

I was carried away this time, perhaps twice as much as ever. The problem is bringing the tensions in the Gospel into the contemporary scene. The issue is complicated. Unraveling the complications uses up trees. Sorry. Feel free to skip or scan whatever you find boggling. The forty-nine words in the following paragraph reduce and summarize all that follows.

In you, Lord, I have found my peace is the theme for this Sunday. As much as I enjoy the accoutrements of my life, should I seek that at the expense of the Lord, I am lost. Peace is found in the Lord, rather than the accoutrements of life.

Malachi 1:14b—2:2b, 8-10

After Cyrus let the Jews return to Jerusalem, Jews like Malachi were in no mood to accept that such accoutrements were the stuff of God's kingdom as promised in the Covenants. The promise:

verse 14b A great **King** am I, says the **LORD** of **hosts**, and my name will be **feared** among the nations.

A scholar¹ notes,

A modern reader might argue that the exile had ended with the decree of Cyrus and the return of some of the exiles to Judah, but that answer failed to satisfy the author of Daniel 9. Whatever limited fulfillment he might have seen in those events, the conditions of his own day precluded his understanding them as the ultimate restoration articulated in such passages as Isa 57:4-13; Hag 1:2-10; Zech 13:1-9; **Mal 1:6—2:17**.

A technical note: the Lectionary² sometimes capitalizes **LORD**. I think that means that Yahweh is the original language. From this point on, my intention is to capitalize all of the letters in **LORD** whenever the Lectionary does.

¹ Paul L. Redditt, "Daniel 9: Its Structure and Meaning," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000) 243--244.

² National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998)

The Latin³ uses *exercituum* for **hosts**. Wondering what **hosts** was, I looked up *exercituum* in *Cassell's*⁴ to find that *exercitus* has a military meaning, a *trained body of soldiers, army*.

Feared is translated from *horribile* in the Latin. The sense of *horrible* puts more punch into what Malachi had in mind.

God as **king** is having an impact on Catholic prayer-life. On October 16, the feast of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the twenty-fourth anniversary of his election as Pope,⁵ John Paul II added five more mysteries to the fifteen decades of the rosary.

Pope John II's

“Mysteries of Light” Sunday Contemplations

Christ's baptism

Christ's first miracle at Cana

Christ's proclaiming the coming of the **kingdom** of God

Christ's transfiguration in front of three disciples

Christ's institution of the Eucharist as a sacrament⁶

My one word translation

- 1 The Baptism of Christ
- 2 The Miracle at Cana
- 3 The Coming of the **Kingdom** of God

³ Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita Iussu Pauli PP, VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP, II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4

⁴ Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English and English-Latin revised by J. R. V. Marchant, M.A. and Joseph F. Charles, B.A. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1952)

⁵ Guide for the Liturgy of the Roman Seraphic Calendar: The Order of Prayer In the Liturgy of the Hours and the Celebration of the Eucharist for the Provinces, Vice Provinces, the Commissariat and the Custodies of the Order of the Friars Minor III Order Regular of St. Francis: in North America for the Year of the Lord 2002 (Joliet IL: The Most Reverend Superiors, 2001), pages for October 16.

⁶ USA Today, Thursday, October 17, 2002, page 11 D, column 1--6

- 4 The Transfiguration
- 5 The Institution of the Eucharist

Contemplate the third and fourth Mystery of Light, the Coming of the **Kingdom** of God and the transfiguration in this verse from Malachi.

Contemplate the Baptism of Christ in the nursing images of **Psalm 131** and **1 Thessalonians**.

Contemplate the Miracle at Cana and the Institution of the Eucharist in the **banquets** people enjoy in **Matthew 23:6**.

Psalm 131:1, 2, 3

The nature of this Psalm obliges one to use the ability to think, but with a purpose of finding the Lord, rather than the accoutrements of life. The antiphon, *In you, Lord, I have found my peace* is only derived from the Psalm.

verse 2 Nay rather, I have stilled and quieted my soul like a weaned child. Like a weaned child on its mother's **lap**, so is my soul within me.

