

Personal Notes
060205 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time 74B
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Like Christians through all of the ages, Saint Paul is filled with awe at the grace bestowed upon him by God, a grace that enables him to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Struck by his union with God, Paul cannot help himself from spreading the Good News, the Gospel.

Saint Paul, apparently tripping over his own enthusiasm for the love of God, fulfills the following admonition (which we intend to include with our 2006 Christmas letter).

They may see the good you do as self-serving. Continue to do good.

They may see your generosity as grandstanding. Continue to be generous.

They may see your warm and caring nature as a weakness. Continue to be warm and caring.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It never was between you and them anyway.¹

Mass begins by praying for the enthusiastic type of fellowship with God which Paul experienced and often expressed in his Epistles. Paul wrote his Epistles before the Evangelists wrote. The assumption follows, therefore, that the Evangelists explain Paul. Although there is no ongoing Sunday-to-Sunday direct correlation between the Lectionary Epistles and Gospels, I have always found insights flowing from one to the other. Since I am concentrating on the Greek of the Epistles this time through the three yearly Liturgical Cycles, I am sensitive to the flow of insight from the First Testament to the New Testament and from the Epistles to the Gospels.

This week, I happened to notice that the time I spent preparing the Greek was about as much as I spent preparing the articles in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly. This helps explain why I write as much as I do about the Greek. The Greek root word for *spreading the good news, spreading the Gospel* comes out flat in the Lectionary as *preaching*. Paul is doing more than *preaching*. He is spreading the Good News, he is evangelizing. This is much clearer in the original Greek.

Paul writes that he cannot help himself. Sometimes he trips over his own words in his enthusiasm and has to defend himself against duplicity. That is what 1 Corinthians 9:16 means, *woe to me if I do not preach it!* Paul does not mean that God will punish Paul, but that Paul is compulsive about preaching, even to Corinthians who will not understand.

¹ As of January 6, 2006, for \$35.00 this could be ordered as an unattributed framed plaque, catalogue number HA6362 at signals.com or 1-800-669-9696.

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Through these Lectionary readings, both the Vulgate and the original Greek use the root word for *evangelize* six times. The Lectionary avoids the word *evangelize* all together, substituting the word *preach* three times (1 Corinthians 9:16, 16, 18), *offer the gospel* [sic] once (1 Corinthians 9:18), *right in the gospel* [sic] once (1 Corinthians 9:18), and *for the sake of the gospel* [sic] once (1 Corinthians 9:23). Since at least one poll shows that evangelization is one of the priorities of the Faithful in the United States, the exclusion of that word from the Lectionary translation is significant.

One wonders if this exclusion of *evangelize* anticipated the scandals of the television evangelicals during the 1990s. The Lectionary translators did not want association with such evangelism. Problems enough would surface during the 2000s.

Before getting too confident in the original Greek words, note there are at least two unexplained punctuation changes in 1 Corinthians 9:17 and 18. One of these changes substitutes a semi-colon for a comma after the Greek word for *entrusted* (1 Corinthians 9:17). The other omits a comma after *offer the gospel* (1 Corinthians 9:18). Since Greek grammar arranges words differently than English, there is no Lectionary equivalent for omitting the comma. The Latin Vulgate, however, uses a period. The latest Greek version omits a comma after the Greek word for *offer-the-gospel*.² The Vulgate keeps the comma. The Lectionary omits the comma.

The historian in me wants to know why these changes occurred. The historian in me also warns about making more out of the evidence than is reasonable. Finally, the historian in me wants to present the evidence that significantly seems to go against my core belief that all of the words, everything, in the Bible is divinely inspired. If the Faithful cannot be sure of the original manuscripts, how can the Faithful be sure either of or what is divinely inspired? The answer is the tradition of the Church.

At the risk of adding to the confusion, my thinking is that anyone reading these Notes is no longer “weak,” so I present the difficult material. My sense of “weak,” is *To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak* (1 Corinthians 9:22). Especially toward the end of my formal teaching career, my students let me know that sharing my degree of certitude was helpful, rather than unhelpful, in shoring up how I see things.

By way of connotation, the word *evangelize* carries with it “a gaggle of commentaries by conservative evangelical scholars,” as Calvin J. Roetzel puts it. 1 Corinthians 8:1—11:1 covers a range of thought whereby Paul defends himself against

² David Holly, *Comparative Studies in Recent Greek New Testament Texts: Nestle-Aland's 25th and 26th Editions* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1983) 37.

duplicity.³ Since being human means being imperfect, the Faithful can share in the embarrassment of Paul being misunderstood.

1 Corinthians 9:17, about Paul preaching willingly and unwillingly, is about the Faithful resonating with the preaching. When the Faithful resonate, that is the reward in which Paul hopes to participate. When the Faithful do not resonate, Paul keeps on trying, filled with hope and grace, for enabling people to understand the holy love of God.

Paul takes up this issue of evangelizing as a matter of dispute over food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8:10—9:27. This includes the interest of Paul in human sexuality.⁴ Paul writes about the effects of knowledge upon the weak and, for the sake of the weak, he renounces some of his apostolic freedoms.⁵ This is similar to the way in which Catholic vowed religious renounce their right to marry.

In the world of Saint Paul, sharing food offered either in the Jewish temple or in pagan temples, included something of the temple involved. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is claiming a “basic eschatological freedom from the ways and expectations of the present world.”⁶ Do the Lectionary readings from 1 Corinthians 9 emanate from Paul? Scholars think so.

Scholars question whether Paul or a surrogate wrote various passages in 1 Corinthians. Except for 1 Corinthians 9:20-21, the Sunday Lectionary includes 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. That passage reflects the predominance of first-person verbs characteristic of Paul. Those verbs are: I am free, I have made myself, I became weak, I have become all things to all, all this I do, and that I too may have a share.

