

Hearing the Word is not enough. Asking questions of the Word is not enough, either. The Word requires hearing, then understanding, and, finally, living out in real life, including the Cross.

The Gospel according Luke reflects the Virgin Mary, a Jewish mother, telling story after story about her son, Jesus, revealing the Word. Mary encourages question upon question, in line with the teen-age questions she must have had in her early years of motherhood. Mary not only heard the Word, but she also questioned the Word. Finally, she lived the Word. Through Luke, Mary encourages the Faithful to ask similar questions and live similar lives.

Rabanus (776 (784?)-856), probably the most learned man of his age¹ explains:

Or, the ruler of the synagogue stands for Moses, and is called Jairus, that is, the 'enlightener', or 'he who will give light'; because he received, to give to us, the words of life, and through this, being himself enlightened by the Holy Spirit, gives light to all.²

In a similar way, Mary passes along her lights into the spiritual life. As a Jewish mother, Mary knows how to lay on a guilt complex, that Luke simply passes along. Mary also does this with a twinkle in her eye, realizing the love of the Father for all of the Faithful. Mary supports asking questions of Faith as part of living the Faith.

According to tradition, Mary lived a long life. Saint John Chrysostom (354-407), within the context of Saint Paul, writes of the meaning of old age.

For to me, he [Paul] says, to live is Christ; and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21); because of the distresses and

¹ Michael Ott, transcribed by Michael C. Tinkler, "Blessed Marus Magnentius Rabanus," The Catholic Encyclopedia at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12617a.htm> August 5, 2004

² Rabanus, "Exposition from the Catena Aurea," 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) 311

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tribulations that go with a longer life, death making haste,
he gains.³

The book of Isaiah was composed in three sections. First, Second, and Third Isaiah all reflect questions of Faith. First Isaiah simply asserts Faith in the creating God leading the Chosen People through the Exodus, with Zion as goal. Second Isaiah answers the question of the Exile with the Assyrian King Cyrus permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Third Isaiah, from which the Lectionary reading is taken, answers the question of the continuing rubble of Jerusalem with a new hope for the future.⁴ The Lectionary readings begin the readings for today with the Prophet Isaiah promising to spread the Good News to everyone, with the new hope of Third Isaiah.

New hope means looking beyond oneself and personal salvation. Within the Jewish community of Third Isaiah, there is tension between the prophets⁵ thinking globally and the religious establishment thinking locally. Souls of the Faithful experience the same tension, between securing salvation for themselves within a very unsafe world and seeking salvation for others as an expression of their own love of God. Isaiah brings a message of hope within Grace within the total context of the Exodus.

Psalm 117 has only two verses, both of which the Lectionary uses. Psalm 117 was one of the psalms Jesus would have sung at the annual Passover feast,⁶ just before his passion, death, and resurrection. Psalm 117 invites questions because it appears in different forms in the Hebrew Masoretic, Greek Septuagint, and the Dead Sea Scrolls Q texts. Such differences show a dynamic religion developing questions

³ St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor, *On the Consolation of Death: First Sermon*, PG 56, col. 293, *De Consolatione Mortis: Sermo Primus* 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) 317.

⁴ Richard J. Clifford, S.J., "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and Its Cosmogonic Language," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 1993) 3, 16-17.

⁵ Adrian M. Leske, "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 4 (October 2000) 669.

⁶ Mark Kiley, "'Lord, Save my Life' (Psalm 116:4) as Generative Text for Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer (Mark 14:36a)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 4 (October 1986) 655.

and answers through the exigencies of time, adapting itself to different realizations of Grace.⁷

Hebrews is about Faith in unseen differences as the hardcore source of Grace.⁸ The whole context of the Lectionary readings is about the Exodus from this life into the next, through Grace enabling Faith. The Holy Family experienced a reverse Exodus, fleeing from the Promised Land back into Egypt, until it was safe to return. Mary must have had a twinkle in her eye, as she told the Flight into Egypt story to Luke. Mary exemplifies Faith in the unseen.