The Latin appears significantly different. My translation would be, *Nay rather, I have stilled and quieted my soul, brought my soul to peace, like a weaned child in the arms of its mother, like a child in its mother's arms, so is my soul at rest within me*. I do not see a word for **lap** in the Latin.

1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13

verse 6 We were gentle among you, as a **nursing mother** cares for her children. With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us. You recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

I do not imagine heterosexual men describing themselves as **nursing mothers**. This is part of why others question the sexual orientation of Paul. I, myself, do not have the expertise to present such a question as my own. When the Pope is questioning sexual orientation to the point of denying that a homosexual is able to receive valid consecration to the priesthood, my soul is unsettled, except *in you Lord*.

Matthew 23:9b, 10b

[no comment here]

Matthew 23:1-12

The context of the Gospel of Matthew has a geographic center that a scholar⁷ explicates.

The most original proposal in W. D. Davies' monumental study, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (1964), is that the gospel according to Matthew was intended to be an almost point for point answer to the challenge posed by the rabbinic academy of Jamnia (Jabneh). This means in effect that the synagogue with which Matthew was in dialogue was the famous center of post-destruction proto-rabbinic Judaism begun by Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai to salvage what could be saved of the religious institutions of Israel in that moment of grave crisis. Of course the historical evidence for such a salvage operation is neither abundant nor highly reliable, especially with respect to details of what exactly was accomplished in the earliest period (ca. A.D. 75-85). But that some such organizing activity occurred in the wake of the destruction cannot be doubted. Indeed, if Jamnia did not exist, historians would have to invent it. That there is a good deal of anti-rabbinic polemic scattered throughout the gospel according to Matthew, not to mention the concentrated attack in **chapter 23**, can also hardly be doubted. Davies is quite firm in his emphasis on the location and the importance of Jamnia, but he remains vague and uncertain when it comes to the location of Matthew's writing. He is only concerned to establish that the writ of Jamnia ran so far north as **Syria**, "where Matthew probably originated." While not wishing to deny this outright, it simply seems more probable to us that this kind of dialogical confrontation would have been facilitated by greater geographical proximity, if there be any evidence to support it. We believe that there is some external evidence to support it ...

Davies elsewhere adduces two further reasons which favor a Palestinian milieu for the gospel, besides the dialogue with Jamnia.

1. The Greek of the gospel points to a strong Semitic influence including the use of Semitic words without translation.
2. The audience addressed seems to be composed, at least in part, of Palestinian Jews. Their Jewish customs are referred to without explanation (15:2; 23:27); so, too Jewish dress (9:20; **23:5**); and a Jewish Christian religious practice and piety are presupposed (5:20; 10:5; 15:24, 23:3; 24:20).

Matthew is writing for a splinter group of Jews who are Christian. Matthew places these Jews in a non-rabbinic worldview.

⁷ B. T. Viviano, O.P., "Where Was the Gospel According to St. Matthew Written?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 4 (October 1979) 537-538.

Mark Powell⁸ notes,

In Matthew's narrative, exponents of worldly power, be it political or religious, are invariably aligned with Satan, while the powerless are presented as those with whom Jesus' disciples must identify. In contrast to political rulers, the followers of Jesus will be **slaves**, seeking not to be served but to serve (20:25-28). In contrast to religious leaders, they will be siblings, refusing positions of leadership in a community of equals (**23:1-12**). The antipathy toward worldly power in this narrative is so great that Jesus himself is portrayed as a person who "has nowhere to lay his head" (8:20); his disciples are required to renounce their possessions and go out into the world with no apparent means of support (10:9-10), helpless as sheep in the midst of wolves (10:16). As such, they will be dragged before governors and kings to give testimony (10:18), a reference implying that the testimony will be offered under oppressive circumstances. Thus, Matthew offers an ideological vision of the world beyond that portrayed within the temporal boundaries of his story, and the only picture of royalty offered by that vision is one of power exercised oppressively against the agents of God.

