

In these readings, the Lectionary instructs the Faithful about prayer. The issue is Faith that God cares, as demonstrated by persistence and single-mindedness. Jesus tells the Faithful that God worries about being slapped around (from the Greek)<sup>1</sup> by persistent prayer, even more than the unjust judge worries about being slapped around by the widow. In this case, Faith means taking the word of God that God cares about the Faithful.

In Exodus, Moses shows persistence by keeping his hands extended. So far, so good. As the priestly redactors developed the history of the Exodus from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land in Numbers 14:39-45, the priestly redactors rearranged and secured their importance in communications between God and the Faithful.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the Israelites filled with Faith defeat the Amalekites before Sinai in Exodus, the Amalekites defeat the unfaithful Israelites after Sinai, on the way to the Promised Land. The issue is Faith in prayer, whether directly, through the intermediary of priests, or both.

Faith that God answers prayer is the key. Psalm 121:3 is a reminder of Elijah taunting the false prophets about whether their gods are sleeping and need awakening.<sup>3</sup> Elijah believes God will make himself known. The Responsorial reminds the Faithful that *Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

### **Exodus 17:8-13**

Trying to find a suitable husband for Miriam, the sister of Moses, Richard Bauckham speculates on Hur.<sup>4</sup> Hur would make a deserving husband because, with Aaron, he helped Moses keep his hands up in verse 10.

### **Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8**

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<sup>1</sup> Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., *Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 81.

<sup>2</sup> Mark S. Smith, "The Literary Arrangement of the Priestly Redaction of Exodus: A Preliminary Investigation," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 1 (January 1996) 32.

<sup>3</sup> Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599 97.

<sup>4</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) 36.

The Lectionary uses the whole psalm, all verses.

Pastoral Care of the Sick uses Psalm 121 as Reading E in Chapter Six, "Commendation of the Dying."<sup>5</sup>

## **2 Timothy 3:14—14:2**

The Lectionary does not capitalize *sacred* in *sacred Scriptures*. I need to watch for that in other places. For one example, Raymond E. Brown does capitalize Sacred Scriptures.<sup>6</sup>

## **Hebrews 4:12**

The Lectionary reminds the Faithful that *The word of God is living and effective*.

## **Luke 18:1-8**

Luke relates this parable as part of the journey toward Jerusalem. The journey is about the road of Faith to salvation.<sup>7</sup> This is one of the two parables Luke tells that feature women.<sup>8</sup> That the parable is about Faith is answered by the final question of Jesus in the reading, *But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?* (verse 8)

In verse 1, Luke writes that the parable is *about the necessity ... to pray always without becoming weary*. This *necessity* presupposes the Faith to which these Notes draw attention.

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<sup>5</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) 174.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond E. Brown, S.S., The Anchor Bible Reference Library: An Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Doubleday, 1997) xxxiv.

<sup>7</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) 214-221-222.

<sup>8</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) 190.

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Luke 18:1-8 parallels Luke 10:41-42, the prayer of Mary. Jesus responds to Mary with an admonition to be single-minded. Anxiety and distractions reveal lack of commitment and, thereby, lack of Faith.<sup>9</sup> While Faith is a gift, Faith is a gift the Faithful can use to increase belief.

To recapitulate, Exodus is about Moses praying determinately to defeat the Amalekites. Psalm 121 is about Faith that God is paying attention. 2 Timothy explains that God requires persistence in the Faith. Luke compares God to the unjust judge and the Faithful to the persistent widow, to insist that God does care and is paying attention. The issue is faith in prayer as explained in these readings.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

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<sup>9</sup> Warren Carter, "Getting Martha out of the Kitchen: Luke 10:38-42 Again," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 1996) 276-277.