

Preach is the word for these readings. Within the context of the magisterium, **preaching** causes a problem in that the present magisterium delivers its *imprimatur* on vertical, top-down communication, without providing for horizontal or peer-to-peer communication. The reason peer-to-peer communication cannot be omitted is because peer-to-peer communication, not parent-to-child communication, is essential for the psychological establishment of character and meaningful commitment.¹

The Feast of Cana suits this contemplation, as Jesus begins his public ministry, **preaching** by an action.

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

verse 6:1² Job **spoke, saying:**

The 6:1 location for this verse is not cited in the *Lectionary*.

verse 1 Is not man's life on earth a **drudgery**?

The meaning taken here is that action-**preaching** can be a rather dreary affair.

Psalms 174:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted is the antiphon. **Praise** is a form of peer-to-peer **preaching**.

verse 3 He heals the **brokenhearted**
and binds up their wounds.

¹ My source for this is a television program on leadership probably between Thursday January 16, 2003 and Saturday, January 18, 2003. The professor had taught at MIT and Harvard and was now at the University of Southern California. His name began with a "B," something like "Bemis." He made his comment in response to a question from the audience. Furthermore, throughout my life I have noted that children often do not take on the character of their parents; this explanation accounts for that differentiation.

² Indented verse quotations are taken 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).

verse 1c it is **fitting** to praise him.

Fitting carries the notion of justice. Saint Jerome³ uses *iucundum*.

verse 2b the dispersed of Israel he **gathers**.

The Latin uses the future tense, *congregabit*. **Gathers** is something ever-present. Once **gathered**, expect **preaching**, because God loves the Faithful to show him off.

verse 3a He heals the **brokenhearted**

Saint Jerome uses *contritos* for brokenhearted. To pray for a *contrite* heart is to pray for healing at the same time and is to pray for recognition that there is a need for healing.

verse 6b the wicked he **casts** to the ground.

Saint Jerome uses *humilians* for **casts**. In other words, to pray for a truly humble heart also prays for a heart cast down to the ground. Recognizing that, because I am my own person, I would be one to get into trouble in the seminary, my Aunt Marie often urged me to be like the grass, low to the ground, able to withstand the worst sort of hurricane or tornado. She correctly knew that I would not turn this advice into misuse of a *pray*, *pay*, and *obey* mantra.

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

verse 16 If I **preach** the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast,
 for an obligation has been imposed on me,
 and woe to me if I do not **preach** it!

verse 18 What then is my recompense?
 That, when I **preach**,
 I **offer the gospel** free of charge
 so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Saint Jerome uses a different root word here than used later in the Gospel, as will be seen. The words Jerome uses here are *evangelizavero* and *evangelizavero* in verse 16, and *evangelium praedicans*, *evangelium*, and *evangelio* in verse 18.

³ *Saint Jerome, the Vulgate, and the Latin* 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

Because verse 20 is omitted from the Lectio, a recent scholarly translation may help.

As he [Paul] wrote to the “strong” at Corinth, “I became to the Jews like a Jew, in order that I might gain Jews; to those under the Law, like one under the Law—though I myself am not under the Law—in order that I might gain those under the Law” (1 Cor 9:20).⁴

Under the Law is used by Paul eight times (Gal 3:23; 4:4-5, 21; 5:18; cf. Rom 6:14-15; 1 Cor 9:20).⁵ The relative ease with which this phrase might be turned into an approbation of lawlessness explains to me reason enough to omit from the *Lectio*.

verse 22 To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak.
 I have become all things to all, to save at least some.

In the seminary a retired priest by the name of Father *Hack* Wilson, S.S.J., warned us not to try to *become all things to all* and referee a basketball game at the same time. Father recognized that that phrase is too often misinterpreted. At the same time, this sense of becoming weak to win over the weak expresses one reason why I take the back row and use a much-moderated voice during public worship and no audible voice at all otherwise. I do not want to distract someone else, including the sisters and nuns trying to connect with their God in holy prayer. As one scholar puts it,

For Paul to become “weak to the weak” (1 Cor 9:22) did not mean that Paul became like someone who had faith in God but not in Christ; rather it meant that Paul abstained from idol meat when around those who so abstained.⁶

Matthew 8:17

No comment

Mark 1:29-39

⁴ Robert A. J. Gagnon, “Why the ‘Weak’ at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 74.