In sum, Matthew depicts a world in which the rule of Satan and the rule of God coexist (13:24-30, 36-43). Consistently aligned with the rule of Satan are all representatives of worldly power: Gentile rulers, Jewish leaders, "great ones" (20:25)—all who are currently first but who are destined ultimately to be last (19:30; 20:16). God's rule is associated with those who lack power in this world: servants (10:24-25; 20:27; 24-45-46), the meek (5:5), children (18:1-4; 19:13-15; 23:15-16; cf. 11:25), little ones (10:42; 18:6, 10, 14), the "least" (25:40, 45)—all who are currently last but who are destined ultimately to be first (19:30; 20:16).

Verses 2-3 ... "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their **seat on the chair** of Moses. Therefore do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. ..."

The chair in the Latin is *cathedram*. When the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*, church doctrine says he is infallible.

While Matthew may suggest a non-rabbinic world-view, church structure may suggest otherwise.

Verse 6 also uses *cathedras*.

verse 6 They love places of honor at banquets, **seats** of honor in synagogues

⁸ Mark Allan Powell, "The Magi as Kings: An Adventure in Reader-Response Criticism," *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 469.

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The Greek uses *first couch*, πρωτο-κλίσια, for *place of honor*.⁹ For **chair** the original Greek uses καθέδρα in verse 2 and πρωτοκλίσια in verse 6. So the parallel with *ex cathedra* is not there in the original Greek.

There may be a tension here over infallibility. The idea is to find peace, *In you, Lord, I have found my peace*, in the midst of tension caused by using one's mind.

Matthew does not focus on church structure, but on a non-rabbinic worldview in which *In you, Lord, I have found my peace* is the theme.

While the Faithful usually do not think of Jesus as being blunt about what he did not like, one scholar¹⁰ notes, "Jesus is presented ... in the gospels as being quite blunt about why he disliked certain things (e.g., in Matt 11:21; 23:13-39) ..."

In Matthew, Jesus is careful to treat the scribes and Pharisees with respect.

A scholar¹¹ comments on the liturgical passage for this Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time.

A second passage of importance to the argument that Matthew's intended readers are Torah-observant [Torah: 1. the five books of Moses constituting the Pentateuch; 2. the body of wisdom and law contained in Jewish Scripture and other sacred literature and oral tradition.]¹² Jews is **23:2-3**, "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' **seat**; therefore, do whatever they say to you and observe it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they say." Whatever the origin of this saying may be, Matthew's context makes it very clear that it does not refer to Pharisaic halakah. [Halakah: The body of Jewish law supplementing the scriptural law and forming esp. the legal part of the Talmud. (1856). Talmud: an authoritative body of Jewish tradition comprising the Mishnah and Gemara].¹³ The immediately following verses emphasize that "the scribes

⁹ Max Zerwick, S.J., and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 74.

¹⁰ David Seeley, "Jesus' Temple Act Revisited: A Response to P. M. Casey," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 57.

¹¹ Douglas R. A. Hare, "How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000) 271.

¹² Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary: Tenth Edition (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1993)

and Pharisees” are *not* to be honored as **teachers (23:4, 8)**; Christians are *not* to obey their teachings (23:16-20). **Mark Powell** has recently proposed that vv 2-3 refer not to the teaching authority of the religious leaders but to the public reading or recitation of Torah. If **Powell’s** intriguing suggestion is accepted, these verses simply reaffirm what is said in 5:17-48: Matthean Christians are to obey “the whole Law” *as it is interpreted by Jesus*. In view of the latitude permitted by 5:19 ... the exhortation of **23:2-3**) cannot be used as evidence of the orthopraxy [Orthopraxy: the correction of bodily deformities by means of mechanical devices]¹⁴ of Matthew’s community.

A scholar¹⁵ elaborates and explains,

... failed expectation concerning the people of God and its leaders. The dissonance in each case can be described as a kind of failed syllogism.

