

Personal Notes

040606 Sunday After Pentecost: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity 166C

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Psalm 8:2a, the responsorial, “O Lord, how wonderful is your name in all the earth,” may well have been the response of Mary to the Annunciation. The Faithful have their own personal, inward Marian Annunciations in the Gospel of John with three *declare*'s, like unto the Annunciation's, *the angel declared unto Mary*. The Greek for *declare* is a derivative of *angel*, which means *messenger*. The readings begin with the very notion of declaring wisdom.

Proverbs 8:22-31

Proverbs 1—9 either praises or teaches the content of wisdom.¹ Here Proverbs praises wisdom. When I first read this passage, I thought of the “I” in verse 22 and throughout as content, as me. Wrong. The “I” is the wisdom of God. That way, the passage takes on a very different meaning; God is not wise for producing me; wisdom is wise for producing God somehow in me. Wisdom is from God.

This passage has a sense of the universe, billions of years old, from the beginning of which, wisdom was. In verse 31, Wisdom is playful, finding delight in the human race. Humans need not be overly serious. Humans are wise when they recognize messages, Annunciations, from God.

Proverbs presents wisdom as a divine quality.² In the original meaning, wisdom is not fixed, but is moving, like the wind. Biblical Hebrew has no word for air that is not in motion. Saint Jerome began the misunderstanding of wisdom as something fixed, a misunderstanding that continues.³

There is a philosophical problem between potency and act. If God is all act, does that mean that God has no potential? Is not potential something positive, a virtue, something necessary to an all-perfect being? When I asked this question to my world-class philosophy professor in the seminary, he had no answer, leaving the Faithful to think what we will. I like the idea of wisdom as a moving target because I certainly am a moving target myself. If things are moving, then there is something to announce, a reason for messages and angels; a reason for an Annunciation within the New Testament souls of the Faithful.

¹ Paul Overland, “Did the Sage Draw from the Shema? A Study of Proverbs 3:1-12,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 425-426.

² Joseph Jensen, O.S.B., “Yahweh's Plan in Isaiah and the Rest of the Old Testament,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 3 (July 1986), 451.

³ Patrick W. Skehan, “Structures in Poems on Wisdom: Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July 1979) 371 especially footnote 11.

Psalm 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

While Psalm 8 is a Royal Psalm, it probably came to be recited as a psalm of commoners for commoners.⁴ The wonder of God merits announcement because flowing from wisdom. Psalm 8 has a planetary sense of wondering why, with the planets at his feet, God should pay attention to humans. In verse 9, the psalmist recognizes *the paths of the seas*; however that may be for fish. Paths for beasts of the fields make more sense. In any event, the wonderment of creation beckons humans to announce the wonderment of the name of God as a reflection of his creation.

Romans 5:1-5

Here Paul has a temporary change in attitude from laying out his theology to marveling at what Jesus is doing for humanity.⁵ Faith and believing⁶ are means for announcing the goodness of the Lord. The message of Jesus Christ requires belief. The fact of the Holy Spirit in the Faithful ensures the promise of the resurrection made by Jesus.⁷

Notice that these verses unite faith, hope, and charity. This union is especially Pauline, though not limited to Paul. The first Christians also had a special place for faith, hope, and charity in their thinking.⁸

Cf. Revelation 1:8

This verse can be misleading, because the Trinity is so well hidden in the original, that I would translate from the Nova Vulgata as "I am the Alpha and

⁴ 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) 684.

⁵ Brendan Byrne, S.J., "The Problem of ΝΟΜΟΣ and the Relationship with Judaism in Romans," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000), page 295, 309; Robert A. J. Gagnon, "Why the 'Weak' at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 73.

⁶ R. Barry Matlock, "'Even the Demons Believe': Paul and πιστις Χριστου," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 316.

⁷ Joseph Plevnik, S.J., "The Understanding of God at the Basis of Pauline Theology," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2003) 563.

⁸ Jeremy Corley, "The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 261, 271.

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Omega, says the Lord God, Omnipotent, who is and was and is to come.”
Praising God is a message and an annunciation for all to hear.

John 16:12-15

This passage from John *declares* in three places: verse 13, the things that are coming; verse 14, what belongs to Jesus; and verse 15 a repetition for emphasis for what belongs to Jesus. In a word, the resurrection belongs to Jesus and Jesus passes it along to the Faithful. John is announcing and declaring that the Faithful have the ability to live the life of Jesus, which is the life of God, through grace. Such a life of grace beckons the Annunciation, *Mary full of grace*, a message available to all the Faithful.

To summarize, these readings connect the message of an annunciation of divine wisdom with the life of grace in the souls of the Faithful. Proverbs identifies wisdom as a divine quality. Psalm 8 marvels that the wisdom required to establish the planets should bother to notice humanity. Romans diverts a bit from proclaiming the law and developing theology to announcing a justification by Faith combined with hope and love. Finally, the Gospel links truth with wisdom in the expectation of the resurrection of the Faithful.

For more on sources, besides the footnotes, see the Appendix file.