

## Personal Notes

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 136A, September 29, 2011

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Accepting the principle of causality is a help to understanding science. Far back in Ancient History, Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC) used the principle of causality to find God. In the Twenty-first Century, however, things are different.

Information overload characterizes the Twenty-first Century. No one has enough time or interest to push the envelope of causality very far. Since the principle of causality can be confusing, if it ties the thinker past newly understood realities, some even deny the principle of causality. That goes too far. God is still the great Uncaused Cause of everything. It remains true that the better the Faithful understand causes, the better they understand God.

Theology is a science and science begins with the principle of causality. Causality is the link between potency and act. Causality is an intrinsic bond between and among created events. Without intense interest in causality, science cannot function. To my dismay, Luke Timothy Johnson does not have an intense interest in causality.

Johnson wrote Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity. While I have no intention to read the book, the more I think about the book review by David L. Balch,<sup>1</sup> the more shocked I become. Johnson has appeared in these Personal Notes over twenty times. Like others, I have high regard for his scholarship. Balch calls Johnson to task for neglecting the principle of causality and love in his book about Christianity. Alerted, I am now watching for similar critiques.

In defense of Johnson, causality can hinder understanding. The more the Faithful limit themselves to causes they understand, the more the Faithful limit their understanding of God. In this way, causality is an intellectual problem.

The problem for me is that as an historian, I look for, and like, causes. As an historian of urban African-Americans in the United States, I know that preconceived notions influence how people understand causality. Preconceived notions change over time.

Ancient Rome involves urban history. What causal influence existed between ancient Greco-Roman religion and early Christianity? The question is important to help understand the current relationship between Christianity and urban life. Recognizing the difficulty of the problem, Balch praises Johnson for masterful work. The Balch criticism, however, leaves me, personally, cold.

*Remember your mercies, O Lord*, is the Responsorial Antiphon for this Sunday. The Antiphon does not use causality, as if the Faithful could control God. No, the prayer is simply that the Lord will remember and, when the Lord remembers, the Lord will be sure to do the right thing. Heavenly Father, we need those mercies in these difficult economic times, as we try to discern how to pay our national debts in the context of your love.

Ezekiel notes that it is easy to complain and give up and become evil; but the consequences of evil are inhuman. That is why the need for the mercy of God is everlasting. Philippians points to the ability of Christians to put on Christ, to think like

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Balch, review of Luke Timothy Johnson, Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 2011) 390.

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Christ, and join with the Holy Spirit to praise God, despite every difficulty. Finally, Matthew makes the point about the treacherousness of causality and the need for love that enables ne'er-do-wells, such as the tax collectors and prostitutes to enter the kingdom of God.

### Readings

First Reading:	Ezekiel 18:25-28
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (6a)
Second Reading:	Philippians 2:1-11
Alleluia:	John 10:27
Gospel:	Matthew 21:28-32

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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.

#### Ezekiel 18:25-28

#### Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 6-9 (6a)

Psalm 25:8 sings out that the LORD *shows sinners the way*. Psalm 25 is available for liturgical prayer at Funerals in three places.<sup>2</sup> This Psalm is also available for visits to the sick.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</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) 224, 254, 262.

<sup>3</sup> 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) 172, 283.

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### **Philippians 2:1-11**

This reading is available for funerals.<sup>4</sup>

Philippians 2:1-11

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, Priests for the Third Millennium: The Year for Priests<sup>5</sup>

Dolan devotes Chapter 7, “Courtesy,” to Philippians 2:1-4 and Chapter 4, “Humility,” to Philippians 2:5-11. These verses, as might be expected from the archbishop, are along pay-pray-and-obey lines. For example, Dolan urges his seminarians to exhibit utmost deference to their pastors.

Dolan also resonates with my Musings, above the double line. “The name-calling, suspicion, and vitriol that characterize the written and spoken word among Catholics is nothing less than sinful. Augustine claimed that the greatest of all heresies was lack of charity.” Musings, therefore, aims at a sense of personal responsibility toward a spirit of ‘fraternal correction,’ with truth as the banner of critique. For example, I pray that my disgust at beatifying the father of the sexual coverup, Pope John Paul II, is out of a sense of charity to those wronged by his policies, rather than any personal rancor toward either Pope John Paul II or Benedict XVI.

Dolan asserts, “we belong to a Church that champions human rights, shepherded by a pastor known as the world’s most forceful defender of human rights—thank God!” Dolan published that diatribe in the year 2000, with a “Forward” by Justin F. Rigali, then Archbishop of St. Louis, now known as the notorious coverup bishop of Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> N.a., 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) 320.

