

Readings

First Testament: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 (cf. 1a)
Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Commentary

Psychoanalyst Elizabeth F. Howell writes, “The patterns of unexamined contradictions in the cultural conscious and unconscious permit the execution of atrocities, which are then often denied or unexamined.”¹ I think sexism is one of those atrocities. One of the purposes of praying over Holy Scripture, then, is to examine and accept recognition of atrocities that interfere with a healthy expression of love. The readings for this Sunday enable the Faithful to do that.

According to an article in the September 19th National Catholic Reporter, last summer, the U.S. Bishops seemed to confront a similar problem in anti-Semitism, when they voted to delete a reference to the covenant between God and Moses in their Catechism. The sentence, which the Bishops deleted, is “Thus the covenant that God made with the Jewish people through Moses remains eternally valid for them.”² That reference occurs in Chapter 11, “The Four Marks of the Church.”³

The Bishops said they voted for the change in order to remove ambiguity. The point is not what the Bishops are doing to the Jews, but how they are interacting with the cultural contradictions that Howell brings to attention. The point is that there are such cultural contradictions to which the Faithful might pay attention in their prayer lives.

To help highlight the difficulty of identifying cultural contradictions, there are two more references to the Mosaic covenant, both in Chapter 2, “God Comes to Meet Us.” One of those references is, “God entered into a covenant later [after Noah] with Abraham and then with the people of Israel at the time of their exodus from slavery in Egypt; under the leadership of Moses. He affirmed that they will [*sic*, rather than *would*] always be his people.” The other reference is at the end of the chapter, under “Doctrinal Statements.” The exact words are, “He [God] then chose Moses through whom the divine was given to the covenant people.”⁴

¹ Elizabeth F. Howell, The Dissociative Mind (New York: Routledge, 2005) x.

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 131.

³ Daniel Burke, Religion News Service, “Jews perplexed by change to Catholic catechism,” National Catholic Reporter: The Independent News Source, Vol. 44, No. 28 (September 19, 2008) 9, col. 1-4.

⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), 14, 18.

Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl chairs the board that oversaw the new Catechism. Wuerl is also Chancellor of The Catholic University of America. That office is capable of engaging Catholic University administration in a discussion with the American Association of University Professors for removal from the AAUP censured list. The AAUP censured the administration for refusing due process in a matter involving academic freedom. The original problem with Father Charles Curran is now moot.

What is not moot is a repetition of how the administration dealt with a professor saying things it did not like. The problem is the same, namely examining hidden, but politically correct cultural contradictions. For the Church, on the one hand to treasure the truth, but on the other hand to deny the ordinary means of finding the truth as laid out by the AAUP, is a cultural contradiction.

According to Daniel Burke, the following sentence from the Vatican Catechism will replace the unhappy statement in the U.S. Catechism. “To the Jewish people, whom God first chose to hear his word, belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ.”⁵ The statement from Burke is not an exact replica of the Vatican Catechism. The verses are Romans 9:4-5, unused in the Lectionary.

Burke goes on “It’s not just an academic debate. For centuries, the church persecuted and proselytized Jews for their supposed apostasy.” Eugene Fisher, former longtime head of the U.S. Bishops’ Catholic-Jewish relations team, says, “We know what we want to say ... but putting this in nice, neat language—we’re not there yet.” Such a statement seems to suit what Howell means in her book, The Dissociative Mind.

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Annotated Bibliography

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

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Prov. 31:10-31

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History⁶

Lawrence relates Wisdom literature with its proclaimed author Solomon.

Solomon has a place in time and space that Lawrence uses for his Atlas.

Lawrence comments on Wisdom literature, especially Proverbs. The Book of Proverbs is a group of several collections, one of which is “In praise of a virtuous wife,”

⁵ n.a., Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, revised in accordance with the official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II, contains glossary and analytical index (The Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994, 1997) 223.

⁶ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 72.

extending from verse 10 to through 31, including the verses skipped by the Lectio. The New Jerusalem (1985) entitles the collection, "The Perfect Housewife." An example of a gross verse passed over is verse 17; *She puts her back into her work and shows how strong her arms can be*. In a footnote, the New Jerusalem suggests, "This eulogy of the perfect wife may have been understood as an allegorical description of personified Wisdom," which I think is the best way to understand it.

Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 (cf. 1a)

Psalm 128:1-8

Psalm 128:1-8 is on the internet as part of the Codex Sinaiticus, but the Greek does not seem to line up with what is in the Lectio. Since I assume others, more skilled than I, look at these notes, the fact that something is available may be useful to them. So far, I am having little luck making a relationship between the Sinaiticus and what else is available.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

When I wrote up the Greek in 2005, I said, "The Greek for 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 has seven indications of difficulties with surviving manuscripts ..." *Difficulties*, perhaps, is the wrong word. When I use *difficulties* now, I mean serious problems with the manuscripts by those deciding which Greek words to prefer. When I used the word *difficulties* in 2005 (which is on the web), I rather meant *variations* among the manuscripts, but variations on whose resolution scholars generally agreed.

In the new 2008 meaning of *difficulty*, the problem is with verse 22 in Matthew, below. *Difficulty* now means unresolved difficulty.

1 Thess 4:13—5:11

Jeremy Corley, "The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13"⁷

Corley uses 1 Thess 4:13—5:11 as a standard of Pauline authorship. Corley uses these verses to argue that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Thess 4:13—5:11

K. K. (Khiok-khng) Yeo, review of S. Sobanaraj, Diversity in Paul's Eschatology: Paul's View on the Parousia and Bodily Resurrection⁸

Sobanaraj is concerned about cyclic versus linear time as related to the Second Coming and Bodily Resurrection. Yeo concludes, that the concluding chapter "would be strengthened if Sobanaraj were to see the modern meaning of the biblical texts not as 'relevance' or application but as the scriptural extension of Paul's eschatology [last things] throughout history and today."

⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (July 2004) 270.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2 (July 2008) 394.

1 Thess 5:1-11

Patricia M. McDonald, review of Hendrikus Boers, Christ in the Letters of Paul: In Place of a Christology⁹

Boers argues that Paul has five levels of understanding of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 begins the development of the levels. McDonald comments. "The book is not an easy read ... The five christological levels are, however, an analytical tool that could be most useful." The review does not unpack the various levels of understanding.

1 Thess 5:1-11

John Clabeaux, review of Colin R. Nicholl, From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians¹⁰

Clabeaux writes,

In chapter 3, on 1 Thess 5:1-11, Nicholl argues that Paul used the image of the "thief in the night" not to emphasize the *element of surprise* but to stress *the harm done by a thief*. Paul's point was to assure the Thessalonians that, since they were awake, they need not fear such harm. The Thessalonians stood in contrast to unbelievers, since the Thessalonians were not "in the dark ... but are all children of light and children of *the day*" (5:4-5).

1 Thess 5:5

Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy¹¹
Barker uses *For all of you are children of the light*, to claim *sons of light* as a title claimed by early Christians.

John 15:4a, 5b

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 139, 140.

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (July 2008) 165-166.

¹¹ London: T & T Clark International: *A Continuum imprint*, 2003, 113.

Matthew 25:14-30

Matthew 25:22

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998)	Then the one who had received two talents also came forward ...
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410)	Accessit autem et quo duo talenta acceperat ...
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610)	And he also that had received the two talents came ...
<u>King James</u> (1611)	He also that had received two talents came ...
<u>Catholic RSV</u> (1969)	He also who had received the one talent came forward ... This is verse 24 in the RSV.
<u>New American</u> (NAB) (1970)	(Then) the one who had received two talents also came forward ...

My guess is that the reason for the parentheses is in the problem with the manuscripts.

New Jerusalem (1985) Next the man with the two talents came forward.
This is verse 22 in the NJ.

The result of this exercise is not to be too reliant on the *ipsissima verba*, or the *word itself*, but rather on the meaning given to the word by the Faithful who pass it down. I have in mind the political brouhaha over abortion currently underway with the United States hierarchy.

Matt 25:14-30

Todd E. Klutz, review of Richard L. Rohrbaugh, The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective¹²

Rohrbaugh argues that this parable about the talents is a warning “to the rich about their exploitation of the weak.” Klutz, the reviewer, regards Rohrbaugh as offering “many new and persuasive understandings of the Gospels.” Rohrbaugh is on the cutting edge of much Biblical interpretation.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (July 2007) 830.