

The word for this Sunday is **testify**.

Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P. points out that the Psalm for today, 104 echoes salvation history.<sup>1</sup> History is what we do through grace.

Pope John Paul II's, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae* mentions the following readings for this Sunday: cf. **Jn 20:22-23** and **Jn 15:26**. **Jn 15:26** was quoted in May 4, 2003, the Third Sunday of Easter. The Rosary Mystery of Light is the Kingdom of God.

## Acts 2:1-11

verse 2<sup>2</sup>      And suddenly there came from the *sky*  
                         a noise like a strong driving *wind*  
                         and it filled the entire house in which they were.

*Sky* in the Latin<sup>3</sup> is the same word as *heaven* in verse 5. *Wind* in the Latin is *spiritus*, the same word used for the Holy *Spirit*.

verse 4      And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit  
                         and began to *speak* in different tongues,  
                         as the Spirit enabled them to *proclaim*.

The Latin for *speak* is *loqui*, but the Latin for *proclaim* is *eloqui*, as in *eloquent*.

verse 5      Now there were devout Jews from every nation under *heaven* staying in  
                         Jerusalem.

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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 180.

<sup>2</sup> All indented verses are 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).

<sup>3</sup> *The Latin, Saint Jerome, the Vulgate* 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

verse 6c                   ...each one heard them *speaking*...

The Latin for *speaking* is *loquentes*.

verse 7b                   ...**speaking** Galileans?

The Latin for *speaking* is *loquuntur*.

verse 11b                  ...we hear them *speaking* in our own tongues...

The Latin for *speaking* is *loquentes*.

When we speak to one another, the Spirit speaks through us. As scary as that is, I see such speaking at work when Joe and I reflect on the Daily Mass readings when I bring him viaticum.

## **Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34**

This is one of the enthronement Psalms, proclaiming God to be God of everything.<sup>4</sup>

The Lectionary omits verse 24b, "In wisdom you have wrought them all."<sup>5</sup>

verse 24c                  The earth is full of your creatures.

The Lectionary omits verse 29a, "When you hide your face, they are lost."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</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) 681.

<sup>5</sup> Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible: Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources: Including The Revised New Testament and the Revised Psalms Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative Committee/Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference: with many helps for Bible reading: Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation, How to Read the Bible, Historical Survey of the Lands of the Bible, Bible Dictionary, Liturgical Index of Sunday Readings, Doctrinal Bible Index, and over 50 Photographs and Maps of the Holy Land (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1992).

verse 29b If you take away their breath, they perish.

*Breath* is translated in the Latin as *spiritum*.

verse 30 When you send forth your spirit, they are created,  
and you renew the face of the earth.

This verse, which is also the Responsorial, is part of the Legion of Mary daily prayers. The Latin uses the future tense for *created* and *renew*. The Greek does not show time relationships through tenses, although the Latin does.

34a Pleasing to him be my *theme*

By *theme*, the Psalmist means *testimony*. The Latin uses *eloquium*.

## **(A) 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13**

The readings for Pentecost permit either (A) or (B). Since I have not indexed any scholarly article for 1 Corinthians, my comments are limited to (B).

## **(B) Galatians 5:16-25**

verse 16a Brothers and sisters, live by the *Spirit*

If we live by the Spirit, then our *testimony* must also be by the Spirit.

verse 18 But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Here Saint Paul gets lathered up about lawlessness. In Romans, Paul does not bother.<sup>7</sup> A scholar writes, “For Paul, it is ultimately the Spirit that guides believers’ behavior (Romans 8:4; **Gal 5:13-25**).”<sup>8</sup> Yet another scholar points out, “Christian behavior is fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22-23**).”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Brendan Byrne, S.J., “The Problem of Νόμος and the Relationship with Judaism in Romans,” *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000) 295.

<sup>8</sup> Vincent M. Smiles, “The Concept of “Zeal” in Second-Temple Judaism and Paul’s Critique of It in Romans 10:2”, *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 299.

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verse 19           ...dissensions...

Today, Sunday, May 18, 2003, Father Peter preached about criticism, as he often does. Especially in this instance, Father Peter's preaching hits home to me, since I wrote a letter to the Pope asking that the new bishop tend to some of the criticisms I have heard from others about priests in the Richmond Diocese,

Saint Caesarius (470-543), Bishop of Arles, warns, "for he who listens carelessly to the word of God is not less guilty than he who through his own inattention suffers the body of Christ to fall to the ground."<sup>10</sup>

My reaction is that sometimes criticism does nothing to hurt anyone's reputation, but only serves to deflate someone's excessively high self-opinion. We need to pray that my self-assessment may bear **testimony** from the Spirit.

Saint Caesarius comments on the Sunday Within the Octave of Ascension, *If thou declare not to the wicked his wicked way, I will require his blood at thy hand* (Ezech. 3:18). His point is about the right of the people to ask the priest for the Word of God. A footnote calls attention "to the belief that the ministry of the word, and the ministry of the Holy Sacrifice, were the joint essential components of the priest's office, in which he is called to minister to the people."<sup>11</sup>

verse 25       If we live in the *Spirit*, let us also follow the *Spirit*.