<sup>5</sup> Huntington, IN 46750: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2000, 53-66, 89-98. The quotations are on page 58 and 95.

<sup>6</sup> NCR, CNS staff, “Cardinal places 21 Philadelphia priests on leave: Sex abuse inquiry continues after historic grand jury report,” NCR, CNS staff, “Philadelphia scandal calls into question bishops’ reporting system: Victims’ advocates: Diocesan review boards have ‘serious, serious problems,’” and Maureen Paul Turlish, “Philadelphia: Where is the outrage?” National Catholic Reporter: The Independent News Source, March 9, 2011 (<http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/cardinal-places-21-philadelphia-priests-leave> (accessed July 4, 2011)), March 10, 2011 (<http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/philadelphia-scandal-calls-question-bishops-reporting-system> (accessed July 4, 2011)), and April 21, 2011 (<http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/philadelphia-where-outrage> (accessed July 4, 2011)).

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Phil 2:1-11

Joseph H. Hellerman, review of G. Walter Hansen, The Letter to the Philippians<sup>7</sup>

Hellerman reports that Hansen is a good scholar, but limited to English language publications. Hellerman argues that pre-Pauline Jewish-Hellenistic-Christians composed the hymn of verses 6-11, *taking the form of a slave* ... Hellerman uses Philippians 2:1-11 to illustrate how Hansen works his way through various problems scholars raise. Hansen has room to regard Philippians as leaving room for arguments about ethics; pre-incarnation existence; divinity; and a personal reward for obedience. Hellerman concludes, "The result is a rich and satisfying reading of the christological master narrative."

Phil 2:4

David L. Balch, review of Luke Timothy Johnson, Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity<sup>8</sup>

Balch reports that just as he and Johnson criticized one another as doctoral students at Yale, so Balch is criticizing Johnson here. Balch is using the term *criticize* as something negative. Balch uses Philippians 2:4, about loving others, to criticize the argument Johnson makes that Christianity accepted Roman values. Roman values meant enhancing personal benefits from the gods, not enhancing the benefits of others. Philippians does not cave in to Rome at *each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others*.

Luke Timothy Johnson appears in Personal Notes about twenty times, already. Luke Timothy Johnson is an important scholar and, because of that, this is an important book review. Two criticisms from Balch, who is at the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, especially concern me.

First, Johnson "is uninterested in causality." Second, "J. focuses on power, but the Jewish Jesus, Paul, and Matthew, as well as the gentile Luke, are more adequately described theologically and socially in terms of love that crosses social/political/religious boundaries, a value that rarely appears in J.'s book." Neglecting causality and neglecting Christian love make for important gaps in any scholarly work, but especially work examining Christianity.

Balch begins his review, "This book is a stunning achievement ..." That notwithstanding, I remain unimpressed. The review is not clearly written; it seems to suppose readers know of the relationship between Balch and Johnson. My reason for citing, above, where Balch is, is that I wondered whether Balch is Jewish and is implicitly defending the contemporary ancient Jewish choice to retreat from Hellenism,

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<sup>7</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 2011) 386.

<sup>8</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 2011) 390.

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in contrast to the ancient Christian choice to engage Hellenism. Apparently, Balch is not Jewish.

I wonder whether the present dichotomy between younger and older Catholics is found here. Older Catholics, like me, engage Hellenism. The way I word that engagement is by contrasting the tension between power or politics and truth or prophecy. It may not be that younger Catholics do not want to bother themselves with causal relations, but, instead, want to focus on love. My problem with such a focus is identifying what such an unanchored love means. Such a love can justify, or remain unconcerned about anything requiring thought, including, for example, how to consider the hierarchic sexual coverup.

Phil 2:5-11

F. Scott Spencer, review of Richard A. Burrige, Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics<sup>9</sup>

Spencer reports that Paul takes some stands that seem inimical to a loving relationship in the early Church. Burrige smooths this problem by arguing that Paul is imitating Jesus, *Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus*. Burrige argues that imitating the love of Jesus ended apartheid in South Africa. The argument does not satisfy me.

Phil 2:6-11

Teresa Okure, S.H.C.J., "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42) in Africa"<sup>10</sup>

Okure argues that Jesus, though God, took on the role of someone marginalized, *he humbled himself*. By doing so, Jesus enabled the downtrodden to lift themselves up.

