

Readings

First Reading:	Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 (Matthew 5:3)
Second Reading:	1 Corinthians 1:26-31
Alleluia:	Matthew 5:12a
Gospel:	Matthew 5:1-12a

Commentary

The readings for this Sunday offer encouragement for the Faithful to say “good night” to the slights of this world with the expectation of finding a “good morning” in next world to come. The Beatitudes form the Gospel readings. The upbeat Beatitudes provide the New Testament setting for the other readings.

In the first readings from the First Testament, the prophet Zephaniah has returned to Jerusalem, now in ruins, after the Babylonian Exile. Zephaniah wrote approximately 630-625 BC.¹ Zephaniah prophecies in an upbeat manner about the Faithful who have kept the Faith despite difficulties. Zephaniah is making the point that when the Faithful wake up in the morning of the next life, things will be better.

Like Zephaniah, the upbeat 146th Psalm is also encouraging. The Psalmist also probably wrote after the Faithful returned from the Babylonian exile to Jerusalem. The place was a mess, but the Psalmist proclaimed, “The LORD keeps faith forever.”

Again, like Zephaniah, Paul finds the Corinthians discouraged yet hopeful. Paul means the Corinthian Christians were mostly put upon by the vicissitudes of life. The epistle, rather than offering support for the way things are; more probably looks to changing the way things are.

In the New Testament, the Beatitudes are about the will to live. The Beatitudes are about staying the course through whatever difficulties arise. One of the difficulties is the current Papacy becoming a laughing stock by approving the use of condoms for male prostitutes.² The Faithful will have to endure by taking comfort in the Beatitudes, the prophecies of Zephaniah, and the hope expressed in the 146th Psalm.

The Beatitudes express compassion for all those suffering from the vicissitudes of life. The remnant constitutes those of the Faithful who remain in the Church despite human frailty, nonsense, and corruption at the height of the hierarchy. The whole condom mess is a matter for prayer within the context of the Beatitudes.

¹ <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/Proph3.htm> accessed November 24, 2010.

² See, for example, Phyllis Zagano, “It’s not just about male prostitutes,” <http://ncronline.org/blogs/just-catholic/its-not-just-about-male-prostitutes> accessed November 24, 2010.

Annotated Bibliography

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

Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13

Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 (Matthew 5:3)

Funerals uses Psalm 146 during the Vigil for a deceased child.³

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

For recurring themes in Sacred Scripture, see the following. The exclamation point (!) indicates where a principal reference list of passages related by a common theme or expression is found.⁴ With this material, I am trying to lay a foundation for developing Biblical themes the next time through the Cycles.

Verse 26	Mt 11:25; James 2:5.
Verse 27	Luke 14:21 synoptic parallel; Mt 5:3.
Verse 28	Mt 19:30; Rom 4:17.
Verse 29	Rom 3:27!
Verse 30	2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Philippians 3:9; Romans 10:4; Jeremiah 23:5 f.; 6:11; John 17:19; Romans 3:24!
Verse 31	Jeremiah 9:22-23 parallels 2 Corinthians 10:17; Romans 5:11; Galatians 6:14.

³ 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 IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: 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 Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 301.

⁴ 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.

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1 Cor 1:26-31

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.⁵

St. Catharine's Monastery in Sinai has a Fifth Century papyrus with 1 Cor. 1:25-27. So far, I designed these comments on the availability of manuscripts to make the point that uncertainty exists as to exactly what Greek words to use for the purposes of translation. At this point, I am offering manuscript availability to lay background for examining Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology,⁶ which I purchased based on the review in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly.⁷ I do not anticipate using Translating for several months.

1 Cor 1:17—2:16

George T. Montague, S.M., review of Ian W. Scott, Paul's Way of Knowing: Story, Experience, and the Spirit⁸

Montague reports that "Scott begins his work by asking whether amid the postmodern distrust of rational thought, its sense of loss of center and accompanying angst, there is value in exploring Paul's way of knowing." Scott goes on to include 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, used today, in support of the use of reason. Montague continues, "The resistance of human reason to the faith is due not to its total inadequacy but to the fact that it has been highjacked [sic] by human vices, making the assent of faith distasteful (p. 44)." Montague regards the work of Scott as "highly significant."

1 Cor 1:26

L. L. Welborn, review of Andrew D. Clarke, Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1—6⁹

Welborn reports, "Problematic is C.'s fundamental distinction between 'secular' and 'Christian' ..." Welborn continues, "One should ask, instead, what united Paul, Plutarch, and Dio in their criticism of aristocratic values. Then one might uncover the

⁵ Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 97.

⁶ Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.), (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009).

⁷ Robert Hodgson, Jr. review of Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology, Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (eds.), the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 4 (April 2009) 877-878.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 3 (July 2009) 656.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 141.

actual social categories that generated the contrasts and their accompanying ideological justifications.”

