

Personal Notes
060226 Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time 83B
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How persons, including the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, relate to one another occurs in three basic patterns. (1) I'm okay; you're okay, that is, adult to adult. (2) I'm okay; you are not okay, that is, adult to child. (3) I am not okay, you are okay, that is child to adult. At the secular level, the most mature relationship is adult to adult, best found in democratic forms of governance. The least mature relationships are adult to child and child to adult, found in hierarchical forms of governance, such as that found in families with children and Catholic Churches. All of the patterns do work, provided everyone participating accepts the ground rules. None of the patterns works when anyone does not accept the ground rules. That is one of the fundamental reasons for the current problems with the Catholic hierarchy. The Faithful are objecting to hierarchical abuse most notoriously with the sexual cover up.

Contemplating the holy will of God, the Faithful cannot avoid considering hierarchical abuse of authority. One wonders whether telling the Faithful they were going to hell for deliberately eating a hamburger on Friday was an abuse of authority. Accepting interest, as mentioned last week, falls into the same category. One also wonders whether telling the Faithful they are going to hell for using artificial means of birth control will go the way of eating meat on Friday. It looks as if Limbo is on its way out as doctrine as well.

The Sunday First Testament reading from Hosea and the Psalm both accept an adult to child relationship between God and the Faithful. The Deuteronomic revision of the First Testament introduced a more adult-to-adult relationship, a relationship truly explored by Saint Paul in 2 Corinthians. The Gospel is also about an adult relationship between Jesus and the Faithful.

The Book of Hosea is a love story between God and the faithless Faithful, whom God is leading to repentance. The Liturgy is preparing the Faithful for Lent, which begins next Wednesday. In Hosea 2:22, God covenants, *I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the Lord.*

The Liturgy uses Psalm 103 at Funerals¹ and in Pastoral Visits to the Sick.² Psalm 103:13 is explicit, *As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.* The relationship is parent to child.

¹ N.a., 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) 40, 226.

2 Corinthians is different and helps explain how the hierarchy considers itself. Within the historical context, the Corinthians have disappointed Saint Paul in their approach to Christianity. Rather than holding himself up as a model for the Corinthians, Paul writes that the Corinthians, as his converts, are imprinted on his heart for all to see as a testimony of love written in the spirit³ rather than as a testimony of death written on tablets of stone. Through love, Paul takes his identity from the Corinthians. Unlike some of his brethren in the hierarchy, Paul is unimpressed with his role bringing the Corinthians to Christianity.

Occasionally the Catholic Biblical Quarterly has an article with no use of any scripture in the Sunday Lectionary. Until now, I have generally kept such articles out of the index found at <http://www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/cbq.pdf> At this point, I intend to note articles in the index, where I use them in these Personal Notes. I will make this change immediately in the Appendix.

The article at hand is Joshua Berman, "Identity Politics and the burial of Jacob (Genesis 50:1-14)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 11-31. Identity politics is always germane to the African-American situation in the United States. The article is about the Patriarch Joseph, the viceroy of Egypt.

Berman does a close reading of Genesis 1-14 to watch Joseph straddling Hebrew and Egyptian customs. For example, Berman describes the Jews arriving in Egypt unshaven and raggedy. The Egyptians were clean-shaven and, by this time, Joseph was anything but raggedy. When Jacob died, Joseph embalmed him, something quite suitable to the Egyptians, but unsuited to the Hebrews.

Berman offers many other such observations, including charts comparing Gen 46:31 with Gen 47:1; Gen 46:31 with Gen 47:1 and Gen 47:5. Berman concludes portraying Jacob as the "strident patriarch" wanting no part of Egyptian culture. Joseph, on the other hand, "struggles for equilibrium, for the balanced expression of a politically expedient commitment to both host and heritage, to both father and

² 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) 60, 296.

³ Joseph Plevnik, S.J., *The Understanding of God at the Basis of Pauline Theology*, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2003) 563.