Phil 2:6-8

William J. Shaules, review of Michael J. Gorman, Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology<sup>11</sup>

*Kenosis* is a new term for my vocabulary. It comes from the Greek, meaning *to empty*. Specifically, it refers to Jesus emptying himself of his divinity to become human. Shaules ends his review by characterizing the reference Gorman makes to George W. Bush as *not useful*. Shaules explains that Gorman

... states that kenotic divinity and kenotic community present a "frontal assault" on the "normalcy" of "piety, war, victory, and peace," a normalcy that has made its way into the minds of "Christians who have found in the

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<sup>9</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 158.

<sup>10</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 404, 406, 413.

<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 2011) 383.

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god of military power a seductive alternative to the cruciform God of Paul” (p. 128). G. names this god the “god of George W. Busch” (p. 35). ...

In contrast to Shaules, I think the statement is very useful because the political evangelical religious right of people like George W. Busch and the Tea Party Movement bulldoze truth over with politics. I think it helpful to cite meaningful examples, outside of academic discourse, showing the relevance of scholarly research.

Phil 2:11

Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J., “Lost in Translation: Did It Matter If Christians ‘Thanked’ God or ‘Gave God Glory?’”<sup>12</sup>

Neyrey explains what *confess* means in *every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*. Here *confess* means to acknowledge something in public, *acknowledge, profess, praise*. As a practical thing, I like the approach of *praising God*.

## John 10:27

## Matthew 21:28-32

Matt 21:28-32

Leroy Andrew Huizenga, “Obedience unto Death: The Matthean Gethsemane and Arrest Sequence and the Aqedah”<sup>13</sup>

Huizenga argues that obedience is the link between Isaac and Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. Distinguishing Jesus from Isaac, Huizenga continues, “Jesus actively orchestrates events to facilitate his sacrificial death, which emphasizes the radical nature of his obedience.”

Matt 21:31

Virgilio Elizondo, “Jesus the Galilean Jew in Mestizo Theology”<sup>14</sup>

Elizondo argues from *tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you* to say that social status and behavior does not matter. What does matter is recognition that everyone is a child of God.

Matt 21:31

Michael L. Cook, S.J., “The African Experience of Jesus”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2009) 9.

<sup>13</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 3 (April 2009) 516.

<sup>14</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2009) 274.

<sup>15</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 70, No. 3 (September 2009) 691-692.

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Cook begins by identifying the marginalized tax collectors and prostitutes of Matthew 21:32, with Africans, to argue for the need to enculturate Christianity outside of Europe and the Americas. Spreading the Gospel requires a positive answer to the question, "Do Christians today proclaim good news to a people being crucified ... to a black humanity over against white domination and oppression?" Cook concludes, "Both community building and nation building are integral to a theology that liberates."

For my background and 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).

## **Divergences between the Lectionary and the NABRE**

In 2011, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops authorized a revised translation of the New American Bible (NAB), thereby setting up a new tension with the Lectionary used at Sunday Mass. Scholars are citing the new translation (New American Bible Newly Revised) as NABRE. This tension between the Lectionary and the NABRE will increase with the use of the new Sacramentary, now called Missal, beginning in Advent. The hierarchy is playing name games, because the full title of the Lectionary includes Missal.<sup>16</sup> One purpose showing the divergences in translation is to show the Church contradicting itself, meaning something is wrong with one or other or both of the translations.

Ezekiel 18:25-28

It is more productive to lay out everything in both versions.

Verse 25

Lectionary: Thus says the LORD:  
You say, "the LORD's way is not fair!"  
Hear now, house of Israel:

Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair?

NABRE: You say, "The LORD's way is not fair!" Hear now, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair? Are not your ways unfair?

Verse 26

Lectionary: When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies,

it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die.

NABRE: When the just turn away from justice to do evil and die, on account of the evil they did they must die.

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<sup>16</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Roman **Missal** Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: **Lectionary** for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998).

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Verse 27

Lectionary: But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed,  
and does what is right and just,  
he shall preserve his life:

NABRE: But if the wicked turn from the wickedness they did and do what is right  
and just, they save their lives;

The Lectionary leaves the problem of evil in the singular; whereas the NABRE presents the problem in the plural, suited for those sent to Rome to absorb the Vatican coverup culture.

Verse 28

Lectionary: since he has turned away from all the sins that he has committed,  
he shall surely live, he shall not die.

NABRE: since they turned away from all the sins they committed, they shall live;  
they shall not die.

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (6a)

It is more productive to lay out everything in both versions.

Verse 4

Lectionary: Your ways, O LORD, make known to me:  
teach me your paths,

NABRE: Make known to me your ways, LORD;  
teach me your paths.

The Lectionary English is more awkward than the NABRE.

