

Personal Notes
030817 Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time 119B
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As last week, the words for this week are **eat** and **taste**, and **see**. For both weeks, the readings are similar. The context for the words is Eucharistic. What there is for which to be thankful is the LORD in his Eucharistic presence.

Pope John-Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*, does not cite any specific Scripture from the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The following section fits no special readings. Mentioning *flavor* (below) relates to **eat**, **taste**, and **see**.

Distribution over time

38. The Rosary can be recited in full every day, and there are those who most laudably do so. In this way it fills with prayer the days of many a contemplative, or keeps company with the sick and the elderly who have abundant time at their disposal. Yet it is clear—and this applies all the more if the new series of *mysteria lucis* is included—that many people will not be able to recite more than a part of the Rosary, according to a certain weekly pattern. This weekly distribution has the effect of giving the different days of the week a certain spiritual “color,” by analogy with the way in which the Liturgy colors the different seasons of the liturgical year.

According to current practice, Monday and Thursday are dedicated to the “joyful mysteries,” Tuesday and Friday to the “sorrowful mysteries,” and Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday to the “glorious mysteries.” Where might the “mysteries of light” be inserted? If we consider that the “glorious mysteries” are said on both Saturday and Sunday, and that Saturday has always had a special Marian *flavor*, the second weekly meditation on the “joyful mysteries,” mysteries in which Mary’s presence is especially pronounced, could be moved to Saturday. Thursday would then be free for meditation on the “mysteries of light.”

This indication is not intended to limit a rightful freedom in personal and community prayer, where account needs to be taken of spiritual and pastoral needs and of the occurrence of particular liturgical celebrations which might call for suitable adaptations. What is really important is that the Rosary should always be seen and experienced as a path of contemplation. In the Rosary, in a way similar to what takes place in the Liturgy, the Christian week, centered on Sunday, the day of Resurrection, becomes a journey through the

mysteries of the life of Christ, and he is revealed in the lives of his disciples as the Lord of time and of history.

Proverbs 9:1-6

This section of Proverbs extols the virtue of Wisdom as a type of banquet of understanding. In other places, Proverbs sets out Wisdom herself.¹

verse 2 she has dressed her meat, mixed her wine,
yes, she has spread her *table*.

verse 3 She has sent out her *maidens*; she calls
from the heights out over the city:

Jerome uses *ancillas* for *maidens*, the same word Mary used in the Magnificat, *the handmaid of the Lord*.

verse 4 “Let whoever is *simple* turn in here;
To the one who lacks understanding, she says,

Simple is *parvulus* in the Latin, carrying the sense of childlike, emotionally and intellectually undeveloped.

verse 5 Come, **eat** of my food,
and drink of the wine I have mixed!

verse 6 Forsake *foolishness* that you may live;
advance in the way of *understanding*.

Jerome translates *foolishness* with *infantiam*, *infant-like behavior*. Jerome uses *prudentialia*, from which is derived *prudence*, for *understanding*.

Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7

Except for verses 7-8 and the antiphon, this is the same psalm used last Sunday. To refresh memories, this is an intellectual, alphabetical, acrostic hymn.²

¹ Paul Overland, “Did the Sage Draw from the Shema? A Study of Proverbs 3:1-12,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 441.

² Hanan Eshel and John Strugnell, “Alphabetical Acrostics in Pre-Tannaitic Hebrew,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000), 443.

The antiphon this week is from a verse not used last week:

verse 9a **Taste** and **see** the goodness of the Lord.

This Psalm 34 is also used according to the following chart.

<u>Reading</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>verses</u>	
33C	208	2-3, 4-5, 6-7 (9a)	
116B	759	2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (9a)	
119B	776	2-3, 4-5, 6-7 (9a)	This is today, this Sunday
122B	789	2-3, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21 (9a)	
150C	925	2-3, 17-18, 19, 23 (7a)	
#591	1158	2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Saints Peter and Paul

verse 3 Let my soul glory in the LORD;
 the *lowly* will hear me and be glad.

Jerome translates *lowly* with *mansueti* in the sense of *easy to get along with*.

verse 7 When the *poor* one called out, the LORD heard,
 and from all his distress he saved him.

Jerome translates *poor* with *pauper* in the sense of *pauper* or *poor* in the sense of *without funds*.

Ephesians 5:15-20

The comparable readings last Sunday were **Ephesians** 4:30—5:2

verse 15 Watch carefully how you *live*,
 not as *foolish* persons but as *wise*.

Jerome translates *live* with *ambuletis*, offering the sense of *walking-around*; *foolish* with *insipientes* from which *insipid* is derived; *wise* with *sapientes*, the generally-used Latin for *wise*.

verse 16 making the most of the *opportunity*,
 because the days are evil.

Jerome translates *opportunity* with *tempus*, offering a sense of trying to make good use of the *time* allotted the Faithful on earth.

verse 17 Therefore, do not continue in *ignorance*,

but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.

Jerome translates ignorance with *imprudentes*, or impudence or im-prudence.

verse 18 and do not get drunk on wine, in which lies *debauchery*

The word Jerome uses for *debauchery* is *luxuria*, the derivative for *luxury*.

John 6:56

The comparable reading last Sunday was **John 6:51**

verse 56 Whoever **eats** my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

John 6:51-58

The Order of Christian Funerals rightly notes that "... the calming effect of familiar prayers can comfort the mourners as they begin to face their loss."³ Familiarization with Scripture readings, therefore, seems appropriate for the Sunday readings. Verses from this Gospel may be used at "13 Funerals for Adults," #13, John 6:51-58⁴ and "14 Funerals for Baptized Children," #4, John 6:51-58.⁵

verse 51 "I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever **eats** this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world."

verse 52 The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,
"How can this man give us his flesh to **eat**?"

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³ 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), "Prayers after Death," page 49.

⁴ *ibid.*, page 241.

⁵ *ibid.*, page 259.

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verse 53 Jesus said to them,
“Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you do not have life within you.

The Greek catches a scholar’s attention. The Greek for *unless*, εαν μη, occurs seventeen times in the Fourth Gospel, “within a solemn affirmation of some truth or some prerequisite of salvation.”⁶ The grammarian called attention to the emotional emphasis associated with ου μη, *never*. The other scholar agrees, pointing out that such a *never* is found in sixteen places in this Gospel. With two exceptions (John 11:56 and 18:11), “this construction always expresses a solemn pronouncement.”⁷

verse 54 Whoever **eats** my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.

A scholar includes these two verses among instances associating glory with the cross.⁸

verse 56 Whoever **eats** my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.

verse 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven.
Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever **eats** this bread will live forever.”

In conclusion, **Proverbs** is about spreading the table of Wisdom and **eating** thereat; Psalm 34 continues about **tasting** and **seeing** the goodness of the Lord; **Ephesians** about giving thanks always and for everything; and the Fourth Gospel about **eating** the flesh of Jesus and thereby living his own very life, forever.

For an overview of sources used see the Appendix file.

⁶ Loren L. Johns and Douglas B. Miller, *The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence*, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 1994) 530.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., “Raymond Brown’s New Introduction to the Gospel of John: A Presentation—And Some Questions,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003) 9.