

At issue in these readings is the conflict between truth and politics, especially between the truth of priestly sexual abuse and hierarchical political cover-up. Adherence to truth means adherence to God, as God reveals whatever truths to individuals. Adherence to politics means adherence to worldly, created matters in the very face of the Creator. This happens when the Faithful know what God wants, for example relative to racism or sexual abuse, but choose to ignore that want of God, out of political favor to humans. While God almighty cannot want anything, there is another sense in that God does want faithfulness from the Faithful.

Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, S.T.D., S.S.L, D.D.: in the Lectionary, Psalm 40 is used but is not indexed for this Sunday. The translation of Luke diverges from the Nova Vulgata in the use of exclamation points.

## Jeremiah 17:5-8

The relationship between Jeremiah and the Psalm 1 symbolizes a greater relationship between Psalm 1 and not only all the other Psalms but even all Holy Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Both Psalm 1 and Jeremiah are secular, about how to live. At a very basic sense, how to live is first learned from parents. Later on, priests want to be known as *Father*. At least in the sense that the arm of the parent disciplines a child, and the soul of the priest guides the Faithful, the translation bears special significance. The Lectionary translation, *flesh* is less personal than *arm*.

Verse 5

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	flesh
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	brachium
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	arm
<u>King James</u> (1611):	arm
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	flesh
<u>New American</u> (1970):	human beings
This is different from the <u>Lectionary</u> .	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	human strength

Timing marks the difference between Wisdom literature that is timeless like Psalm 1 and Prophetic literature that is futuristic. Verb tenses are relevant. More importantly, Jeremiah bemoans how humans seek glory from other humans, rather than from God himself. Jeremiah bemoans fascination with creation to the exclusion of fascination with the Creator.<sup>2</sup> Fascination with creation amounts to fascination with politics, whereas

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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 182.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, "Κοσμος in John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 98, footnote 36.

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fascination with the Creator amounts to fascination with truth. Ultimately, as children mature into adults, they make certain choices about accepting the arm of parents as the arm of God. Postponement of maturity helps account for why exposing sexual abuse can take years.

Verse 6

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	is
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	erit
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	shall be
<u>King James</u> (1611):	shall be
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	is
<u>New American</u> (1970):	is
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	does

This translation is difficult because scholars agree that Psalm 1 belongs to Wisdom rather than Prophetic literature. Such a categorization means that the present is more amenable than the future tense. In reality, a prophetic edge is present in Psalm 1. The danger is when what is written does not conform to a preconceived notion of what ought to be written, one translates out of political convenience, if not necessity, rather than out of what is present in Sacred Scripture. Similarly, one translates life in awe of the arm of parents and God, sometimes in concert with one another in a truly holy manner.

Life is not fair. People are not treated the same either by God or by other humans. Because people are sinful, fairness is not an issue. The wonderment of God able to make all things right in the end is the issue. Everlasting life is the issue.

Hope in the Lord is different from trust that God will act as a fiduciary against our debts.

Verse 7

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	hope
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	fiducia
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	confidence
<u>King James</u> (1611):	hope
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	hope
<u>New American</u> (1970):	hope
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	reliance

*Hope* is easier to accept in the Lord, rather than *confidence*. Hope tends to be prophetic to the future, whereas *confidence* tends to be wisdom about how to live. One wonders how much politics is at play in this translation, the very politics that is the focus of these readings. The arm of parents and superiors who replace parents sometimes suits and at other times does not suit the arm of God. The Faithful often have difficult choices wending their way through prudential courses of action in the love of God.

A natural difference exists between the *planted* of the Lectionary and *transplanted*. *Planted* implies satisfaction with the *status quo*; *transplanted* implies a change of venue may be legitimate.

Verse 8

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	planted
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	transplantatur
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	planted
<u>King James</u> (1611):	planted
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	
<u>New American</u> (1970):	planted
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	

Two of the translations simply omit the phrase about transplanting. If *transplantation*, then grace does the transplanting of the human from one state to another. If simple *planted* is at work, then nature may be the only gardener. Saint Jerome liked the idea of grace at work.

As an interesting side note, Jeremiah 17:5 is introduced with the Aramaic,<sup>3</sup> the daily language of Jesus. This sense of how to cope with the secular world, then, Mary and Joseph would have taught the child Jesus. From this section of Jeremiah, Jesus would have learned how to cope with the outrageous way people treated him.

The Faithful, who bring Jesus to the present in their own persons, can relate to Jeremiah when they are ignored not because they might be wrong, but because they might be right in the face of the Lord.

### **Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 (40:5 a)**

The Lectionary does not use Psalm 1 in any other place. The Lectionary does use Psalm 40, which has the Responsorial antiphon:

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>	
64A	504	2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10	(8 a and 90 a) Ordinary 2
65B	508	2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10	(8 a and 90 a) Ordinary 2
78C	574		(40:5 a) Today
120C	781	2, 3, 4,	18 (14 b) Ordinary 20

Bishop Serratelli: Psalm 40 is not indexed for reading 78C.

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<sup>3</sup> P. M. Casey, "Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 1997) 317.

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This Psalm begins with a word beginning with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and ends with a word ending with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This Greek type of alpha and *omega* represents all the following psalms. This psalm was written late and appears unknown to some New Testament writings and some Fathers of the Early Church.<sup>4</sup> This means that the psalm makes a good summation of religion at the time and context of Jesus.

