

## Personal Notes

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 132C, September 12, 2010

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## Readings

First Reading:	Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19 (Luke 15:18)
Second Reading:	1 Timothy 1:12-17
Alleluia:	2 Corinthians 5:19
Gospel:	Luke 15:1-32

## Commentary

The Fourth Century Saint Gregory of Nyssa is one of the Cappadocian Fathers of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Cappadocia is in modern Turkey. In 2007, I saw a book review about the history of slavery in the Muslim world and about how Christianity inspired the Muslims to make slavery illegal, if only after World War II.<sup>2</sup> The review noted that Gregory of Nyssa opposed slavery in principle. I looked for a place to insert him into these Personal Notes. Since I had already mentioned Gregory of Nyssa at Reading 132 in 2004, I am bringing him in here.

Raymond Arroyo gave me another reason to connect with the book review. On Friday, June 25, Arroyo interviewed Macram Grassis, the Archbishop of Darfur in the Sudan, who is having trouble living with the Muslims who rule Sudan.<sup>3</sup> Slavery is still practiced in some places in the Sudan. The book review reflects on this trouble, dating back for centuries.

A third reason to associate these readings with slavery is an observation by Pope John Paul II. He said that because culture is human, culture is tainted with sin.<sup>4</sup> The cultural sin that fits is slavery. Associating with sinful people, all the while disassociating from sin, is the reason Luke has for setting up three parables: the Prodigal son; the woman looking for her lost coin; and the shepherd finding his lost sheep. The point is that God loves humanity, despite its sinful tendencies.

What holds these diverse observations together is love by the Father. Love is in the Responsorial Antiphon about turning to the Father in all things. 1 Timothy asserts

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07016a.htm> accessed June 29, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> David Brion Davis, review of William Gervase Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery, The American Historical Review, Vol. 112, No. 4 (October 2007) 1134-1135.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Arroyo, the Encore Presentation on ETWN, "The World Over," Friday, June 25, 2010. I do not own the technology required to record this program, and accept the risk associated therewith.

<sup>4</sup> Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor, C.S.Sp., "An African Moral Theology of Inculturation: Methodological Considerations," Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 3 (September 2008) 603.

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that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Exodus reminds the Faithful that God found his people depraved.

The prayer resulting from these readings is to remove depravity, such as slavery from the culture. As time passes, other depravities emerge, such as the unseemly divergence between the very rich and powerful; and the very poor and powerless. The worst of the depravities is letting politics determine what the culture accepts as true; rather than insisting that truth determine how to exercise politics. Democracy is the best way to ensure transparency in the relationship between truth and politics, especially Church politics.

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### **Annotated Bibliography**

Material above the double line draws from material below the double line. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting details.

#### **Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14**

Exod 32:10

Joel S. Baden, "The Morpho-Syntax of Genesis 12:1-3: Translation and Interpretation"<sup>5</sup>

Baden argues that God is exercising both purpose and judgment in saying to Moses to stand aside so that God can destroy the people.

#### **Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19 (Luke 15:18)**

Psalm 51, which the liturgy also uses in the Funeral Rites,<sup>6</sup> is a song of the sinful David, rejoicing at finding himself once again in the good graces of God the Father. David repents, and turns again to his God, the lodestar of life. David is his own intercessor, but Jesus, his son, intercedes for all. Reading 35B, the Fifth Sunday in Lent on my web site, develops Psalm 51.

#### **1 Timothy 1:12-17**

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<sup>5</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 2 (April 2010) 234.

<sup>6</sup> 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) 271, 304.

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The original Greek manuscripts are difficult in verse 16, with the words *Christ Jesus* in *along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus*.

1 Timothy 1:15-16

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.<sup>7</sup>

The Staatliche Mussen in Berlin has a Seventh Century parchment with these two verses. The point is to be humble before the fact that the manuscripts on which Sacred Scripture is based are incomplete and differ.

Different languages perceive reality differently. The ancient Greeks used pronouns for emphasis. Translating this emphasis from the original Greek into English is an object of the highlighting on the last page of the hard copy, not found on the web site. The purpose of the highlighting is to transfer the Greek emphasis on personal pronouns into the English translation. Pronouns highlighted in blue have greater emphasis than in English, but are not as intense as the words marked in red. The word in green at *my son* in Luke 15:31 is not in the Greek. Words underlined with a horizontal line, indicate places where the English translation uses a noun, corresponding to a pronoun in the Greek. Marks that do not highlight anything indicate untranslated pronouns.

Anyone wanting a copy of the highlighted verses, please ask me at [Jirran@verizon.net](mailto:Jirran@verizon.net). Thank you.

In verse 15, at *this saying ... deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*, *full* is intense.

1 Tim 1:17

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J., "Lost in Translation: Did It Matter If Christians 'Thanked' God or 'Gave God Glory'?"<sup>8</sup>

Neyrey identifies four New Testament doxologies, of which this is one. The doxologies do not thank, but give glory.

