

Personal Notes  
030525 Sixth Sunday of Easter 56B  
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The word for this Sunday is **love**.

For me, personally, **love** is not as simple in execution as in fact. The problem is how to deal with perceived abuse. To offer some examples, when I was in the seminary, I asked my confessor how to deal with abuse on the baseball field. Since I was captain of the team, responsibility for objecting to abuse fell to me. He was not much help. My classmates would not let me call balls and strikes for the same reason. I would become too rattled when they disagreed with my calls, thinking my calls abusive. My confessor said that experience would tell the tale about when to object to abuse.

In time, I learned of research into people of Faith that found that people with the most Faith were objectionable to those around them. No one wants to live with a Saint; at best, living with a Saint is difficult. We were taught that in the seminary, too. In other words, I find no way out of my difficulty with perceived abuse.

It then dawned on me that Jesus was not crucified because he was such a nice guy. A later confessor taught to look to prudence as my most needed virtue. That I do. As evidence, one of the nicest things that an academic Dean ever said to me was that I never did anything without first thinking it through. What he meant was that he might not be seeing why I was doing whatever it was I was on his carpet for and he was giving me an opportunity to explain why I had done whatever it was that time.

There is a cacophony at Daily Mass that needs to be mentioned for the readings on this Sunday, about which I have a load of explanations. Would setting down my explanation here, in writing, be an act of love? I am doubtful.

At the college, where I was paid to criticize people, I was encouraged to do that privately. Sometimes silence is not prudent. Objecting to a bad call by an umpire on a baseball field has a value against the next call when done immediately, rather than after the game, when the original call may be (conveniently) forgotten. It would be a mistake not to call attention to the cacophony at Daily Mass at this time.

Just the same, "in doubt, duck," is not a bad philosophy. So, let me acknowledge the cacophony, thereby objecting to it, and then duck the reasons for it as best I am able. My understanding about why it is happening are more likely to be wrong than the fact that it is happening.

Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P.,<sup>1</sup> regards the 98<sup>th</sup> Psalm as an enthronement Psalm, something celebrating the enthronement of the king. How this enthronement translates into the spiritual life is enthronement in the heart. Enthronement in the heart can bring a

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599, page 30.

type of harmony out of the noise where there should be harmony for example, at Daily Mass.

For those of you who may not know, my reference is to Daily Mass at the Newport News Poor Clare Monastery. Since the daily racket is an exercise in endemic church politics, my worry has a more universal character than limited to that place. As the writer puts it, "No man is an Island."<sup>2</sup> Putting up with one another, in the final analysis, is an act of love.

Pope John Paul II's, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae* does not mention any of the readings for this Sunday. The Rosary mystery is the Institution of the Eucharist, a sign that accomplishes what it signifies, as will be continually developed in comments on the Gospel of John below.

## **Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48**

The current Catholic Biblical Quarterly places the life and times of Jesus in the routine of daily life. Twice, every day, the Jews made a whole offering of a lamb, called a Tamid service. *Whole* means that the *whole* community made the offering, sponsored through the annual temple tax.<sup>3</sup>

During the Tamid, prostration occurred just before the blessing in the afternoon at the ninth-hour service. Verse 25 is pertinent.

verse 25<sup>4</sup> When Peter entered, Cornelius met him

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<sup>2</sup> John Donne (1572-1631), *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions (1624)*, no. 17 as cited in John Bartlett, edited by Emily Morison Beck and the editorial staff of Little, Brown and Company, Familiar Quotations: A collection of passages, phrases and proverbs traced to their sources in ancient and modern literature: fifteenth and 125th anniversary edition, revised and enlarged (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 254, # 22.

<sup>3</sup> Dennis Hamm, S.J., "The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts: The Cultic Background behind Luke's Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5-25; 18:9-14; 24:50-53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 215-216.

<sup>4</sup> Indented verses are taken from National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998).

and, falling at his feet, paid him homage.  
verse 26 Peter, however, raised him up, saying,  
“Get up. I myself am also a human being.”

A scholar thinks this homage points to the Tamid service. “In other words, *proskyneseis* should be reserved for worship of God alone—as mandated in Exod 20:5 and Deut 5:9, dramatized in the prayer of Mordecai in Esth 4:17 LXX, and illustrated twice in Sir 50:17, 21.”<sup>5</sup> The ninth hour is also when Peter and John go up to the temple “at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1).”<sup>6</sup> Acts 10:2-3 describes the centurion, Cornelius, at prayer “at the ninth hour.” A few verses after the one used in the Lectionary, at Acts 10:30, Cornelius, again, was at prayer at the ninth hour. Jesus died at the ninth hour (Mark 15:33-34; Matt 27:45-46; Luke 23:45-47). Some pattern their lives to attend Mass once a day. In a similar pattern, the Jews prayed formally twice a day.

