

Personal Notes
040808 Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 117C
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First, some comments from two weeks ago, on July 18th, 2004, the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, about Martha and Mary. At the Bible Study discussion, Saturday morning, July 17 in Saint Michael's Hall at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, participants took the idea of Martha and Mary as co-evangelists as an occasion passively to examine their personal inward balance between active and contemplative ministry. Balance meant actively to look outward to what might work evangelizing, rather than inward toward self-examination.

Turning to this Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, there is a little bit of jest in the readings.¹ Luke and Mary, the Mother of God, seem to be having fun at the disproportion between not paying attention to when the partying master would return and cutting the servant-slacker in two (Luke 12:46). Mary was probably regaling Luke with stories, like a Jewish mother, meaning to communicate the idea that a loving God wants the Faithful to pay attention. These readings are not meant to depress the Faithful, but to take such threats as being cut in two, from the Greek, as a sort of Divine bluster, meant to be overcome with the love of Mary. Jesus loves the Faithful, as does the Father. There is no need to worry.

The selection from the Book of Wisdom is from the prayer of Aaron² imploring God to spare the first-born of the Hebrews from an Egyptian-type genocide. God then turns the tables on the first-born of the Egyptians. Turning the other cheek comes later, with the New Testament. Sacrificial offering does run through these readings,³ both First and New Testaments. All point toward the Kingdom of God at hand, present, now. That is why Mary, with a twinkle in her eye, threatened Luke with cutting him in two if he did not pay attention. The Lectionary translation lacked the sense of humor and irony for the more literal translation. In 12:47, Luke passed the threat along, half seriously.

Psalm 105 recollects the first Exodus as a forerunner of the Exodus of Jesus into eternal glory, a model for the rest of the Faithful. Jesus is an active mediator, not a passive servant. In the Gospel, Luke 12:36, Jesus is portrayed as the intermediary between God and the Faithful. The noun at work is *servant*. Furthermore, when

¹ Timothy A. Friedrichsen, "A Note on και διχοτομησει αυτον (Luke 12:46 and the Parallel in Matthew 24:51)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 258-264, especially 264.

² Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 208.

³ Jeremy Corley, "The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 265-266.

Luke portrays Martha and Mary as servants, the tone is one of compatriots in his mission, just as Jesus is a compatriot with his Father in the same mission.⁴

Hebrews makes the point that the Kingdom of God is here present. Hebrews expects the Faithful to feel that presence and then to share the good word.⁵

Wisdom 18:6-9

This reading may be a prayer of Aaron, but how scholars posit this passage as a prayer of Aaron⁶ escapes me. According to my Concordance,⁷ The word "Aaron" only appears in Exodus and Leviticus.

Not only does wisdom lead to the Father, but also seeking the Father is wisdom. For Christians, seeking the Father means finding the Kingdom of God in this life, a forerunner of the life to come.

Psalm 33: 1, 12, 18-19, 20-22

The Lectionary uses this Psalm at five Sunday liturgies.

Readings	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>	Verses used			
25A	159	4-5,	18-19, 20, 22	(22)	Lent 2
41B	319	4-5, 6-7, 12-13,	20-22	(5b)	Easter Vigil
52A	403	1-2, 4-5,	18-19	(22)	Easter 5
117C	763	1,	12, 18-19, 20- 22	(12b)	Today
146B	908	4-5,	18-19, 20, 22	(22)	Ordinary 29

This is the second time the 33rd Psalm appears in the Lectionary readings germane to these Notes. The first time was in 2003, Ordinary 29, Reading 146B.

⁴ Warren Carter, "Getting Martha out of the Kitchen: Luke 10:38-42 Again," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 1996) 273.

⁵ Craig R. Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 112.

⁶ Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 202 ff.

⁷ Rev. Newton Thompson, S.T.D. and Raymond Stock, Concordance to the Bible (Douay Version) (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Co., 1942) 1. There is no footnote in the article by Clark.

The antiphon is verse 12b: Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Verse 12 mentions *inheritance*. Hebrews changes the First Testament sense of *inheritance* from something passed along in a human fashion to something passed along in a supernatural fashion through Jesus and the sacraments.⁸ That is why the Kingdom of God is at hand, now.

Verses 18 and 22 mention *hope*, that Hebrews again changes. The First Testament sense is something to be realized, the sense in Hebrews is something already realized in the person of Jesus.

The point is that the Kingdom of God is here, present.

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Verse 1 says it all and says it well: "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for ..." Saint John Chrysostom (354-407) writes that "Scripture is wont to designate a generation not only by time, but also by place, worship and manner of life."⁹ The Christian generation is inheriting the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 24:42a, 44

Matthew generally takes on a more threatening posture than Luke does. "Stay awake and be ready!" (Matthew 42a) Matthew, writing for the Jews, is probably writing in a more serious vein than Luke, writing about the same subject of paying attention.

Luke 12:32-48

⁸ Scott W. Hahn, "A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15-22," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 421.

⁹ As found in the Exposition from the Catena Aurea of Saint Thomas Aquinas, V.34 in 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) 346.