Hebrews implies that salvation is difficult, because the Father disciplines the sons he loves. The translators have a difficulty expunging the original Greek from sexism. In reality, the Father also disciplines the daughters he loves. In Luke, Jesus gets around to saying that salvation is difficult in that not everyone will attain salvation.

In the Gospel, Mary is laying a guilt trip on the Faithful, through Luke. Luke seems to lead the way to John to whom Jesus entrusted his mother from the Cross. 'Mother behold thy son, son behold thy mother.' The Gospel of John forgets the threats to write of the love of God.⁹ However, back to the threatening Jesus, the passage begins with a question.

The Gospel of Luke has question after question. In this instance, Jesus deals with the question of the relative difficulty to obtain salvation. Not only does Jesus say that salvation is difficult, he also says that the hearers will not necessarily save themselves. Hearing the Word is insufficient. Living the Word is required.

In verse 29, Luke rumbles on to say that people from all four corners of the earth will find places in the Kingdom of God, whereas some of those hearing but ignoring the Word will not find a place. Mary, in the person of Luke, shines forth that the rewards of eternal life cannot compare with whatever Satan can throw at the Faithful in this life.

⁷ See Lloyd M. Barré, "*Halelu yah*: A Broken Inclusion," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 195-200.

⁸ Craig R. Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 112.

⁹ See Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 286-287.

Luke sets up his Gospel as a journey to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is better understood as the interior life of the souls of the Faithful, than as a place on a hill. Luke organizes his passages in a sequence of logic and concept rather than a sequence of place.¹⁰

Here in the Lectionary, Jesus is explaining how he would deal with his own passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus is telling the Faithful they will experience the same thing in their own Exodus from this mortal life to eternal life. In Luke, Jesus travels through Samaria, thereby suiting the Isaian stretch to all humanity.

The difference between the Samaritans and the Jews was like the difference between the Protestants and the Catholics, strong disagreements under one religious umbrella. The Samaritans worshipped at Mount Gerizim toward the north while the Jews worshipped at Mount Zion toward the south. The First Testament only mentions Samaria in one place, 2 Kings 17:29.¹¹ Now to look at the individual readings, consider the following.

Isaiah 66:18-21

Verse 19, Tar shish, Put and Led, Mooch, Tubal and Java are not all in the Bible Atlas. Only Lud and Tubal are there. Lud is on the Turkish side of the Dardanelles, which separates the Mediterranean and Caspian seas. Tubal is in the Turkish mountains northeast of Tarsus, where Paul grew up.¹²

Richard J. Clifford, S.J. writes that within its general context, this part of Isaiah is one of the rare passages showing forth the anthropomorphic birth imagery of God.¹³ Gathering nations and refugees is a feminine sharing activity, rather than a male competitive activity.

Psalms 117:1, 2

¹⁰ Richard J. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 43, No. 2 (April 1981) 221-222.

¹¹ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 276-277.

¹² Standard Bible Atlas, 2nd edition (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, 1997) for Lud see page 16, Map 11 B2. For Tubal, see page 14, Map 9 B4 and page 15, Map 10 B4.

¹³ Richard J. Clifford, S.J., "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and Its Cosmogonic Language," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 1993) 17.

The Lectionary uses this Psalm at two Sunday liturgies.

Readings	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>	Verses used
87C	617	1, 2 (Mark 16:15) Ordinary 9 (unused in 2004)
123C	795	1, 2 (Mark 16:15) Today

The antiphon, “Go out to all the world and tell the good news” suits all of the readings.

Verse 2

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	the fidelity of the LORD endures forever.
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever (Psalm 116)
<u>King James</u> (1611):	and the truth of the LORD endureth forever
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	his faithfulness eternal.
<u>New American</u> (1970):	the LORD is faithful forever.
Diverges from <u>Lectionary</u> .	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	and his constancy is never-ending.

Identifying truth with God, as distinct from identifying politics with God, is what I was looking for in the translations. The *fidelity* of the Lectionary suits *truth* in that *truth*, once grasped, is faithful and everlasting, as is the author of truth, God.

