

Personal Notes
081019 Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 145A
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Raymond J. Jirran

The Gospel for today proclaims the classic division between Church and State, *Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God*. In this vein, Pope Benedict XVI entitled his first encyclical “Deus Caritas Est,” already written up in these Personal Notes. Apparently, the Pope is trying to keep the Church from meddling in affairs of state. Abortion seems to be the moral issue for the State in this Presidential election as it was in the last Presidential election.

Father Charles E. Curran makes significant comments.¹

... the universal and unchangeable moral norm on abortion found in *Evangelium vitae* [1995]. The pope [John Paul II], in a very solemn way, reasserts the teaching of the church condemning direct abortion (62.3). Notice that the condemnation does not include all abortion but only direct abortion. The pope thus invokes the philosophical distinction between direct and indirect to distinguish right from wrong with regard to abortion. This distinction is obviously based on a particular philosophical view and is far removed both from the core of faith and from more general ethical norms, such as the respect due to all life including nascent life. One cannot claim the same certitude on this level as one can regarding the more general ethical principles of respecting life or doing good.

I submit that the civil issue is not whether or not people will have abortions. They always have and it seems reasonable to assume that they always will, as long as they have unwanted pregnancies. The charitable problem arises, first in accepting a credible way of birth control to prevent those unwanted pregnancies and, second, in allowing medical care for those suffering through abortions. Once the abortion is complete, then what?

Abortion and birth control, for that matter, was not an issue with the Church until the Nineteenth Century. For almost two millennium abortion and birth control were a given, about which the Church did not get involved beyond her own confines.

Rather than marching on abortion clinics, why not, in charity, encourage medical science to develop a way for ending unwanted pregnancies “naturally.” Why not free moral theologians to explore the problem, rather than to assume there are no alternatives, thereby closing discussion.

The distinction between an abortion that is “procured” and one that is not “procured” is moot. Some abortions do occur “naturally.” Science says that about nine of ten conceptions flush down the toilet, without the mother ever knowing about the abortion.

Courage to accept uncertainty as an aspect of love is a theme of these Notes for the past six years. The Magisterium would profit from accepting the uncertainty associated with the possibility it has erred in the matter of artificial means of birth control

¹ Charles E. Curran, The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005) 31.

as well as procured abortions. At least the Magisterium has admitted erring in the case of Galileo, after the gross injustice for close to five hundred years. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit has erred. It does mean that the Magisterium accept the possibility of making a human error in order to render a credible human judgment of right and wrong. Presently, because of the sexual cover-up scandal, the Magisterium has already erred in a most grievous manner.

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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 scholarly details.

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Isaiah 44—45:13

Richard Clifford, S.J., and Khaled Anatolois, "Christian Salvation: Biblical and Theological Perspectives"²

Clifford writes,

For First Isaiah, the human instrument of judgment was Assyria ('Ah Assyria, the rod of my anger,' Isaiah 10:5), for Jeremiah, Babylon (Jeremiah 20:4; 28:14), and for Second Isaiah, Cyrus of Persia (44:28-45:13). In short, judgment could take place within history, not at its end, and could involve human agency in its unfolding, pagan kings or native Israelites, conscious or not of their role.

For ancient Israel, the problem was going to war. In the present election, medical attention is at least part of the problem.

Isa 45:1

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History³

Lawrence writes, "The fact that Isaiah did not live to see Judah's exile in 586 BC and his specific prediction of Cyrus, who authorized the Jews to return in 538 BC, have prompted many to suggest that the latter chapters were written by a second, later Isaiah." It seems to me that not only was there a Second Isaiah, but that there was also a Third Isaiah and that, in the face of uncertainty, the First Isaiah founded a type of school to continue his vision.

² Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2005) 745.

³ Downers Grove, Illinois, *InterVarsity Press*, 2006, 105.

Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10

Psalm 96:8

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults⁴

There is a difference between the translation the Bishops use in their Lectionary and their Catechism. In their Lectionary, the Bishops write of *courts*, the plural, but in the Catechism, it is *court*, the singular. The Bishops use this verse to in support of Chapter 27, "Third Commandment: Love the Lord's Day." The Sinaitic Codex available on the internet does not have Psalm 96.

Psalm 96:10

Aelred Cody, O.S.B., "'Little Historical Creed' or 'Little Historical Anamnesis'"⁵
Cody identifies *The LORD is king*, as a statement of belief, from which a full creed might develop.

