrament of Confirmation." Note that the Bishops are not using this verse in their Catechism, at all. In other words, where Challoner permitted Church politics to

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<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July 1993) 487.

<sup>12</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 1979) 99.

<sup>13</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 544.

<sup>14</sup> Theological Studies 67, No. 3 (September 2006) 489-490.

determine truth in his notes, the Bishops are shying away from that type of inversion and, instead, prioritizing truth over Church politics.

## **Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20 (1)**

### **1 Peter 3:15-18**

The Greek for *Christ*, not only means *anointed*, but also *messiah*.

1 Pet 3:18-22

Joel B. Green, review of Karen H. Jobes, 1 Peter<sup>15</sup>

Green refers to 1 Peter 3:18-22 as “its peculiar reference to Christ’s proclamation to the spirits.” The Lectionary only uses 1 Peter 3:18, mentioning *life in the Spirit*. What is peculiar is a reference to “the Enoch-Noah tradition.” Enoch was the grandfather of Noah.<sup>16</sup> There must be a relationship between the politics of Noah in his wooden arc and the politics of the Faithful in the arc that is the Church.

1 Pet 3:18

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History <sup>17</sup>

Lawrence points out that 1 Peter 3:18 explains the significance of the death of Jesus, “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” The Lectionary substitutes *suffered for death* and *lead for bring*. I am not quarreling with the difference in translation.

## **John 14:23**

### **John 14:15-21**

John 14:20

Kelli S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric"<sup>18</sup>

O'Brien includes John 14:20 to indicate that the Christian Faith is “experienced in the Father and Son dwelling in the believer.” This is not a *visit*, but an *indwelling*.

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<sup>15</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 335.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.answers.com/%E2%80%9CEnoch-Noah%E2%80%9D> 080406.

<sup>17</sup> Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006 146.

<sup>18</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 2005) 291, 296.

John 14:20

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

Neyrey notes that the relationship between Jesus and the Father must be significant for the Faithful, because it is mentioned many times, besides John 14:20. The Faithful reach their God, through the Son and the contact results in the Holy Spirit doing its best to love creation.

John 14:16

David M. Coffey, "Quaestio Disputata: Response to Neil Ormerod, and Beyond"<sup>20</sup>

This article is the foundation for the Trinitarian comments above the double line.

John 14:21-22

Alice L. Laffey, review of Maurizio Marcheselli, "Avete qualcosa da mangiare?" Un pasto, il Risorto, la comunità<sup>21</sup>

Marcheselli presents the Gospel of John as a "narration of manifestation." John 14:21, used in the Lectionary, explains that the ministry of Jesus is broadly based, both before and after the resurrection.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

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<sup>19</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 284, 285, 289.

<sup>20</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 4 (December 2007) 903.

<sup>21</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 4 (October 2008) 159.