The sequence of Gentile events is interesting. First, the Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit, then, *because* they have received the Spirit, Peter orders them baptized.

The language used does not portray Peter as any great intellectual. Where the English has:

verse 34 Then Peter proceeded to speak and said,

The Latin has *opening his mouth*, Peter said.

## **Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4**

Psalm 98 is one of the enthronement psalms, probably developed while the Jews still had a king, but possibly also developed in the exile or even post-exile.<sup>7</sup> The Psalm has an emphasis on activity, activity that loses verve in the light of the life of Christ.

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<sup>5</sup> Dennis Hamm, S.J., “The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts: The Cultic Background behind Luke’s Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5-25; 18:9-14; 24:50-53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30),” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 222.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis Hamm, S.J., “The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts: The Cultic Background behind Luke’s Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5-25; 18:9-14; 24:50-53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30),” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 2003) 221.

<sup>7</sup> J.J.M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 677.

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The key to all of these readings is state of being, rather than activity. When Mary said, "My soul does magnify the Lord" she was proclaiming a state of being, translated by the Greek in the aorist (completed, continuing) tense. To the contrary, this Psalm is still in the active phase.

verse 1a     *Sing* to the LORD...

Verse 1 also influences the Prophet Isaiah 12:5, looking for a better day ahead.<sup>8</sup>

verse 2     The LORD has made his salvation known:  
                  in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.

The Psalmist means that the LORD will bring order out of primordial chaos, even the chaos of church politics. The Psalmist sees human sinning as the source of all disorder.

verse 4     *Sing* joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;  
                  *break* into song; *sing* praise.

The excitement in the Latin<sup>9</sup> crescendos into a fever pitch to what I would describe as the point of becoming incontinent. A scholar is gentler,<sup>10</sup>

... as the prophets point out, human injustice, whether Israelite or foreign, causes all of creation to suffer and threatens to return it to a state of primeval chaos (Hos 4:3; Jer 4:23-26). That is why all of creation rejoices at the announcement that God is coming to judge the world and the nations in righteousness (Pss 96:10-13; 98:4-9) ...

1 John 4:7-10

verse 7     **Beloved**, let us **love** one another, because **love** is of God;  
                  everyone who **loves** is *begotten by* God and knows God.

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<sup>8</sup> Sue Gillingham, "From Liturgy to Prophecy: The Use of Psalmody in Second Temple Judaism," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 3 (July 2002), page 472.

<sup>9</sup> The Latin, the Vulgate, and Saint Jerome all refer to Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita Iussu Pauli PP, VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP, II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4

<sup>10</sup> J.J.M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002), page 681.

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The Latin for *of* is *ex*, carrying the sense *out of* or *from*. The Latin for *by* is also *ex*. *Begotten* has *natus est*, or *born* in the Latin. The Evangelist seems to be saying that **love** is a gift from God and a sign that God **loves** us.

verse 8      Whoever is without **love** does not know God, for God is **love**.  
verse 9      In this way the **love** of God was revealed to us;  
                    God sent his only Son into the *world* so that we might have life  
                    through him.

The meaning of the *world* is important for dealing with the noise at Daily Mass. One reason the nuns are moving is to avoid the noise emanating from road traffic. Noise emanating from the Faithful is something else. **Love** enables people to be themselves, but **love** does not necessarily always enable abusers to abuse. While the readings take the word *world* from an Epistle, a scholar has looked at the word *world* in the Gospel according to John. He notes two things, first that *world* in the first part of the Gospel is a substitute word for Jews, somewhat like “the scribes and Pharisees” in Matthew. The world itself is neutral, getting its value from what is made of it.<sup>11</sup>

The point is that John finds both the world and the Jews within the Church, in a manner that Matthew finds the equivalent of Scribes and Pharisees within the Church. The self-righteousness needed to accuse anyone else of hypocrisy makes coming to terms with the abusive sounds in the Poor Clare chapel difficult. The final relevance of the disconcerting sentence of the scholarly article, is, itself disconcerting. “The ‘world’ is firmly ensconced in the community, and, consequently, the severe condemnations of the Fourth Gospel are aimed more at the members within than at those without.”<sup>12</sup>

As someone who sang in a Gregorian choir in the seminary, I admire the nuns not laughing when they err in their singing. That is a kindness to whoever is responsible for disrupting the music. In the seminary, we never did manage to keep such laughter to ourselves. Of course, we were not singing before the Faithful, either. When there is a musical error, I always expect to hear a chuckle, but never do. Good for the nuns.

verse 10      In this is **love**:  
                    not that we have **loved** God, but *that* he **loved** us  
                    and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

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<sup>11</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, “Κοσμος in John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), page 101.

<sup>12</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, “Κοσμος in John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), page 102.

*That he **loved** us, that* comes out of the Latin, *quoniam*, with a sense of *because*, i.e. causality.

