

The word for this week is **bread**.

Pope John-Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*, does not cite any Scripture specific to this Sunday. The following section fits no special readings. The *rhythm of life*, mentioned below does rely on the **bread** of life.

### **Mystery of Christ, mystery of man**

25. In my testimony of 1978 mentioned above, where I described the Rosary as my favorite prayer, I used an idea to which I would like to return. I said then that 'the simple prayer of the Rosary marks the rhythm of human life.'<sup>1</sup>

In the light of what has been said so far on the mysteries of Christ, it is not difficult to go deeper into this *anthropological significance* of the Rosary, which is far deeper than may appear at first sight. Anyone who contemplates Christ through the various stages of his life cannot fail to perceive him *the truth about man*. This is the great affirmation of the Second Vatican Council which I have so often discussed in my own teaching since the Encyclical Letter Redeptor *Hominis*: "it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man is seen in its true light."<sup>2</sup> The Rosary helps to open up the way to this light. Following in the path of Christ, in whom man's path is "recapitulated,"<sup>3</sup> revealed and redeemed, believers come face to face with the image of the true man. Contemplating Christ's birth, they learn of the sanctity of life; seeing the household of Nazareth, they learn the original truth of the family according to God's plan; listening to the Master in the mysteries of his public ministry, they find the light which leads them to enter the Kingdom of God; and following him on the way to Calvary, they learn the meaning of salvific suffering. Finally, contemplating Christ and his Blessed Mother in glory, they see the goal towards which each of us is called, if we allow ourselves to be healed and transformed by the Holy Spirit. It could be said that each mystery of the Rosary, carefully meditated, sheds light on the mystery of man.

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<sup>1</sup> Angelus Message of 29 October 1978 : Insegnamenti, I (1978), 76

<sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 22

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 18, 1: PG 7, 932.

At the same time, it becomes natural to bring to this encounter with the sacred humanity of the Redeemer all the problems, anxieties, labors and endeavors which go to make up our lives. “Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you” (*Psalms 55:23*). To pray the Rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and his Mother. Twenty-five years later, thinking back over the difficulties which have also been part of my exercise of the Petrine ministry, I feel the need to say once more, as a warm invitation to everyone to experience it personally: The Rosary does indeed “mark the rhythm of human life,” bringing it into harmony with the “rhythm” of God’s own life, in the joyful communion of the Holy Trinity, our life’s destiny and deepest longing.

The overview for the readings for this the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time is about **bread** as the spiritual **bread** of life and **bread** in its physical materialistic dimension.

## 2 Kings 4:42-44

verse 42      ...twenty barley **loaves** made from the first fruits and grain in the ear....

## Psalms 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

verse 15              and you give them their **food** in due season

This psalm is a relatively intellectual, unemotional, alphabetical acrostic psalm.<sup>4</sup>

Psalms 23 is also used for Readings 54C, page 413; 100A, page 678, 110B, viz. here, page 730; 112A, page 741; 133A, page 840, and 153C, page 938.

## Ephesians 4:1-6

verse 2              ...bearing with one another through love,  
striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

## John 10:27

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<sup>4</sup> Hanan Eshel and John Strugnell, “Alphabetical Acrostics in Pre-Tannaitic Hebrew,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 444. [At this point, following the practice of the CBQ, I begin to omit the word *page* in the documentation.]

No comment

John 6:1-15

Since this passage is also found in Matthew 14:17, Mark 6:38, and Luke 9:13, the significance increases.<sup>5</sup>

The grammarian adds a lot to this passage.

verse 1        Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee.

This translation disturbs me because *of Tiberias* is in both the Latin and the Greek, but not here. The 1993 World Almanac has the following about the topography of Israel: "The eastern border drops sharply into the Jordan Rift Valley, including Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) and the Dead Sea, which is 1,312 feet below sea level, lowest point on the earth's surface."<sup>6</sup>

Another troublesome aspect of the translation is omission of *After this*, just before the word *Jesus*. *After this* is a formula indicating a transition, significant in light of the *signs* below.

verse 2        A large crowd followed him,  
                  because they *saw* the *signs* he was performing on the *sick*.

The grammarian points out that *saw* carries the sense of *witnessing*.