Verse 5

Lectionary: guide [sic] me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my savior.

NABRE: Guide me by your fidelity and teach me,  
for you are God my savior,  
for you I wait all the day long.

As pointed out in 2002, the King James Version and the Nova Vulgata include for you I wait all the day long for the acrostic letter Vau. This difference looks like a sign of sloppy scholarship in the Lectionary.

Verse 6

Lectionary: Remember that your compassion, O LORD,  
and your love are from of old.

NABRE: Remember your compassion and your  
mercy, O LORD,  
for they are ages old.

The Lectionary presents no argument with God, whereas the NABRE shows a causal relationship in favor of remembrance.



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Verse 7

Lectionary: The sins of my youth and my frailties remember not;  
in your kindness remember me,  
because of your goodness, O LORD.

NABRE: Remember no more the sins of my youth;  
remember me according to your mercy,  
because of your goodness, LORD.

The Lectionary has *kindness* where the NABRE has *mercy*. In English, there is a difference in meaning.

Verse 8

Lectionary: Good and upright is the LORD;  
thus he shows sinners the way.

NABRE: Good and upright is the LORD,  
therefore he shows sinners the way,

Verse 9

Lectionary: He guides the humble to justice,  
and teaches the humble his way.

NABRE: He guides the humble in righteousness  
and teaches the humble his way.

Philippians 2:1-11

Verse 4

Lectionary: ... but also for those of others.

NABRE: ... but [also] everyone for those of others.

Verse 5

Lectionary: Have in you the same attitude  
that is also in Christ Jesus,

NABRE: Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ  
Jesus,

Verse 8

Lectionary: ... obedient to the point of death,

NABRE: ... obedient to death,

Verse 9

Lectionary: ... which is above every name,

NABRE: ... that is above every name,

The Lectionary uses *which*, which is more awkward than *that*, which the NABRE uses.

Matthew 21:28-32

Lectionary: There are no differences.

NABRE: There are no differences.

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## Themes

For recurring themes in Sacred Scripture, see the following, taken from the Greek.<sup>17</sup> The exclamation point (!) indicates principal reference lists of passages related by a common theme or expression. The exclamation point sometimes also functions as a semi-colon, comma, or period. Commas separate verses within the same book and semi-colons separate books. The abbreviation for *following* is f. For material based on the Greek Septuagint, the abbreviation is LXX. Nestle-Aland uses a dagger, which I am unable to reproduce here, to indicate difficult passages, which I note as *difficult*. With this material, I am trying to lay a foundation for developing Biblical themes the next time through the Liturgical Cycles. I intend to add in which Lectionary readings to find the relevant passages.

Sacred Scripture develops themes for the following readings in Philippians 2:1-11:

Verse 1	Romans 12:8! 2 Corinthians 13:13.
Verse 2	Philippians 1:18! Romans 15:5!
Verse 3	Galatians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:5; Romans 12:10.
Verse 4	1 Corinthians 10:24, 33, 13:5. The Greek manuscripts are difficult at the words <i>of others</i> .
Verse 5	Romans 15:5.
Verse 6	John 1:1 f., 3:13! 17:5; John 5:18.
Verse 7	2 Corinthians 8:9; Isaiah 53:3, 11, Romans 8:3! 12:2!
Verse 8	Luke 4:11! Hebrews 2:9, 5:8, 12:2.
Verse 9	Acts 2:33, 5:31, Ephesians 1:21, Hebrews 1:4.
Verse 10	Isaiah 45:23 LXX; Romans 14:11, Revelation 5:13!
Verse 11	Isaiah 45:23 LXX, Romans 10:9!

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<sup>17</sup> Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum: Graece et Latine: Textum Graecum post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Barbara et Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger: Textus Latinus Novae Vulgatae Bibliorum Sacrorum Editioni debetur: Utriusque textus apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII.

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Sacred Scripture develops themes for the following readings in Matthew 21:28-32:

- Verse 28 Luke 15:11. Daniel Wallace uses *he came to the first* as an example of the Greek using a superlative adjective for a comparative adjective.<sup>18</sup>
- Verse 29 Greek manuscripts are difficult at the words *he came* and *will not go*.
- Verse 30 Matthew 7:21! Greek manuscripts are difficult at the words *yes, sir* and *other son*.
- Verse 31 Luke 3:12, 7:29, 18:14, 19:1-10.
- Verse 32 Luke 7:36-50; 2 Peter 2:21; Proverbs 8:20, 12:28, 21:21 LXX; Matthew 21:25; John 7:48; Luke 7:29 f.

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<sup>18</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996) 303.