

Personal Notes  
040530 Pentecost 63C  
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Pentecost with its wind, tongues of fire, and forgiveness of sins comes across as personal and isolated. The Psalm carries the message into the whole cosmos. That Pentecost has a cosmic dimension is the theme for these Personal Notes.

### **Acts 2:1-11**

Since I already translated John 20:19-23 for the Second Sunday of Easter, Cycle B, last year, April 27, 2003, for today, I translated Acts instead. My thought then, a year ago, was about the cosmos, the wonderment of God as reason to rejoice. That same wonderment continues to enchant me. Since no one is asking me for my past comments, my intention is to note that fact two more times, before relegating announcement of availability to the Appendix.

The Greek for verse one, *when the time for Pentecost was fulfilled*, means at the end of the day, rather than at the end of fifty days. That meaning for the translation may explain why depictions of the division of tongues of fire appear in the evening.

As an individual day Pentecost, itself, is a cosmic event, one rotation of the globe. Noise coming from the sky or heaven in verse 2 also depicts a cosmic event. The Greek for *in the house* connotes a place *where* rather than a confined space *in which*. The noise was not confined simply to the house; the house, however, was the place where the cosmic noise was heard.

Verse 5 and following has cosmic relevance. First, only Jews witness the disciples speaking each *in his native language* (verse 8). The Gospel must first be preached to the Jews. However, these Jews are a special group, from a plethora of at least fifteen places in the known world. *Travelers from Rome*, carries the Greek sense of *visitors*, people living in Jerusalem, but from Rome. The Faithful may think of tourists. That the disciples are Galileans (verse 7) is a cosmic reference to a particular geographic area. Jesus starts with these comparative country-bumpkins, with a hard-to-believe story, to spread the Gospel.

Verse 6, *they were confused*, is, itself confusing. From the Greek, the sense is *bewildered*. *Not knowing what to make of it* is clearer. When contemporaries try to wrap their minds around cosmic reality, confusion resounds. The 104<sup>th</sup> psalmist helps clarify the relationship between God and cosmic reality.

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

The Lectionary uses this Psalm as follows.

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>	
21C	135-136	1b-2, 3-4,	24-25, 27-28, 29-30 Baptism Cycle C
41A	318-319	1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24,	Easter Cycle A
62ABC	475	1-2,	24,
		<b>35,</b>	27-28, 29, 30
		(cf. 30)	Pentecost Vigil
63A	480	1,	24, 29-30
		31, 34	(1) Today

The readings for the Psalm are also available in these Personal Notes for the The Baptism of the Lord, January 11, 2003. As previously written, this is one of the royal Psalms, echoing salvation history.<sup>1</sup> In secular society, royalty of the people means human rights, including a right to privacy and a right to equal pay for equal work or non-discrimination. Rights of the people are compatible with the fear of the Lord.

The idea that God is robed in light has special meaning for Poor Clares, who themselves are robes of light for the societies in which they live and pray.

Within the context of this royal psalm, verse 24,  *manifold are your works, O LORD!* has a cosmic dimension.<sup>2</sup> This psalm ties Pentecost with the cosmos itself. The activity of God is not limited to individual Faithful or the Chosen People. Rather, the activity of God is cosmic in nature. 1 Corinthians is about completely enveloping the human race in the loving embrace of God.

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

This reading is about the Mystical Body of Christ. For many of the Faithful, what this means is a difficulty not found in these Notes. The Faithful do live the life of

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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 180.

<sup>2</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.

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Christ. This life of grace is sufficiently evident for the Faithful to enjoy. The Spirit blows where it will and in this sense, the diversity within the Catholic Church can thrill rather than distract the Faithful. The full view of what God is doing looking out onto the cosmos is similar to looking into the Church. Both directions can astound the Faithful. Most of all the Faithful can remain astounded at grace within their own souls.

Pastoral Care of the Sick uses 1 Corinthians 12:12-22, 24b-27 for New Testament Readings during the Easter Season.<sup>3</sup> In this spirit, the Faithful are free to pray for a variety of daily special intentions, with no doubt that God hears their prayers.

### **John 20:19-23**

The Lectionary uses this passage from the Book of Glory (13:1—20:31)<sup>4</sup> more than any other Gospel text: The Second Sunday of Easter 41ABC and Pentecost 63ABC.

Richard Bauckham regards John 20:19-23 as about Easter Sunday evening, as is appropriate. This passage, then, is not about Pentecost. Bauckham assumes women were present, though unmentioned, Easter Sunday, because John concentrated on the appearance to Mary Magdalene as the transition in the narrative.<sup>5</sup> To rise from the dead is a cosmic event.

Verse 1, *that first day of the week*, is evidence of Aramaic rather than Greek influence.<sup>6</sup> Aramaic would have been the tongue of Mary for whom John at the

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<sup>3</sup> International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, 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 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1983) 269.

<sup>4</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>5</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>6</sup> John M. Perry, "The Three Days in the Synoptic Passion Predictions," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 4 (October 1986) 645.

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Foot of the Cross cared. The Faithful often regard John and John the Evangelist as the same. That conjunction makes this a Marian Gospel, one settled in peace, proclaimed twice by Jesus. This verse is “the most impressive agreement of all” between Luke 24:36, and John 20:19.<sup>7</sup> Bauckham thinks “there must be a common tradition between Luke’s and John’s resurrection narratives.”<sup>8</sup> Peace also evolves from the ability of humans to forgive sins in verse 23. Verse 23 also helps interpret Matthew 16:19 used for the Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, 121A. Matthew is less clear than John about forgiving sins.<sup>9</sup>

The theme of these Personal Notes is the cosmic relationship between the Feast of Pentecost and the cosmos. Acts tells of the sound coming from heaven above. Psalm 104 is about God, the ruler of the universe, not only planet earth. 1 Corinthians extends Christianity from the Chosen People to all people. The Gospel, when taken within the context of the general violence found within the cosmos, does have a cosmic dimension by granting peace to the Faithful.

For more on sources, besides the footnotes, see the Appendix file.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Stein, “The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July 1992) 493.

<sup>8</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) 192.

<sup>9</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) 450-452.