A scholar focuses on *signs* as a means for understanding the Gospel of **John**. *Signs* is used in verse 2 and *sign*, below, in verse 14. The Book of Wisdom was written relatively close to Christian times. The redactor organized Wisdom according to signs, six, then the seventh, which is the Exodus. The scholar regards this passage as part of a fourth sign comparable to the sign of hail that destroyed crops in Egypt, though the

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<sup>5</sup> Robert H. Stein, "The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July, 1992), 488-489..

<sup>6</sup> World Almanac, *The Authority Since 1868: The World Almanac and Book of Facts: 1993* (New York: World Almanac: An Imprint of Pharos Books: A Scripps Howard Company, 1992), 766.

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Israelites still had manna. The sign comparable to the Exodus in **John** is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup>

The grammarian and Saint Jerome also carry a sense of *infirm* along with *sick*. As someone in *old age*, but not *sick*, I resonate thinking about *old age*. A time will come when physical bread will not make much difference to me.

verse 3      Jesus went up on the *mountain*

There are no true mountains in the Holy Land, at least not according to my view of the Appalachian standards of western Virginia. The Golan Heights are *Heights*, not *Mountains*. The grammarian relates that *mountain* means an unfamiliar place, carrying the sense of *the hills* or *hilly country*.

verse 4      The Jewish feast of Passover was near.

A scholar notes, first, that other scholars note that in **John**, the role of *the Jews*, in Chapters 13-17, changes to the role of *the world*. A semantic substitution would work. The point for both the world and the Jews is that **John** sometimes takes a neutral<sup>8</sup> value stance toward them. The above is an example of presenting a fact about Judaism without adding a value to that fact.

verse 5      When Jesus *raised his eyes*  
                  and saw that a large crowd was coming to him,  
                  he said to Philip,  
                  “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?”

verse 6      He said this to test him,  
                  because he himself knew what he was going to do.

verse 7      Philip answered him,  
                  “*Two hundred days’ wages worth* of food would not be enough  
                  for each of them to have a little.”

The grammarian points out that *raised his eyes* has the sense of *looked at, observed*.

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas K. Clark, “Signs in Wisdom and John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983), 203-205.

<sup>8</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, *Κοσμος in John*, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 100.

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Two points come to mind. First, the Novice Master made an exception from the *Imitation of Christ* for this passage, telling us never to test one another. Life is full of enough tests without our adding to them.

Second, a Philip owns Van Costa's Restaurant, my favorite. I can hear Philip wondering the same thing.

*Two hundred days' wages worth* is a free translation of *denarii* that both the Latin and the Greek use. The objections to the current Lectionary translations seem well exemplified here. No ancient nation had a Bureau of Labor Statistics able to determine *two hundred days' wages worth* and that is not what the Greek said.

verse 9                    "There is a *boy* here who has five barley **loaves** and two *fish*..."

The grammarian relates that *boy* can also mean *slave*. Additionally, *fish* can mean a type of cooked relish to eat with **bread**.

verse 10            Jesus said, "Have the people *recline*,"  
                          Now there was a great deal of grass in that place,  
                          So the men *reclined*, about five thousand in number.

The grammarian observes that *reclining* was the usual position these ancients would have taken. We might *sit down to dinner*, instead. The grammarian offers the option *take one's place for a meal*.

verse 13                    ...that had been more than they *could* eat.

This is not a comment on the eating capacity of the five thousand, but on how much was *left over*, as the Latin and Greek express it. The grammarian suggests *fill, satisfy*. The political situation being what it is in the contemporary Church, I look for this translation to change in the next rendition.

Several comments in the July 2003 the Catholic Biblical Quarterly seem germane: The quotations and their references are from the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* published in 1993 and approved by Pope John Paul II in at least a quasi-magisterial manner.