First, Matthew’s Gospel reflects two basic convictions about the people of God.

1. The people of God are those who do the “will of (the) Father” 7:21) as it is expressed in the law (5:17-20).
2. Jesus has come as Israel’s savior (1:21), announcing the arrival of the **kingdom** of God (4:17) to the “sons of the **kingdom**” (8:11) and identifying the double commandment of love as the heart of the “law and the prophets” (22:34:40).

The logical *expectation* arising from these two convictions is that Israel will find salvation by adhering to Jesus’ teaching, thus achieving the “greater righteousness” (5:20) called for in Jesus’ interpretation of the law. But this expectation is *not fulfilled*. Instead, the experience reflected in the text is that the church’s proclamation of Jesus and his teaching was rejected by the majority in Israel, and that those who accepted Jesus as Messiah and savior were excluded and persecuted.

¹³ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate ® Dictionary: Tenth Edition (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1993).

¹⁴ Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language: unabridged: second edition: based upon the broad foundations laid down by Noah Webster: extensively revised by the publisher editorial staff under the general supervision of Jean L. McKechnie: including etymologies, full pronunciations, synonyms, and an encyclopedic supplement of geographical and biographical data, scripture proper names, foreign words and phrases, practical business mathematics, abbreviations tables of weights and measures, signs and symbols, and forms of address: illustrated throughout (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

¹⁵ 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.

Second, a similar pattern emerges with respect to leadership in the people of God. Matthew's Gospel reflects these two basic convictions about leadership:

1. Leadership in Israel is supplied by those who sit on Moses' **seat (23:2)**, that is, by the authoritative and authorized interpreters of the Torah.
2. Jesus has come as the authoritative (e.g., 7:29) and divinely authorized (e.g., 17:5; 28:18) interpreter of the law, and therefore as Israel's leader (7:28-29).

Again, this leads to an *expectation*: Israel and its leaders will recognize Jesus' authority and submit to his leadership. But again this expectation was *not fulfilled* in the experience of the church. Instead, Israel's leaders oppose the church and its message, thereby rejecting Jesus' teaching and authority.

The dissonant cognitions can be described simply as (1) the belief that the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus represented the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, and (2) the recognition that these events and subsequent ones did not conform to the expected shape of the fulfillment. Put in these general terms, of course, this description is applicable to the whole of early Jewish Christianity. Matthew's Gospel is just an especially Torah-oriented version of the tension present whenever it was declared that "what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus" (Acts 13:32-33), for many aspects of the "fulfillment" (the cross itself, the appearance of a Messiah without a messianic age, the success of the mission to the Gentiles and relative failure of that to the Jews) were unanticipated in the "promise," and many aspects of the "promise" (glorification of Jerusalem, return of the exiles to Zion, liberation of Israel) were not manifest in the "fulfillment." Indeed, the whole New Testament can be seen as an attempt to resolve such tensions by creating a new social world in which the inherited world of Judaism was reinterpreted in the light of the present Easter experience.

A scholar¹⁶ further expounds on the fulfillment of the Torah.

The idea that the true interpretation of the law is entrusted to a particular person or group brings Matt 16:19 into connection not only with Pharisaic Judaism and its class of scribes, whose main duty was scriptural exegesis but also with the Qumran community, which jealously guarded its great privilege of possessing the true Torah. It is of special interest for the exegete of Matt 16:18-19 that the apocalyptically minded Dead Sea covenanters believed that the law changed with the time. This apocalyptic belief relates to a detail about 16:19 that we have not fully considered, viz., Jesus' use of the future tense: "I *will* give you the keys

¹⁶ Joel Marcus, "The Gates of Hades and the Keys of the Kingdom (Matt 16:18-19)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 3 (July 1988) 452-455.

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... *will* have been bound ... *will* have been loosed.” In the context of Matthew’s Gospel, these futures are not just intentional (“I will to give”), but refer to an apocalyptic change that will alter the entire cosmos, including the law.

