

Personal Notes
080629 Saints Peter and Paul 591
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Lectionary readings for this Feast of Saints Peter and Paul invite the Faithful to attempt to decipher what is the will of God in relationship to the Magisterium. That relationship begins with trying to understand the Church as an assembly, of which the Magisterium is an important part, but only a part. In the readings for today, that relationship goes on to pray over the legitimacy of the difference in theology between Saint Luke and Saint Paul. Saint Peter did not step in to settle the fragile nature of their difference. Finally, the life of the first Pope, Saint Peter, stands as an example of how all the Faithful transition from one state of grace to another, including the final portal of grace, earthly death.

To begin to elaborate, this is the feast on which the Magisterium touts its own importance. The Catechism proclaims that administration is a gift of the Holy Spirit.¹ Without doubt, what the Catechism of the U.S. Bishops has in mind is Church administration. The Bishops are drawing their Catechism from the New Testament.

The original Greek, in which the New Testament is written, offers three meanings for *church*: (1) the local assembly; (2) the regional assembly; (3) the universal assembly. In that original Greek, *Church* does include the Magisterium, but only as but part of the Church. The Magisterium is not the same as the Church.

Psalms 34, used this Sunday, is an acrostic (alphabetical) psalm, emphasizing the use of reason. The Hebrew *waw*, however, is missing. I do not know why, except that reason is a fragile vessel. The Gospel is about Peter being the rock on which Jesus builds his church, meaning that the Church exists to please Jesus, rather than the Magisterium. Trying to please Jesus, despite the Magisterium, accounts for so-called *cafeteria Catholics*, who must pick and choose what to accept from the Magisterium. The Magisterium is trying to manage an increasingly sophisticated Faithful, unable to accept irrational proclamations.

Readings from the Acts of the Apostles and the Second Letter to Timothy examine the primacy of Peter governing the church. Such governance does not imply uniformity of opinion. Saint Luke, the companion of St. Paul, did not accept the Pauline theology of the cross. Paul spent his time figuring out the cross, "I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation." Luke spent his time marveling at the goodness of God. At Acts 12:8, [which Luke wrote] "The angel said to him [Saint Peter], 'Put on your belt and your sandals,'" in other words, "tie your shoes and get out of here."

As time went on, after over a thousand years, patterns of spiritual development appeared. Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274)² makes a great deal out

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 111, 121.

² <http://www.answers.com/Saint%20Bonaventure> 080511.

of transitions, such as the transition of Saint Peter out of prison. Saint Bonaventure posits three major transitions in the spiritual life: (1) from sin to virtue; (2) from virtue to contemplation of God; (3) from contemplation of God, to union with God through the passage of earthly death.

After years of waiting, I am finally receiving the Greyfriars Review, a scholarly journal on the spiritual life. The Greyfriars Review is the source for the comments about Saint Bonaventure. I have indexed the most recent five issues and intend to continue doing that. The focus of the Greyfriars Review is Medieval. To offset the Protestant claim that the Medieval Church was practically non-existent, the Lectionary posits, "the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it [the Church]." (Matthew 16:18).

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.

Acts 12:1-10

Acts 12:1-24

Susan R. Garrett, "Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24"³
Garrett points out that Luke does not share Paul's theology of the cross.

Acts 12:10

André Menard, O.F.M. Cap., "The Spirituality of Transitus in the Writings of St. Bonaventure"⁴

This article is the source for the comments about Saint Bonaventure, above the double line.

Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Psalm 34

Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P., "The Use of 'Panels' in the Structure of Psalms 73—78"⁵

Boadt examines the acrostic nature of Psalm 34.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 4 (October 1990) 656-680, 679.

⁴ Greyfriars Review, Vol. 19, Supplement (2005) 31.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 537.

Psalm 34

Anthony R. Ceresko, O.S.F.S., "Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking and the Shaping of Psalms 106 and 150"⁶

Ceresko is the source for pointing out, above the double line, that Psalm 34 skips the letter *waw*.

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

2 Tim 4:6-8, 10

Paul Lawrence, The IVP Atlas of Bible History⁷

Lawrence maps out archaeological evidence for the first Christians. Lawrence writes, "The significance of the New Testament letters cannot be overstated." 2 Timothy, used in the Lectionary today, was the last letter Paul wrote.

2 Tim 4:17b

"William O. Walker, Jr., "1 Corinthians 15:29-34 as a Non-Pauline Interpolation"⁸

Walker mentions that

... the pseudo-Pauline 2 Tim 4:17b refers to Paul being "rescued from the lion's mouth" It is unclear whether the words are to be interpreted literally or figuratively, but it is important to note that the (fictive) setting is not Ephesus, but rather Rome.

2 Tim 4:27

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, O.P., "Interpolations in 1 Corinthians"⁹
Murphy-O'Connor writes about,

... the Corinthians' acceptance of a fable that Paul had fought with beasts at Ephesus, a legend that Paul uses but does not claim. This silence caught the attention of an interpolator, who knew that the Apostle had spoken of his rescue from "the lion's mouth" (2 Tim 4:17), and he harmonized 1 Cor 15:31-32 with the Pastorals.

⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 1 (April 2006) 33, 34.

⁷ Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006, 165, 175.

⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 1 (January 2007) 96.

⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 1 (January 1986) 93.

In other words, the original teaching Magisterium of the Church kept its hands off of the original Greek, as it was written.

Matthew 16:18

Matt 16:18

Mark Allan Powell, "Matthew's Beatitudes: Reversals and Rewards of the Kingdom"¹⁰

Powell asserts that for Matthew, the disciples "serve as ciphers for `the Church.'" Disciples are neither "Apostles" nor Magisterium, but apparently include all of the Faithful.

Matthew 16:13-19

Matt 16:14

Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Developing conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study"¹¹

When Kingsbury writes the following, he reminds me of the bishops involved in the cover-up of the sexual scandal.

Finally, the Jewish leaders attest to their evilness also in the way in which they relate to the crowds, revealing in this respect that they are `faithless' to their trust. In the leaders' view, the crowds, although they do not believe in Jesus, are nevertheless susceptible to the deceit he practices, for they follow him, are amazed at his teaching and search him out for healing, glorify God over his works, toy with but reject the idea that he might be the Son of David (12:22-23), and hold him to be a prophet (16:14; 21:11, 46).

Matt 16:16

Mark J. Goodwin, "Hosea and "the Son of the Living God" in Matthew 16:16b"¹²

Goodwin argues that "Where early Christian tradition accepted a general link between the living God and the formation of the *ἐκκλησία* [church], Matthean tradition saw Jesus as the unique mediator of that formation."

¹⁰ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 1996) 469.

¹¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 1987) 63-64.

¹² the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 2005) 265-283.

Matt 16:18-19

Michael J. McClymond, "Through a Glass Darkly: Biblical Catholic and Protestant English-language Bibles"¹³

McClymond makes the point about "...pertinence for the Catholic polemic against the Protestant assertion that the true church had all but disappeared during the medieval era," as mentioned above the double line.

Matt 16:19

Rick Van De Water, "'Removing the Boundary' (Hosea 5:10) in First Century Palestine"¹⁴

The boundary to be removed, about that which De Water writes, is the boundary that prevents change in Sacred Scripture. De Water argues that the boundary was not kept by the Church in anything like an absolute manner.

Matt 16:20

Mark F. Whitters, "Jesus in the Footsteps of Jeremiah"¹⁵

Relying on the question, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Whitters argues that Matthew not only presented Jesus as a new Moses, but also as a new Jeremiah.

After-action Report

Lack of supporting research data is the reason the following comments were not in the original presentation of Personal Notes for Pentecost, Reading 63A, 080511 (Mother's Day).

Readers may miss the implication involved with the assertion that the Magisterium exercises little respect for the *sensus fidelium*, sense of the Faithful. This implication is an indictment of the Magisterium for damaging the family. The Magisterial high-profile attack on all procured elimination of potentially separate human life within the womb, all the while remaining obdurate against all forms of artificial birth control is why many people no longer bother to have their marriages blessed by the Church. This sense of the Faithful is that artificial means of birth control, far from being immoral, offers moral enhancement for the quality of life of those children brought into this world. Parish priests avoid teaching the Magisterial posture on birth control by leaving those practicing birth control in charge of most teaching done in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RICA).

¹³ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 3 (September 2006) 489, 494.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 625.

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 2006) 230, 247.

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My thought is that personal identity comes from the family. The family, in turn finds its identity in both church and state. Over the past fifty years, scholars began by focusing statistics on economics. This focus is ephemeral (beside the point) to the totality of human endeavor. Beginning in the 1980s most scholars increasingly recognized the political dimensions of economic endeavors. These scholars were trying to do some good, all the while ignoring institutional religion.¹⁶

Whatever humans may know, they hold in a fragile vessel. Finding truth demands a constant search. Political intervention, by any individual or institution, such as church or state, can cut short this search. Using Matt 1:16-18, from the Lectionary for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Catechism words it this way:

Peter was able to see that Jesus was the Messiah, not from “flesh and blood,” that is, not by means of reason or common sense, but by the grace of the Father (cf. Mt. 16:16-18). When by faith and Baptism we enter the Church, we already share in eternal life. Faith perceives this in ever deepening ways, as through a glass darkly (cf. 1 Cor 13:12).¹⁷

In line with Saint Bonaventure, the search for truth is fundamentally a search for God, who is truth. In opposing the search for truth, as unnecessary, especially by moral theologians, the Magisterium stands before the judgment seat of God. That is the implication of the Notes for Pentecost this year.

Besides an implication for the church, there is also an implication for the state. What is personally great about the United States, for example, is the fact that the Commonwealth of Virginia paid me to teach at Thomas Nelson Community College, that no man, woman, or child is safe so long as the Virginia General Assembly is in session. In other words, the Commonwealth paid me to teach not to trust civil government.

Because the Church would never pay a professor to teach the Faithful not to trust the Magisterium, professors have done their best to ignore the Magisterium. This lack of engagement is the cause of the present impasse trying to understand politics in a coherent manner. This includes the politics of family life. The simple paragraph above the double lines for Pentecost implied all of the above.

¹⁶ See, for but one example, the “*AHR* Forum: Geoff Eley’s *A Crooked Line*,” The American Historical Review, Vol. 113, No. 2 (April 2008) 391-437.

¹⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006) 38.