

Personal Notes

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Reading 150C, October 27, 2013

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Raymond J. Jirran, Ph.D.

When "Rome has spoken" ends discussion, because the Papal Magisterium has spoken, politics is determining truth. This is to recognize, rather than deny, the power of the Papacy, the Magisterium of Holy Mother the Church. When truth becomes the means to power, power is secured in the source of all truth, God. When politics, however, becomes the means to truth, truth rests on a sandy foundation and will not stand. As Lord Acton once said, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."¹

Discerning whether truth determines politics or politics determines truth lies at the essence of Christian living and is fundamental to the Crucifixion. The Faithful keep trying to insist on this principle in Church politics. That insistence helps account for the many translations of Christianity into human cultures. Readings for this Sunday help lay out and resolve the truth/politics problem.

Sirach 35:12: *The LORD is a God of justice, who knows no favorites.* Recognizing favorites is a political act. Psalm 34:7a, *The Lord hears the cry of the poor.* The poor are politically powerless. 2 Timothy: 4:16, *At my first defense no one appeared on my behalf, but everyone deserted me.* Luke 18:9, *Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness* (because of their political power) *and despised everyone else.* As part of Christian living, the Faithful can include prayer in their quest that truth have the upper-hand against politics. As John Dean said when confronted with backlash from Richard Nixon for exposing Watergate: 'The truth is my only defense.' Wikipedia brings the matter close to home.

According to Dean, modern conservatism, specifically in the Christian Right, embraces obedience, inequality, intolerance, and strong intrusive government, in stark contrast to Goldwater's philosophies and policies. Using [Bob] Altemeyer's scholarly work, he [Dean] contends that there is a tendency toward ethically questionable political practices when authoritarians are placed in positions of power, and that the current political situation is dangerously unsound because of it.²

What Dean describes for positions of power in general, Personal Notes sees for current Papal power in particular. Pay-pray-and-obey Christianity enables abuse of Papal power. Prayer at Sunday Mass can help with this difficulty discerning legitimate from abusive Papal power. Fast-tracking the sexual-abuse-cover-up-Pope, John Paul II, to formal canonization is an abuse of power.

¹ <http://voices.yahoo.com/phrase-origins-absolute-power-corrupts-absolutely-7658436.html> (accessed August 28, 2013).

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dean (accessed August 25, 2013). This page was last modified on 22 August 2013 at 08:23.

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Readings

First Reading	Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18
Responsorial Psalm:	Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23 (7a)
Second Reading:	2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Alleluia:	2 Corinthians 5:19
Gospel:	Luke 18:9-14

Annotated Bibliography

Musings above the solid line draw from material below. Those uninterested in scholarly and tangential details should stop reading here. If they do, however, they may miss some interesting details.

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18

Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23 (7a)

Care for the Sick uses Psalm 34, *Part III: Readings, Responses, and Verses from Sacred Scripture: Responsorial Psalms E God is the salvation of those who trust in him*, page 286 and *Mass for Viaticum: Responsorial Psalms B*, page 324.³

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

2 Tim 4:9-18

Philip H. Towner, review of Michel Gourgues, *Les deux lettres à Timothée, La lettre 'à Tite'*⁴

Towner identifies 2 Tim 4:9-18, *I was rescued from the lion's mouth*, as an "intertextuality rich passage" upon which Gourgues might have elaborated and changed his assessment. Towner wonders about "1 Timothy/Titus understood as reimaginings of Pauline ecclesiology, and 2 Timothy being a theologizing of the Pauline mission and (near) canonization of the apostle."

³ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, *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* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1983) 296.

⁴ *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (July 2013) 361.

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Luke 18:12

Daniel B. Wallace, With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes: Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament⁵

Wallace explains *I fast twice a week*. The Greek means customarily fasting twice during the week.

2 Corinthians 5:19

Luke 18:9-14

The Church uses this gospel as an option in Pastoral Care of the Sick.⁶

Luke 18:9-14

Richard Rohr, Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life⁷
Rohr asserts,

You cannot avoid sin or mistake anyway (Romans 5:12), but if you try too fervently, it often creates even worse problems. Jesus loves to tell stories like those of the publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14 [used here]) and the famous one about the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), in which one character does his life totally right and is, in fact, wrong; and the other who does it totally wrong ends up God's beloved! Now deal with that!

Personal Notes cites members of the Protestant Revolt in the spirit of Gerald O'Collins, S.J., writing,⁸

⁵ Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1996, 123, 202, 522.