I am writing this on Sunday, May 4, 2003. Tomorrow, I expect to take viaticum to one of the former daily Poor Clare communicants. The most convenient time for the household on school days is after the parish 9:00 a.m. Mass, rather than after the 7:00 a.m. Poor Clare Mass. This means that I may miss what Father Peter says about **love**, something dear to both his and my heart, but something that he presents as more passive, more pay, pray, and obey, than suits my taste.

## John 14:23

verse 23      Whoever **loves** me will keep my word, says the Lord,  
and my Father will **love** him and we will come to him.

## John 15:9-17

Like last Sunday, these readings are also from the Book of Glory. Raymond E. Brown and his editor identify this book as verses 13:1—20:31.<sup>13</sup> To repeat what was written last Sunday, a [different] scholar explains, "... the paschal mystery shows us something about Jesus, but unlike them [six preceding signs], it effects the reality that it shows, like the exodus in Wisdom, which brings about the freedom signified in the other signs."<sup>14</sup> Expect further development of these signs in coming Sundays.

The paschal mystery of these readings is why I suggest contemplating the Institution of the Eucharist of the rosary Mysteries of Light.

The sense of **love** running through the Gospel for this Sunday is conditional and unsatisfactory. To be, **love** must be at least somewhat unconditional and forgiving. One must **love** one's enemies, not simply one's friends. Something seems awry to me with this Gospel.

verse 9      "As the Father **loves** me, so I also **love** you.  
Remain in my **love**."

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<sup>13</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) 11.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983), page 205.

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While barely present in the Latin and not evident in the English, this is the place in the Greek calling for a state of being in the aorist, rather than activity. Of the verbs in 9a, the grammarian writes that the Greek may be a Semitism denoting a state, rather than an act, referring equally to the past and present.<sup>15</sup>

verse 10     *If* you keep my commandments, you will remain in my **love**,  
                  just as I have kept my Father's commandments  
                  and remain in his **love**.

*If*, that is the conditional part giving me difficulty, on at least two scores. First, I know I am loved, even though I do not keep the commandments as well as either I might or wish I would. Keeping the commandments is rather like swimming, one does what one can but never reaches perfection. Second, what is God's command relative to the daily disruption at Mass? Surely not absolutely ignoring misbehavior. "In doubt, duck."

verse 12     This is my commandment: **love one another** as I **love** you.  
verse 13     No one has greater **love** than this,  
                  to lay down one's life for one's *friends*.

Is a greater love to lay down one life for one's enemies? *Doing good to those who persecute you?*

verse 15     I no longer call you *slaves*,  
                  because a slave does not know what his master is doing.  
verse 15b    I have called you *friends*  
                  because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

I wonder the sound Jesus heard from the Father, the music, the words.

The Latin has *amicos*, in the sense of the Spanish *amigos*. *Amigos* seems warmer than *friends* does.

verse 16a    It was not you who *chose* me, but I who *chose* you.

The sense of *elect* used with the neophytes is implied in the Latin, *elegistis*.

verse 16b             and appointed you *to go* and bear fruit that will remain,

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<sup>15</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J., and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 332.

In this place, the grammarian seems to disagree with himself. In his Grammatical Analysis, he writes, “ὁμοίως perh. redundant <sup>s</sup> 198 f.; if emphatic, connoting disciples as appointed to the work hitherto done by Jesus.”<sup>16</sup> In his Biblical Greek, he writes “... Jo 15, 16 εθηκα υμας, ινα υμεις υπαγητε ...; in this text emphasis would have the effect of inducing a change of the sense (opposition to Jesus) ...”<sup>17</sup> The grammarian seems to mean that a mistranslation would convey the idea that since the work of Jesus is unsatisfactory, that work is then given to the disciples.

I think of someone suffering illnesses, a *state of being* with the potential to *bear fruit that will remain*.

verse 17 This I command you: **love one another.**”

verse 16c so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

That, indeed, is the prayer for the cacophony of Daily Mass. On Sundays the singing is more harmonious. I need to **love** all of those I perceive as causing the chaos. That **love** is easy in the Father, but how to express that **love** is difficult. The burning fervor of prayer is a good beginning.

When I write to my priest friends, I like to close with *Ora pro invicem. Let us pray for one another.* The former Latin takes thirteen characters, the latter English twenty-three. Not only is the Latin more concise, the Latin is also more meaningful. *Invicem* is used twice in this Gospel, in the twelfth and seventeenth verses, printed above.

**Love** in these readings comes across as no easy task in its expression. Pope John XXIII (1881-1963) used to pray, ‘Lord grant me the grace to change what I can, to leave alone what I cannot change, and to know the difference between them.’ Love does bring an order out of cacophony, out of the cacophony of the world.

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<sup>16</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J., and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 333.

<sup>17</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) 64.