

That the Faithful find the light of Christ through the Cross is the full meaning of the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. A little history of what the Personal Notes say about these readings is relevant. Ordinarily there is a three-year cycle for the Lectionary readings. The last time the Church observed this Feast on a Sunday was September 14, 2003, five years ago. That 2003 Notes material, which is on the web, calls attention to other Lectionary readings found on the web that also help explain these readings. There is much scholarship, between then and now, to review and consider.

Hearing the Word enables the Faithful to participate vicariously in what the Word commemorates. The possibility of that reenactment in the soul gives the readings for this Sunday their importance. By exalting the cross, the Faithful have an opportunity to participate in their own salvation and the salvation of others.

The reading from Numbers, about looking on the bronze serpent, is analogous to looking at the Holy Eucharist at the time of Consecration, with the expectation of healing from and forgiveness of sin. Psalm 78, about *not forgetting the works of the Lord*, is about participating in the liturgy as a reminder of those very works. Philippians is about poverty of spirit enabling the Faithful to detach themselves from the cares of this world for the cares of the next world. Finally, the Gospel of John, in the words the Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, in Newport News, Virginia, Father Peter T. Tran, likes to repeat, *Per Crucem Ad Lucem*. One finds the light of Christ through the Cross.

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.

Numbers 21:4b-9

Psalm 78:1-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38

Psalm 78

J. J. M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms"¹

This ancient Psalm came "from very early in the divided monarchy." The monarchy divided with the Exile in 586 BC.²

¹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 677, 685.

² <http://thunderation.org/timeline.html> 080720.

Psalm 78

Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P., "The Use of `Panels' in the Structure of Psalms 73—78"³

Psalm 78 refers to the history of the Jewish people. Boadt argues that Psalm 78 was written after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. The psalm moves "in contrastive steps to accent the lessons to be learned from past history." These lessons are that God does not abandon his people, despite the vagaries of international politics.

Psalm 78

Melody D. Knowles, "The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling: The Choice of David in the Texts of the Psalms"⁴

Psalm 78 contains one of the only three texts in the Psalms in which David "is a significant narrative feature." Psalm 78 only brings David and Zion together after sixty-seven verses. In contrast, Psalm 89 sets up the Davidic kingship at the beginning of the earth. The Lectionary uses Psalm 89 in four liturgies, including the Feast of Saint Joseph.

Psalm 78:2

Edward F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., "Teaching in parables: (Mk 4:10-12; Lk 8:9-10; Mt 13:10-15)"⁵

I will open my mouth in a parable refers to Matthew 13:34-35, that says Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. The Lectionary uses Matthew 13:34-35 as part of Matthew 13:24-43 in Reading 106A, The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, which this year fell on July 17.

Philippians 2:6-11

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The Greek text is written in the form of a hymn. It looks like iambic pentameter to me. The Reinach *cj* manuscript seems to transpose and manipulate *something to be grasped*. I am uncertain and uncomfortable with what the other word means. It may have something to do with impartiality or without respect for persons. Nestle-Aland has ten other cross-references to other areas in Sacred Scripture, which the Lectionary uses.

³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 2004) 533-550, 547.

⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 2005) 237, 241-243.

⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 2 (April 1961) 170.

Phil 2:5-11

Nicholas E. Denysenko, "The Soteriological Significance of the Feast of Mary's Birth"⁶

Jesus ...coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance was due to Mary, his mother. Denysenko writes about the Byzantine feast of the Birth of Mary. The Byzantines use Philippians 2:5-11 during their Divine Liturgy. Rather than Philippians, the Roman Rite uses Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 for Reading # 689, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Denysenko writes,

If the liturgy facilitates the assembly's adoption into Mary's story, then the assembly realizes its vocation as the body of Christ, as the worshipping Church manifests Christ's presence by providing him a location, a body of people, that includes Joachim, Anna, and Mary.

Phil 2:6-11

David N. Power, O.M.I., "Eucharistic Justice"⁷

Power writes,

While not neglecting the role of the priest, John Paul II explains that it is in the sign of the meal that the church is one with Christ in his sacrifice, which is his self-giving to the Father, his self-emptying in obedience, for the sake of the world. Thus, in explaining sacrifice, John Paul II employs the image of *kenosis* or self-emptying found in Philippians 2:6-11.

Self-emptying means accepting the cross.

⁶ Theological Studies, Vol. 68, No. 4 (December 2007) 751.

⁷ Theological Studies, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 2006) 863.

Phil 2:6-11

John Reumann, review of Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Podorum*⁸

Carmen is Latin for *a passage in a poem*.⁹ *Cursus* is Latin for *course, march, journey*. Hellerman reconstitutes Roman values in Philippi, to show that Paul reversed the Roman sense of honor to the Christian sense of service to others, even to death on a cross.