Psalm 96:

William P. Brown, review of Theodore Mascarenhas, The Missionary Function of Israel in Psalms 67, 96, and 117⁶

Mascarenhas does not convince Brown that Israel had a missionary function, because such a missionary function "ultimately serves to undermine the mystery of election [as the Chosen People]."

Psalm 96:10

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy⁷

Interestingly, Barker writes,

There had been at one time a version of Psalm 96:10 which read 'The LORD reigns from the tree.' Justin quotes this line in his debate with Trypho (*Trypho* 71), as an example of words which Jews had removed from the Scriptures by the middle of the second century CE, because they were significant for Christians. The first century CE *Letter of Barnabas* hints at the idea: 'The royal realm of Jesus is founded on a tree' (*Barn.* 8). These additional words in Psalm 96 were known to several early Christian

⁴ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 371.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 5.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 3 (July 2006) 518.

⁷ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, 243, also see 119, 295, 332, fn. 43.

writers, but are not in any known Hebrew (although this verse has not been found at Qumran).

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

Several papyrus manuscripts contain part or all of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b: #48 dating from about 200, at the University of Michigan, #61 dating from about 700 at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, # 65 dating from the third century at the Instituto Papirologico G. Vitelli in Florence. For 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b, none of these manuscripts seems to make a difference in the Greek.⁸

1 Thess 1:3

John Clabeaux, review of Colin R. Nicholl, From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians⁹

This verse in 1 Thessalonians offers reassurance that God will come again.

1 Thess 1:5

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults¹⁰

In contrast to what they write in their Lectionary, here the Bishops write, “Our Gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and (with) much conviction” (1 Thes [sic]).” In the Lectionary, the Bishops cite the same verse as 5a-b. In their Catechism, the Bishops omit mention of verse 5c in both places.

In their Lectionary, the Bishops write “For our Gospel,” rather than “Our Gospel.” In their Lectionary, the Bishops omit the parentheses they use in their Catechism. The Greek does have brackets around [with], meaning that that word is omitted. I regard what is in the Catechism as pseudo scholarship.

The Bishops cite 1 Thess 1:5 in Part I. The Creed: The Faith Professed, Chapter 4, Bring About the Obedience of Faith.” The Bishops assert *Faith believes with conviction in a message*. I do not think Faith believes anything. It is the Faithful who believe; Faith is what they believe with. Faith is the means to belief, especially within a context of uncertainty. Sloppy grammatical scholarship, however, is a major problem when accepting the arguments of the Magisterium at face value.

Philippians 2:15d, 16a

⁸ 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. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989) 99, 100.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 165.

¹⁰ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 39.

Matthew 22:15-21

The National Library in Athens has an Eighth Century uncial [capital letter] manuscript for Matthew 22:7-46. This is a vellum palimpsest manuscript in which contains one or two earlier erased writings. This manuscript is identified as 0161.¹¹

In Matthew 22:16, the Greek for *saying* is difficult, whether a participle, as in the Lectionary or as a verb in the vocative case.

Matthew 22:16	
<u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	saying
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	dicentes
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	saying
<u>King James</u> (1611)	saying
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	saying
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	saying
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985)	to say

I wonder whether *to say* reflects the vocative case. Daniel B. Wallace does not cite Matthew 22:16.¹²

Matt 21:23—24:2

Terence J. Keegan, O.P., "Introductory Formulae for Matthean Discourses"¹³
This Gospel is part of a series of discourses in which Jesus reveals who he is.

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. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989) 123.

¹² 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) 802.

¹³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 44, No. 3 (July 1982) 422.

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Matt 22:21

Charles M. Murphy, "Charity, Not Justice, As Constitutive of the Church's Mission"¹⁴

This article is about the inaugural encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, "Deus Caritas Est." Murphy writes, "It is the lay faithful, as citizens in a personal capacity, who have the direct duty to work for a just ordering of society." With the entire hullabaloo by Raymond Arroyo on EWTN about abortion, I wonder about the relationship to Deus Caritas Est. It seems to me that what Arroyo and his ilk are trying to do is deny medical attention to women suffering through abortions. That looks like one more example of patriarchal sexism and lack of charity.

Matt 22:21

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults¹⁵

The Bishops use this verse to assert, "Catholics have the duty to vote, to participate in the political arena, and to help shape society in light of Catholic teaching." If they mean it, the Bishops are voiding an easy pray, pay, and obey mentality.

¹⁴ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 2 (June 2007) 279.

¹⁵ Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006, 380.