

Personal Notes

080525

Sunday after Trinity Sunday: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

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Scholars relate the spiritual food value of Holy Communion for the soul with the material food value of the ancient manna in the desert for the body. Continuing to look for relationships between the First and New Testaments, scholars go on to relate the spiritual trials and temptations of the Jewish people with the spiritual trials and temptations of Jesus. Historically, institutional religion has used these spiritual and material relationships to deflect the horrors of slavery from the horrors of sin. These Personal Notes do not do that. Slavery is sinful.

The problem for those in the Twentieth Century United States is considering slavery from the point of view of the master. The Lectionary readings and Sacred Scripture in general, consider slavery from the point of view of the slave. Christians did not begin running things until Constantine (c. 274-337)<sup>1</sup> in the East and Charlemagne (747-814)<sup>2</sup> in the West. These notes treat slavery from both views, slave and master.

Starting from the point of view of the master, Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (371-394), condemned slavery as, what the Church today would name *intrinsically evil*. No one really listened, either inside or outside the Church. Quakers of the Seventeenth Century began the abolition movement, which, eventually, influenced Western Civilization, and the whole world. Embarrassed by its neighbors to the West, the Muslims followed suit, gradually eliminating slavery, but trailing about a century after the West. That accounts for how civilizations reduced slavery to its present minimal level, according to recent historical scholarship.<sup>3</sup>

The Quakers recognized the evils of slavery through their method of quiet prayer. For Catholics, the highest form of prayer is found in Communion. 1 Corinthians 10:16 reminds the Faithful about participation in the body and blood of Christ. Since the Greek for *participation* seems to be the root word for *Communion*, I checked why the United States Bishops do not use 1 Corinthians 10:16 in their Catechism. I have no answer, but do note that in their Glossary at Sacraments at the Service of Communion, the Bishops write,

The term *communion* refers to the Community of the church. Holy Orders and Matrimony are the Sacraments at the Service of Communion (the community of the Church). This means they are primarily directed toward the salvation of others. If they benefit the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.answers.com/Constantine?cat=travel> 080422.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.answers.com/Charlemagne> 080422.

<sup>3</sup> David Brion Davis, review of William Gervase Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery, The American Historical Review, Vol. 112, No. 4 (2007) 1134.

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personal salvation of the ordained or married person, it is through service to others that this happens.<sup>4</sup>

When the Bishops write in this way, they at least confuse, if not contradict what they write elsewhere, for example, “in receiving [Holy] Communion, we are more fully united to the Church.”<sup>5</sup> The Bishops confuse Communion as union with Jesus with communion as union with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Ecclesiastical hierarchy is not what Saint Paul has in mind in 1 Corinthians 10:16. Not only priests and religious, but bishops also require the prayers offered for bishops, by name, at Mass. The Faithful do need better bishops.

Father Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., also avoids the hierarchy when he writes,

I believe there are many ways to get to know Jesus more intimately but the greatest is through the Eucharist. “... Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you” (John 6:53), NAB [which the Lectionary uses]. It is through the Eucharist that God gives us the greatest experience of Himself, heaven touching earth at the moment of Communion, an incredible, incredible mystery.<sup>6</sup>

The Bishops use John 6:51, 53 and 56 in Chapter 17, “The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Christian Life,” and Chapter 29, “Fifth Commandment [Thou Shalt Not Kill]: Promote the Culture of Life.”<sup>7</sup> In the

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<sup>4</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 527.

<sup>5</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 225.

<sup>6</sup> Fr. Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., The Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist (Texas: Praising God Catholic Association, 1998) 15.

<sup>7</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 216, 222, 224, 401.

final analysis, Eucharistic love, whether of Quaker or Catholic variety, releases all forms of slavery to sin.

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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 of the interesting details scholars and others are presenting.

### **Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a**

Deut 8:1-16

John Paul Heil, "Jesus with the Wild Animals in Mark 1:13"<sup>8</sup>

Heil goes back to Deuteronomy 8:1-16, to what the Lectionary translates as "the vast and terrible desert," to explain the temptations Jesus endured in the desert. Heil writes, "The reason for this testing [in Deuteronomy] was to train and teach Israel as God's Son." In other words, through Jesus, the Faithful, tested though we are, have quite a divine legacy.