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<sup>9</sup> Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 21.

<sup>10</sup> Saint Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, *On How the Word of God is to be Received*, Migne's Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina. Edition Paris 1844-66, Vols. 221, 39, App. Sermo. 300, App. Sermo. 299, The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 458.

<sup>11</sup> Saint Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, *On Eating and Drinking the Word of God*, Migne's Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina. Edition Paris 1844-66, Vols. 221, 39, App. Sermo. 299, The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 456 and 460.

## (A) John 20:19-23

I have already commented on these verses as follows at the Second Sunday of Easter, April 20, 2003. My original thinking was that the section may either be too hard or impossible to locate. If someone wanted to skip the material, that seemed easy enough. Not so? Unless I hear otherwise, in the future I will simply make a reference, without duplicating the material.

### John 20:19-13

The Church also utilizes these verses from John in five other places during the three-year cycle. This is the first time in Cycle B.

The verse most intriguing to me is

verse 19a    On the evening of that first day of the week

because of its contribution to determining the day of the week of Easter. While the Church celebrates Easter on Sunday, an argument can be made that Jesus rose on a Monday, like this appearance to the disciples. A scholar writes,<sup>12</sup>

The Greek-speaking church's preference for speaking of the empty tomb's discovery as having happened "on the third day" (Luke 24:21-23) stands in marked contrast with the earlier "on the first day" formula preferred by the Aramaic-speaking church (Mark 16:2 parr.; **John 20:19**; 1 Cor 16:2; Acts 20:7). Since the Aramaic-speaking Palestinian church knew that Jesus had spoken of his *death* as coming in three days (Luke 13:31-32) and thought of his *resurrection* as coming "after three days" (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Matt 27:63), it was not inclined to see the empty tomb foreshadowed in Hos 6:2 as was the Greek-speaking church. Instead, the Aramaic-speaking church developed an interpretation of the empty tomb which theologically expressed its faith-conviction that its discovery "on the first

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<sup>12</sup> John M. Perry, "The Three Days in the Synoptic Passion Predictions," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 4 (October 1986) 645-646. This quotation was used in my notes for Pentecost, May 19, 2002.

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day of the week” was a revelatory sign from God that the eschatologically anticipated new creation had begun. For just as the old creation (as described in Gen 1:1-2:4a) was begun by God on the *first day* of the first week of creation, so also Jesus was raised by God “on the first day of the week” to signify that the expected new creation had begun and was moving inexorably toward its completion at the arrival of God’s reign, when the cosmic Sabbath would commence (Gen 2:2-3; Lev 23:39; Heb 4:3-10; John 20:26; Luke 9:28).

The existence of the earlier tradition, which spoke of the empty tomb as discovered “on the first day” instead of “on the third day,” lends support to the view that originally Jesus was understood by his Aramaic-speaking disciples to have died on the third of three figurative days and to have been raised “after three days.”

verse 19c Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

The grammarian writes that *stood in their midst* carries a sense of motion.<sup>13</sup>

Another scholar notes that the agreement between John 20:19 and Luke 24:35 is *most impressive*. This is part of a scenario suggesting that Luke and John had a common, non-Markan source.<sup>14</sup>

verse 23 “... Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

This verse means that one can refuse the penance imposed by the sacrament of reconciliation without penalty. One is simply no worse off than one was before. This rationale for not accepting penance imposed during the sacrament of reconciliation was suggested in these notes before.

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<sup>13</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) 34.

<sup>14</sup> Robert H. Stein, “The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July 1992) 493.

While not making my observation, the grammarian notes a difference in the Greek tenses for *forgive* and *retain*. *Forgive* is in the aorist, a past act, *retain* is in the present “because here we have simply continuing in the same state.”<sup>15</sup>

verse 24 Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

While *Didymus* does mean *the twin*, *Didymus* also means one who cannot make up his mind. Alcuin Albinus, educator and theologian<sup>16</sup> (735-804) writes, “*Didymus (geminus)* means twofold or doubting...” Alcuin also writes, “Thomas means *abyss*; for with sure faith he penetrated to the depths of the divinity.”<sup>17</sup>

Chrysostom (354-407) presents the matter differently. “...to question excessively is a sign of a slow intelligence. Of this latter Thomas is accused. For when the Apostles say, *we have seen the Lord*, he did not believe; not so much doubting them as thinking such a thing impossible...”<sup>18</sup>

verse 25e ...I will not believe.”

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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) 81.

<sup>16</sup> The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) xvi.

<sup>17</sup> Alcuin, “Exposition from the Catena Aurea,” The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 269.

<sup>18</sup> Chrysostom, *Hom. 86 in John*, in “Exposition from the Catena Aurea,” The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 269.

The grammarian points out that the Greek used here is of special solemn emphasis.<sup>19</sup>

The poor man just would not **rejoice**.

verse 27a Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands ..."

Saint Augustine (354-430) has something to say about this verse. "What else does He say but: 'feel and see'. For he had not eyes in his finger."<sup>20</sup> The Poor Clare concern for light for seeing Divinity is apropos.

verse 31 But these are written that you may come to believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,  
and that through this belief you may  
have life in his name.

