

Personal Notes  
020630Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 97A  
by  
Raymond J. Jirran

My thoughts here are focused on John using an article by Hendrikus Boers of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, in *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.<sup>1</sup> Too much is copied to be free of copyright violations for publication. The reason for not simply passing along the article is that the Greek needs translation and that the uses of different print may help grasp the meaning of chiasm. The English translation will come from the *Lectionary*.<sup>2</sup> The term *chiasm* will be used. *Chiasm* comes from the Greek for X. Boers uses another English word, *paraenesis* that I will transpose into *exhortation*. One reason for the following explanation is to clarify the material for myself.

A chiasm works as follows: The tops of the X are two statements developed in reverse order at the bottom of the X. In this way one has **A** at the top of the X to **A**<sup>1</sup> at the bottom; **B** at the top to **B**<sup>1</sup> at the bottom. Such is the general idea. In this passage from Paul, not only are there an **A** and a **B**, but also a C and **D**. Since **D** is at the heart of the cross, there is no D<sup>1</sup>. There is a C<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a

The missing versus 12 and 13 look like a sexist disconnect:

He said to his servant Gehazi, 'Call our Shunammite.' he called her and when she appeared, Elisha said, 'Tell her this: 'Look, you have gone to all this trouble for us, what can we do for you? Is there anything you would like said for you to the king or to the commander of the army?' But she replied, 'I live with my own people about me.' 'What can I do for you then?' he asked. Gehazi replied...<sup>3</sup>

## Psalm 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19

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<sup>1</sup> Hendrikus Boers, *The Structure and meaning of Romans 6:1-14, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001), pages 676-682.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> Translations not from the *Lectionary* are from Henry Wansbrough, General Editor, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

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Notice the difference in translation of the same verse 2a between the antiphon and the body of the psalm

Verse 2a: the antiphon

Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Verse 2a: the body

The promises of the Lord I will sing forever

There is a lot more I would like to add, but unscrambling Romans will be enough

## **Romans 6:3-4, 8-11**

- I. Baptism in the History of the Interpretation of Romans 6:1-14

...

- II. The Structure of Romans 6:1-14

- A. *A Text-Syntactic Model for the Interpretation of Romans 6:1-14*

...

- B. *Levels of the Meaning of Christ in Romans 6:1-11*

...

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Verse 1 | What should we say then? Should we remain in sin so that grace may be given the more fully?   |
| Verse 2 | Out of the question! We have died to sin; how could we go on living in it? <sup>4</sup>   |
| Verse 3 | Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?   |
| Verse 4 | We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as <b>Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.</b> <sup>5</sup> |

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<sup>4</sup> Verses 1 and two are from the NBJ.

<sup>5</sup> Verses three and four are from the *Lectionary*.

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Verses 5-7 are not in the readings for this Sunday.

Verse 5 If we have been joined to him by dying a death like his, so we shall be by a resurrection like his;

Verse 6 *realising that our former self was crucified with him, so that the self which belonged to sin should be destroyed **and we should be freed from the slavery of sin.***

Verse 7 *Someone who had died, of course, no longer has to answer for sin.<sup>6</sup>*

Verse 8 If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

Verse 9 We know that **Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.**

**Verse 10 As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God.**

**Verse 11 Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.<sup>7</sup>**

Verses 12-14 are not in the readings for this Sunday.

Verse 12 That is why you must not allow sin to reign over your mortal bodies and make you obey their desires;

Verse 13 or give any parts of your bodies over to sin to be used as instruments of evil. Instead, give yourselves to God, as people brought to life from the dead, and give every part of yourselves to God to be instruments of uprightness;

Verse 14 and then sin will no longer have any power over you—you are living not under law, but under grace.

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<sup>6</sup> Verses 5-7 are from the NJB.

<sup>7</sup> Verses 8-11 are from the Lectionary.

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The agenda for Paul's entire reasoning in the passage is set by the two rhetorical questions in vv. 1-2: "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound?" and "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" Even though the christological statements in vv. 4cd and 9-10 play a crucial role in Paul's reasoning—"Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (v. 4cd), and "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin once for all; the life he lives he lives for God" (vv. 9-10)—these statements have no independent meanings. Their meanings are determined by the way they function in Paul's reasoning. The close correlation between the christological statements and what they mean to Paul and his readers is revealed by the way they are embedded in statements that express their meanings. The first Statement, "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (v. 4cd), is embedded on the one side in the preceding assertion of dying with Christ through baptism, for which it provides a basis: "...all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death(?). We were buried with him, therefore, by baptism into his death, (so that just as ...)" (vv. 3b-4b). On the other side, the statement connects with the conclusion toward which Paul is moving: "(so also) we might walk in newness of life" (v. 4e). The christological statement is embedded syntactically between vv. 3-4b and 4e by means of *indeed* and *too*. The conjunction *indeed* signals that what follows in v. 4c-e carries further what was said in the preceding statement about baptism in vv. 3b-4b.