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<sup>7</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 127.

<sup>8</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (April 2009) 21.

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1 Tim 1:17

Luke Timothy Johnson, review of Jerome H. Neyrey, S. J., Give God the Glory: Ancient Prayer and Worship in Cultural Perspective<sup>9</sup>

Johnson reports that Neyrey brings cultural studies to bear on the life and times of Jesus. Johnson then reports that Neyrey is writing for those unfamiliar with such an approach to ancient prayer and worship. Johnson then asks a devastating question that Neyrey does not answer, namely how significant is the light cultural studies sheds on the life and times of Jesus.

## **2 Corinthians 5:19**

There is a manuscript difficulty at verse 19/20, which I do not understand.

This verse 19 is incomplete here, but is complete where the Lectionary uses 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 in the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Reading 33C. Sloppy scholarship, again.

*Himself* is intense in *God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ ...*

## **Luke 15:1-32**

The original Greek manuscripts are difficult in verse 16, *he longed to eat his fill* and verse 21, at *to be called your son*.

Eight words are intense: verse 1, *Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near ...*; verse 13, *the younger son collected all his belongings*; verse 14, *When he had freely spent everything ...*; verse 17, *Coming to his senses ...*; verse 20, *... and went back to his father*; verse 29, *'Look, all these years I served you ...'*; verse 31, *My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours*.

Luke 15:11

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, 2nd ed., Erroll F. Rhodes, tr.<sup>10</sup>

The Alands use Luke 15:11 to explain how the Greek Bible, in general, marks parallel passages in the margins.

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<sup>9</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 2 (April 2009) 415.

<sup>10</sup> Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, 256.

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Luke 15:3-32

Garwood P. Anderson, "Seeking and Saving What Might Have Been Lost: Luke's Restoration of an Enigmatic Parable Tradition"<sup>11</sup>

Anderson argues that the audiences for the parables are significant. Crowds are asked to make decisions. Religious leaders are given polemics. Disciples are offered ethical criteria. Anderson also argues that *I say to you* means Luke is claiming Jesus as the authority for his interpretation of the parable.

Luke 15:11-32

PHEME PERKINS, Luise Schottroff, The Parables of Jesus  
Perkins reports,

For example, S. says of the father in Luke 15:11-32, "his love is magnificent, but it does not disrupt earthly relationships, not even the power relationships of a patriarchal household. He embodies neither the divine order nor the ideal of a generous sage" (p. 144). One has to look elsewhere in Luke to find the critique of the property and family relationships that this story assumes. ...

She rejects both the obvious and indirect anti-Judaism of most interpretations of the parables. ... S.'s unpacking of the pernicious influence of anti-Jewish assumptions on [sic] exegesis—even on [sic] her own work—makes this an important voice in Christian-Jewish dialogue as well.<sup>12</sup>

Luke 15:11-32

Craig L. Blomberg, "Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?"<sup>13</sup>

Blomberg argues, "Despite important differences in imagery, all three parables of Luke 15 teach about God's initiative in saving the lost, the joy of discovery of that which was lost, and the need for those who are not lost not to begrudge God's concern for those who are."

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<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 4 (April 2008) 732-5, 737-8, 740-1, 743, 744.

<sup>12</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 2006) 782.

<sup>13</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 1 (April 1991) 53, 56. 63.

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Luke 15:11-32

Todd E. Klutz, review of Richard L. Rohrbaugh, The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective<sup>14</sup>

Klutz reports that Rohrbaugh, while not always convincing, nonetheless, offers an excellent corrective against reading modern Western values into ancient middle-eastern practices as found in Sacred Scripture.

Luke 15:11-31

Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor, C.S.Sp., "An African Moral Theology of Inculturation: Methodological Considerations"<sup>15</sup>

Odozor argues that Luke is radical enough to fit into African piqué at European colonialism. Odozor compares African theologian Bénézet Bujo with the well-known Richard McCormick, S.J.

Luke 15:11

Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C., "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees"<sup>16</sup>

Groody argues,

The territory into which the Prodigal Son migrates and squanders all his worldly wealth (Lk 15:11-32) symbolizes this barren terrain; it is a place that moves people away from the original creative design into a place of estrangement from God, others, and themselves.

Luke 15:12-17

F. Scott Spencer, review of Philip F. Esler and Ronald A. Piper, Lazarus, Mary and Martha: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Gospel of John<sup>17</sup>

Spencer reports that Esler and Piper use Lazarus, Mary, and Martha to look for insight into family life at the time of Jesus. In current Western Civilization, the family is considered a nucleus rather than extended as at the time of Jesus in Israel.

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<sup>14</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (April 2007) 830.

<sup>15</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 3 (September 2008) 602.

<sup>16</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 3 (September 2009) 648.

<sup>17</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008) 364.

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Luke 15:16

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History<sup>18</sup>

Lawrence reports that the pods the Prodigal Son yearned to eat are only found in the Mediterranean basin.

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

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<sup>18</sup> Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 54.