Here I rely upon J. P. Meier’s careful examination of the programmatic statement about the law in Matt 5:17-20. Not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished (5:18). Yet the third, fourth, and fifth antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount (5:31-42) show that the fulfilled torah of Jesus is one in which the letter of the law has been revoked. The most sensible way to understand this paradox, Meier shows, is to suppose that in Jesus’ death and resurrection “all has been accomplished,” and a **transfiguration** of the law has therefore taken place. Thus, while the Sermon on the Mount is situated with Jesus’ ministry by Matthew’s narrative, its commandments do not really take effect until after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

The reason for the Matthean Jesus’ use of the future tense in 16:19, then, becomes plain. During his earthly ministry, Jesus cannot yet bequeath to his disciples the power of authoritative interpretation of the law. Until his death and resurrection, the scribes and the Pharisees still sit in Moses’ **seat**, and so one must do what they say and accept their interpretation of the law (**23:2-3**). Only after the apocalyptic change brought about by Jesus’ resurrection, only after all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him (28:18), and thus in a certain sense the kingdom has come, can he bequeath to his disciples *the keys of the kingdom*. Then he will send them out to teach “all things that I have commanded you”: not the law in its old-age wrappings, but the fulfilled torah, the previously hidden sense of the law that has now been revealed.

This fulfilled torah includes the specific injunctions issued by Jesus during his earthly ministry (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount), but it is not limited to them. Like Pharisaism, Matthew recognizes the need for continued interpretation of the Lawgiver’s revelation. New situations will arise that are not covered even by the teachings in the Sermon and the rest of Matthew’s Gospel. Matt 16:18-19 promises that Jesus will not leave the community without a guide when this happens; subsequent to and because of his cosmic enthronement, he himself will be present in the halakic deliberations of his people (cf. 18:20), time after time opening up new facets of God’s living, life-giving, eschatological law.

Disquieting tension is so associated with the torah that the new assembly, the Christian Church, is to regard its members as equals, as brothers and sisters, without rabbis or teachers.

verses 8-12 As for you, do not be called ‘**Rabbi**.’ You have but one **teacher**, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called ‘**Master**’; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest

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among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

What about *rabbi* in the Greek? The grammarian makes some interesting comments, “Hebrew *my Lord, sit*; in Aramaic mode of address to a teacher, *master*. Like the English, the *Nova Vulgata* uses the Greek, in this Latin occurrence, *Rabbi*.

As obliquely, though technically noted, once before, at the Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 9, 2002, Warren Carter placed this **23:8-12** passage within the context of the Lord’s Prayer.¹⁷

With the help of Driver’s [another scholar’s] model of the social impact of ritual, we have identified at least three likely aspects of the experience of the Lord’s Prayer which members of the authorial audience recall as they encounter the prayer in Matthew’s narrative. Through participation in the prayer as part of their community’s worship, they have received its “gifts,” its perlocution of order, community, and transformation. In hearing the familiar prayer in chap. 6 of Matthew’s Gospel, members of the authorial audience recall these gifts from their previous liturgical experiences, so that they become part of the “meaning” of the prayer for the authorial audience.

There is no doubt that the placement of the prayer in Matthew’s narrative expands and renews these “gifts” by further defining their contours. The realities experienced in the liturgical setting and recalled by the authorial audience preface the immediate literary context of the Sermon on the Mount and the entire gospel. While no comprehensive sketch is possible here, several brief examples can be noted. The order created by the first chapter of the sermon manifests God’s blessing (5:3-12), reign (5:3, 10, 20; cf. 4:17, 23), and will (5:13-48). The gospel’s opening chapter sketches this order in God’s purposes for Jesus, to manifest God’s saving presence (1:22, 23). Repeatedly the sermon and the whole gospel anticipate the future completion of God’s purposes (7:24-27; 10:32-42; 13:36-50; and elsewhere). Throughout, the audience is reminded of what threatens this order: sin (1:21), refusal to comply with God’s will (the example of Herod in chap. 2), unfruitful presumption (3:8-9), Satan’s tempting demand for allegiance (4:1-11), disease and demons (4:23-24), ignorance and disobedience (5:17-48), hypocrisy (6:1-6). It is also reminded of its task to do God’s will (4:18-

