

Personal Notes  
060604 Pentecost Sunday 63B  
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Raymond J. Jirran

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274),<sup>1</sup> said that knowledge of what is loved, precedes love. Contrary to Saint Thomas, one can love without knowing exactly whom one loves. In certain situations, love can be blind. The readings for Pentecost are about such a blind love of God.

Five pages of non-biblical scholarly work develop this theme and precede direct engagement of the readings. The insight of love overwhelming knowledge is the great contribution of Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) to Twentieth Century Catholic thought. Despite his contribution, Lonergan, who taught at the Gregorian University in the Vatican, does not juxtapose the truth of knowledge with the politics of power.<sup>2</sup> As part of the Church establishment, this would have been difficult for him. It can take the blind love of Pentecost to overlook Church politics.

Hierarchical abuse of power over sexual scandals is the scandal of today. Three researchers, Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. R. Sipe, and Patrick J. Wall, have written a history of that scandal, tracing it back to the earliest days of the Church. In the mid-Twelfth Century, before the Western Church codified Canon Law for everyone, each diocese had its own rule. Saint Raymond of Penafort (1175-1275)<sup>3</sup> codified Canon Law in the West during the Thirteenth Century. His effort lasted without revision until the Twentieth Century. Using the work of Saint Raymond and others, the three researchers into sexual scandals conclude that the hierarchy always abused the Faithful in sexual matters under the guise of avoiding scandal. The research has documented a history of Church politics overwhelming truth and love.<sup>4</sup>

The credentials of the researchers are significant. Doyle is an active Catholic priest who authored the report several decades ago that predicted the scope of the abuse scandal. Doyle and Sipe are both canon lawyers. Sipe and Wall are both former Benedictine monks. Sipe is a practicing therapist who has studied the sexuality of Catholic clergy for many years. They love the Church and know of what they write.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/> May 7, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., "Bernard Lonergan at the Service of the Church," Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 2005) 517-526.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.google.com/search?sourceid=navclient-ff&ie=UTF-8&rls=GGGL,GGGL:2005-09,GGGL:en&q=%22Saint+Raymond+of+Penafort%22>  
May 7, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Bill Frogameni, "Books: Sex, lies, secrecy and abuse," review of Thomas P. Doyle, A. W. R. Sipe and Patrick J. Wall, Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2,000-Year Paper Trail of Sexual Abuse, National Catholic Reporter: The Independent Newsweekly, Vol. 42, No. 27 (May 5, 2006) 14, col 1-4.

The authors portray love overcoming the terrible truth of scandal,

The long, sad history of sexual abuse by clergy has been written. Now the church—priests and people—have a chance to write a different record—one of mutual concern and effective protection of the vulnerable, and support for the trustworthiness and integrity of the clergy.

As important as truth is, love, can overwhelm truth. How else account for the fact that my wife still loves me, after 42 years? Agneta Schreurs, the psychotherapist, demonstrates that people can love God passionately, without regard to the presence of evil. Recognizing this possibility does cause difficulty.

According to Schreurs, since Sigmund Freud (1856-1939),<sup>5</sup> “therapeutic thinking tends to view *all* religious motivation and interpretation as rationalization and a flight from reality.”<sup>6</sup> To the contrary, Schreurs asserts, not all religious motivation is a defense mechanism against facing reality. Schreurs defines healthy religious motivation as “behavior that is authentically motivated by the ideals of spirituality, ideals which are generally much *higher* than the ideals in everyday relationships, and which are in part *different* from therapeutic ideals.”<sup>7</sup>

Dealing with the unexpected, such as what the readings record happened at Pentecost, is an important aspect of religious life. I was reminded of this observation when a lady on the hospitality committee at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church explained dealing with the unexpected as an act of Faith. She had taken Friday, May 5, 2003, off from work in order to be with her grandchild on Grandparents Day at the school. She, then, expected to spend the afternoon gardening. Instead, the parish asked her to host a reception after a funeral that day.

When I suggested to her, almost in the following words of Schreurs, “in order for [spiritual] growth to occur, it is vital to remain open to the dynamic unexpectedness

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.iep.utm.edu/f/freud.htm> May 7, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 212.

