

Personal Notes
050515 Pentecost Sunday 63A
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Experiencing the Word enables the Faithful to experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Generation after generation manages to pass along the Faith on the witness of others. Through the witness of others, the Faithful come to personal witness themselves. The humanity of Sacred Scripture draws the Faithful.

New Biblical research,¹ upon which these Personal Notes reflect, portrays John, the Beloved Disciple, as not all that Beloved and very much more human. John is more interested in breakfast than in the distress Mary Magdalene feels. Research now portrays the Beloved Disciple abandoning Mary Magdalene as she weeps at the deserted tomb, not believing that Jesus rose from the dead.

Contrary to Mary, John immediately understands that Jesus rose from the dead, and goes home apparently to breakfast, leaving Mary there, weeping. By leaving Mary alone, John missed basic Christian charity and the obligation to witness. Thoughts turn to others within the Church suffering like Mary because of people like John. The Gospel of John, thereby, ultimately draws in the Faithful to experience the Resurrection.

The Lectionary readings draw from two descriptions of the Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost, John and Luke. John 16:7-8, 20:22 condenses what happened into one event. Luke, in Luke 24 and Acts 1, expands what happened across several days, unpacking the meaning in his theologically orderly way.²

In the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene receives the first commission to preach the Gospel as well as the first revelation that Christ is risen. Mary Magdalene makes the first proclamation of Easter Faith, "I have seen the Lord." The Gospel of John is making a point for the Faithful. Only personal experience of the Word engenders Faith, Faith that Mary would only grasp with the gift of more time.

Tradition portrays Mary, Peter, and Thomas as relatively thick and stubborn, not believing the Resurrection, without considerable personal experience of the Word. Recent scholarship extends the ability of the frail Faithful to identify not only with Mary, Peter, and Thomas, but with John as well. The point of the Gospel of Love is that God loves humans in their brokenness.

This point is a revelation and consolation to me, because I have never seen what is so loving about the Gospel of John. Anti-Semites have long used John to support "their biases, thereby causing me the problem. While hatred is the other side of love, I have a difficult time with the self-righteousness required for hatred in the concrete.

¹ Kelli S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No 2 (April 2005) 284-302.

² Neil J. McEleney, C.S.P., "Peter's Denials—How Many? To Whom?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No 3 (July 1990) 469-470.

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The Pentecost readings, John 20:19-23, leave no hint that the Beloved Disciple abandoned Mary, weeping at the tomb (20:11). Apparently, to repeat, the Beloved Disciple was more interested in breakfast than the weeping Mary was. The Lectionary only uses John 20:11, Mary weeping at the tomb, during the week, not on Sunday. The Lectionary does not use anywhere the earlier verse, John 20:10, the disciples returning to their own homes, thereby abandoning Mary. The segue for explaining the Gospel of John as designed to enable the Faithful to experience the Resurrection like the misstepping disciples happens at this reading.

The Lectionary also omits John 20:31 where John offers the purpose of the Gospel. "These (signs) are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." By signs, John imitates the Book of Wisdom.³ John intends that readers identify with the characters in the narrative and, thereby, believe.

Faith requires courage in the face of uncertainty. Courage in the face of uncertainty is one of the themes developed in these Notes. John does as much, portraying Mary Magdalene as uncertain because she does not understand, Thomas as uncertain because the testimony of others is unconvincing. The Beloved Disciple is uncertain about the requirement to witness, without understanding the requirement or the uncertainty. Such hesitancy and uncertainty is something the Faithful must always overcome, through the ages.

Throughout the Gospel of John, misunderstanding is a narrative strategy, designed to draw readers into the reality of what Christ did. Just as the original disciples had to reinterpret what they witnessed, so have later disciples, down to the Faithful today. Belief and discipleship is a process, ongoing throughout earthly life. John intends the Faithful to identify with the developing characters in his narrative.

Irritation stemming from misunderstanding is one thing. Irritation stemming from the opposite, however, is something else. Once again, the Lectionary exhibits sloppy scholarship documenting what verses of Sacred Scripture are used. Using the Lectionary as a witness against itself, Psalm 104:24 omits the center phrase of that verse, "in wisdom you have wrought them [your works] all." The full verse, properly documented is in Reading 21ABC, The Baptism of the Lord⁴; Reading 41ABC, Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord: At

³ Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 205.

⁴ 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) 136.

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the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter.⁵ Reading 62ABC, Pentecost Sunday at the Vigil Mass has the complete verse, but adds, “Bless the LORD, O my Soul! Alleluia” without foundation in the original.⁶ Even the Lectionary shows that the Church is for weak and broken Faithful.

The Lectionary also presents Psalm 104:29 in problematic format. To what do creatures return? to dust or to their own dust? Modern astronomers teach us that we are all made of stardust, after all. The readings for today have *their* dust, in the Vulgate sense of *their own* dust. Here, Pentecost and the Vigil of Pentecost agree. The Baptism of the Lord, however, simply has *the* dust.⁷ The Easter Vigil omits the verse.

Finally, I have a translation problem, as, evidently, do others.

⁵ 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) 319.

⁶ 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) 480.

⁷ 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) 136.

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Psalm 104:34	
<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	theme
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	eloquium
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	speech (Psalm 103)
<u>King James</u> (1611):	meditation
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	reflections
<u>New American [NAB]</u> (1970):	theme
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	musings

The translation, *theme* is only used in the NAB and the Lectionary. I personally like *musings*.

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Because these readings are already treated, a major shift is happening. The question is what to do with past, relevant Notes? The answer is to put those Notes at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal_Notes arranged by Reading number and date. This may take some time as I figure out how to do it.

The past relevant Notes are:

E:\Microsoft Office\Word\Letters\OLMC\Bible Study3 before 2003\Bible Study020519Pentecost.doc

E:\Microsoft Office\Word\Letters\OLMC\Bible Study2 2003\Bible Study030608Pentecost_Sunday.doc

and

E:\Microsoft Office\Word\Letters\OLMC\Bible Study1 2004\Bible Study040530_Pentecost_63C.doc

The above references show how to locate the files on my personal computer, 4/10/2005. My intention is to rename those files on the web.

Because of the research already accomplished, such as that listed above, subsequent Notes should become considerably shorter, to the satisfaction of those doing the reading. Anyone wanting to see past Notes can either go to the web site or ask me to send a copy. While the index is relatively thorough since 2001, as occasions and time permit, I may add earlier articles.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.