The second christological statement is : "...Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin once for all; the life he lives he lives for God" (vv. 9b-10). It, too, is embedded in statements concerning what it means for Paul and his readers, on the one side in the preceding statement concerning dying with Christ and living with him, for which it provides support—"But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (v. 8)—and on the other in what follows from the christological statement for Paul and his readers: "(So also) you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive for God in Christ Jesus" (v. 11). As in the case of the syntactic links established by means of *indeed...too* between the first christological statement (v. 4cd) and what it means for Paul's readers (vv. 3b-4b and 4e, so here, too, syntactic links are established by means of *We know that...Consequently, you too* between the second christological statement (vv. 9-10) and what it means for Paul's readers (vv. 8 and 11).

Paul's purpose with the statement about baptism in vv. 3-4b is not to provide his readers with information about baptism as such, but, drawing on baptism as an accepted practice, to bring out those features that are relevant for what he is driving at in the first christological statement, "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (v. 4cd), which he connects to those features by means of *indeed*, and then clarifies what the christological statement means for his readers, "so also [the *Lectionary* has *too*] we might walk in newness of life" (v. 4e)—the "newness of the life" in Christ to which they are called.

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There is no reference to Christ's death in the first christological statement, only to his resurrection. Christ's death is, of course, involved as part of the context provided by the preceding statement about baptism as participation in his death (vv. 3-4b), but Paul begins his reasoning by putting his focus not on Christ's death as the liberation from sin but on Christ's resurrection as the foundation of the new life to which he and his readers are called (vv. 4e-5): "**so also we might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall certainly be also in the likeness of his resurrection.**" Participation in Christ's death is the basis on which this new life is made possible, but Christ's death is not in the forefront in this part of Paul's reasoning.

Coordinate with Paul's focus on Christ's resurrection is the absence, after vv. 1-2, of any reference to sin before v. 6, where it becomes dominant all the way to the end of his reasoning. In addition to the two references in vv. 1-2, Paul refers to sin eight more times between v. 6 and v. 14. What he is *aiming* at in the first part of his reasoning also is liberation from sin, the issue raised by the rhetorical questions in vv. 1-2; but after that he does not refer to sin again until v. 6.

*C. The Emergence of a Chiastic Structure in Rom 6:1-14*

Looking more closely at these levels of the meaning of Christ in our passage, we find an unexpected chiastic structure appearing. The structure does not seem to be the product of design, but to be the result of the process of Paul's thought.

Paul's main reasoning in the passage takes place between the two christological statements, each followed by a fourth-level meaning, introduced with the identical *we too might live in newness of life*, and *Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus*. Significantly, Paul moves from *we* in v. 4e to *you* in v. 11, preparing for his exhortation in vv. 12-13.

Paul's reasoning begins with two sets of third, followed by fourth-level statements, **B** and **C** on the diagram of the text: [Boers uses a diagram where I am using different fonts] "for if we have been united to him in the likeness of his death, we shall certainly be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (v. 5) and "*knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed*" (v. 6a-c); and it concludes with a single fifth-level statement, labeled **D** on the diagram of the text: "**so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin**" (v. 2), and though it could have concluded this reasoning as a whole, he was evidently not satisfied but continues the discussion with two more sets of third- followed by fourth-level statements, **C**<sup>1</sup> and **B**<sup>1</sup> on the diagram of the text: "*for one who dies has been freed [the NJB has no longer has to answer for] from sin*" (v. 7), and "but if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (v. 8). With these he leads up to the second christological statement (vv. 9-10) by means of *we know that*.

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At first sight, the statements in the two halves of Paul's reasoning in vv. 5-6c and 7-8 appear repetitive, with an abbreviated, semantically inverted sequence in the second, without significant development: "For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall certainly be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old self has been crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed" (vv 5-6c), and "for one who dies has been freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (vv. 7-8). In reality, they are well structured in a chiasm that begins and ends with semantically parallel statements in vv. 5 and 8, labeled **B** and **B**<sup>1</sup> on the diagram of the text: "for if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall certainly be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (v. 5), and "but if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (v. 8).

With these parallel statements Paul picks up the thoughts about participation in Christ's death through baptism in vv. 3-4, but he expands them to include participation in Christ's resurrection as well, as he had already done in the application of the first christological statement to himself and his readers in v. 4e: **"so also we might walk in newness of life."** Death is a critical element in Paul's negation of the first rhetorical question in the second; but it is death in a qualified sense—"we have died to sin" (v. 2b)—the topic on which Paul places his focus at the center of the chiasm. The two semantically parallel statements, labeled **C** and **C**<sup>1</sup> on the diagram of the text—*Knowing this, that our old self has been crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed*"(v. 6a-c), and *"for one who dies has been freed from sin"* (v. 7)—frame the chiastic center, labeled **D** on the diagram of the text: **"so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin"** (v. 6d).

