

Personal Notes  
060723 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 107B  
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Raymond J. Jirran

Breaking down unjust human prejudice suits these readings, which begin with Jeremiah commenting on the status quo biases of the king; continuing with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, critical of the same status quo; and culminating with Ephesians, which takes down the wall separating peoples. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus and his disciples need a vacation from the stress of challenging biases of the status quo.

Jeremiah (active 626-585 B.C.),<sup>1</sup> warned the Jews of their coming destruction, if they continued along the lines of the status quo. Jeremiah was critical of how the kings ruled.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah predicted a new shepherd would come to save Israel, namely the Good Shepherd of the New Testament.<sup>3</sup>

Within the context of the present sexual scandal of the hierarchy, when Jeremiah 23:1 writes, "woe to the shepherds," I do think of the hierarchy. This may be the gravest church scandal of all time. Clerical culture does endanger the Faithful.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is the famous Good Shepherd Psalm, available four times at Funerals<sup>4</sup> and three times in Pastoral Care of the Sick.<sup>5</sup> Psalm 23:3a, *he refreshes*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://jeru.huji.ac.il/eb35s.htm> 060618

<sup>2</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 25; Adrian M. Leske, review of Clay Alan Ham, The Coming King and the Rejected Shepherd: Matthew's Reading of Zechariah's Messianic Hope, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 145.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen L. Cook, "The Metamorphosis of a Shepherd: The Tradition History of Zechariah 11:17 + 13:7-9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July, 1993) 459, 464; Antti Laato, "Second Samuel 7 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Ideology," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 1997) 254.

<sup>4</sup> 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) 143, 223, 253, 267.

<sup>5</sup> 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

*my, soul* is about restoring and revitalizing the human person,<sup>6</sup> for example eliminating unjust human prejudice. When the Psalmist depicts himself sitting at a banquet table,<sup>7</sup> set by the Lord, he is taking the place of the king, feasting in the temple.<sup>8</sup> Scraps of information gleaned from passages like this uncover what the First Temple was like, up to 585 B.C. As time has passed, insight has increased, dismantling much past prejudice.

Ephesians 2:16 lays out the unity of all things in Christ. Ephesians 2:14 says that Jesus destroys the wall between people. The wall Paul had in mind, would have been the wall in the temple, separating the Gentiles from the Chosen People. Ephesians 2:15 also does away with the commandments of local customs. I was surprised to see that the Greek for the *commandments* done away with, is pronounced *dogma*. With this in mind, I looked in the King James Version (KJV) to see whether it translated *commandments* as *dogma*. Translating *commandments* as *dogma* would be an indictment of the One, Holy, Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, with its many dogmas. The KJV translates *commandments* as *commandments*. Dogmas is not an issue.

While Ephesians is not written in poetic format, Ephesians appears in the Lectionary in the same format as Psalm 23, which is poetry. Distinguishing poetry from non-poetry is an unsolved problem both in the Lectionary and in the KJV. In poetry, the reader expects greater use of metaphors than in straight prose. There really was not a great concern about poetry versus prose until the Nineteenth Century.<sup>9</sup>

Ephesians joins human life with divine life. One might expect a poetic result, as sometimes happens in the Greek hymns incorporated in the New Testament, though not here, in Ephesians. There is a translation difficulty, at least for me.

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Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 171, 188, 323.

<sup>6</sup> J. Ross Wagner, "From the Heavens to the Heart: The Dynamics of Psalm 19 as Prayer," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 1999) 255.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003) 90, 248, 326 fn. 57.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003) 243.

<sup>9</sup> Alister McGrath, In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture (New York: Anchor Books: A Division of Random House, Inc., 2001) 247-248.

The Lectionary translation of Ephesians 2:16 differs from the Vulgate in ascribing unity to the cross, rather than Jesus. The original Greek is ambiguous and may be translated either way.<sup>10</sup> In such cases, I thought Rome decreed that the Vulgate should be followed. I do not understand, therefore, the Lectionary translation.

Another interesting aspect of Ephesians is the use of the word *peace* three times (Ephesians 3:14, 15, 17). Peace only belongs to those in control. Ephesians, by joining human with divine life, puts humans in control of their own destinies. This means that Christians are freer than others in working out their salvation according to their own consciences. This also means that victims of bias are able to maintain their dignity with peace of soul.

When Mark 6:30 uses the term *apostles*, Mark means the twelve. So do Matthew and Luke. Paul, however, calls himself an apostle and opens the breach to others, such as women. In Ephesians, Paul expands human dignity to include all people.<sup>11</sup>

The Gospel is about taking a break. Jesus and his disciples take a boat trip to get away. The people run after them. Like a Good Shepherd, Jesus continues to teach the people, after they catch up with him. I know a priest unjustly removed from ministry, who described his flock as lost, like sheep without a shepherd. Those taught by Jesus were not enamored because Jesus is enthralled with the status quo. Jesus is breaking down unjust prejudices.

Writing in Italian, Emilio Salvatore examines the structure of Mark with narrative methodology. Like Joseph Jensen, O.S.B., Salvatore sees Mark as about the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. The concluding words of Salvatore's book carry the message, "to be healed by seeing (one) is healed and sees."<sup>12</sup> Salvatore means that Mark continues to draw the Faithful to learn about Jesus through observing the works of Jesus, such as openness to all humanity, among themselves.

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<sup>10</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) 67.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 188.

<sup>12</sup> Emilio Salvatore, "*E vedeva a distanza ogni cosa*": *Il racconto della guarigione del cieco di Betsaida*," 289 as cited in the review by James Swetnam, S.J., the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 668.

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These readings are about breaking down unjust prejudices. Jeremiah and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm begin with the king, worried that the people, without a Good Shepherd, are headed in the wrong direction. Ephesians effectively draws all people into the blood of Christ, uniting everyone with God. The Gospel is preached to the common people, showing the Faithful, down to the present, how to implement and break down unjust prejudices.

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