

Personal Notes  
080713 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 103A  
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The focus of the Lectionary is on the parable of the sower. Saint Francis makes some interesting observations about this text. He equates the seeds to understanding the Word of God. Seed sown on the path never sprouts and, thus, is never understood. Seed sown on rocky ground sprouts but dies and, thus, is understood but not preserved. Seed sown among thorns sprouts but does not flourish. This seed, therefore, is understood and preserved, but does not bear fruit. Seed sown on rich soil sprouts and flourishes and is, thus, understood, preserved, and fruitful. Finding and adhering to truth as the Word of God is fundamental to this parable.

The parable is about letting truth determine politics; rather than stifling truth with politics. The truth in the parable is the Word of God. Politics is the human heart. By politics, I mean the exercise of power, most fundamentally at the level of free will choices.

Faith and truth relate to one another in that faith is an ordinary means for knowing truth. Most human knowledge draws upon faith in other humans. Learning usually requires faith in human teachers. Similarly to how humans learn in the ordinary course of events, so humans learn to believe God, from other humans.

That transmission of truth known through faith is one necessary function of the Church. In rare instances, God reveals what requires belief directly, without the intermediary of other humans. In the ordinary course of events, I think God does approach individual souls both directly and through other humans, such as parents, children, spouses, and church and state officials.

Romans has a fascinating twist of words involving *faith*. This twist affects the meaning of faith in the Lectionary choice from Romans. The word the Lectionary uses in Romans is *creation*, which appears twice: *creation awaits with eager expectation* in verse 19 and *we know that all creation is groaning in labor pains* in verse 22. The manuscripts are consistent with the second *creation*, but a few manuscripts substitute *faith* (πιστις) for the first *creation* (κτιστις). The alternate reading would be, *faith awaits with eager expectation*.

I do not think that the Magisterium is directly involved prioritizing *creation* over *faith*. Material below the double line, however, addresses how the Bishops use this verse. I think, scholars acting in conjunction with the Magisterium, after comparing all the relevant manuscripts, have determined to prioritize *creation*. As I enter this thicket of the Greek “apparatus,” I need to warn the reader that I enter as a relative novice, without a teacher to guide me away from making mistakes. I identify the 28<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek text I am using in the Appendix.

The other readings the Lectionary uses this Sunday support Matthew. Isaiah is about *giving seed to the one who sows*. Psalm 65 proclaims that God has *visited the land and watered it*. Psalm 65 means that God plants the seeds of truth within the hearts of the Faithful, who are then obliged to follow their own consciences, in faith, wherever those consciences may lead.

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## Annotated Bibliography

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some of the interesting details scholars and others are presenting.

I seem to have translated all of the New Testament Greek that the Lectionary uses in the three-year cycle. My interest is now shifting to the apparatus described in the Introduction to the Greek New Testament<sup>1</sup> and to various snippets of the Greek, with a less systematic approach than before.

### Isaiah 55:10-11

Isaiah 55:10-13

Joseph Blenkinsopp, review of John Goldingay and David Payne, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40—55, Volume 1, Introduction and Commentary on Isaiah 40:1—44:23; Volume 2, Commentary on Isaiah 44:24—55:13.<sup>2</sup>

Goldingay and Payne argue that the emphasis on the active and all-powerful divine word in Isaiah 55:10-13 marks a major theme of Second Isaiah.

### Psalms 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14

### Romans 8:18-23

Rom 8:18-25

Paul J. Achtemeier, review of Jouette M. Bassler, Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts<sup>3</sup>

Bassler presents four key problems with what Paul teaches. Romans 8:18-25 is one of those problem areas. The problem is the relationship between the cosmos and the second coming of Jesus. Bassler summarizes, "Interpretations of th(ese) [sic] passage(s) are widely divergent, with good arguments for many and compelling

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<sup>1</sup> 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 recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII.

<sup>2</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008) 342.

<sup>3</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (April 2007) 810.

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arguments for none” (p. 92). In other words, this is a rare place in the Lectionary to present a difficult passage for the Faithful to contemplate.

Rom 8:19-32

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults<sup>4</sup>

Without acknowledging that a few manuscripts exchange *faith* for *creation*, the Bishops quote *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council, “Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay” (cf. Rom 8:19-23). When I tried to pin down the citation at no. 48 at the Vatican website, I was unsuccessful.<sup>5</sup> *Lumen Gentium* does not use the word *creation* anywhere at that place. I hope I am overlooking something and that this is not but one more example of sloppy scholarship by the Bishops.

