

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

These notes are prepared long in advance because we will be unusually busy October 30-November 8.

These readings match the desires of the spirit with the desires of the flesh. The idea is to learn from the flesh what to do about the spirit, to learn to desire God from the way people desire worldly pleasure.

Wisdom 6:12-16

verse¹ 13 She [Wisdom] hastens to make herself known in anticipation of **their** [those who seek Wisdom] **desire**

In the *Nova Vulgata*,² Saint Jerome uses **concupiscent**, concupiscence, for **desire**.

verse 15 For **taking thought** of her is the perfection of **prudence**

Saint Jerome uses **consummatio** for **prudence**. **Consummatio** means finishing, completion, consummation.³ St. Jerome uses *de illa sensus*, which I translate, *concerning this sense*, so that **to think** about wisdom is the finishing, completion, and consummation of **wisdom**. The teaching magisterium is hard-pressed ever to urge the Faithful to **think**.

Some of the other translations into English are interesting.

The King James Version⁴ does not recognize the Book of Wisdom as part of the inspired canon.

¹ 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)

² *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

³ *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) 131.

⁴ General Editor, The Reverend Cain Hope Felder, Ph.D., *The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version* (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing Company, 1993)

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

Douay-Rheims:⁵ **To think** therefore upon her [Wisdom], is **perfect understanding**.

*The New American Bible*⁶ replaces **their desire** with **men's desire**.

The Jerusalem Bible:⁷ Even to **think** about her is **understanding** fully grown.

*The New Jerusalem Bible*⁸ **Meditating** on her is **understanding** in its perfect form.

This semantic focus on **prudence** relates to the **prudent** virgins found below in the Gospel.

verse 16 because she **makes** her own rounds, seeking those worthy of her, and **graciously** appears to them in the ways, and meets them with **all solicitude**.

My translation of Saint Jerome's Latin has wisdom appearing in ordinary **providence**, **goes around**, rather than **makes her rounds**. Saint Jerome uses *hilariter*, from which comes *hilarious*, to describe those aspects of **providence** in which wisdom finds herself. The Liturgy uses **graciously** where Saint Jerome uses *hilariter*.

Douay-Rheims: For she **goeth** about seeking such as are worthy of her, and she sheweth herself to them **cheerfully** in the ways, and meeteth them with **all providence**.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: Translated from the Latin Vulgate with Annotations, References, and an Historical and Chronological Table: The Douay Version of The Old Testament, First published by the English College at Douay, A.D. 1609: The Confraternity Edition of The New Testament: A Revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version Edited by Catholic Scholars under the Patronage of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine* (New York. P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1950).

⁶ *Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible: Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources: Including The Revised New Testament and the Revised Psalms Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative Committee/Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference: with many helps for Bible reading: Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation, How to Read the Bible, Historical Survey of the Lands of the Bible, Bible Dictionary, Liturgical Index of Sunday Readings, Doctrinal Bible Index, and over 50 Photographs and Maps of the Holy Land* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1992).

⁷ Alexander Jones, General Editor, *The Jerusalem Bible: Reader's Edition* (Garden City, New York: Double Day * Company, Inc., 1968).

⁸ Henry Wansbrough, General Editor, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

Jerusalem: She herself **walks** about looking for those who are worthy of her and **graciously** shows herself to them as they go, in **every thought** of theirs coming to meet them.

New Jerusalem: For she herself **searches** everywhere for those who are worthy of her, **benevolently** appearing to them on their ways, anticipating their **every thought**.

New American Bible follows the *Lectionary*.

Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

verse 2 O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my **flesh** pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

A scholar⁹ elaborates on the tenor of Psalm 63.

In order to understand the reactions of the two remaining groups (the “vast nations,” and their kings) to the Servant—the Faithful might look first at [Isa] 52:15b, “But kings shall shut their mouths.” The general consensus is that this gesture signals some kind of shock or astonishment, but M. Gruber has shown that in ancient Near Eastern literature “to open the mouth” and similar expressions mean to smile, laugh. Conversely, “to shut the mouth” means to refuse to smile, to sulk. This meaning is abundantly evident in Psalm 107:42, “The upright shall see (this) and *rejoice* (*weyismahu*), *but all the wicked shall shut their mouth* (*qapesa piha*).” This contrast between the just rejoicing and the wicked closing their mouth appears in **Psalm 63:12**: “And the king shall *rejoice* (*yismah*) in God... but *the mouth* of those who speak lies *shall be shut* (*yissaker*).”

...