¹⁷ Warren Carter, “Recalling the Lord’s Prayer: The Authorial Audience and Matthew’s Prayer as Familiar Liturgical Experience,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July 1995) 528-529

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22; 7:24-27; 12:46-50) and of God's sustaining presence(1:23; 8:23-27; 18:20; 25:31-46; 28:19-20).¹⁸

Equally pervasive is the narrative's community-forming impact. In calling disciples to follow him Jesus calls them to encounter God's reign (4:17-22) in a new and alternative community (5:3-16). The Sermon on the Mount requires this community to live according to Jesus's reinterpretation of conventional wisdom (5:17-48). It exists over against the synagogue (6:2, 5, 16) and the Gentiles (5:47; 6:7, 32), yet it exists for the world (5:13-16; 10). It is the forgiven, forgiving, merciful community of the "little ones," the children, the servants (9:13; 12:7; 18:1-13, 15-20, 21-35; 20:20-28; 24:45-51), where traditional patterns of authority are overturned (**23:8-12**). Throughout the gospel, personal, social, and cosmic transformation by means of divine presence and human obedience is portrayed.

The compatibility between the prayer's liturgical impact (insofar as we can identify three general aspects of it with the help of Driver's model) and these major themes in the gospel may account for the prayer's inclusion in the gospel. As part of the gospel narrative, the prayer offers another means of communicating with the audience. The prayer contributes to the gospel's "meaning" not only by its content in the context of the narrative but also by its perlocutionary force. By encountering this familiar prayer in the gospel's text, the audience is enabled to recall, and thereby renew, its liturgical experience of the prayer's gifts of order, community, and transformation, realities which are also central to the gospel's narrative.

This sense of order, community, and transformation does enable one to recognize that *in you, Lord, I have found my peace*. Because **history** teaches that neither the status quo nor the establishment are always correct, the gospel message about thinking through the status quo and the establishment is about loving God.

The Day-By-Day *Magnificat*® readings are from Isaac of Nineveh.¹⁹ St. Isaac of Nineveh Gift of Tears Catholic Worker community operates in Spencer, West Virginia, about seventy-five miles north and east of Charleston. Isaac really was from Nineveh in Syria, a bishop. He is known for basic writings on Western Christian spirituality. A Nestorian bishop, Patriarch

¹⁸ Warren Carter, Recalling the Lord's Prayer: The Authorial Audience and Matthew's Prayer as Familiar Liturgical Experience, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July 1995) 529-530.

¹⁹ Isaac of Nineveh as cited in as cited in *Magnificat*®, Vo. 4, No. 9 (November 2002), pages 95 and 431.

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George (660-680), consecrated Isaac. His writings remind one of Thomas à Kempis.²⁰ The Nestorians²¹ believed that Jesus was two distinct persons, so that Mary was mother of the human and not the Mother of God. The councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) clarified that Jesus is one person with two natures, so that Mary is the Mother of God.

Changing the direction of prayer to songs of thanksgiving in the spirit of Saint Isaac is pertinent. For example, the Sixty-eighth is the only psalm that has no petition, according to the King James Version my friend Thelma uses. The Sixty-eighth psalm is used for Reading 126C the Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time. This sense of not asking for anything is contrary to the Catholic Worker Movement that so tries to change the underpinnings of the capitalist world in which we live.

The tensions of life are evident in that socialism, including communism, is good in moral theory but bad in economic practice; whereas capitalism is bad in moral theory, even to the point of selling slaves, but good in economic practice, witnessed by the fact that so many living in the United States are overweight.

²⁰ Accessed October 26, 8:00 p.m., 2002, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08176a.htm>.

²¹ The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, sold and distributed by Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983, 1989, 1994) 609.