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Luke 12: 35-40 is read at the Vigil for the Deceased and is option 7 among the Gospel Readings at Funerals for Adults.¹⁰ A longer reading, Luke 12:35-44 is option O among Gospel Readings from Sacred Scripture for visiting the sick.¹¹

In verse 32, the Greek for “Do not be afraid” means “Stop worrying.”¹² In verse 32, Luke announces, via Jesus, “... your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	Do not be afraid any longer
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	Noli timere
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	Fear not
<u>King James</u> (1611):	Fear not
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	There is no need to be afraid
<u>New American</u> (1970):	Do not be afraid any longer
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	There is no need to be afraid

I wanted to see whether the translations picked up “Stop worrying.” The translations are more circuitous about the Kingdom of God being so at hand. They do not pick up the “stop worrying” lilt.

Verse 33, about selling everything and following Jesus, is part of the Pauline gospel. Associated with the acerbic Paul and the gentle Mary, Luke must have stretched his imagination to reach the historical Christ. Luke is trying to say that living the life of

¹⁰ 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) 30-31, 235-236.

¹¹ 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 Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 313.

¹² 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) 83.

Christ is worth everything; that grasping for material possessions, beyond “daily bread” is not worth the effort.

Verse 33 also implies that women contributed to the economic sustenance of the disciples. While the men disciples would have left their economic resources with their families, the women disciples would have been independent enough to offer the alms mentioned in verse 33.¹³

Verse 35, “light you lamps” has special meaning for Poor Clare nuns. Wake up, smell the roses, realize the Kingdom of God is yours. In the same verse, “gird your loins” is a type of reference to Exodus 12:11.¹⁴

In verse 36, the Greek means they were waiting for the master actually to return; the Greek does not mean they did not know the answer to the theoretical question of when their master would return.¹⁵

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	return
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	revertatur
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	shall return
<u>King James</u> (1611):	will return
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	to return
<u>New American</u> (1970):	return
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	to return

I wanted to see how the translations noticed the master returning from partying. None of them seems to notice the frivolity of the moment.

Verse 37, *Amen* is frequently translated *truly* by Luke. I have often struggled with the meaning of *Amen*. *Truly* helps me.

¹³ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 113.

¹⁴ Susan R. Garrett, “Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 4 (October 1990) 675.

¹⁵ 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) 121.

Verse 37 the Greek for “recline at table” means “take a seat.”

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	recline at table
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	discumbere
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	them sit down to meat
<u>King James</u> (1611):	to sit down to meat [sic]
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	sit them down at table
<u>New American</u> (1970):	recline at table
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	sit them down at table

The translations seem overly formal.

The Greek in verse 39, letting “his house be broken into” means making a hole in the wall. Once one begins to look for a sense of humor, one finds it.

Verse 39 is interesting, because it would made more sense habitually to watch if one did *not*, rather than *did*, know “the hour at which the thief was coming.” The Greek also means, “burglarized.”¹⁶

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	be broken into
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	perfodi
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	be broken open
<u>King James</u> (1611):	be broken through
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	break through the wall
<u>New American</u> (1970):	be broken into
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	break through the wall

I was looking for some humor, but did not find any, except in my own eye.

Verse 40

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	will come
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	venit
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	will come
<u>King James</u> (1611):	cometh
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	is coming
<u>New American</u> (1970):	will come
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	is coming

¹⁶ Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Institutii Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 108.

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The verb *venit* in verse 40 is translated by the Lectionary the same as in verse 46. I have no quarrel with keeping the English tense the same, even though the Latin is different, as is the Greek.

Verse 41 includes a Lucan question, “Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?” This is not a trick question, but something straightforward.¹⁷ The Kingdom of God is compatible with questioning, with thinking.

In verse 42, Jesus continues exploiting the urge to think, by answering the question with another question, “Who is the faithful and prudent steward? ...”

Saint Ephraim, Deacon, Confessor, and Doctor, who died in 373, prayed, “Our mind is invaded without ceasing, with sorrow and with tears; at all times we are in fear of being deprived of the solace of Thy hope. With Thy secret words, O Lord, comfort our souls in that time ...”¹⁸ Thought and prayer do go together.

Verse 44 has *truly* rather than *amen*.

Verse 46, “will punish the servant severely” is better translated “will cut the servant in two.”

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	will come...will punish the servant severely
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	veniet...dividet
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	shall separate him
<u>King James</u> (1611):	will come...will cut him in sunder
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	will come...will cut him off
<u>New American</u> (1970):	will come...will punish him severely
Note the rare Gospel difference with the <u>Lectionary</u> . Searching for a reason for the difference helps understand the message contained therein.	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	will come...will cut him off

¹⁷ Paul Elbert, “An Observation on Luke’s Composition and Narrative Style of Questions,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 101 and 101.

¹⁸ St. Ephraim Syri, Edition Lamy, III, col. 212, *Sermo III: Oratio pro future vita in 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) 350 and 409, footnote 8.

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Verse 47

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	shall be beaten severely
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	vapulabit
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	shall be beaten with many stripes
<u>King James</u> (1611):	shall be beaten with many stripes
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	will receive very many strokes of the lash
<u>New American</u> (1970):	shall be beaten severely
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	will be given a great many strokes of the lash

These readings are not meant to depress the Faithful, but to take such threats as being cut in two as a sort of Divine bluster, meant to be overcome with the love of Mary. Jesus loves the Faithful. God loves the Faithful. The Faithful already have their inheritance, the Kingdom of God. Hebrews proclaims that Faith is already the fulfillment of the First Testament covenant promises. Psalm 33 vicariously recognizes all the Faithful as the Chosen People. Wisdom joins the Exodus from Egypt to the Exodus from sin through the merits of Jesus Christ.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.