To summarize thus far as regards the opening stanza [of Isaiah], the Servant is portrayed as a wisdom figure who “instructs” certain groups—“the high, the exalted, and the lofty”—which are specified a few verses later as the *rabbim*, the “vast nations” and (their) “kings.” At least according to 52:14 the “great ones” are unable to get beyond their shock and grief over the Servant so as to understand his instruction. In contrast, nothing is said about the reaction of the “vast nations” to his appearance. But somehow they do “**understand**” his unspoken teaching and rejoice over him. They are most likely the subject of 52:15cd, “For what they had never been told they perceived what they had never heard they **understood**.” Finally, the leaders of these nations, the members of the third group, have yet another reaction to the Servant. They adopt a posture of sulking and refuse to join their subjects in rejoicing over the Servant. None of the

⁹ Michael L. Barré, S.S., *Textual and Rhetorical-critical Observations on the Last Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13—53:12)*, *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000), 10-11.

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

groups reacts here with the “surprise” or “astonishment” reflected in most translations, nor do any of them react to the purported “exaltation” of the Servant. They react rather to what God teaches through him: his vicarious suffering for Israel.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

verse 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

A scholar¹⁰ comments.

IV. The destination in **First Thessalonians 4:14**

The context of **1 Thess 4:14** indicates that Paul is answering the question, Will the deceased share in the ultimate completion at the Lord’s coming? The Thessalonians thought that the dead could not participate in this event. They imagined that one had to be alive in order to participate in this union with the Lord.

Paul, appealing to the Thessalonians’ faith in the saving power and promise of the Lord’s death and resurrection, reassures them: “since we believe that Jesus died and rose again...God will bring with him those who have died through Jesus.” He is telling them that this should be clear to them from their Easter faith. Basically, he is asserting that the promise of God holds true even for those among them who have died. In **vv. 16-17** he insists that at the Lord’s coming the deceased believers will be brought to life first.

To cite the *Lectioary*:

verses 15-18 Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

Continuing with the scholar:

¹⁰ Joseph Plevnik, S.J., “The Destination of the Apostle and of the Faithful: Second Corinthians 4:13b-14 and First Thessalonians 4:14,” *the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 94-95.

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

But in **1 Thess 4:14**, in the rush to state that the deceased faithful will then be with the Lord, Paul leaps over his own thought, leaving it incomplete. He does not state clearly where the deceased are taken. Clearly, *axei* implies that they were brought to life and then taken somewhere. **Verses 16-18** indicate that the dead are first restored to life, then taken up on the clouds to the lofty heights above the earth. **Verses 15-18** indicate that Paul thinks of full human beings taken up, body and soul, to join the risen Lord: the dead are first brought back to life, then they are taken up. The implication is that they are brought to life so that they *can* be taken up. The use of the cloud as a vehicle of transportation supports this interpretation.

This interpretation is strengthened by 2 Cor 4:14, which is a close parallel to **1 Thess 4:14**. In 2 Cor 4:14 as well, Paul is first raised to life then ushered with Jesus into God's presence. This is congruent with all of **1 Thess 4:13-18**, and it agrees with our explanation that the faithful are taken up into the glory of God.

This explanation makes Peterson's suggestion that Paul here is relying on Hellenistic parousias less likely. In Peterson's view, it is the faithful who take charge of the event, who go up to bring the Lord back to their place on earth. But it has already been pointed out that the passive *harpagesometha* in **1 Thess 4:17** indicates that the faithful are being taken up. Peterson's solution does not explain Paul's insistence in the preceding verse that the dead must be raised first, the assertion in **v. 14** that God will bring the deceased along with Jesus, or the conclusion in **v. 18** that they will be forever with the Lord (rather than that the Lord will be forever with them).

The imagery in **1 Thess 4:16-18** suggests that Paul has been telling the Thessalonians that at the Lord's coming they will all be taken up to meet him. Only this explains the conclusion which the Thessalonians have drawn and the fact of their grieving over their deceased. They have concluded that the deceased cannot be taken up, because in order to be taken up, one must be alive. This explains Paul's insistence that the dead are raised first and his peculiar presentation of the resurrection as a restoration to life, which seems so different from the presentation in 1 Corinthians 15. There, Paul is interested only in explaining how the dead can share in the taking up.

Thus, the taking up, as it is understood here by Paul, is not merely going forth and returning. It is not the *Einholung* of Jesus but rather the *Einholung* of the faithful, who are brought up to "be with the Lord forever" **v. 18**).

In this explanation, **v. 14** and **vv. 16-18** complement each other. On the one hand, **v. 14** indicates that God brings the deceased faithful into his presence (hence, the taking up in **vv. 16-18** means being assumed into the glory of God).

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

On the other hand, the resurrection of the dead mentioned in **v. 16** implies that *axeí* in **v. 14b** includes the resurrection.