⁵ Joel Marcus, “‘Under the Law’: The Background of a Pauline Expression,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 72.

⁶ Robert A. J. Gagnon, “Why the ‘Weak’ at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 76.

verse 29 On Leaving the synagogue
 Jesus entered the **house** of Simon and Andrew with James and
 John.

For **house**, Saint Jerome uses the well-known Latin, *domum*. Mark is about the *household* that is the Church.⁷

verse 30 **Simon's** mother-in-law lay sick with a fever.

A scholar points out that this is the first mention of **Simon**, Peter, by himself, alone.⁸ I note that Peter is presented as among peers, rather than as a Pope, even a Pope *primus inter pares*, first among equals.

verse 33 The whole town was gathered at the **door**.

Door presumes a *house*.

verse 34 He cured **many** who were sick with various diseases...

Without a comma in the Greek, Saint Jerome provides one. This translation reads as if there were some whom Jesus did not cure. The grammarian points out that the use of **many** here, deriving from the Semitic mind, does not exclude *all*.⁹ All of that notwithstanding, a scholar does recognize this verse as *difficult*.¹⁰

verse 35 Rising very early before dawn, he left
 and went off to a **deserted** place, where he prayed.

⁷ Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., review of Michael F. Trainor, The Quest for Home: The Household in Mark's Community in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 781.

⁸ E. Best, "Peter in the Gospel According to Mark," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 548.

⁹ 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) 103.

¹⁰ Robert H. Stein, "The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July, 1992) 484.

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A scholar points out that the wilderness of Mark 1:2-8 is “a narrative symbol for homelessness.”¹¹ In line with this thought, **deserted** place is somewhere, homelessness, other than a household. Prayer is appropriate outside the household. Prayer is the joy of contemplation of God, **preaching** is the result of that joy. Too much **preaching** is like too much joy, meaning that an empty barrel makes the most noise. Contemplation fills the barrel.

verse 36 Simon and those who were with him **pursued** him

For **pursued**, the grammarian offers the sense of *hunted down*,¹² Saint Jerome offers the sense of *persecute*. The exact Latin is *persecutus est*. Jesus wanted to be left alone to pray, yet he acceded to the pestering. In the seminary, there was a visiting priest, recognized by us seminarians as holy. That notwithstanding, we did not think it appropriate for him to shut down the basketball game in the gym below the church so that he might the better concentrate on his prayers. This was not judging the holy priest, but was peer-to-peer enabling us to develop our own character as to how we would react to similar circumstances did we encounter similar circumstances in our future parishes. I think this sense of *hunted down* also accounts for the great patience with the cacophony too often present during what should be singing at Mass, not only during the week, but also on Sundays.

verse 38 He told them, “Let us go on to the nearby villages
 that I may **preach** there also.
 For this purpose have I come.”

verse 39 So he went into their synagogues,
 preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

Saint Jerome uses *praedicem* only, for Jesus here, leaving out any direct reference to the good news of the Gospel.

A scholar notes, “The intimate association of the Twelve ‘with Jesus’ is what authorizes them to do what, up to this point in the story, only Jesus has done.”¹³ How? does this *intimate association* ever authorize the laity to do anything? in the eyes of the

¹¹ Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., review of Michael F. Trainor, The Quest for Home: The Household in Mark’s Community in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 781.

¹² 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) 103.

¹³ Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., “Mark 6:6b-30: Mission, the Baptist, and Failure,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 651.

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magisterium? in the eyes of the non-magisterium? in the eyes of the Faithful, themselves? If the Faithful are to **preach** to one another, that can only happen based on their intimate association with grace, with Jesus.

Preaching is the word for these readings. The **preaching** of Job is drudgery. The **preaching** of Paul a type of thankless obligation. The **preaching** of Jesus a joy (even at Cana), often misunderstood. All of the **preaching** in these readings comes across as peer-to-peer, rather than as father-to-child.