

The Lectionary readings for today are about prayer. The hymn, “How Great Thou Art,” captures some recognition of God. The chorus for the hymn, “in the Garden,” “And He walks with me, and He talks with me, He tells me I am His,” captures something of the personal relationship between God and the Faithful. That God permits evil, therefore, poses a problem, a problem as one draws closer to the final agony. The way to deal with that problem in an adult manner is to accept what happens. There is no avoiding unpleasantness in this life. As the Richmond Diocese Black Catholics like to pray at their annual retreat, “God is good, all the time; all the time, God is good.” Often that prayer is an act of Faith, which can enable a person to deal with the difficulties and tragedies of life. In the following references, scholars bring out a wide variety of aspects of prayer.

First Reading: Genesis 18:20-32

Genesis 12—50

Bruce N. Fisk, “Offering Isaac Again and Again: Pseudo-Philo's Use of the Aqedah as Intertext”¹

Perhaps someone else can see how to make this reference relevant to the readings today.

Gen 18:22

Rick Van De Water, “‘Removing the Boundary’ (Hosea 5:10) in First Century Palestine”²

Perhaps someone else can see how to make this reference relevant to the readings today.

Genesis 18:22

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy³
Evidently, the two angels went ahead of the LORD and reported the debauchery of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then Abraham prayed for God to spare the cities.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8

Nothing new.

¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 484.

² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 627.

³ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003 111.

Second Reading: Colossians 2:12-14

Col 2:12

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"⁴

Matera writes, "... whereas the Johannine letters begin to emphasize a future eschatology (1 John 2:18, 28, 3:2), the Deuteropauline letters begin to move in the direction of a more realized eschatology, viewing the baptized as not only buried with Christ into death, as Paul writes in Rom 6:4, but raised up with him (Col 2:12; 3:1) and even 'seated with him in the heavens' (Eph 2:6)." Prayer seated with God as a friend arises differently from prayer begging God for mercy.

Col 2:12, 14-15

Jerry L. Sumney, "'I Fill Up What Is Lacking in the Afflictions of Christ': Paul's Vicarious Suffering in Colossians"⁵

Colossians is not about the rigors of the cross, though the cross is mentioned, as about reconciling the readers to God. As Sumney words it, "In 2:12 Christ's death and resurrection are mentioned only as things in which the readers participate through baptism. Colossians emphasizes the work of Christ, rather than his suffering."

Alleluia: Romans 8:15bc

Gospel: Luke 11:1-13

Luke 9:51--18:14

Richard J. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)"⁶

Perhaps someone else can see how to make this reference relevant to the readings today.

Luke 11:1-13

Warren Carter, "Getting Martha out of the Kitchen: Luke 10:38-42 Again"⁷

Related to prayer, Martha seeks the Lord's intervention. The issue is shared evangelization rather than competing with a poor sister, Mary, who is not carrying her load of the work. A better understanding may be "different strokes for different folks" in the effort to evangelize together. Sometimes the Faithful do not think of Martha and Mary as co-evangelizers with the rest of the disciples. In the article cited above, Carter does.

⁴ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 255.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2006) 675, 678.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 43, No. 2 (April 1981) 221.

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 1996) 274.

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Luke 11:3

Bruce J. Malina, "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean?"⁸
Emphasis is on the present. Ancient non-elites in agrarian societies generally expected payment "right now."

Luke 11:4

Nicholas Perrin, review of Scot McKnight, Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory⁹

McKnight regards the *final test* as the last agony of death. Jesus is regarding his forthcoming death not as much as atonement for sins as of vindication of his life and love for humanity, "poured out for many." McKnight writes that Jesus "... told his followers that his death would protect them, liberate them, and usher them into the kingdom of God" (p. 372).

Luke 11:5-8

Craig L. Blomberg, "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?"¹⁰

From the parable, the point about prayer may be more about boldness than persistence.

Luke 11:5

William L. Holladay, "Indications of Segmented Sleep in the Bible"¹¹

Holladay notes that the neighbor did not complain about being awakened, but rather about having to get out of bed. Holladay takes this as one sign that the eight hours continual sleep of the machine age is a relatively new development.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 1 (January 1989) 6.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 158.

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 1 (January 1991) 75.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 217.

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Luke 11:5

Fr. Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., The Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist¹²
DeGrandis has some interesting comments on Eucharistic bread.

Why did God choose bread to become His body through transubstantiation? Perhaps it was because bread is a main article of diet. God, in relating physical to spiritual to suggest and illustrate the spiritual, may have wished to emphasize the spiritual nutrition of the Eucharist as our “daily bread” as found in the “Our Father.” Bread is prominently mentioned in the Bible, e.g., “... Friend, lend me three loaves ...” (Luke 11:5, NAB), or “... taking flour, she (the woman) kneaded it and baked unleavened bread” (1 Samuel 28:24, NAB). God gave the great prophet Ezekiel the recipe for what has been termed “Ezekiel” bread. “... Take wheat and barley, and beans and lentils, and millet and spelt; put them in a single vessel and make bread out of them” (Ezekiel 4:9, NAB). Incidentally, Ezekiel bread is the most nutritious of all breads, having all of the essential amino acids, the only food in the world for which this can be said.

Luke 11:1, 9-13

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults¹³

In their Chapter 36, “Jesus Taught Us to Pray,” the Bishops seem to misunderstand the very nature of prayer. Prayer, or conversation with God, is very limited when confined to asking for things. My wife and I rarely ask one another for anything. What we mostly do is share our life experiences as an act of love. The seven “petitions” of the Bishops also can be understood as seven basic acts of sharing. For example, my wife and I work to share our ideas, working toward a closer relationship with one another and, in the process, with God, rather than competing in a power play. Where the *Our Father* has *hallowed be thy name*, Bette and I cheer on and cherish the good name of each other.

Luke 11:13

Basil S. Davis, "Severianus of Gabala and Galatians 6:6-10"¹⁴

The Greek for the good gifts humans, wicked as we are, give to one another often includes material goods, such as food.

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

¹² Texas: Praising God Catholic Association, 1998 2.

¹³ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006 481, 482.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 2007) 296.