1 Cor 1:26-31

Yung Suk Kim, review of Seyoon Kim, Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke¹⁰
Kim reports,

This book presents a number of problems. First, K. offers a thoroughly dualistic approach that separates theology from politics and defines salvation as transcendent, unrelated to this world. But Paul’s gospel emphasizes the radical love of God, who chooses the weak and despised in the world to shame the strong (1 Cor 12:26-31).

1 Cor 1:27-31

Robert Jewett, review of Stephen Finlan, The Apostle Paul and the Pauline Tradition¹¹

Jewett reports that Finlan relates that “Most Christians imagine the firm and proper Paul of the Pastorals, not the ... status-criticizing Paul of 1 Corinthians 1:27-31 ...”

Matthew 5:12a

Matthew 5:1-12a

As a teaching moment, Funerals uses this section of Matthew as one of the texts for Funerals for Adults.¹² Pastoral Care of the Sick uses the same section.¹³ These verses

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 3 (July 2009) 648.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 2 (April 2009) 402.

¹² International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops’ Conferences, Part III: Texts of Sacred Scripture: 13: Funerals for Adults, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: 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 Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 231.

¹³ Part III: Readings, Responses, and Verses from Sacred Scripture, 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

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with the Beatitudes, examined below, offer consolation to those put upon by the social order. It is Divine order that reigns over history and human society, as well as the universe.

The promise for the poor in Spirit is in the present tense. The promises for the meek and those who mourn are in the future tense, something not quite realized yet. The meek are promised the *earth* in the Latin, the *land* in the Lectionary. Such a conundrum is not the way things are supposed to be, according to worldly-centered standards. The promise in the Beatitudes of Matthew is that Divine order will prevail.

- Verse 1 Old Latin manuscript 5-7 parallels Luke 6:20-49, 14-23; 15:29; 24:3; (I do not understand the apparatus) 6:12; John 6:3.
- Verse 2 Sirach 25:7-12.
- Verse 3 Matt 11:5; Luke 4:18; 1 Corinthians 1:27 f.; James 2:5; Psalm 33:19(LXX); Isaiah 57:15; 61:1. Verse 3 in the Latin has the kingdom of the plural *heavens*, rather than the Lectionary singular *heaven*.
- Verse 4 Isaiah 61:2 f; Sirach 48:24; Revelation 7:16 f.
- Verse 5 Psalm 57:11; Deuteronomy 4:38; Enoch 5:7; Romans 4:13.
- Verse 6 Psalm 107:5-8 f; John 6:35; Revelation 7:16f.
- Verse 7 Matt 18:33; James 2:13.; Proverbs 14:31; Matthew 17:5 (I do not understand apparatus).
- Verse 8 Psalm 24:4; 73:1; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:22; Genesis 20:5 f.; Revelation 22:4.
- Verse 9 Proverbs 10:10 (LXX); James 3:18; Hebrews 12:14!; Hosea 2:1; Romans 9:26.
- Verse 10 1 Peter 3:14.
- Verse 11 Matt 10:22; Isaiah 51:7; Acts 5:41; 1 Peter 4:14.
- Verse 12 Revelation 19:7; Genesis 15:1.

Matthew 5

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.¹⁴

The National Museum in Damascus has a Ninth Century parchment with Matthew 5:1-11. Nikanoros in Zavorda has a Ninth Century papyrus with Matthew 5—26.

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) 301.

¹⁴ Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 124, 127, 243.

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The Alands are clearer here than below about Matthew 5:5. Their writing overlaps. Here, they write, “Square brackets [] in the apparatus enclose information derived not from the basic textual witnesses, but from modern editors, whether the conjectures of modern commentators (comm = commentators; e.g., Matt. 5:6 Julius Wellhausen proposes omitting the entire verse) ...”

Matt 5:1-12

Fr. Tissa Balasuryia, “Companion to the Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI on ‘God is Love’”¹⁵

Father Balasuryia is a Sri Lankan priest and theologian, whom Benedict, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger recommended for excommunication. On January 2, 1997, Pope John Paul II complied and excommunicated Father Balasuryia. Father Balasuryia is a member of the Order of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.). After intense negotiation and worldwide publicity, on January 17, 1998 the Vatican lifted the excommunication.¹⁶

In 2006, Father Balasuryia wrote,

A significant omission in the Encyclical [“God is Love” by Benedict XVI] in relation to the teachings and life of Jesus is the Sermon on the Mount—as in Mt. 5:1-12 [used in the readings for today] and Luke 6:20-41.

The Beatitudes present a dimension of Jesus Christ that goes beyond the charity of social service and the mere legality or correctness of loving one’s friends, and the strict obligations of justice. Jesus teaches that human happiness and the coming of the Kingdom of God lies in the goodness of self-giving for others. From this disposition many conclusions can be drawn for personal and social life.

...

Have Christians as a community been humble? What has been the relationship of the Church towards other faiths, people of other religions and of non-Western cultures? Has it been one of humility and respect? Could the Church say that it has followed the teachings of Jesus ...