Death on the cross means that Jesus perished in a bodily manner, not that he vanished. The difference between perishing and vanishing bears on the translation of Psalm 1. The psalm ends that the way of the wicked *vanishes*. The Latin has *perishes*. The difference is that *vanishing* leaves no trace of what happened. *Perishes* does leave traces. Bygone species, such as dinosaurs, *perished*. Other species, which left no traces, *vanished*. Jesus *perished*, he did not *vanish*. The relationship between parents and children, like the relationship between the clergy and Faithful, is about perishing rather than vanishing.

Verse 6

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	vanishes
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	peribit
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	perish
<u>King James</u> (1611):	perish
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	doomed
<u>New American</u> (1970):	ruin
This, too, is different from the <u>Lectionary</u> .	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	doomed

The beginning of the psalm is more interesting. The word *blessed* has many possible translations.

Verse 1

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	blessed
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	beatus
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	blessed
<u>King James</u> (1611):	blessed
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	happy
<u>New American</u> (1970):	happy
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	how blessed is anyone

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<sup>4</sup> Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599 180.

*How happy that one and how envious or to be envied is that person* are both close to the Hebrew.<sup>5</sup> Psalm 1 is Wisdom literature about how to live in a secular world. One should follow one's own lights in the light of the Lord, regardless of the political repercussions. The Gospel shows that, eventually, these repercussions can result in ostracism from society itself. It is always possible for one to be a "black sheep" in the family for not following secular dictates.

Scholars may seem ostracized from translating. In the final analysis, only one translation can be used in the Lectionary. The following translation is another alternative for verse 1.

Blessed is the one who  
does not walk in the counsel of the *wicked*  
or stand in the way of *sinner*s  
or sit in the seat of *scoffers*.<sup>6</sup>

The Psalmist is moving from the general to the specific in daily matters of getting along with one another. In the final analysis, Psalm 1 "is no longer simply a reflective hymn about God the creator, but is a prophetic promise about to be fulfilled."<sup>7</sup>

## **1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20**

Moving from the First to the New Testament, wisdom and prophecy change. Jesus Christ personifies wisdom and fulfills prophecy of the Messiah. In Corinthians, Paul insists on the miracle of the resurrection affecting all humanity. The evangelist Luke stresses concern of God for the poor.<sup>8</sup> The Faithful are involved in everything.

Bodily resurrection from the dead outside of Faith is not politically useful, except that Jesus bodily rose from the dead. This reality is overwhelming. Acting on this reality enables the brave person to die but one time, rather than a thousand bodily deaths earlier through fear. Death of the spirit is another matter.

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<sup>5</sup> Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599 181.

<sup>6</sup> Paul R. Raabe, "The Particularizing of Universal Judgment in Prophetic Discourse," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 652.

<sup>7</sup> Sue Gillingham, "From Liturgy to Prophecy: The Use of Psalmody in Second Temple Judaism," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 3 (July 2002) 481.

<sup>8</sup> Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Observations on the 'Miracle Chapters' of Mathew 8-9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 563.

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In this reading, Saint Paul is adamant that the Faithful believe in their own bodily resurrection, along with the bodily resurrection of Jesus. The material is difficult to translate.

Verse 17

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	vain
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	stulta
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	vain
<u>King James</u> (1611):	vain
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	
<u>New American</u> (1970):	vain
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	pointless

Verse 18 is parallel with Psalm 1:6.

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	perished
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	perierunt
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	perished
<u>King James</u> (1611):	perished
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	perished
<u>New American</u> (1970):	perished
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	utterly lost

Saint Paul wrote first. When it came time, Luke wrote to clarify what others had written. Both are calling for a mature spiritual life in the face of whatever authorities do to the Faithful.

## Luke 6:23ab

*Be glad* carries the sense of skipping with happiness.

Verse 23

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	be glad
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	exultate
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	rejoice
<u>King James</u> (1611):	leap for joy
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	dance for joy
<u>New American</u> (1970):	leap for joy
Again, different from the <u>Lectionary</u> .	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	dance for joy

The difference between the *rejoice* in this place and Matt 5:10 is the difference between the aorist and present tense, the difference between one act in reaction to another and

a continuing state of mind.<sup>9</sup> Not only does Jesus admonish the Faithful to accept the misuse of power against them; the Faithful are even to rejoice in state of mind that they are treated like the prophets before them. The Faithful who are standing up to the recent priestly scandals often suffer the abuse of the prophets before them who objected to wrong practices in the name of God.

## **Luke 6:17, 20-26**

These beatitudes are beatitudes of truth over politics. Those without political power are poor, hungry, weeping, hated, excluded, insulted, and denounced. Children abused by priests make a good example. Those with political power are rich, filled, laughing, and spoken well of. The hierarchy makes a good example. With his preference for the poor, Luke has a sort of liberation theology as well as a priority of truth over politics.

The child in a family is not the one with real political power. Parents empower children in a way like God the Father empowering the Faithful. The knack of it for the Faithful is to accept empowerment even in the darkest days of despair on the various crosses of life.

Bishop Serratelli: the Lectionary has but one exclamation point, but not in the same place as the Evangelist Luke. The translator, Saint Jerome uses four exclamation points in different places.

These readings are about speaking out in the face of countervailing political pressure. Truth speaking to power in this way is bold. The Faithful need to exercise prudence in their reactions to boldness, whether their own or others. Just as importantly, the Faithful should be bold in their faith, fearing nothing, except sin.

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

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<sup>9</sup> Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 242.