

Personal Notes
051023 Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time 148A
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These Lectionary readings help the Faithful with humility as a counter-balance to self-confidence. Self-confidence is appropriate as the Faithful bear witness to the works of God all about them, not only in a passive sense, but also in an active sense as they spread the Word of the Lord. Not only self-confidence, but also humility is appropriate because the very Word of God passes through the ages in mixed, uncertain manuscripts. Love is about accepting crosses of uncertainty as something pleasing to God.

At this point, I am beginning to examine the Greek with a new, different care, noting the Critical Signs [a technical term] in the “apparatus [another technical term],” that is, notations, about what the various original manuscripts hold. The Greek text for 1 Thessalonians has at least nine different areas where the original manuscripts, because of differences, carry some doubt.¹ Because love is a moving target, humility and self-confidence are appropriate for examining the Word of God. These readings are about love.

Critical Signs for 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10 indicate (1) a location where one or more words, sometimes a whole verse, is inserted by the witnesses [manuscripts] cited. An example of this is 1 Thessalonians 1:6, where *the Holy* is not in the Greek, thereby reading *with joy from spirit* rather than *with joy from the Holy Spirit*. Continuing with other Critical Signs: (2) the word following in the text is omitted by the manuscripts cited. That mark occurs three times. (3) The word or verse of text is transposed occurs once. (4) The word following in the text is replaced with one or more words by the manuscripts cited, four places. (5) The end of the omitted text, noted once. Presentation of Variant Readings: (1) conjectures with regard to both the text and its punctuation appear in four places; (2) variants of word order appear once. This is the first time for me ever to examine the Greek in such a fashion. One wonders how proficient the authors were compared both with other writers of their own day and Greek scholars of today. One wonders about the ability to get the meaning of exactly what was taught across both cultures and times.

Maximilian Zerwick, S.J. draws some distinctions from the Greek for Macedonia and Achaia:²

¹ Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum: Graece et Latine: Textum Graecum post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle communiter ediderunt Barbara et Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger: Textus Latinus Novae Vulgatae Bibliorum Sacrorum Editioni debetur: Utriusque textus apparatus criticum recensuerunt et editionem novis curis elaboraverunt Barbara et Kurt Aland una cum Instituto Studiorum Textus Novi Testamenti Monasterii Westphaliae (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1999) Editio XXVII.

² 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) 59.

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“you are become a model for all *** in Macedonia and in Achaia³” distinguishes the two provinces, while immediately afterwards the apostle goes on to say “for the Word of the Lord has been spread by you not only *** in Macedonia and Achaia” [the Greek omits the second *in the*] but in every place” where the same two provinces are taken together as opposed to “everywhere (else).”

Zerwick means that Saint Paul is not taking a swipe at other places, so that the *but in every place* would be better translated *and* in every place. Combined, the translations below indicate substantial agreement with Zerwick.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	but in every place
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	sed in omni loco
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	but also in every place
<u>King James</u> (1611):	but in every place
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	has spread everywhere
<u>New American</u> (1970):	but also in every place
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	has spread everywhere

1 Thessalonians is about the risen Christ,⁴ something already evident in the self-confident lives of the Faithful as they spread the Word. One humiliating problem exists in the difference between the immediate expectation of Paul and the Thessalonians and how that expectation institutionalized itself both as something in the distant future and as a daily ambiguity, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.⁵ Another humiliating problem exists in the wrath of God, 1 Thessalonians 5:3.⁶ That wrath is on a timetable with the second coming of Jesus. The problematic nature of that wrath is described below. In the meantime, Matthew elaborates on his convictions about the People of God, the Faithful.

³ *** stands for Greek words that follow, omitted here, but translated from the Lectionary.

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) 364.

⁵ Randall E. Otto, “The Prophets and Their Perspective,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 2001), 234.

⁶ Jeffrey S. Lamp, “Is Paul Anti-Jewish? *Testament of Levi* 6 in the Interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 413.

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Matthew 22:34-40: sets out the two basic components Matthew recognizes for the People of God, the Faithful. First is doing the will of the Father, often not an easy task, since Church traditions change through time. Father Charles E. Curran explains.⁷

History reminds us that over the centuries and the years the church has changed its teaching on a number of significant issues—such as slavery, usury, freedom, religious freedom, human rights, democracy, torture, the right of the defendant to remain silent, the death penalty, the intention and role of procreation in marital sexuality, the nature of the family, and the role of women in society.

