

Personal Notes
060219 Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time 80B
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Looking forward, away from sin, to a brighter future is the theme for these Sunday readings. Isaiah 43 is where the second chapter of Second Isaiah begins. Written at the time of the Babylonian Exile, in the mid-Sixth Century B.C., Isaiah 43 assures Israel that God will comfort them, in the sense of a mother comforting her child.¹

Isaiah 42:10—43:8, just before these Sunday readings, is about the blind and exiled led through the desert back to their home. Isaiah 43:9—44:8, which include these Sunday readings, is about a people formed and rendering praise in Isaiah 43:16-21.² In other words, along with comfort, a maturation process takes place.

Isaiah 43:18 is about God beginning something new; that it is time to forget the past. The Liturgy moves from Isaiah to the Psalm. Psalm 41 asks God to forget the past. 2 Corinthians is about that new something, namely the love and life of God in the souls of the Faithful. The Gospel of Mark offers the best scholarly insights into dealing with sin. Jesus deals with his antagonists by healing the paralytic as a sign that he, indeed, forgives sins.

The Lectionary readings from Isaiah 43 appeal to an understanding of the unconscious mind, the events of the past that torment the present. Isaiah 43:24b addresses the unconscious; *You burdened me with your sins, and wearied me with your crimes.* Isaiah 43:25 goes on to say, *It is I, I, who wipe out, for my own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more.* If God is not remembering the sins of the Faithful, why should the Faithful be tormented by them? They should not be. That is the comfort the LORD promises in Isaiah 43:21 that the Faithful *might announce my praise.*

The Responsorial Antiphon, Psalm 41:5b, looks away from sin toward a brighter future. *Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.* The unused Psalm 41:10 refers to a false friend and a deceitful ally or covenant partner.³ In modern times, healing resulting from the trauma of a false friend and a deceitful ally is a psychiatric function. Those over seventy years of age can remember when the need for psychiatric help was a sign of weakness to be pitied, rather than a sign of sickness

¹ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 94.

² Richard J. Clifford, S.J., "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and Its Cosmogonic Language," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 1993) 4.

³ John S. Kselman, S.S., and Michael L. Barré, S.S., "Psalm 55: Problems and Proposals," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 60, No 3 (July 1998) 449, 454.

either to be cured or managed. For modern people regarding sin as a spiritual illness, the Psalmist looks away from sin toward a brighter, healthier future.

In 2 Corinthians, Saint Paul excoriates the Faithful for their pettiness, considering the grace God is bestowing upon them. Because of their pettiness, when Paul visited the Corinthians he suffered humiliation. The first seven chapters of 2 Corinthians address the resulting crisis of faith in Corinth.⁴

The Greek for 2 Corinthians 1:15, *as God is faithful*, is “a formula for swearing *As God is true ...*”⁵ assuring the Faithful God loves them. 2 Corinthians urges the Faithful to revel in the presence of God in their lives. In the Greek for 2 Corinthians 1:21, Paul plays upon words, first to refer to Jesus as the Christ, or the anointed one, then to refer himself as anointed in the love of God, and finally to describe the Faithful with the same anointing.

For some unexplained reason an earlier edition of the Greek has Christ Jesus, whereas the current edition has Jesus Christ.⁶ The earlier rendition seemed to stress anointed. The point of 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 is that God anoints the Faithful with the same chrism as Jesus and Paul.

Paul is insisting that God is consistent, for all of God’s apparent inconsistencies in love. Paul shows that Jesus, as the one anointed by God, accepts the hatred associated with sin, in order to conquer that hatred with love. Paul wants that love to characterize the relationships of the Faithful with one another. In his encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI does not cite any verses from the Sunday Lectionary between now and Holy Thursday. For anyone interested, I will send my Sunday index to the encyclical in a Microsoft Excel file. The encyclical is available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html

When 2 Corinthians 1:15 and 19 refer to *yes and no*, 2 Corinthians refers to unforgiving judgment. 2 Corinthians 1:19 and 20 insists that God so loves the Faithful that God only approaches the Faithful with a *yes* in love. The Lectionary

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

⁵ 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) 536.

⁶ David Holly, Comparative Studies in Recent Greek New Testament Texts: Nestle-Aland’s 25th and 26th Editions (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1983) 38.

translation of 2 Corinthians 1:19, *but “yes” has been in him* is a difficult translation. The meaning is that the *yes* existed as a past action, which continues as the present state of affairs. Paul is not using the Greek aorist tense, that refers to an act totally completed in the past, but he uses the perfect, which means a present state of affairs resulting from a past action.⁷

Moving through the Lectionary to the Gospel, Pastoral Care of the Sick uses this Gospel according to Mark.⁸ The Faithful should anticipate this as one of the readings the parish Healing Ministry will use when they are sick. When the Faithful suffer in sickness, they can suffer with Jesus.

Mark 14:18, 21 refer to texts from the 41st Psalm to predict the betrayal, death, and resurrection of Jesus.⁹ The Lectionary does not use Mark 14 for this Sunday. The Lectionary does use Mark 2 about forgiving the sins of the paralytic.

Mark 2 is part of a cycle of Galilean dispute incidents in which Jesus explains the theology of his love. Matthew uses these incidents differently.¹⁰ For Mark, the man paralyzed on the pallet is similar to the man with the withered hand, both of whom Jesus heals. What happens because of the healing is enmity with the clerical leaders, who successfully plot to kill him.¹¹ Jesus overcomes the sin of enmity with love, a love he bestows upon the Faithful to exercise in like manner for the forgiveness of sins.

⁷ 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) 96.

⁸ 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: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 94, 306.

⁹ P. M. Casey, “Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 1997) 320.

¹⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, “Observations on the ‘Miracle Chapters’ of Matthew 8-9,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 560.

¹¹ John P. Meier, “The Historical Jesus and the Plucking of the Grain on the Sabbath,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 566-567.

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The readings for this Sunday forget the sins of the past to praise God in the present. Deutero Isaiah encourages the exiled Jews to praise God who is not forgetting them. Psalm 41:13 asks for healing from past sins; *let me stand before you forever*. 2 Corinthians 1:24 assures the Faithful that God is faithful and has *given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment* of the forgiveness of sins and the consequent ability to love and praise God. Mark absorbs the sins of humanity into the love of Jesus as a way of getting past sin and into love of God and neighbor.

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