

Personal Notes
061022 Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time 146B
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The readings for this Sunday are for the Faithful to contemplate how to use the power they have. The power of the Faithful rests in their ability to bring God into their midst. The way in which they are to use that power is in the service of others.

In a quick overview of the readings, Isaiah is trying to serve his fellow exiles. Psalm 33 is trying to serve Israel by renewing the initial fervor, following the Exodus. Hebrews is about realizing that Christianity does bestow power upon the Faithful, power designed for the service of others. Mark 10:38-45 is about turning hope of personal fulfillment into the realization of success for others, mainly by accepting the cup from which Jesus drinks and the baptism with which Jesus is baptized.

Use of power in the service of others can become unappreciated and grow old quickly. Frequently, Psalmists proclaim, "let us sing a new song." Such a translation misses the point. The point is to re-new fervor, a fervor to serve as Jesus did, rather than to think up a new poem.¹

Remaining in the mode of a quick overview, the readings for this Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time are about using power in the service of others. Paul J. Achtemeier makes some strong points in his review of Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, 'But it is not so among you': Echoes of Power in Mark 10:32-45. "Kaminouchi proposes two working hypotheses for his study: first, Jesus' teaching on power in Mark 10:32-45 is central to both the plot and the theology of Mark; and, second, this teaching is based on knowledge of how power works 'in the real world' (p. 5)."² Achtemeier has high regard for Kaminouchi.

A more detailed consideration of the readings contemplates Isaiah 53:10-11 as probably Second Isaiah, a successor of First Isaiah. First Isaiah lived in Jerusalem, predicting the Exile. Second Isaiah lived in Babylon, predicting the return to the Holy Land. Life in Babylon was good for the Exiles. Isaiah felt himself consumed by infirmity as an offering for sin, reaching out to his fellow Exiles, encouraging their forthcoming return to Jerusalem. The Church uses these verses as forerunners of Jesus and in its care for the sick.³

¹ Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003) 119.

² Paul J. Achtemeier, review of Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, 'But it is not so among you': Echoes of Power in Mark 10:32-45, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 479, 480.

³ 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

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Though the Lectionary does not use Psalm 33:10-11, that part of the Psalm, at least in the Hebrew,⁴ reflects back to Isaiah, bringing the plans of nations to naught.⁵ Scott W. Hahn also sees a relationship between Isaiah 53 LXX [Greek] and Hebrews, but Hebrews 9, rather than the Lectionary Hebrews 4. Using the Greek (LXX), Camille Focant disagrees with a relationship to Mark, which the Lectionary seems to imply.

Many exegetes want to read Mark 10:45b in relation to Isa 53:10-12 as expressing an expiatory death of substitution for many, but the Hebrew *asam* has no equivalent in the LXX [Greek] of Isa 53:10 and *lytron* has no cultic sense. Rather, “ransom” calls up the image of a generous friend ready to pay any price to avoid the condemnation to death of friends.⁶

Peter at Mark 8:31-33 objects to Jesus here, in Mark 10:45, where Jesus comes “but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”⁷ As a brief reminder, at Mark 8:33, Jesus scolds Peter, “Get behind me, Satan.” Mark does develop the Christology of the Suffering Son of Man.⁸

Another scholar, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, offers a translation that differs from the Lectionary and helps with the meaning of Mark 10:42-45.

And Jesus, calling them, said to them, “You know that those supposed to govern the peoples lord it over them, and the great among them domineer them. But it is not so among you; but whoever would wish to

Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 259.

⁴ John Kloppenborg, “An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula 1 Cor 15:3b-5 In Light of Some Recent Literature,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 3 (July 1978) 353, 363.

⁵ Joseph Jensen, O.S.B., “Yahweh’s Plan in Isaiah and the Rest of the Old Testament,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 3 (July 1986), 453.

⁶ James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp., review of Camille Focant, L’evangile selon Marc, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 329.

⁷ Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “The Poor Widow in Mark and Her Poor Rich Readers,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 4 (October 1991) 596.

⁸ James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp., review of Camille Focant, L’evangile selon Marc, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 329.