V. Conclusion

What Paul says in 2 Cor 4:14, which emerged as a real parallel to **1 Thess 4:14**, has to do with his own death rather than with the deceased faithful. At **1 Thess 4:14**, he deals with the presence of the deceased at the Lord's coming. He expresses his firm conviction that God, through Jesus, will raise him and will place him in God's presence. The parallelism with **1 Thess 4:14** suggests that the faithful, as well, will be raised from the dead through Jesus and will be brought into God's presence. If this interpretation is correct, 2 Cor 4:14 discloses that Paul's ideas on the parousia in 2 Cor 4:14 have not changed much from those in **1 Thess 4:13-18**. He still presumes that some will be alive at the Lord's coming, and apparently he still imagines the encounter with the Lord as a taking up.

Matthew 24:42a, 44

[no comment here]

Matthew 25:1-13

verse 1 Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven will be **like** ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

The grammarian¹¹ is exercised over this first verse.

Parables are often introduced by the formula *ομοιωθησεται, ωμοιωθην, ομοις εστιν*, with a following dative which however does not correspond, or corresponds only inexactly, to the term of the comparison. Thus "the kingdom of God" is not in reality "like unto a merchant," but is likened to the pearl of great price (Matt 13:45); nor is it "**like** unto ten virgins," but to the wedding (**Matt 25:1**), nor is it "like the sower, but like the harvest (Matt 13:24). This looseness of expression is to be accounted for by the fact that the formulae *ομοιος εστιν* etc. are added in the Greek, the Aramaic using simply the preposition *le*

¹¹ 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, page 22-23.

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

corresponding to the dative; for the Jews were accustomed to introduce parables by a formula such as *Mashal: le (melek she...l*, “Similitude: to (a king who...)” (for examples see Strack-Billerbeck II, 8), this being an elliptical form of: “I will tell you a similitude. To what can the affair be **likened**? To (a king who...)”: cf. in the Gospel a similar full formula with the question in Matt. 11:6; Mk 4:30 ff; Lk (6:47; 7:31 ff; 13:18 ff.) Clearly the Aramaic formula, and consequently also the Greek one used to render it, is not to be understood as “the kingdom of heaven is like a king,” but “concerning the kingdom, it is as in the case of a king.” Though this interpretation is clearly enough called for in the examples cited above, this is less clear in others. Thus it is not so sure that we can maintain that the kingdom of heaven is really to be likened not to the grain of mustard-seed or the leaven, but to the tree wherein the birds nest and the leavened dough (J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, ed. 5, 1956, p. 85 ff; and for the last-mentioned doubtful point cf. O. Kuss, *Zum Sinngehalt des Doppelgleichnisses vom Senfkorn und Sauerteig*, *Biblica* 40 (1959) 641-53, where it is shown that the idea of the evolution of the kingdom of heaven cannot be excluded from the parable).

verse 2 Five of them were foolish and five were **wise**.

For **wise**, Saint Jerome uses *prudentes*, or *prudens*, throughout. *King James*, Douay-Rheims, *Jerusalem*, and *New Jerusalem* versions all use *wise*. The Greek has φρονιμος or **sensible**.¹²

Wisdom is seeking God like people seek personal pleasures, as the flesh pines for the psalmist, as Paul promises the Thessalonians and as Jesus explains the sleepy virgins at the wedding feast.

The *Magnificat*® readings are from Caryll Houselander. Houselander appears¹³ like a Catholic Worker, focusing on the poor. Like St. Isaac, she is honored as a mystic, though no taint of heresy can be associated with her ordination. She was never ordained into Holy Orders. She had a “wickedly funny tongue.” She also smoked and swore. Toward the end of her life, she broke her smoking habit.

Learning to desire God from the way people desire worldly pleasure seems exemplified in this smoking, swearing mystic who thought of herself as a woodcarver. Mine is not and never has been one of her “in many minds virginity is associated only with negative qualities, with impotence—impotence of body and mind, emotional and spiritual impotence.”¹⁴ Pray, pay, and obey impotence is my main concern with *Magnificat* spirituality.

¹² 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)

¹³ October 26, 8:21 p.m., 2002, <http://www.peregrina.com/caryll/caryll.html>

Personal Notes
0201110 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 154 A
by
Raymond J. Jirran

The spiritual life consists not only of the passive virtues, but also of the active virtues. Once nailed to the Cross, few options remain; but actively choosing the options that lead to the Cross is the test of discernment. Houselander was considered neurotic; Saint Isaac of Nineveh wrote on depression. The readings for this Sunday explore such tensions of life. The knack of it all is to make what choices the Faithful may have as inspired by the Spirit as the Faithful can make them.

¹⁴ Caryll Houselander, *From The Reed of God*, pp. 43-44. 1944, *Christian Classics*, a Division of Thomas Moore Publishing, 200 East Bethany Drive, Allen, TX 75002-3804 in as cited in *Magnificat*®, Vo. 4, No. 9 (November 2002) 148 and 431.