With the focus on dying to sin, Paul returns to the central issue that he raised in the rhetorical questions in vv. 1-2, living in sin or dying to it. With the central statement in v. 6d he is back at the heart of the matter, his negation of the erroneous suggestion "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" (v. 1bc) by means of the second rhetorical question, "How can we who have died to sin still live in it?" (v. 2bc). Now, however, the negation is no longer in the form of a rhetorical question but in that of a resolute affirmation.

The chiastic structure of vv. 5-8 reveals Paul's ability to focus his thoughts sharply. It is not necessary to assume that he consciously structured his thoughts as a chiasm. The chiasm appears rather to be the result of the way his thoughts move forward toward his goal. His aim is to reinforce his negation of the mistaken view expressed in the first rhetorical question, a point he appears to have reached in v. 6d (**"so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin"**) at the center of his chiasm. But he is evidently not satisfied. His thoughts move on, resulting in the chiastic parallelism between vv. 5-6c and 7-8. Even with that he has not yet reached his goal; he moves on to a new christological statement: **"Christ being raised from the dead will never die**

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**again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives he lives for God” (vv. 9b-10).**

Although, in a way, Paul already says all he needs to say at the center of the chiasm in vv. 6-7, it is possible to establish a surplus of meaning in the second christological statement, compared with everything which precedes, namely, that Christ died to sin and lives for God: **“The death he died he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives he lives for God”** (v. 10). In that way the statement in v. 7 (*“the one who dies has been freed from sin”*), which Paul applied to himself and his readers in support of his statement at the center of the chiasm in v. 6d (**“so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin”**), is grounded in Christ’s death to sin. Paul does not present Christ’s death sacrificially *for* sin but—more powerfully for his reasoning in the passage—to sin, as a model for that to which he admonishes his readers.

Paul formulates the second christological statement specifically with what it means for his readers in mind, as he makes explicit in v. 11: **“So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.”** The expression in v. 11 has features that are parallel to the earlier expression in v. 4e, and both are introduced with *too*, as we have already noted: “we too might live in newness of life.(v 4e), and “Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus” (v. 11). Nevertheless, there is an important difference in v. 11: in addition to the newness of life in Christ expressed in the first statement, v. 11 includes the crucial element of death to sin as well.

It now becomes clear that we may also consider vv. 4c-e and 9b-11 as parallel parts of the chiasm,

**Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. (v. 4c-e), and Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus (vv. 9b-11).**

The difference between these two statements, the presence of dying to sin in the second, absent from the first, reveals at what Paul is driving. The structure of his discourse has two steps, each with its own focus: first, the new life in Christ (vv. 3-5), and then dying to sin (vv. 6-11). The latter conception was clearly Paul’s goal when he formulated what had been at issue in the two rhetorical questions: remaining in sin (v. 1b) and living in it (v. 2c), as against dying to sin (v. 2b).

The function of the two christological statements in Rom 6:1-11 is not exhortatory, as, for example, such statements in 1 Thess 5:1-11; rather, they concern a

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more theoretical issue, stated at the beginning in the two rhetorical questions in vv. 1 and 2: whether reliance on God's graciousness can be considered a motivation to sin. Paul, nevertheless, could not, as a pastor, refrain from bringing the discussion to an exhortatory conclusion:

Therefore, let not sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its cravings, and do not present your members as weapons of wickedness for sin's advantage (vv. 12-13); rather, present yourselves to God as people made alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness for God's advantage (vv. 12-13).

It again becomes clear that Paul's primary concern in the passage as a whole is not exhortatory when he returns to the theoretical level of the liberation from sin with a concluding statement, "For sin will have no dominion over you" (v. 14a)—only now with a different basis: "since you are not under the Law but under grace" (v. 14b). This final statement leads Paul back to the original issue, "What should we say then? Should we remain in sin so that grace may be given the more fully? (v. 1), but formulated differently: "What is the implication? That we are free to sin, now that we are not under the law but under grace?"<sup>8</sup> This new version of the question leads him to a new discussion in vv. 15-22 that is parallel, in many ways, to what we have in the present passage.

*D. The Progression of Paul's Thought in Rom 6:1-14*

The structure of the passage is complicated. Let us now see if we can follow Paul's reasoning.