<sup>7</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 214.

of self, of life, and, above, all of God,”<sup>8</sup> she agreed and added other personal examples. My experience with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] exhibits that same openness to changing reality.

As Schreurs words it, “Engaging in spiritual change is basically engaging in a [mental] healing process.”<sup>9</sup> Not only individuals, but society needs mental healing. There is a developing historiographic trend placing religion at the center of the civil rights movement.<sup>10</sup> That is something to which I would like to contribute as a Christian and as a member of the Newport News Branch of the NAACP.

Continuing to develop what mental health means for religious people, Schreurs asserts, “In the Christian tradition *contemplation*’ means a wordless prayer, in which you `forget yourself because you are paying full attention to God as he manifests himself at the actual moment to such an extent that you may become totally absorbed in it.”<sup>11</sup> Forgetting oneself in contemplation means forgetting any dichotomy between truth and politics. Human lovers can do the same thing. Such contemplative love is blind to any dichotomy between truth and politics. As is well-known from common experience, blind love can come at an enormous cost.

Schreurs observes that tragic historical experience has made everyone wary of all authorities and ideologies claiming to be pre-eminently trustworthy, including the Biblical God.<sup>12</sup> Schreurs never mentions a Pope who claims to be infallible. Healthy, overwhelming blind love is not of the pay, pray, and obey stripe. Schreurs

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<sup>8</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002)191.

<sup>9</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 134.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Newman, review of Charles Marsh, The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, from the Civil Rights Movement to Today in The American Historical Review, Vol. 111. No. 2 (April 2006) 522-523.

<sup>11</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002)203.

<sup>12</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 207.

writes, "The God of the biblical religions asks for obedience not slavery, for trust not blind docility."<sup>13</sup> Schreurs explains, "for the first time in human history, belief in God has become implausible in Western civilization, and to the very same extent it had been plausible for earlier generations."<sup>14</sup> Where Schreurs writes, "the ideas and ideals connected with the religious view have become *implausible* to many modern minds,"<sup>15</sup> I think the reason is Church bureaucracy letting Church politics overwhelm truth, especially as found in modernism.

The Church has a long history of conflict with modernism. Modernism is about accepting truths, such as the ones Galileo proposed, before the institutional Church is prepared. The work of Lonergan is about systematically preparing the Church for such acceptance. To be complete, however, Lonergan needed to get into Church politics, something he avoided as best I can tell from a light perusal of secondary sources.

Significantly, the Great Depression was the driving force and inspiration behind the philosophy and theology of Lonergan. Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., regarded as "one of the leading intellectual lights in the church" by John L. Allen, Jr.,<sup>16</sup> has high praise for Lonergan. Lonergan "will restore to Catholic thought its full dignity and right of citizenship in the complex and rich picture of contemporary research."

It seems to me that modernism is a Church term for liberalism. Liberalism not only has a modernistic side, but also a conservative side. Josephite professors at the minor seminary, Epiphany Apostolic College, in Newburg, New York offered me a "liberal" education, in the sense of Liberal Arts. Those professors taught that just as the great thinkers of all time built upon the thinkers who came earlier, so the thinkers

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<sup>13</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 149.

<sup>14</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 71.

<sup>15</sup> Agneta Schreurs, Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the spiritual dimension into therapeutic practice (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002) 61.

<sup>16</sup> John L. Allen Jr, "In gray zones, incline toward life and do less harm, Martini says," National Catholic Reporter: The Independent Newsweekly, Vol. 42, No. 27 (May 5, 2006) 9, col 1-3.

of our own time must not be paralyzed from doing the same. Those professors were political conservatives.

In the Nineteenth Century, political liberals lost their intellectual footing with the political disasters of the Revolutions of 1848. The Revolutions of 1848 were not successful. Liberals were in disarray. In order to become organized in the Germanys, they attacked Catholicism. This means there is a strong anti-Catholic bias built into liberalism. At least that is how Michael B. Gross presents his case.<sup>17</sup>

On the positive side engaging liberalism, Catholic economic thought from *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to Vatican II, in the words of Mel Piehl, “resisted mainstream economic insistence on disengaging economic analysis from political and moral categories, and certainly religious categories, as a way of enhancing its ‘scientific’ status.”<sup>18</sup> These Notes and the NAACP are about integrating religious thought with all other forms and categories of thought.