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become great among you will be your servant, and whoever would wish to be first among you will be slave of all. For the Son of humanity also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for the many.⁹

The Lectionary has *summoned* where Professor Malbon has *calling*. The Lectionary has *those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles*, where Malbon has *those supposed to govern the peoples*. The Lectionary has *make their authority over them felt*, where Malbon has *domineer them*. The Lectionary has *Son of Man*, where Malbon has *Son of humanity*. Finally, the Lectionary has *ransom for many*, where Malbon has *ransom for the many*. The different translation simply helps understand the nuances in the Lectionary.

Disentangling Mark from Psalm 33 is difficult. These Notes return to Mark below. Psalm 33 began after the Exodus, but before the Exile. Psalm 33 wants to renew the original fervor Israel felt as they escaped slavery by the Egyptians. Remembering the mercy of God, the Exiles ask it again. Psalm 33:20 is *our* soul, recognizing the Faithful as a group. The next reading is Hebrews.

Hebrews is exciting, because Hebrews lets the Christians know that the presence of the power of God is among them,¹⁰ as it had been with the Holy of Holies in the temple.¹¹ For the Jews, it was a matter of their High Priest entering the Holy of Holies. For Christians, Jesus Christ was the new High Priest, who ordained Christians to live the same life of grace as he did. As part of his ordination, Jesus accepted suffering, the same suffering the Faithful experience. Christianity, however, is not about suffering, but about power. As Hebrews 4:16 words it, “let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.”

The Greek for *confidently* means *boldly*. God is not aloof from the Faithful, in his high heavens, but, because of Jesus, is close to their hearts. The Greek at Hebrews 4:15, “*For we do not have*” is not an explanation of Hebrews 4:14, “*Since we have a great high priest,*” but a realization of “*sympathize with our weaknesses.*” Mark, by referring to Jesus as the Great High Priest, is moving the liturgy from Judaism to Christianity.¹²

⁹ Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “The Poor Widow in Mark and Her Poor Rich Readers,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 4 (October 1991) 600-601.

¹⁰ Scott W. Hahn, A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15-22”, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 422.

¹¹ Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: A Continuum imprint, 2003) 164.

¹² Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: A Continuum imprint, 2003) 108.

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Christians, in turn, see themselves as “the new royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9),”¹³ empowered to make the presence of God known.

One of the major themes of Mark is the use of power. Mark 10:38-42 is the core explanation of Christian power. Power comes from serving, rather than from being served. When Jesus says to James and John that his right and left are not for him to give, Mark has in mind the two thieves, on Golgotha, crucified with Jesus.¹⁴ Jesus goes on to explain that Christians are to be slaves in the service of one another. That is one reason the Pope calls himself the Servant of the Servants of God. Bernard Hoose reminds the Faithful that in the cases of slavery, torture, and the execution of heretics, “Jesus’ instruction that his disciples should not lord it over one another (Mk 10:42-45; Matt 20:24-28; Lk 22:24-27) apparently went unheeded as the corrupting and intoxicating effects of power cut off access to important moral intuitions.”¹⁵

In this spirit of using power in the service of others, Lions Clubs International has the motto “We serve.” As a member in good standing, with thirty-five years perfect attendance, with the Northampton Lions Club, I am privileged to introduce prospective members not only to my own club, but also to other clubs. If the Faithful would like to investigate joining a Lions Club anywhere in the world, please contact me. Lions Clubs are civic organizations whose main purpose is to help the deaf and blind, but whose broader purposes include practically every civic-improving activity. “We serve.” By organizing around this purpose, Lions manage to keep up their spirits in often unending, difficult situations, and often requiring considerable use of power.

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For more on sources see the Appendix file. Personal Notes are on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes The updated Appendix is distributed with these Notes.

¹³ Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T & T Clark International: A *Continuum imprint*, 2003) 112.

¹⁴ Paul J. Achtemeier, review of Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, ‘But it is not so among you’: Echoes of Power in Mark 10:32-45, the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2004) 480.

¹⁵ Bernard Hoose, “Intuition and Moral Theology,” Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 3 (September 2006) 618-619.