### **Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20**

Psalm 147:19-20

Richard Clifford, S.J. and Khaled Anatolois, "Christian Salvation: Biblical and Theological Perspectives"<sup>9</sup>

Clifford writes, "The 'Wisdom' tradition represents a significant development and synthesis of the larger biblical theme of salvation as knowledge of God." This idea is dear to this retired history professor, who thinks that whatever is known about creation reveals something about the Creator. Clifford goes on, "God sought out and chose Israel to know the one true God and to manifest that knowledge: 'The Lord also proclaims his word to Jacob, decrees and laws to Israel. God has not done this for other nations; of such laws they know nothing' (Psalm 147:19-20)." Clifford translates these verses differently, but not significantly differently, from the Lectionary.

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<sup>8</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2006) 73, 74.

<sup>9</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2005) 763.

## 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

### 1 Corinthians

Jeffrey R. Asher, review of Karl Olav Sandnes, Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles<sup>10</sup>

Asher writes, "This work [by Sandnes] is an important secondary source for anyone who is interested in Paul's letters, especially in the context of his appropriation of the principles, language, and *topoi* of *Hellenistic moral philosophy*."

### 1 Cor 8:10—11:1

John Fotopoulos, "Arguments Concerning Food Offered to Idols: Corinthian Quotations and Pauline Refutations in a Rhetorical *Partitio* (1 Corinthians 8:1-9)"<sup>11</sup>

Fotopoulos writes that the Lectionary selection is part of a larger argument in 1 Corinthians 8:1—9:27 about concern for how the weak and unsophisticated may take scandal at what the strong and sophisticated may, otherwise, do.

### 1 Cor 9:1—10:22

Wendell L. Willis, review of Jan G. Van Der Watt (ed.), assisted by Francois S. Malan, Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament<sup>12</sup>

Willis writes, "[Michael] Wolter's essay on 1 Corinthians begins with a succinct, and helpful, explanation of methodology. Then it examines several of Corinth's many ethical concerns, first by describing the problem and then by looking at Paul's teaching. I [Willis] share his view that Paul's ethical teachings are derived not from his doctrine of justification but from his ecclesiology. ..."

### 1 Cor 10:16 ff.

David N. Power, O.M.I., "Eucharistic Justice"<sup>13</sup>

Power quotes Hans Urs von Balthasar to write, "... And so the [Eucharistic] meal becomes the Church's real sharing in Jesus' flesh and blood in their condition of victimhood (1 Cor 10: 16 ff.)."

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<sup>10</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 2003) 480-481.

<sup>11</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 4 (October 2005) 619.

<sup>12</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2008) 205.

<sup>13</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 861.

## **(Lauda Sion)**

When the nuns sing this sequence in their monastery, the Faithful are unable to follow, no matter in which language, either Latin or the English vernacular, they sing. For that reason, I have no further comment.

## **John 6:51**

### **John 6:51-58**

This reading is used in Funerals.<sup>14</sup>

John 6:1-66

Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John"<sup>15</sup>

Clark relates Eucharistic bread with manna.

John 6:50-51

Edward L. Bode, review of Alberto Casalegno, "Perché Contemplino la Mia Gloria" (Gv 17, 24): Introduzione alla teologia del Vangelo di Giovanni<sup>16</sup>

Bode writes, "Some scholars' suggestion that the bread of eternal life (Jesus' body and blood) replaces Eden's tree of life receives some consideration by comparing [John] 6:50-51 [which the Lectionary uses here] with Gen 3:22; Prov 3:18; 11:30."

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<sup>14</sup> 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 IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: 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 Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 241, 259.

<sup>15</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 205 ff.

<sup>16</sup> the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2007) 574.

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John 6:57

Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology"<sup>17</sup>

Matera writes, "The ultimate goal of Jesus' revelation, therefore, is that the world should believe that the Father sent him ([John] 11:42). Only then will the world receive the life the Son brings from the Father ([John] 6:57 [which the Lectionary uses here])."

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<sup>17</sup> Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June 2006) 250.