On the negative side opposing liberal insights, are four great English Catholic intellectuals, G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936),<sup>19</sup> Graham Greene (1904-1991),<sup>20</sup> Christopher Dawson (1889-1970),<sup>21</sup> and the Welsh poet David Jones (1895-1974)<sup>22</sup> who all railed against modern secularism. Modernity’s reconstruction of truth as relative troubled all four. All three alive at the time, regarded Vatican II (1962-1965)<sup>23</sup> as a betrayal of Roman Catholicism. To the contrary, I regard Vatican II in the spirit of Pope John XXIII (1881-1963)<sup>24</sup> as letting a little fresh air into the Church.

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<sup>17</sup> Raymond C. Sun, review of Michael B. Gross, The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany in The American Historical Review, Vol. 111, No. 2 (April 2006) 577-578.

<sup>18</sup> Mel Piehl, review of Within the Market Strife: American Catholic Economic Thought from Rerum Novarum to Vatican II in The American Historical Review, Vol. 111, No. 2 (April 2006) 498.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/G. K. Chesterton](http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/G._K._Chesterton) May 7, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> <http://members.tripod.com/~greeneland/bio.htm> May 7, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.nd.edu/~ndethics/inspires/dawson.shtml> May 7, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.cwru.edu/artsci/engl/V/SALM/mod/dresch/djbio.html> May 7, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.stjosef.at/council/search/> May 7, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_John\\_XXIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_XXIII) May 7, 2006.

I regard Vatican II as a move to prioritize truths emanating from liberal and modern sources over bygone outmoded Church politics.<sup>25</sup>

Now to try to fit all of the above into the readings for Pentecost, the readings begin with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles in tongues of fire. Significantly, Acts 2:1 simply refers to the Apostles as *they*, expanding the twelve in Mark and Matthew. Undoubtedly, women also spoke in tongues.<sup>26</sup> The Apostles then become so fired up that they ignore whatever other reality they must in order to preach the Gospel.

Acts 2:9 mentions that some of the Faithful, hearing the Apostles in their native language were Medes, of the diaspora of the northern tribes.<sup>27</sup> Anna, who greeted the Holy Family when they presented the infant Jesus in the Temple, was a Mede. Mede was to the north, a difficult place to reach, according to one report, news taking three years to reach Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup>

Praying constantly in the Temple, Anna must have loved God passionately. With the 104<sup>th</sup> Psalm, Anna must have realized that all creation was a gift of God. Psalm 104:31 wishes “the LORD be glad in his works!” the works are cosmic works, the heavens, the earth and all who dwell in it.<sup>29</sup>

1 Corinthians 12:6 references “different workings but the same God.” The Church uses 1 Corinthians in Pastoral Care of the Sick.<sup>30</sup> In 1 Corinthians 12:7, that “the

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<sup>25</sup> Meredith Veldman, review of Adam Schwartz, The Third Spring: G. K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Christopher Dawson, and David Jones in The American Historical Review, Vol. 111, No. 2 (April 2006) 566-567.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 193.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 99, fn 84.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 88.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: A Continuum imprint, 2003) 283.

manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit,” the Greek for *benefit* connotes suitability and advantage, rather than material profit.<sup>31</sup> Regarding themselves as the head of the Church, the hierarchy likes this passage. The point is that the Church is free to organize, as it will, whether vertically, in a hierarchal manner, or horizontally, in a democratic manner. When the Reverend Kenneth E. Wood, Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, writes, “I know a lot of this [forming a new Koinonia, our parish Council] is new,”<sup>32</sup> what is new is any departure from top-down, hierarchal organization.

