

Arthur Edward DeMatteo wrote a 1999 doctoral dissertation at the University of Akron History Department, *Urban Reform, Politics, and the Working Class: Detroit, Toledo, and Cleveland, 1890-1922*,<sup>1</sup> useful for the institutional church in the Twentieth Century. DeMatteo makes a distinction between structural and social reform. Social reform is about divisions between classes. The Gospel is clear about everyone being equal before the Lord—social reform. Structural reform is less clear from the Bible, where the Jews say that they want a king and the Lord relents because of their insistence. How is the church structured under God is the question. Might the church be better structured is another question. We look for prayerful answers, in the words of Saint Catherine of Siena, “courageously and sincerely, letting neither our selfish feelings nor any other person get in the way.”<sup>2</sup>

## Jeremiah 20:7-9

Jeremiah 10-13 was also seen in readings 94A, June 23.

Verse 7 ... everyone mocks me.

Verse 8 ... derision and reproach all the day.

Verse 9 ... I grow weary ...

Jeremiah is about changing the way Israel is organized, whether organized to resist Egypt against Assyria; or to resist Assyria against Egypt, or to resist neither and simply capitulate. Jeremiah is not about social reform, the way in which classes are treated.

## Psalms 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Verse 4 ... your kindness is a greater good than life...

Verse 6 As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied ...

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Edward DeMatteo, *Urban Reform, Politics, and the Working Class: Detroit, Toledo, and Cleveland, 1890-1922: A Dissertation Presented to The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron, In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346: UMI Dissertation Services: a Bell & Howell Company: 300 North Zeeb Road, P.O. Box 13496 1-1800-521-0600 734-761-4700 <http://www.bellhowell.inforlearning.com> UMI Number: 9940602), xii, 498 pages.

<sup>2</sup> *From The Letters of Catherine of Siena, Vol. II, Suzanne Norffke, O.P., Tr. © 2001, Center for Medieval 7 Renaissance Studies, Binghamton University, N.Y in Magnificat® Vol. 4, No. 7 (September 2002), 36*

The psalmist is concerned with how society is structured, rather than with how groups within the structure are faring.

## Romans 12:1-2

Verse 1            **I urge you**, brothers and sisters, **by the mercies of God**, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.

See below on page 4/4.

Verse 2            Do not conform yourselves to **this age** ...

**This age** is more about structure, about structural priorities, than about social priorities.

## cf. Ephesians 1:17-18

## Matthew 16:21-27

Verse 21            ... be killed ...

One reason for killing Jesus was that Jesus represented structural change for organized Judaism. Jesus was not killed because of his concern for widows, but because of concern for his Father's House.

As one scholar notes, relative to the Magi, "Jerusalem's unhelpful response to the Magi is merged into Herod's troubled response. This Jerusalem troubled by the prospect of the messiah prepares for the Jerusalem that will do away with Jesus (**16:21**; 20:17-19; 23:37; 27:25)."<sup>3</sup>

Verse 22            Then Peter **took Jesus aside** ... **God forbid** ...

In colloquial terms, **take aside** has the meaning of *corner* or *collar*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Nolland, "The Sources for Matthew 2:1-12," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 60, No. 2 (April 1998), 297.

<sup>4</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), 53.

Personal Notes  
020901 Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 124A  
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**God forbid** in the Greek, οὐ μὴ, is an emotional rarity in the New Testament. As the grammarian puts it:

In the majority of the NT uses, therefore, οὐ μὴ may be said to express "prophetic" emphasis. In the other uses it expresses, as in Greek in general, an "emotional" emphasis, and it is to be noted that it is never used by the Evangelists (or by Luke in Acts) in their own narrative but only in quoting the spoken word (**Matt 16, 22**; 26, 35 = Mk 4, 31; Jo 13, 8; 20, 25, and perhaps Lk 1, 15; Jo 11, 56).<sup>5</sup>

Verse 23        ..."Get behind me, **Satan!** ...

In the Hebrew, **Satan** carried the notion of *adversary*, as well as the name of a particular person.<sup>6</sup>

Verse 25        For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it ...

This verse is also found at Mark 8:35 with readings 131B; Luke 9:24; and John 12:25 with readings 35B.<sup>7</sup>

Verse 27        ... his angels ...

Matthew promises that at the parousia Jesus will send out *his* angels (cf. 16:27).<sup>8</sup>

Saint Catherine of Siena is one of my favorite Saints. I finished reading Augusta Theodosia Drane, The History of St. Catherine of Siena (1914) July 24, 1955 and Translation and Introduction by Suzanne Noffke, O.P., Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), September 26, 1987, thirty-two years later. The Dialog

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<sup>5</sup> 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, 149-150.

<sup>6</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), 53.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Stein, "The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July, 1992), 489.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, "How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000), 274.

is described by The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia as “a notable mystical work.”<sup>9</sup> My interest is long-standing. The Magnificat ® cites *From The Letters of Catherine of Siena, Vol. II, Suzanne Norffke, O.P., Tr. © 2001, Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, Binghamton University, N.Y.*<sup>10</sup>

Saint Catherine did deal with structure, convincing Pope Gregory VI to return to Rome from Avignon, thereby ending what is known as the “Babylonian Captivity.” It is legitimate, then, for me to look for structural concerns in what Catherine writes.

The Magnificat ® title, “The Grace of Self-Denial” leaves me with the sense of limiting one’s charity to social matters, rather than including structural matters as well. Kindness towards those who must try harder includes dealing with social structures as well as dealing with the individual people caught in such structures. Those social structures include the church as well as the state.

Catherine writes, “And to achieve such tender love we have to open our mind’s eye to see and know how much we are loved by God.” Along this line, one scholar points toward the “debt theology” of Saint Paul, mentioned by me in the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, June 16.

This “debt theology” of obligation arising out of God’s grace is made clear in the transitional verse **12:1 (I exhort you ... by the mercies of God)** but especially in 15:7 (“therefore, welcome one another, just as also Christ welcomed you to the glory of God”), a verse signaling the *raison d’être* of the sections in Romans 1—11 in which Paul defends his gospel, free from the law, against the imaginary Jewish interlocutor.<sup>11</sup>

With the antiphon, My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God; my soul also challenges social structures for alignment with the Gospels.

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<sup>9</sup> The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, 3rd ed. (New York; Houghton Mifflin Company, Columbia University Press, 1983, 1989, 1994), 152.

<sup>10</sup> Magnificat ® Vol. 4, No. 7 (September 2002), 414.

<sup>11</sup> Robert A. J. Gagnon, “Why the ‘Weak’ at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 73-74.