⁶ "Part III: Readings, Responses, and Verses from Sacred Scripture," Gospels, P, 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)

⁷ San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Imprint, 2011, xx.

⁸ Theological Studies, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2012) 772.

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In fact, by allowing the liturgy to be celebrated in the vernacular, by stressing “the table of God’s word” along with the importance of the homily (no. 52), and by granting to the laity—although restricted to certain circumstances—communion “under both kinds” (no. 55), Vatican II conceded the demands of Martin Luther and other 16th-century Protestant reformers, albeit in the 20th century. In short, while SC [Sacrosanctum concilium [sic]] did not use explicitly the language of “reform” or “reformation,” what it enacted can and should be described in those terms.

Luke 18:10-14

Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), “Notes on Paul’s Letter to the Colossians 2:18”⁹

The Protestant revolutionary, Melanchthon, argues, “In the Gospels, the Pharisees treat Jesus most respectfully—to all appearances. Yet they hate him and set themselves above him; they call themselves the people of God, and condemn the Christ because he had censured their righteousness”

Luke 18:11-12

Martin Luther (1483-1546), “Summer Postil (1544), Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity”¹⁰

The Protestant revolutionary, Luther, argued,

In this way, nature and the world always behave; they can do nothing else. Whenever this word from heaven comes and says: You are a holy man, a great learned, devout jurist, a powerful ruler and praiseworthy prince, an honorable citizen, etc., but with your government and fine life [sic] you barrel towards hell. Everything you do reeks and is damned before God. You must become an entirely different person, with a different mind and heart, if you want to be saved, etc.

⁹ in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI: Philippians, Colossians, Graham Tomlin (ed.) in collaboration with Gregory B. Graybill, general editor, Timothy George, associate General editor, Scott M. Manetsch, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic: An imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2013) 202.

¹⁰ in Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI: Philippians, Colossians, Graham Tomlin (ed.) in collaboration with Gregory B. Graybill, general editor, Timothy George, associate General editor, Scott M. Manetsch, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic: An imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2013) 90.

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Personal Notes gave up systematically examining the illiterate 2011 Missal November 25, 2012. On April 7, 2013, with Reading 045C 2nd Sunday of Easter_A Catholic Bible Study 130407, Personal Notes systematically began to incorporate material from A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal: A New English Translation: Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy, Edward Foley (ed.) (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011). The hope is that this approach will help pray with the new Missal, despite itself.

Catherine Vincie, "The Mystagogical Implications"¹¹

Vincie expresses a hope, rather than a commitment on the part of the clergy, when she writes,

The church, through the priest, calls us to pause and "acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries." What the rubrics do not stress, yet what is very important, is the ever-abiding mercy of God. It takes a few moments of silence to come to awareness of these two realities. The first we are often loathe to admit, and the second only too glad to embrace. The liturgy invites us to give sufficient attention to both. The time for silence is time for grace to work its ways on us, as we are often oblivious to the ways in which we do not act as Christ's. Once we acknowledge, through God's grace, how far we have missed the mark, more time is needed to accept God's forgiveness. This moment is not for its own sake but renders us more open and ready to celebrate the Word and Eucharist that follow.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops illustrated sloppy proofreading with ProdCode 7-440, "Roman Missal UPDAATE Stickers (Altar Edi" labels for adding "with blessed Joseph, her Spouse" to page 649. The original Missal omitted the rubric, "Celebrant or one concelebrant." That rubric was already present on pages 653 and 661 before those labels were added.¹²

For more on sources see the Appendix file. A complete set of Personal Notes, dating from the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 14, 2002 to the present, is on the web site at www.western-civilization.com/CBQ/Personal%20Notes.

¹¹ in A Commentary on the Order of Mass of The Roman Missal: A New English Translation: Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy, Edward Foley (ed.) (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011) 144-145.

¹² Personal correspondence, Invoice # 916836.

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The Responsorial Antiphon for this Sunday is *The Lord hears the cry of the poor.*

In the gobbledygook prayer at Sunday Mass immediately following mention of forgiven sins, the Faithful hearing the 2011 Roman Missal can listen for “make us love what you command”¹³

This is a call for grace that some Black Baptists call to mind with *And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places wither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of* (Genesis 28:15).¹⁴

¹³ n.a., The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 490. Personal Notes refers to this book as the Missal.

¹⁴ UMI Annual Sunday School Lesson Commentary: Precepts for Living ®: 2013-2014: International Sunday School Lessons: Volume 165: UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.), Okechuku Ogbonnaya, Ph.D., (ed.) (Chicago, IL 60643: UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.), 2013) 90-91.