

Habakkuk insists that Faith is what makes the Faithful, Faithful. The Royal Psalm 95 proclaims that the greatness of Israel emanates from God creating the nations rather than Israel conquering anyone.<sup>1</sup> The hope for the future resides in the Faith that God will provide.

2 Timothy reminds the Faithful not to surrender to worldly affairs.<sup>2</sup> Luke reports that Jesus reminds the Faithful that they have a long way to go, should they even have the Faith of the first Apostles. As will be seen below, for Luke, *Apostles* extends beyond the Twelve. Faith, ultimately, enables the Faithful to be charitable in all things. Faith should never be taken for granted. The point is not about how much Faith one has, but that the Faithful should not expect God to be grateful that they believe.

### **Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4**

In the first part of this reading from Chapter 1, Habakkuk proclaims that his loving God seems so unaware of his life-experience that only Faith can hold Habakkuk steady. The reading from Chapter 2 reassures Habakkuk that God is not forgetting. “The just one, because of his faith, shall live” (verse 4b). Hebrews 10:37-38 refers back to this verse.<sup>3</sup>

### **Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)**

The Lectionary uses Psalm 95 at four Sunday liturgies.

Readings	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>	Verses used	Particular Sunday
28A	172	1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Lent 3
71B	537	1-2, 6-7, 7 -9 (8)	Ordinary 4
127A	813	1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Ordinary 23
141C	884	1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Ordinary 27

Although the citation for 71B is different from the rest, all four psalms are the same. Since the Faithful will not hear the references, this academic sloppiness is not as serious as that of last Sunday, which the Faithful will hear. 71B is incorrect according to my Nova Vulgata.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 680.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent M. Smiles, The Concept of “Zeal” in Second-Temple Judaism and Paul’s Critique of It in Romans 10:2, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 285, footnote 12.

<sup>3</sup> Craig R. Koester, “Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 118.

<sup>4</sup> 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 88-2209-2163-4 827.

Verse 7 supports Habakkuk 2:2 (*write down the vision*) that the LORD is a literate God. Psalm 95:7-8 *hear his voice*, urges the People of God to accept the spoken word as well. Faith requires the Faithful to believe Sacred Scripture,<sup>5</sup> especially in the context of how the Lectionary presents Sacred Scripture.

Verse 8 remembers lack of Faith on the part of the People of God and pleads with the Faithful not to suffer such a lack again.<sup>6</sup> Faith is somewhat independent from how what to believe is presented.

Verse 13 offers a hint at the underlying Platonic philosophy of Saint Paul. What the Lectionary translates as *norm*, Saint Jerome translates as *formam*. Such a *norm* appears to me as the universal ideas of Plato, rather than the matter and form of Aristotle. This means that, for Paul, things for the body only exist as a shadow of the soul. For Aristotle, on the other hand, both body and soul exist without a Pauline shadow of a difference. The matter turns on human sexuality as something good in and of itself, like Aristotle; or as something interfering with the soul as in the Platonic relationships of Plato. Unanswered questions revolve about reducing Faith to particular bodily circumstances.

Psalm 95 dates from before the Exiles to the monarchial period.<sup>7</sup> The early Church Father, Saint Justin, Martyr (ca. 100-165), argued over the accuracy of the Septuagint. Recent scholars justify the concerns of Justin. Known as “Papyrus Bodmer XXIV,” the earliest “upper Egypt” text of the psalms dates from the second century AD. Bodmer XXIV supports what Justin held. Justin had Faith, even as he worried about the accuracy of the Scriptures handed down.<sup>8</sup>

## **2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14**

Paul is writing to his bishop, Timothy, to keep the Faith. Paul wants Timothy and the Faithful to remember and keep the same Faith and Love that was and is in Jesus.

## **1 Peter 1:25**

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<sup>5</sup> Alan C. Mitchell, S.J., “The Use of  $\pi\rho\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\nu$  and Rhetorical Propriety in Hebrews 2:10,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 4 (October 1992) 691.

<sup>6</sup> J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 681.

<sup>7</sup> J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 677.

<sup>8</sup> Rick Van De Water, “‘Removing the Boundary’ (Hosea 5:10) in First-Century Palestine,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 621.

That “the world of the Lord remains forever” merits Faith in what is to come.

## Luke 17:5-10

The Apostles think they have Faith, but Jesus explains that they are not true believers. The Greek in verse 5 carries an implication that the Apostles thought they had more Faith than they did. The point is not about how much Faith one has, but that the Faithful should not expect God to be grateful that they believe. God does not owe the Faithful anything. In the Gospel, Jesus, the gift of God from the Father, is preparing everyone for his passion, death, and resurrection.<sup>9</sup> The most wonderful thing about the resurrection is the resurrection of the life of Christ in the living souls of the Faithful.

On his eightieth birthday, the famous Carmelite scripture scholar, Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., quoted Luke 17:10 as follows, “So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves [the Lectionary *unprofitable servants* may be the better translation];<sup>10</sup> we have done only what we ought to have done!’” Since I am seventy-years old myself, I note that Murphy cited Psalm 90:10 also to say, “Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty, if we are strong.”<sup>11</sup> Belief and other good works are something the Faithful owe their God. Belief has no merit in and of itself, because Faith is a gift.

Luke 17:5-21 is about authentic worship. The meaning of the readings for this Sunday relates to the grace of the ability to worship in an authentic manner. Faith is an essential ingredient to worship. The problem is that the Apostles themselves over-estimated their Faith.<sup>12</sup> With the Faithful, the Magisterium runs a similar, if not the same, risk.

Luke only uses the word *apostles* to refer to the Twelve, but Saint Paul gives *apostles* a broader meaning, to include himself, for example. Luke in Acts 1:14 places women in the same extended category as Paul, thereby including women in what Paul means by *apostles*.<sup>13</sup> Mark and Matthew,

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<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</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) 250.

<sup>11</sup> Craig E. Morrison, O.Carm., “An Essay on the Life and Legacy of Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm.,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 630.

<sup>12</sup> 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) 274.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 188.

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in contrast to Luke, keep the notion of *apostles*, confined to the Twelve.<sup>14</sup> The issue is Faith rather than biology as found in human sexuality.

Verse 8, *put on your apron* is a reminder of Martha. Although verse 8 does refer to the serving of meals,<sup>15</sup> verse 8 still helps make the point that Martha was a co-evangelist with Jesus, not simply a domestic servant fulfilling a household duty.<sup>16</sup>

To review: Habakkuk tells of Faith that a reversal of fortunes will happen. The Royal Psalm 95 mandates that the Faithful not harden their hearts, should they become discouraged with their fortunes. 2 Timothy exults in the power God offers the Faithful through belief in Sacred Scripture and tradition. 1 Peter reminds the Faithful, "The word of the Lord remains forever." Luke insists that Faith should never be taken for granted. The point is not about how much Faith one has, but that the Faithful should not expect God to be grateful that they believe.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 193, text and footnote 353.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 164.

<sup>16</sup> Warren Carter, "Getting Martha out of the Kitchen: Luke 10:38-42 Again," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 1996) 273.