Pharaoh.” For a similar expression of a contemporary struggle, see Gayle T. Tale and Lewis A. Randolph, editors, Dimensions of Black Conservatism in the United States.⁴

Self-promotion with their role bringing the Faithful to Christianity is where anticlericalism originates, especially with the current hierarchy. With Saint Paul, the clergy regard themselves *as ministers of a new covenant* (2 Corinthians 3:6). So far, so good. How such clergy abuse the authority associated with evangelization is by not identifying with the weaknesses of their converts, as Paul does.

Scholars find much to study in the writings of Saint Paul. Explaining how Frank J. Matera examines II Corinthians: A Commentary, Calvin J. Roetzel, of Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, has an interesting turn of phrase. Matera’s “avoidance of supersessionist views is refreshing.”⁵ Roetzel means that Matera does not let Church hierarchal politics silence the discussion. The Notes try to do likewise.

Abstaining from Church politics, Paul recognizes human suffering as what Saint Thomas regards as being human, namely as being imperfect. Only God is perfect. When clergy abuse their authority as some think the hierarchy is doing, those members of the hierarchy forget that only God is perfect. The true scandal lies in not accepting the reality of scandalous realities within the ranks of the Faithful, including the clergy. In yet other words, the true scandal lies in covering up the reality of scandal among the Faithful. Accepting the reality of human imperfection, Paul promotes an adult-to-adult relationship among the Faithful, rather than a parent to child relationship between the clergy and the Faithful.

In Mark, Jesus sees no reason not to party, at least not to have to fast, as long as he is around. By comparing his presence to putting *unshrunk cloth on an old cloak* (Mark 2:21) and pouring *new wine into old wineskins* (Mark 2:22), Jesus foreshadows the violence associated with following him. Matthew 14:17⁶ takes these

⁴ Elwood Watson, review of Gayle T. Tale and Lewis A. Randolph, editors, Dimensions of Black Conservatism in the United States in The Journal of African American History, Vol. 90, No. 3 (Summer 2005) 340-342.

⁵ Calvin J. Roetzel, review of Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* in *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No 4 (October 2004) 661.

⁶ *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 recensuerent et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum*

same parables and uses them in other ways.⁷ All Scripture explains the human condition. By passing from physical life to death, everyone suffers. The Liturgy is showing how to accept suffering, namely as an opportunity to participate in the very love of God against the covenant of eternal glory.

Suffering takes many forms, apart from what the hierarchy is doing to the Faithful in the current abuse of authority. Some of that suffering concerns the inability to get the very words of Sacred Scripture to agree from ancient manuscript to ancient manuscript in any but an eclectic or derived manner. That is what the Protestant revolt is about. What the Faithful now accept as the original Greek, exists nowhere in its entirety in any of the original Greek manuscripts.⁸

What all of the Faithful have derived is a scholarly agreement about how to compromise the differences among manuscripts. Working out this agreement is known as *textual criticism*. The critical apparatus for the few verses the Lectionary readings use for 2 Corinthians 3:1b-6, contains ten signs indicating words and phrases omitted and inserted among the various manuscripts.

The marginal notes in the Greek text indicate four other principal reference lists of passages related by a common theme or expression. The point is that the Faithful have plenty of reason both to accept the lead of the clergy because they are knowledgeable about the spiritual life and to be skeptical of the clergy because of the great evidence that the hierarchy is abusing their trust. When it comes to the Bible Study promoted by these Personal Notes an adult relationship between the clergy and the Faithful is appropriate.

The theme for these readings is adult relationships among the Faithful. Hosea is about adult faithlessness causing God to react as a parent or an angry but loving spouse. Psalm 103 turns to God as a loving father. In 2 Corinthians, Saint Paul identifies his heart with the immature Corinthians, as he tries to bring them deeper into the heart of Christ. Mark develops an adult relationship with God through Jesus Christ, by inviting the Faithful to party while the presence of God is known.

Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII marginalia 94.

⁷ Jack Dean Kingsbury, Observations on the "Miracle Chapters" of Matthew 8-9, the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 560.

⁸ Davis A. DeSilva, "The Sinaiticus Text of 4 Maccabees," *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 47.

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