Rom 8:19-23

Denis Edwards, “Resurrection and the Costs of Evolution: A Dialogue with Rahner on Noninterventionist Theology”<sup>6</sup>

First, Edwards observes:

In the current dialogue between science and theology, the issue of the suffering of human and nonhuman creatures takes on a new intensity, with science making it clear how predation, competition for survival, death, and extinction are built into the 3.8 billion-year-history of life on Earth.

Edwards, then, goes on to complete his thought with, “Only a theology of resurrection that is eschatologically [in the final analysis] transformative can begin to respond to the suffering that is built into an evolutionary universe.” Edwards uses Rom 8:19-23 as one illustration of such transformation.

Rom 8:22-23

Anthony J. Godzieba, Lieven Boeve, Michele Saracino, “Resurrection— Interruption—Transformation: Incarnation as Hermeneutical Strategy: *A Symposium*”<sup>7</sup>

Godzieba, Boeve, and Saracino argue that the first Christians felt that creation was incomplete, as they waited for “the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:23).

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<sup>4</sup> Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 157.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html) 080527.

<sup>6</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 817.

<sup>7</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 784.

Rom 8:22

Richard S. Ascough, review of Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Our Mother Saint Paul<sup>8</sup>  
Ascough uses the word *creation* three times in the review, most significantly to say that Gaventa “points to a completely new configuration of family those results from Christ’s work.” The new family is based on spirit, rather than biology.

Ascough does not mention the matter of homosexual marriages, but I am, because I think avoiding controversial subjects damages credibility. My assumption is that Gaventa is not referring to bodily sexual relations in the new configuration of family advocated by Saint Paul. In Romans 8:22, Paul is expecting “the imminent transformation of the world,” according to the new creation. This transformation is probably asexual, but who knows for sure?

Rom 8:23

Frank J. Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology”<sup>9</sup>

Matera argues that, for John, the Christian life “is so real that it can, even now, be called eternal life.” For Saint Paul, however, this life is only “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom 8:23).

## **cf. Matthew 11:25**

### **Matthew 13:1-23**

Matt 13:1-52

Craig L. Blomberg, “Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?”<sup>10</sup>

Blomberg writes, “A second major contribution of the redaction criticism of the parables is to set individual passages in their larger contexts in the evangelists’ outlines. Matthew expands Mark 4:1-34, arranging seven parables into a chiasmic pattern in 13:1-52.” The parable of the sower is the first of those seven parables. The fourth or key parable in the chiasm is the parable of the yeast.

Matt 13:1-9, 18-23

Daniel W. Ulrich, “The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew”<sup>11</sup>

Ulrich writes, “The parable and its interpretation show that ‘the word of the kingdom’ must be scattered widely, since it will bear fruit in only some hearers.”

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<sup>8</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008) 369.

<sup>9</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 254.

<sup>10</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 1 (April 1991) 58.

<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (April 2007) 73, 78.

Matt 13:9-23

Dino Dozzi, "Thus Says the Lord' The Gospel in the Writings of Saint Francis"<sup>12</sup>  
The comments about Saint Francis, above the double line, draw from this article.

Matt 13:10-17

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy<sup>13</sup>  
Barker argues that the parable of the sower is autobiographical for Jesus, explaining how he learned. Barker writes, "These were Jesus' own accounts of his spiritual growth."

Matt 13:10-15

Edward F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., Teaching in parables: (Mk 4:10-12; Lk 8:9-10; Mt 13:10-15)<sup>14</sup>

This is a 1961 basic article designed to illustrate the procedure for present-day Scripture studies. Siegman demonstrates that the synoptic Gospels are compilations, not always arranged in tight sequence, either temporal sequence or topical sequence. Siegman writes, "Luke has the disciples ask for the meaning of the parable just spoken, while Matthew has them inquiring *why* He spoke in parables. A disagreement of this nature shows how uncertain the historical tradition about the question [the disciples asked] was."

Matt 13:18-23

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History<sup>15</sup>

Lawrence points out that the parable of the sower is one of about forty parables attributed to Jesus. Lawrence states that "the meaning of a number of parables was not always evident," implying that his Atlas helps, when Jesus himself does not offer the explanation, as is the case here, with the sower.

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<sup>12</sup> Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, Supplement (2004) 23-26, 24.

<sup>13</sup> London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, 30.

<sup>14</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January 1961) 161-181, 166.

<sup>15</sup> Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 140-141.