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13

Verse 5

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	addressed to you as children
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	tamquam filiis loquitur
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	speaketh to you as unto children
<u>King James</u> (1611):	speaketh unto you as unto children
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	you are addressed as sons
<u>New American</u> (1970):	addressed to you as sons
This is another rare divergence between <u>Lectionary</u> and <u>New American</u> .	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	you are addressed as sons

I was surprised to see the King James and Douay translations using *children* without reference to gender. I am as surprised to see the difference, identified above, between the Lectionary and the New American.

Douay-Rheims writes in verse 6 that the Lord “scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Such a translation seems to approve child abuse. Here the Lectionary does far better using the word *discipline*. Jerusalem does even better, changing *discipline* to *training*.

Verse 7

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	for what “son” is there
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	Quis enim filius
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	For whom the Lord loveth
<u>King James</u> (1611):	for what son is he whom
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	Has there ever been any <i>son</i>
<u>New American</u> (1970):	for what “son” is there
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	Has there ever been any <i>son</i> ...

I have not figured out why *son* is either in quotation marks or italicized. I wanted to see if the various translations would help. They have not helped.

John 14:6

I am ... the truth ... says the Lord.

Luke 13:22-30

Verse 22

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	passed through
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	iter faciens
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	And he went through
<u>King James</u> (1611):	And he went through
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	Through towns and villages he went teaching
<u>New American</u> (1970):	passed through
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	Through towns and villages he went teaching

The Greek uses the Middle Voice, somewhere between Active and Passive, which I was trying to locate in the translations. Since English does not have a Middle Voice, the meaning must be that Jesus simply went through.

In the Greek, verse 23 has evidence of Hebrew influence,¹⁴ which I would trace back to the Mother of God regaling Luke with the original version of the question about how many will be saved.

¹⁴ 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) 137.

Where Mark 10 takes Jesus around Samaria along the usual detour of pilgrims, Luke 9:51—19:46 includes Samaria on the itinerary. In this section, Luke portrays Jesus reaching beyond his Chosen People to the rest of humanity.¹⁵

Verses 25 and 27

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	where you are from and where you are from
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	unde sitis and unde sitis
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	whence you are and whence you are
<u>King James</u> (1611):	whence ye are and whence ye are
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	where you come from and where you come from
<u>New American</u> (1970):	where you are from and where [you] are from
Note the brackets in the second phrase, but not the first.	
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	where you come from and where you come from

The Greek has a present sense that I would take as existential. In other words, I do not know where you are now in your spiritual development, not in the sense of not knowing, but not wanting to know.

Verse 28

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	And there ...
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	Ibi ...
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	There ...
<u>King James</u> (1611):	There ...
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	Then there ...
<u>New American</u> (1970):	And there ...
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	Then there ...

I wondered why the Lectionary used the word *And*. *And* still seems both unnecessary and inappropriate as a conjunction. Saint Jerome omits any Latin for *and*. Wailing and gnashing of teeth is a sequential event, suitable for an *and*.

Verse 30

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	some are last
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	novissimi
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	they are last
<u>King James</u> (1611):	they are last
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	those now last
<u>New American</u> (1970):	some are last
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	those now last

¹⁵ Dennis Hamm, S.J., "What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 1994) 275-276.

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I wanted to see where the Lectionary found justification for *some*. None of the other translations uses *some*. By introducing *some*, the Lectionary mitigates the twinkle in the eyes of Mary as she tells the story to Luke, who, in turn, passes the story down to the Faithful.

In conclusion, these readings are about outreach, beginning with hope for the future in Third Isaiah, identification of universal truth with God in Psalm 117, and with acknowledgment in Hebrews that prioritizing the truth of the Gospel over politics of all stripes requires discipline and training. Finally, the Gospel of Luke, taken as a handing down of stories from Mary, encourages questions that lead to God, that lead to truth. Hearing the Word is not enough. Asking questions of the Word is not enough, either. The Word requires hearing, then understanding, and, finally, living out in real life, including the Cross.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.