He begins by stating the issue by means of two rhetorical questions (vv. 1-2). Then, after establishing the believer's dying with Christ through baptism, he is moved by the second part of the second rhetorical question to the first christological statement affirming Christ's resurrection (v. 4cd) and the believer's participation in it (v. 4e). At this point his focus is on Christ's resurrection and participation in it, surrendering, for the time being, the topic of Christ's death and what it means for the believer. In v. 5, he reaffirms the believer's participation in Christ's resurrection. The real issue, however, is not the new life in Christ as such, but that the new life in Christ is a death to sin. That is the issue to which Paul returns in v. 6, not to being enslaved to sin (v. 6d), with which he ends the first part of his reasoning.

But that does not leave Paul satisfied, damn it. He moves back up the chiasmic ladder to the second christological statement with statements that are parallel to those that lead from the first christological statement to the central point of the Chiasm in v.

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<sup>8</sup> NJB



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6d, including the first half of the second christological statement. The second half of the christological statement, affirming Christ's death to sin and his life for God (v. 10), provides the foundation for the point he wants to make. On that basis Paul can say not only that we now live for God in Christ (v. 11a) as the basis on which believers can live for God.

The meaning of Christ's resurrection for Paul in Rom 6:1-14 is that **"we might walk in newness of life"** (v. 4e), and that his readers can consider themselves **"alive for God in Christ Jesus"** (v. 11b). At the same time, in contrast with what he wrote in 1 Cor 15:17—"and if Christ has not been raised...you have not, after all, been released from your sins"<sup>9</sup>—in our passage it is again through his death that Christ defeated the power of sin. Apart from expressing what Christ's resurrection meant, that through it **"we might walk in newness of life"** (v. 4e), Rom 6:1-14 makes clear that it is through Christ's death that believers are liberated from sin.

One can argue that if Christ had not been raised from the dead, his death would have been ineffective. There is reason to believe that Paul himself understood that to be true. In his thought, Christ's death and resurrection cannot be separated as unrelated events. Surely for Paul, whose life was radically changed by his encounter with the Risen One, Christ's resurrection established the effectiveness of his death as the event of salvation. The unity of Christ's death and resurrection as a single complex event of salvation was so complete in this thought that he was able to write in 1 Cor 2:2 "I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ,"<sup>10</sup> even though he was also able to write in 15:17, "and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is pointless and you have not, after all, been released from your sins"<sup>11</sup> without contradicting himself. In his mind the Christ who had been crucified was the resurrected Christ who had appeared to him; and inversely, the Christ who appeared to him was the Christ who liberated him from sin through his death on the cross.

Paul's reasoning in Rom 6:1-14 may now have become a little clearer. In his rejection of the view suggested in his first rhetorical question, two important components in thinking emerge: dying to sin and the new life in Christ, brought to mind by the implied negation of living in sin. Chiastically, he first takes up the second component by drawing a christological conclusion from his appeal to baptism, not from Christ's death but his resurrection (**"so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life"** (v. 4be)). He does not, however, lose sight of his focus on the liberation from sin, that is, the death to sin, culminating in the

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<sup>9</sup> NJB

<sup>10</sup> NJB

<sup>11</sup> NJB

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statements in v. 6cd: “so that the sinful body might be destroyed, **and we might no longer be enslaved so sin.**” The liberation from sin remains grounded in Christ’s death by the statement of v 6ab, “*knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him,*” but Paul appears to be aware that he has not grounded this statement explicitly in Christ’s death. For that reason he retraces his previous reasoning back to a new christological statement which reasserts Christ’s resurrection (“**Christ being risen from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him**” (v. 9bc)), but now adds a new feature which clinches the entire issue: “**The death he died he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives he lives for God**”(v. 10). Paul’s reasoning in this passage is not basically christological but concerns the concrete issue of the liberation from sin. It is clear, nevertheless, that he cannot find satisfaction in his reasoning until he grounds the liberation from sin solidly in Christ; and that means in Christ’s death.

## 1 Peter 2:9

### Matthew 10:37-41

verse 42      And whoever gives only a cup of cold water...

The word *water* does not appear in the original Greek, though *water* is implied. Just the same, “whoever gives a cold one to a disciple” has a certain amount of fun-type ambiguity at that.

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity admonishes “Surrender yourself to love.”<sup>12</sup> Such does not seem to reflect Pauline theology in Romans 6:1-14. Paul seems to be saying that through grace we should liberate ourselves from sin which is something positive, a fulfillment of potential, rather than anything negative, a surrender. Paul seems to regard the spiritual life as a resurrection first and only then a dying to self and sin. Paul is not regarding the spiritual life as a dying to self and sin in order to achieve a resurrection.

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<sup>12</sup> Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, *From I Have Found God, Complete Works, Vol II, Anne Englund Nash, Tr.* © 1995 ICS Publications, Washington, D.C. as cited in *Magnificat* ® Vol. 4, No. 4 (June 2002), pages 413 and 422.