While reaching out to the Pharisees, as the will of his Father, Jesus becomes involved with another of his dialogues, this time concerning the nature of the Faithful.⁸

The Pharisees ask Jesus, which is the greatest of the laws. Jesus avoids the picayune matters of fasting and almsgiving to focus on love, the second way Matthew characterizes the People of God.⁹ The problem with the Pharisaic leadership, as distinct from the Faithful, is the leadership was not focusing on love.¹⁰

Before Jesus went into his public ministry, he may have been a Pharisee. Jesus, then, was fundamentally sympathetic to the Pharisees. Matthew seems to have had a similar sympathy for the Pharisees, even directing his Gospel towards them. This passage in Matthew deeply respects the First Covenant.

Jesus, like Moses (Exodus 19—24), is a mediator of covenant between God and the Faithful. As the Faithful age or fail in health, they become more aware of their relationship with their Creator. Jesus helps mediate the relationship. Appropriately,

⁷ Charles E. Curran, The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005) 42 where documentation is cited as Charles E. Curran, ed., Change in Official Catholic Moral Teachings: Readings in Moral Theology No. 13 (New York: Paulist Press, 2003).

⁸ Wendell E. Langley, S.J., “The Parable of the Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-32) against Its Semitic and Rabbinic Backdrop,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No 2 (April 2005) 242.

⁹ Terence L. Donaldson, “The Law That Hangs (Matthew 22:40): Rabbinic Formulation and Matthean Social World,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 57, No. 4 (October 1995) 705.

¹⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Developing Conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew’s Gospel: a Literary-Critical Study,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 1987) 61.

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therefore, Care of the Sick makes this passage from Matthew available.¹¹ If one pays attention, the Covenant with God gains meaning as life progresses through its various phases.

Exodus 32—34 is about Moses renewing the First Covenant,¹² explaining to the Faithful their need to love. They are to be compassionate (Exodus 22:26), because God is compassionate. They are to be like God.

Exodus 22:21 bears on the Black Apostolate and through the Black Apostolate to everyone else in the United States. Verse 20 refers to *aliens*, something even native Americans, Indians, have become in what used to be their own land. Showing compassion toward the suffering people of the Gulf Coast, mainly Blacks as aliens, does follow the admonition of the Lord. The country seems humbled and shaken in its self-confidence at signs of the developing world poverty in the Gulf Coast in the United States. The love expressed through monetary and material contributions by people in the United States and throughout the world is a tribute to the love of God for strangers.

Psalm 18:51 is about humility and self-confidence. Humility belongs to the fact that, while the Lectionary documents verse 51, the Lectionary omits the specific mention of David in that verse.¹³ Saint Jerome includes the Word *David* in his translation. Psalm 18 involves a renewal of the covenant with David.

The Lectionary also uses Psalm 18 in Reading 152B for the Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B. Verse 51 appears differently in Reading 152B, in that the first Word, *you* is capitalized there, but not here. While the difference is insubstantial, one wonders whether the reason for the difference has anything to do with the omission of *David*. There is also a little difference in the previous verse, verse 47 that reads *The LORD lives! And blessed be my rock!* in Reading 152B, but *The LORD lives and* [without the ! And] *blessed be my rock!* here in Reading 148A.

¹¹ 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) 305.

¹² Kathryn L. Roberts, "God, Prophet, and King: Eating and Drinking on the Mountain in First Kings 18:41," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 4 (October 2000) 635.

¹³ Melody D. Knowles, "The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling: The Choice of David in the Texts of the Psalms," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No 2 (April 2005) 238-237.

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Another aspect of humility is disagreement among scholars about when to date Psalm 18. Uncertainty about the date of psalms is not unusual. What is unusual is one scholar thinking the psalm is very old, dating from the time of the monarchy,¹⁴ and another thinking the psalm is comparatively recent, the First Century B.C.¹⁵ The difference would be about 900 years. Psalm 18, however, is full of self-confidence that God will protect his people, assuming they follow his commandments.

As a final note, my problem is unconditional love conjoined with the wrath mentioned above at 1 Thessalonians 1:10. Political correctness calls for unconditional love. Focusing on wrath, hardship is punishment for not loving, a means for bringing the Faithful back to the right track. The reality is that hardship is not necessarily punishment for anything.

Jesus is on his Cross not because God is punishing him, but because Jesus only wants to please the Father. It is one thing to be on a cross. It is quite something else to accept the cross. Love is about accepting the cross as something pleasing to the beloved.

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

¹⁴ 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) 676-677.

¹⁵ Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 1989) 254.