The grammarian points out that this verse gives the purpose of the Gospel of John, "addressed to the pagans to be converted or to Christians to be confirmed in their faith."<sup>21</sup>

John Paul has the following. Eventually I should duplicate the whole of his Apostolic Letter. Rather than duplicating it, I could summarize it to reduce the length. Unless I hear otherwise, I will keep duplicating the whole of pertinent sections.

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<sup>19</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5<sup>th</sup>, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 149-150

<sup>20</sup> Augustine, *Tr. 121 in John*, in "Exposition from the Catena Aurea," The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 271.

<sup>21</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5<sup>th</sup>, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 82.



## The Mysteries of Light

21. Moving on from the infancy and the hidden life in Nazareth to the public life of Jesus, our contemplation brings us to those mysteries which may be called in a special way “mysteries of light.” Certainly the whole mystery of Christ is a mystery of light. He is the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12). Yet this truth emerges in a special way during the years of his public life, when he proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom. In proposing to the Christian community five significant moments—“luminous” mysteries—during this phase of Christ’s life, I think that the following can be fittingly singled out: (1) his Baptism in the Jordan, (2) his self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana, (3) his proclamation of the Kingdom of God with his call to conversion, (4) his Transfiguration, and finally, (5) his institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery.

Each of these mysteries is *a revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus*. The Baptism in the Jordan is the first of all a mystery of light. Here, as Christ descends into the waters, the innocent one who became “sin” for our sake (cf. 2 Cor 5:21), the heavens open wide and the voice of the Father declares him the beloved Son (cf. Matt. 3:17 and parallels), while the Spirit descends on him to invest him with the mission which he is to carry out. Another mystery of light is the first of the signs, given at Cana (cf. Jn 2:1-12), when Christ changes water into wine and opens the hearts of the disciples to faith, thanks to the intervention of Mary, the first among believers. Another mystery of light is the preaching by which Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. Mk 12:15) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. Mk 2:3-12; Lk 7:47-48): the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation which he has entrusted to his Church (cf. **Jn: 20:22-23**). The mystery of light *par excellence* is the Transfiguration, traditionally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor. The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to “Listen to him” (cf. Lk 9:35 and parallels) and to

prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit. A final mystery of light is the institution of the Eucharist, in which Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and **testifies** “to the end” his love for humanity (Jn 13:1), for whose salvation he will offer himself in sacrifice.

In these mysteries, apart from the miracle at Cana, *the presence of Mary remains in the background*. The Gospels make only the briefest reference to her occasional presence at one moment or other during the preaching of Jesus (cf. Mk 3:31-5; Jn 2:12), and they give no indication that she was present at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Yet the role she assumed at Cana in some way accompanies Christ throughout his ministry. The revelation made directly by the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan and echoed by John the Baptist is placed upon Mary’s lips at Cana, and it becomes the great maternal counsel which Mary addresses to the Church of every age: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). This counsel is a fitting introduction to the words and signs of Christ’s public ministry and it forms the Marian foundation of all the “mysteries of light.”<sup>22</sup>

## **(B) John 15:26-27; 16:12-15**

verse 26 “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the father, he will **testify** to me

verse 27 And you also **testify**, because you have been with me from the beginning.

verse 12 “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.

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<sup>22</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*, at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2ROSAR.HTM>, 10/16/02, paragraph 21, page 11 of 26.

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The grammarian writes, "*I have much to say* (and he will do it through the Spirit v. 13)."<sup>23</sup>

verse 13 But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth

verse 14 He will glorify me,  
because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

While the Greek<sup>24</sup> has *glorify*, Saint Jerome uses *clarificabit*. In other words, the Spirit will clarify what Jesus is about. That clarification continues through the **testimony** of the Faithful.

Saint Gaudentius (+ 410), Bishop of Brescia in northern Italy, brings John 14:25-26 to attention, *These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I have said to you.*<sup>25</sup>

Jesus, therefore, has spent two millennia speaking to us through the Spirit. We are able to speak to one another in that same Spirit. This does not mean that the canons of prudence are to be dismissed. Far from it. Prudence, to the contrary, demands that we consider criticism for what it may be worth for bringing us closer to the Father.

To conclude, the readings from the Acts of the Apostles present the Spirit in very common language, as the wind, meaning that we can find the Spirit in the words of the

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<sup>23</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)

<sup>24</sup> Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum: Graece et Latine: Textum Graecum post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Barbara et Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger: Textus Latinus Novae Vulgatae Bibliorum Sacrorum Editioni debetur: Utriusque textus apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII.

<sup>25</sup> Saint Gaudentius, Bishop of Brescia, *On the Promised Coming of the Paraclete*, Migne's Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina. Edition Paris 1844-66, Vols. 221, 20, Sermo. 20 as cited in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 446.

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Faithful about us. The Psalm is not so gentle, proclaiming that God created everything. Our mighty God speaks to us on a gentle breeze. Galatians warns us about being self-serving as we leave the law of the First Covenant for the fulfillment of the law in love. The (A) reading is about the resurrected Jesus in conversation with us; the (B) reading about the continuing presence of the Spirit in our midst.