...The Scriptures belong to the entire church (III.B.3.i) and all of the members of the church have a role in the interpretation of Scripture (III.B.3.b). People of lowly status, according to scripture itself, are privileged hearers of the word of God (III.B.3.f)...The magisterium's function is not to set itself between Scripture and the people of God, but rather to render authoritative judgments as the need arises...All Christians are called to actualize Scripture for themselves. While pastoral actualization—applying Scripture to contemporary circumstances—belongs to preachers and catechists rather than

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exegetes, good exegesis is oriented toward and prepares the way for actualization....Principles of interpretation can serve not only exegetes but also theologians, clergy, and lay people.<sup>9</sup>

These Personal Notes, then, are not preaching, but are a sharing of my nonprofessional sense of Scripture.

verse 14      When the people saw the *sign* he had done, they said  
                  “This is truly the *Prophet*, the one who is to come into the world.”

In this verse, a scholar finds “According to countertraditions, the most excellent prophet was not Moses but rather David, or those who did more extraordinary miracles (Josh 10:12; Isa 38:8; Sir 48:4), or Jesus (**John 6:14**; Heb 3:5-6).”<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, **2 Kings** points to the Eucharistic Jesus with the barley **loaves** Elisha told the man from Baal-shalishah to give to the people to eat. The psalm is about gratitude for all food. **Ephesians** gets to the meaning of the Eucharist through *the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace*. Finally, the Gospel connects the later institution of the esoteric Eucharistic food for the soul with hard-core reality of food for the body.

#### APPENDIX

The Quarterly references apply recent scholarship to the Lectionary<sup>11</sup> readings. In effect, Personal Notes annotate the Index references at [www.western-civilization.com](http://www.western-civilization.com). By reviewing the footnotes, one can quickly decide whether the effort to consult the

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<sup>9</sup> Peter S. Williamson, “Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003), 337, 338, 346, 348.

<sup>10</sup> Benedict T. Viviano, O.P., “The Least in the Kingdom: Matthew 11:11, Its Parallel in Luke 7:28 (Q), and Daniel 4:14,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 48.

<sup>11</sup> All indented verses are taken from 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).

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original article may be worthwhile. The idea is to balance and connect recent scholarship with the substance of traditional spirituality.

Traditional spirituality rests upon several basic sources in Personal Notes. The Lectionary gives the readings used at Mass. Where the Lectionary capitalizes all the letters in *LORD*, so does these Notes, under the assumption that LORD means Yahweh. The Vulgate<sup>12</sup> reaches toward a traditional Latin translation, while Nestle<sup>13</sup> and the grammarian<sup>14</sup> reach even further back to the original Greek. Sunday Sermons<sup>15</sup> brings the Fathers of the Church to bear, in the monastic traditions, including

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<sup>12</sup> The Latin. Saint Jerome, and the Vulgate all refer to Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita Iussu Pauli PP, VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP, II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4

<sup>13</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 and Nestle-Aland: Greek-English New Testament: Greek text Novum Testamentum Graece, in the tradition of Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle edited by Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger. English text 2nd Edition of the Revised Standard Version The Critical Apparatuses prepared and edited together with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Munster/Westphalia by Barbara and Kurt Aland (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1998) Editio XXVII.

<sup>14</sup> 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) and 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).

<sup>15</sup> The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume One: From the First Sunday of Advent to Quinquagesima, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996); The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996); The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Three: From Pentecost to the Tenth

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the Poor Clares. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter on the Rosary<sup>16</sup> ties the devotion to the Mass. I try to use American English and style for the Apostolic Letter, changing the original without comment.

The Sunday **words** are developed out of Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P.<sup>17</sup> Stuhlmueller advises praying the psalms with a word-focus. A single word is somewhat easier than the Responsorial Antiphon that is a little more difficult, but that I use personally.

As the readings cycles progress, eventually Stuhlmueller and the Sunday Sermons will be used up. After that, I may simply add to what I originally wrote. That change will take several more years to accomplish.

This Appendix takes up two pages; my computer can readily accommodate that. I will not expect regular readers to print the Appendix, nor do I intend to print it for my personal use each week.

Brackets [ ] indicate insertions made by me, parentheses ( ) indicate insertions made by someone else.

Thursday, July 03, 2003

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Sunday after Pentecost, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996); The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: A Manual of Preaching, Spiritual Reading and Meditation: Volume Four: From the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost to the Twenty-fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*, at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2ROSAR.HTM>, 10/16/02.

<sup>17</sup>Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599.