

Lazarus, the leper, suffering outside the gates of a rich man and representing the marginalized of the world, especially the “Two-thirds Word,” personalizes these readings. In Luke, Jesus aims his parable about Lazarus at the Pharisees, by name and at the Faithful by extension.¹ One of the themes of Luke is the reversal of fortunes destined for the next life. These readings not only portray such a reversal; these readings mandate what Liberation Theology labels a preference for the poor.

The Eighth Century B.C.² Book of Amos says it loud and clear. “Woe to the complacent (verse 1a) ... their wanton revelry shall be done away with. (verse 7).” Gaining momentum since the late 1960s, Amos has served as a gateway to the other prophets. Now a book serves as a gateway through the last two centuries of scholarship on Amos, M. Daniel Carroll R., Amos—the Prophet and His Oracles: Research on the Book of Amos. Carroll R. summarizes many works available only in Spanish. The Book of Amos represents an exciting change in direction for post-modern theologians.³

Just as Amos offers exciting new challenges, so does Psalm 146 offer a disappointing traditional challenge of getting the translation right, at least consistent from Sunday to Sunday. Last year in Cycle B, the Lectionary translated Psalm 146:7 one way, this year, in Cycle C, the translation is different. This means the Lectionary further burdens the poor in spirit, who are obligated to accept the Lectionary without critical input, with confusion. Confusing the Faithful haphazardly and cavalierly looks like that against which Jesus rails in his parable about Lazarus.

Lazarus symbolizes the Faithful destined to enjoy a reversal of fortune. Lazarus is put upon by the nature of his sores and his condition outside the gate of the rich man. What is important for the Faithful, who may be fortunate like the rich man, is concern for those less fortunate, like Lazarus. Because of the Catholic school system and because of the self-discipline religion enjoins, the Faithful do tend to garner the rich things of this world. This is especially true of the Faithful in the United States. Both civil rights and the rights of the Faithful to consistent translations of the same verses, suits Amos and the pursuit of the Faithful in the U.S.A. In other words, the Faithful have an obligation not only to have a preference

¹ John T. Carroll, “Luke’s Portrayal of the Pharisees,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 4 (October 1988) 614, 616.

² Stuart A. Irvine, “The Southern Border of Syria Reconstructed,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 1 (January 1994) 21.

³ Barry A. Jones, review of M. Daniel Carroll R. [sic], Amos—the Prophet and His Oracles: Research on the Book of Amos in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 429-431.

for the poor in a civil sense, but also for a sound translation of Sacred Scripture in a religious liturgical sense.

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

The setting for Amos of Tekoa is fancy, in a symposium among the elite. Perhaps Amos sang his prophecy, especially verses 4-7, alone, as customary among poets.⁴ Amos was not a John the Baptizer or Jeremiah crying in the wilderness, but rather a respected man of God revealing wisdom. Because the elite did not like what Amos, the shepherd, had to say, they eventually drove him from the great cult center of Bethel.⁵ By analogy, when Amos spoke of civil rights, the elite spoke of tax cuts for the rich as the powerful drove Amos away.

Amos 6:1a is about the Southern Kingdom of Israel, Juda, through Zion that stands for Jerusalem. Amos 6:1b chastises the errant Northern Kingdom of Israel, Samaria, through Mount Gerizim.⁶ Amos 6:1 and 7 is explicit about all of Israel, "Woe to the complacent ... their wanton revelry shall be done away with." Amos may be prophesying about future Syrian aggression.⁷

In contemporary society, Amos is no help to the Faithful suffering from anxiety. Amos redirects anxiety to anxiety about loving everyone, especially those suffering a reversal of fortunes. Incorporating Amos into the politics of concern for the poor, Amos is a cause, not a relief, from anxiety.

⁴ Joyce Rilett Wood, "Speech and Action in Micah's Prophecy," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly Vol. 62, No. 4 (October 2000), 650.

⁵ Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible: Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources: Including The Revised New Testament and the Revised Psalms Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative Committee/Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference: with many helps for Bible reading: Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation, How to Read the Bible, Historical Survey of the Lands of the Bible, Bible Dictionary, Liturgical Index of Sunday Readings, Doctrinal Bible Index, and over 50 Photographs and Maps of the Holy Land (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1992) 1058-1059.

⁶ 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) 277.

⁷ Stuart A. Irvine, "The Southern Border of Syria Reconstructed," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 1 (January 1994) 40.

Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Bible Study030907_Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time.doc already treats these verses. Since that was about a year ago, the following comments develop and add to what I wrote then. Psalm 146 comes in three ancient versions: (1) Masoretic (ancient Hebrew) text, (2) Septuagint (Greek) text, and (3) Qumran Scrolls.⁸ The differences show a trend revealing the Masoretic as the oldest, then the Septuagint, then Qumran. The differences while exhibiting a pattern, focus on the placement and use of Alleluia, in other words, nothing major.

Funeral Rites uses this psalm on page 307, one of the “Second Psalms” for Morning Prayer. The Lectionary uses Psalm 146 as follows:

Reading	Page	Antiphon	Verses	
7A	34	Isa 35:4	6-7, 8-9, 9-10	Advent 3
70A	532	Matt 5:3	6-7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 4
128B	817	1b	7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 23
138C	865	1b	7, 8-9, 9-10	Today
155B	947	1b	7, 8-9, 9-10	Ordinary 32

The antiphon is

verse 1b Praise the Lord, **my soul!**

verse 8a The LORD gives sight to the *blind*;

verse 18b The LORD raises up those who were bowed down.

Jerome is more succinct:

Dominus erigit depressos

Rather than the Lectionary *bowed down*, why not transliterate the Vulgate as *depressed*?

verse 10 The LORD shall reign forever;
your God, O Zion, through all generations.

The unused verse 3 asks, “How can **you** believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”⁹

⁸ Lloyd M. Barré, “*Halelu yah:* A Broken Inclusion,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 195-200.

⁹ Stanley B. Marrow, “*Κοσμος* in John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 98.

The personal pronouns individuate the psalm. By standing for Jerusalem, Zion represents the various souls of the Faithful. No matter what their circumstances, the Faithful can let God reign in their souls.

Coming to light now, unnoticed last year, the problem with the translation of Psalm 146:7 is as follows:

Blessed is <i>he</i> who keeps	page 865	Today
The God of Jacob keeps	page 817	Ordinary 23 B
The Lord keeps	page 947	Ordinary 155B
The Lord keeps (identified as verse 6, not 7)	page 533	Ordinary 70A
The Lord God keeps (identified as verse 6, not 7)	page 34	Advent 3A

The Nova Vulgata¹⁰ uses the following for verse 5, which seems to be the Latin for the above.

Beatus, cuius Deus Iacob est adiutor,
Cuius spes in Domino Deo suo,

Such a cavalier attitude in the Lectionary damages the Magisterium upon which it relies. This cavalier attitude seems similar to the attitude Amos rails against, when Amos 6:1a prophecies, *Woe to the complacent in Zion*. The Lectionary is already six years old, old enough for complacency. The United States fought the Civil War in order to avoid such complacency over the matter of states rights to slavery. The issue with the Lectionary is the right of the Faithful to a consistent translation of the same verses.

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Verse 12 specifies that for which to compete, *Compete well for the faith*. This means Faith that the reversal in fortunes will happen as promised. John 5:44 paraphrases Psalm 146:3 as follows, "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?"¹¹ Seeking

¹⁰ Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita Iussu Pauli PP, VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP, II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4 865.

¹¹ Translation as found in Stanley B. Marrow, "*Κοσμος* in John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 98. Also, see footnote 36.

the glory that comes from God is one source for enhancing civil and religious rights for the marginalized and dispossessed.

Cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9

So that by his poverty you might become rich illustrates the reversal of fortunes the Faithful are to expect.

Luke 16:19-31

Verse 22, the bosom of Abraham refers to the prone position in which the ancients used to eat. Lazarus is so close to good fortune that he simply leans his head to rest on the chest of Abraham. Lazarus enjoys a reversal of fortune. In this parable, Lazarus enjoys far more than civil rights. Lazarus is enjoying a Divine right to be with Abraham and, by implication, to be with the Word, the Word well and consistently translated into the vernacular.

The Greek for *torment* in verse 23 stems from a touchstone used for proving gold, to mean an investigation by torture, to mean *torment*.

Verse 27, *my father's house* is an example of *house* standing for *household*. There are many such examples in the Gospels.¹²

Verse 31, *Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'* The problem here is with the translation of Psalm 146:7 above. Such a cavalier attitude toward translation becomes an obstacle to the Faithful suffering liturgical misfortune.

Inadvertently, these readings are about the right of the Faithful who lack the scholarly tools required for translation, to a sound translation of Sacred Scripture. Amos rails against complacency with confusing translations, such as that of Psalm 146:7. 1 Timothy urges the Faithful to compete for the faith, which here means to strive for consistent translations in the Lectionary. Lazarus represents the Faithful, suffering from liturgical inanities, finding satisfaction for their love of God through the reversal of fortunes destined for the next life.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

¹² Robert H. Gundry, "Mark 10:29: Order in the List," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997) 468.