On the other hand has not the historical record of the Church been one of thinking of itself as having the unique truth concerning God and a

¹⁵ Cross|Currents, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Summer 2006) 249-251.

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tissa_Balasuriya (accessed November 21, 2010) and Basil Fernando, Executive Director, Asian Human Rights Commission, 17 January 1998 <http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/1998/13/> (accessed November 21, 2010).

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monopoly of the path and means to salvation. Others [sic] faiths and religions were considered wrong, and therefore without rights. They were not only be [sic] opposed but defeated and if possible exterminated as works of the Devil. The interpretation of Christian revelation combined with political and military power endowed Europeans with the belief that they were superior human beings, specially loved and privileged by God.

The attitude of the Catholic clergy towards [sic] women is that men were/are considered more in the image of the Man-God Jesus Christ and therefore superior to women. Women are still not considered worthy of priestly ordination, or of the exercise of higher teaching and administrative functions in the Church. The exclusion of women in some places from university and seminary theological studies till [sic] Vatican II (1962-65) ensured that women's views had little chance of influencing the teaching and life of the Church. This is a long history of male domination that continues today.

...

The world system [sic] is very far from the reign of God promised by Jesus. The norms in today's world system could hardly be more divergent from His ideals. The foreign debt of poor countries constitutes a crushing burden that further impoverishes countries long exploited by their former colonial rulers. The IMF [International Monetary Fund] and World Bank impose structural adjustment policies that compel impoverished debtor nations to open their economies to foreign subsidized imports. Those imports in turn destroy local production. Debtor nations are further required their [sic] to privatize utilities and infrastructure—water supplies, fuel delivery systems, health, education, communications and transportation.

After reading what Father Balasuryia had to say above, in 2006, about "God is Love" by Benedict XVI, one gains a sense of why, in 1996, Benedict attacked Father Balasuryia. And why his religious order defended Father Balasuryia.

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Matthew 5:5

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 Editio XXVII.¹⁷

Nestle-Aland explain, "Brackets [] enclose conjectures with regard to both the text and its punctuation. Textual conjectures are identified either by their author (cf. Mt. 5:5 ...)" At Matthew 5:5 the apparatus has "vs. Wellhausen" conjecture, with regard to the verse "Blessed are the meek ..." Wellhausen does not think the manuscripts support that verse.

My purpose in examining the manuscripts upon which translations are based is to expose the politics involved in seeking the truth in Biblical studies. Because Church politics is deeply invested in understanding Sacred Scripture according to long-held traditions, seeking the truth runs grave risks, as described below.

Wellhausen is Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), a scripture scholar who stopped teaching in the seminary because he thought he was rendering his students unfit for the ministry. The work Wellhausen did on the Pentateuch stood firm until about twenty-five years ago. What Wellhausen did with Matthew was a minor part of his scholarship. The point is that Wellhausen remains so highly regarded that his comment on the Beatitude remains in the Greek apparatus.¹⁸

There is another point relative to these Notes. My concern is whether these Notes render the Faithful to be unfit to remain Catholic. I continue, because I think that not the case. I expect the Faithful who think will find enjoyment, consolation, and understanding in these Notes. The Faithful, including bishops and their priests, who use their religion as an excuse not to think, do not risk thinking by reading Notes like these. Because they do not read with a purpose of positive critical thinking, these Notes will not affect those who do not want to think.

A more fundamental reason why I continue is shortly after I call for change in Church politics, change occurs. The position of the Papacy on condoms is a change in a thinking direction. The softening of the attack on President Barack Obama and the Democrats marks a similar change. So, I continue with a sense of gratitude toward my readers.

¹⁷ Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999, 11.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Wellhausen (accessed November 22, 2010).

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Matt 5:8

Alfio Marcello Buscemi, "The Evil of Self-Will Admonition II of Saint Francis," translated by Edward Hagman, O.F.M.¹⁹

The presence of God in the lives of the Faithful is a great light. Purity of heart enables the Faithful to see God and experience the great love and affection of God.

Matt 5:8

Walter T. Wilson, "Seen in Secret: Inconspicuous Piety and Alternative Subjectivity in Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18" ²⁰

Wilson argues,

References to "the secret place" and the "inner room" (6:6), for example, are to be taken not as references to the household or a "private chapel," but as symbolic language for "what is inward" in the human personality, one's inner thoughts and intentions, what Matthew refers to elsewhere as the "heart" (5:8 [used here in the Beatitudes], 28; 6:21; 15:7-9, 18-19), which ought to be directed fully and exclusively toward God.

Wilson also argues

That the evangelist wants to draw particular attention to this [forgiveness] theme is indicated by the redactional material in 6:14-15 (cf. Mark 11:25), which constitutes a community rule on the dynamics of forgiveness, a topic of recurring interest in his Gospel (cf. 5:7 [used here], 23-26; 16:19; 18:15-22; 26:28).

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

¹⁹ Greyfriars Review Vol. 19, Issue 1 (2005) 16.

²⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 3 (July 2010), 477, 486.