³ Calvin J. Roetzel, review of Frank J. Matera, II Corinthians: A Commentary in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No 4 (October 2004) 661.

⁴ Jeffrey R. Asher, review of Karl Olav Sandnes, Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 480-481.

⁵ John Fotopoulos, “Arguments Concerning Food Offered to Idols: Corinthian Quotations and Pauline Refutations in a Rhetorical *Partitio* (1 Corinthians 8:1-9),” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 4 (October 2005) 618.

⁶ Harry P. Nasuti, “The Woes of the Prophets and the Rights of the Apostle: The internal Dynamics of 1 Corinthians 9,” The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 2 (April 1988) 251, 263.

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Six times in seven lines, this passage uses a first-person verb.⁷ On this evidence, Paul wrote the readings for this Sunday.

Scholars trip up over 1 Corinthians 9:18, offering the Gospel *free of charge* versus *full use of my right* [to charge] *in the gospel*. Paul offering the Gospel free of charge is like a teacher going beyond what is required by contract to enable students to grasp the material. Paul is like the teacher who admonishes students to put up with the teacher in order to learn the material. Just as the teacher is authorized by the administration to teach, in a similar manner, the preaching of Paul and others like him is authorized by God to spread the Good News.⁸

Through using the Cross, Paul makes sense out of Job. The Lectionary begins with the Book of Job. Job excoriates God for treating him badly. Job exclaims that God is not treating him rationally.⁹ Job 7:2 describes human life as *a slave who longs for the shade*, bringing an African-American dimension into consideration. Job 7:7 bemoans, *I shall not see happiness again*. God is making no sense.

The Responsorial Antiphon, see Psalm 147:3a, *Praise the Lord, who heals the broken hearted* is not only about the Faithful witnessing their children leave the Church and their Church leaving them, but is also about Jesus Christ witnessing and engaging sin. The 147th Psalmist recognizes the presence and fellowship of God in human anguish. 1 Corinthians even finds goodness in suffering, because suffering brings the Faithful closer to fellowship with the Holy Spirit. In this age of returning space ships from the cosmos, Psalm 147:4 has special meaning, *He tells the number of the stars; he calls each by name*. The Lectionary is continually relevant to how life is lived, because the Lord does heal the broken hearted.

The household of Peter and Andrew must have been broken hearted because the mother-in-law of Peter was no longer waiting on them. Within such a context, the Gospel according to Mark explains Jesus as forming a Church to explain suffering. Like important political figures, who never arrive without their entourage, Jesus enters *the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John* (Mark 1:29). Jesus is able to accept the accoutrements of human adulation. When Mark portrays Jesus as healing the mother-in-law of Saint Peter, Mark shows a relief of suffering in the

⁷ Jeremy Corley, "The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 272.

⁸ Richard A. Horsley, *Consciousness and Freedom among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8—10*, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 579.

⁹ Gregory Vall, review of Carol A. Newsom, The Book of Job: A contest of Moral Imaginations in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 627.

midst of feminist suffering.¹⁰ Upon being cured, the mother-in-law simply goes back to waiting on them, that is, suffering as expected.¹¹

With feminine interest in the suffering associated with injustices, Richard Bauckham observes:¹²

[Kim] Paffenroth assigns to L [Luke] only six of the nine pericopae mentioned above as featuring women (Luke 7:11-17, 36-50; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 15:8-10; 18:1-14). This is fewer such pericopae than Mark has (see Mark 1:29-31 [used here]; 3:31-35 (?); 5:21-43; 7:24-30; 12:41-44; 14:3-9; 15:40-41, 47; 16:1-8), and so [Thorlief] Boman's case for women's tradition is not strong for this version of the L hypothesis.

Borman's case is "that the whole of Luke's special material (so-called L) derives from a circle of women disciples, including Joanna, who were the eyewitnesses, traditioners, and custodians of a cycle of Gospel traditions."¹³ The point is that the concern of Jesus for outcasts permeates the sources describing what he did. The concern is not from what Saint Luke's special material had about Jesus, but about Jesus himself.

The ministry of Jesus is connecting the Faithful with the love of God. The Biblical text of Mark 1:39-41 is one of several (Matt 9:9-12, 21:30-33, Luke 3:11-14, 7:28-30, 14:12-14, 17:11-13) where Jesus is "free to disregard tradition and free to identify with ... outcasts."¹⁴ Such an ability to identify with outcasts is germane to the Black

¹⁰ Robert H. Gundry, "Mark 10:29: Order in the List," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997) 469.

¹¹ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 263.

¹² Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 191.

¹³ T. Boman, Die Jesus-Uberlieferung im Lichte der neuen Volkskunde (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 123-37. A Hastings, Prophet, 40, thinks of the women as a source for Luke 9:51—18-14 as cited in Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 190, footnote 333.

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experience in the United States. In the remainder of the Marcan reading, Jesus goes on to cure those who come to him; but his purpose is not to cure, but to use curing to demonstrate that God loves the Faithful. Evidently worn out from evangelizing, Jesus takes a break *early before dawn* (Mark 1:35), to get away by himself, before accepting the call, *by Simon and those who were with him* (Mark 1:36) back to his ministry of demonstrating that God loves the Faithful.

This Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time is about the overwhelming, overpowering love of God for the Faithful. This love of God is the Holy Spirit. Mass begins by praying for fellowship with this same Holy Spirit. Job is about recognizing that suffering is real. Paul is about not caring about human suffering. Paul only cares about the Good News of fellowship with God. The Gospel is about portraying that God loves the Faithful.

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

¹⁴ Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, "Let My People Go! Threads of Exodus in African American Narratives," in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 125-126.