Galatians 5:16-25 is the alternative Second Reading. Galatians 5:22-23 uses moments of the Spirit for discernment, looking for love, joy, peace and the like against movements of the flesh, now crucified to Christ Jesus. Jeremy Corley notes that love has primacy of place in this list.<sup>33</sup> Lonergan suits such a spirit,<sup>34</sup> as I hope would movements of the Newport News Branch of the NAACP. This section of Galatians mirrors Romans 8:90 and 1 Corinthians 3:16.<sup>35</sup>

Just as the Faithful have love for the Church approaching blindness, however it may be organized, so does God manifest a blind love for the Faithful, in John 20:22-23, “Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” At least John is clear about the sacrament. The power to

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<sup>30</sup> The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: Approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 269.

<sup>31</sup> William D. Mounce, Zondervan Greek Reference Series: The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House: A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 431.

<sup>32</sup> Rev. Kenneth E. Wood, form letter, May 2, 2006, in my possession.

<sup>33</sup> Jeremy Corley, “The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 269.

<sup>34</sup> Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J., “Bernard Lonergan at the Service of the Church,” Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 3 (September 2005) 521.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Plevnik, S.J., “The Understanding of God at the Basis of Pauline Theology,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2003) 563.

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forgive sins is with the Church.<sup>36</sup> Where Matthew explicitly excludes women from the commissioning appearance, Luke includes them, though John is unclear. The role women play in the narrative of John is transitional, between the death of Jesus and his resurrection.<sup>37</sup>

John 15:26-27; 16:12-15 is the alternative reading for the Gospel. Both readings are from the Book of Glory in John,<sup>38</sup> 13:1—20:31.<sup>39</sup> John 15:26 “the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me” is about receptivity and growth in Faith. As Kelli S. O’Brien words it, “Faith comes progressively, not whole but in stages.”<sup>40</sup> Part of those stages works though the influence of politics on truth.

According to Loren L. Johns and Douglas B. Miller, witnesses in the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, are part of a judicial rhetoric. John 15:16 is not only about the Advocate testifying on behalf Jesus, but also about convicting the world for not accepting Jesus.<sup>41</sup> Like the Advocate, the Faithful continue the witness to Jesus.

Blind love overwhelming truth works back and forth, from God to the Faithful and from the Faithful to God. Love can and does overwhelm knowledge. Thanks are to God, because loving God can never be wrong, though knowing God accurately is impossible. Only God is perfect, after all.

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<sup>36</sup> Joel Marcus, “The Gates of Hades and the Keys of the Kingdom (Matt 16:18-19),” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 3 (July 1988) 450.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 283.

<sup>38</sup> Douglas K. Clark, “Signs in Wisdom and John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 205.

<sup>39</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>40</sup> Kelli S. O’Brien, “Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No 2 (April 2005) 291.

<sup>41</sup> Loren L. Johns and Douglas B. Miller, “The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 1994) 523



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Before sending these Personal Notes out the first time, I review them about sixteen times. First, I do the research, and then comes the first draft. After the first draft, come about ten more drafts, one for each of the documentations, as I place the footnotes. Then I go over the material about three more times, trying to smooth transitions and clarify ambiguities. Then Bette goes over the finished product with a special eye for required assumptions readers may not make. After that, I first incorporate the suggestions from Bette, then review the results again, for about the sixteenth time. If the results are still bumpy, I may revise it again. Sometimes Bette wants to see my changes. After that, the Personal Notes rest about two weeks. For example, these Personal Notes for June 5 are being composed May 7th for distribution May 25th. Before sending out the material May 5<sup>th</sup>, in both hard copy and on the internet, I make another revision. Up until April 23, this had been standard practice. Now a change is taking place.

Beginning Easter, April 16, I began systematically preparing for Sunday Mass by praying over the Personal Notes just before Mass begins. Again, I revise the Personal Notes, for about the eighteenth time. My reason for calling attention to the process is that I am beginning to upload changes to the website made on the Sunday itself. This means that the hard and virtual copies distributed about two weeks before each Sunday are subject to further revision on the Sunday in question. Beginning next Sunday, this notice will no longer appear here, but will appear in the attached Appendix.

For more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at [www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes](http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes)