

Personal Notes

The Ascension, Reading 058C May 12, 2013

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At prayer, the Faithful recognize their weaknesses, before the power of God. God lifts up the Faithful in the worst of circumstances. The Roman Catholic Church is dysfunctional and in the worst of circumstances. On February 11, 2011, the Pope resigned, as of Thursday, February 28.

Historically, institutions and humans fall when they stray from following the Truth, wherever it leads. Recent popes have been afraid of and denied much of the truth about human sexuality developed recently. The whole Roman Catholic Church is complicit. New scientific developments in human sexuality strain against medieval quackery. Birth control is one of those knotty sexist exercises of power that need humanization at the pastoral level.

The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the following two scenarios help tell the dysfunctional story. Both involve human sexuality. The first is about a German Cardinal who changed his mind about a birth-control pill for the Faithful. The second is about a couple of archbishops in Los Angeles finding fault with one another with the sexual cover-up so well documented there.

With the above as context, on December 15, 2012, a twenty-five year old woman approached two Catholic hospitals in Cologne, Germany, fearing she had been drugged and raped. Both hospitals turned her away for fear of getting involved with an abortion from an after-morning pill. Help eventually came from a Protestant hospital.¹

Cardinal Joachim Meisner had jurisdiction over the hospitals. His Catholic hospitals refused to treat a rape victim, because they could not prescribe the pill taken after sex to prevent pregnancy. Finally, on February 5, 2013, the Daily Press reported that the Cardinal changed his abortion policy. That made news, even if only in one inch of type. As the footnotes reveal, the internet brings a hullabaloo of added information.

Meisner announced that so-called morning-after pills do not induce abortions and could be used. Meisner, who is seventy-nine years old and a conservative ally of Benedict XVI,² said the case "shames us deeply because it contradicts our Christian mission and our purpose."³ "Our purpose" must mean loving compassion, rather than sterile rules.

¹ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-politicians-fight-catholic-church-power-over-public-institutions-a-879198.html> (accessed February 9, 2013).

² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/04/germany-catholic-rape-idUSL5N0B48UL20130204> (accessed February 9, 2013).

³ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-catholic-bishops-to-review-policy-on-morning-after-pill-a-881531.html> (accessed February 9, 2013).

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From Rome, came a medieval-reinforcing response to the Cardinal. Dr. Jose Maria Simon Castellvi of the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations was claiming that that the Cardinal was misinformed about the effects of the “morning-after-pill.”⁴ With such contrary opinions forcing the Faithful to sift through medieval science, with little to no sign of compassion for the suffering involved, the Church has become a bombastic Tower of Babel spewing nonsense over human sexuality. Readers with a scientific bent should consult the footnote.⁵

In the meantime, back in Los Angeles, the newly installed Archbishop, Jose Gomez, and the former Archbishop, Cardinal Roger Mahoney are entertaining the Faithful with a public spat. On January 31, 2013, just before the courts released incriminating sexual cover-up documents, made during the tenure of Cardinal Mahoney, Archbishop Gomez relieved him of all public duties. The protocol between the Archbishop and the Cardinal is unprecedented and shocking.

Mahoney wrote his own public poison-pen letter in reply to Gomez, complaining, “Nothing in my own background or education equipped me to deal with this grave problem.”⁶ Mahoney meant the problem of the sexual cover-up, rather than the fact that he has been muzzled. In the final analysis, neither letter makes too much sense. Now, maybe, the Holy Spirit is getting some place.⁷

Some will find it refreshing that Gomez smacked Mahoney. Gomez, however, was in on the sexual cover up too, as he waited to take over the diocese. Mahoney only too happily points that out.

⁴ <http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=17028> (accessed February 9, 2013).

⁵ For readers with a scientific bent, “morning-after-pills” include “elleOne” and “PiDaNa”, available in Germany. Mifepristone or RU-486, and marketed as Mifegyne or Mifeprex is not a morning-after-pill, but an abortifacient.⁵ The active hormonal ingredient in the pill Meisner favors is levonorgestrel, which prevents ovulation. Levonorgestrel, marketed as Plan B in the United States might meet the Meisner criteria, but if it does, that will come as more news. In 2009, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops did not name the Plan B pill—marketed elsewhere as Levonelle, NorLevo, Postinor-2 or Optinor—which some U.S. Catholic hospitals use and others do not, depending on their reading of Church teaching.

⁶ Victoria Kim, Ashley Powers and Harriet Ryan, Tribune Newspapers, Los Angeles, “Priest files show, misplaced priorities: LA records reveal more outrage over ecclesiastical errors than crime of abuse,” (Newport News, Virginia) Daily Press, Sunday, February 3, 2013, News: Nation & World, page 15.

⁷ <http://ncronline.org/node/44561> (accessed February 9, 2013)

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If the hierarchy will break the clerical culture presenting the Roman Catholic Church as in blissful agreement with itself, perhaps reasonable discussions will open the way beyond church politics to truth and improve Church administration in its care for the Faithful. The Holy Spirit may be leading the Church in the direction of transparency and truth. Dysfunction must be recognized, before it can be addressed. Only then can functional changes occur.

The Faithful can listen for the priest to pray, *Gladden us with holy joys . . . and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving*, for the Ascension of Christ your Son . . . ⁸ The Church is in a heap of trouble. It is worth remembering, *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and Virtue”* (2 Peter 1:3).⁹

Readings

First Reading	Acts 1:1-11
Psalm:	Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9
Second Reading	Choice A: Ephesians 1:17-23 Choice B: Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23
Alleluia Verse	Matthew 28:19a, 20b
Gospel:	Luke 24:46-53

Annotated Bibliography

Musings above the solid line draw from material below. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting details.

Acts 11:1-11

⁸ n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 432.

⁹ UMI Annual Commentary 2012-2013: Precepts for Living: Based on the International Uniform Lessons, Vincent E. Bacote, Ph.D., (ed.) (Chicago, IL 60643: UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc., 2012), 438-439.

Acts 1:1-26

Gregory E. Sterling review of Matthew Sleeman, Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts¹⁰

Sterling reports that Sleeman applies the concept of thirdspace developed by Edward Soja to the geography of Acts 1:1—11:18. Firstspace is real spatiality, e.g. as expressed by maps. Second space was abstract projection, e.g. an architectural plan. Thirdspace, somewhere in between, is where Jesus acts, ordering firstspace and secondspace for early Christians. This is a new methodology that time will have to test.

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 (6)

Choice A

Ephesians 1:17-23

Choice B

Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23 2nd Choice

Heb 9:26

Benjamin J. Ribbens, "Forensic-Retributive Justification in Romans 3:21-26: Paul's Doctrine of Justification in Dialogue with Hebrews"¹¹

For Paul, Christ was both a sacrificial offering and the priest making the offering.

Heb 10:23

James W. Thompson, "The New Is Better: A Neglected Aspect of the Hermeneutics of Hebrews"¹²

Hebrews runs on the premise that new laws supersede the laws that came earlier.

Hebrews 10:23

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament¹³

The Greek for the Lectionary *Let us hold unwaveringly to our confession that gives us hope, for he who made the promise is trustworthy* uses only ten words. The Lectionary count is nineteen highlighting the difficulty translating the Greek into standard American English.

¹⁰ Theological Studies, Vol. 73, No. 1 (March 2012) 208.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 74, No. 3 (September 2012) 564.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 3 (September 2011) 553.

¹³ Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 240.

Matthew 28:19a, 20b

Luke 24:46-53

Personal Notes gave up systematically examining the illiterate 2011 Missal November 25, 2012. On April 7, 2013, with Reading 045C 2nd Sunday of Easter_A Catholic Bible Study 130407, Personal Notes began to incorporate material from A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal: A New English Translation: Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy, Edward Foley (ed.) (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011). The intention is to call attention to what is taken from the Commentary to incorporate in Reading 1610 Missal: The Last Sunday in Ordinary Time. The hope is that this systematic approach will help the Faithful pray with the new Missal, despite itself.

Some forty years ago, seminarians stopped learning Latin. Ignorance of Latin is no help with the new illiterate 2011 Missal. In the Commentary, Anscar J. Chupungco warns:

Much work remains to be done on the level of implementation in order to make the new translation intelligible and prayerful. Through catechesis and Mystagogy, pastors, liturgists, catechists, and religious educators need to explain the intended meaning of the new English texts in the light of the original Latin. When grappling with the real meaning of the English text, they cannot make the excuse that “this is what the Latin text says.” It is possible that the Latin has not been properly translated.¹⁴

For more on sources see the Appendix file. A complete set of Personal Notes, dating from the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 14, 2002 to the present, is on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes.

¹⁴ Anscar J. Chupungco, “Excursus on Translating OM2008,” in A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal: A New English Translation: Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy, Edward Foley (ed.) (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011) 135.