Phil 2:6-8

Dino Dozzi, "Thus Says the Lord' The Gospel in the Writings of Saint Francis"¹⁰

The difference between the spirituality of Francis and the evangelical-pauperist movements of his time was "not so much material poverty as the humility that leads the Son of God to take the human form of a slave, 'becoming obedient to death' (Phil 2:8)."

Phil 2:7

Jean-Joseph Buirette, O.F.M., "A Short Glossary of Terms Used by Francis of Assisi"¹¹

Two terms are relevant to Phil 2:6. One term involves several words, *lesser, minority, little, and servant*. Franciscans identify themselves as the Order of Friars Minor or O.F.M. Buirette writes, "At the time of Francis, Assisi society distinguished between the *majores* who had the power and the *minores* who had no say."

Buirette misidentifies that Jesus *emptied himself* [of himself] as verse 6. He means verse 7. The other term, which also uses verse 7, is *poverty*. This verse expresses the Franciscan virtue of poverty.

Phil 2:7

Camille Bérubé, "The Early *Spirit of Saint Francis* by Berdardine of Paris"¹²

I do not understand the relationship between Phil 2:7 and what Bérubé attributes to it. That notwithstanding, Bérubé concludes by emphasizing the importance of poverty as the school of renunciation and love."

⁸ Theological Studies, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2008) 193, 194.

⁹ 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) 85, 148.

¹⁰ Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, Supplement (2004) 41-42.

¹¹ Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2004) 296-297.

¹² Greyfriars Review, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2004) 250, 292.

What strikes me most is Berdardine writing, "After the incarnation of the Word, the holiness of the saints is the most precious work of divine love." I see this happening most effectively through the liturgy.

Phil 2:8

R. Barry Matlock, "Even the Demons Believe': Paul and πιστις Χριστου"¹³

Matlock argues that the *obedient* of Phil 2:8 is not the same as the *obedience of faith* in Romans 1:5, which the Lectionary uses at Reading 10A, Fourth Sunday of Advent. This article concerns the current scholarly debate between the faith of Christ and faith in Christ. Matlock comes down on the side of *faith in Christ*.

Phil 2:8

Todd D. Still, "*Christos as Pistos: The Faith (fulness) of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews*"¹⁴

Still takes the debate between the faith of Christ and faith in Christ into Hebrews. Still relates Phil 2:8, *obedient to the point of death* to Hebrews 5:7, *although he was a Son, he learned obedience (to God) through what he suffered*. The Lectionary uses Hebrews 5:7 at Reading 35B, Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Phil 2:9-10

Paul M. Hoskins, "The Use of Biblical and Extrabiblical Parallels in the Interpretation of First Corinthians 6:2-3"¹⁵

Hoskins writes, "Even angels will fall under the jurisdiction of believers, since they also fall under Christ's (1 Cor 15:24-28; Phil 2:9-10)."

John 3:13-17

John 3:1-21

Craig L. Blomberg, review of Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda, The Johannine Exegesis of God: An Exploration into the Johannine Understanding of God¹⁶

In the words of Blomberg, Sadananda explains that this dialogue with Nicodemus reflects "the dialogues between the Johannine community and crypto-Christians ... The point of John 3 is to show Jesus as the normative determinant for understanding God's actions ..."

¹³ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 308.

¹⁴ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 2007) 748

¹⁵ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 2001) 297

¹⁶ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 2005) 541.

John 3:14

Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., "The Gospel of John as Scripture,"¹⁷

John 3:14, comparing Moses with Jesus, reveals that the Evangelist regards his writing as Sacred as the rest of Scripture.

John 3:13-17

John 3:16, 17

Stanley B. Marrow, "Κοσμος in John"¹⁸

Here is a place where John uses the word *world* in a positive sense, *God so loved the world*. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. The world, then, is not anything uniformly bad, but is sometimes good and sometimes neither good nor bad, but neutral.

John 3:16

Robert J. Daly, S.J., "The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac"¹⁹

Daly writes,

The Allusion to the Akedah [Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac] is less explicit here [John 3:16] than in Rom 8:32. But the striking similarity with Pauline thought on this point—the motive of love for giving one's only son, the function of faith, the universalist soteriology (all elements of the Akedah theology)—makes it likely that John was to some extent influenced by the Akedah when he made this insertion into the Nicodemus dialogue.

This still gets back to poverty of spirit.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

Between 080203 and now, I unintentionally omitted the above reference.

¹⁷ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 2005) 458, 461, 462.

¹⁸ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 97.

¹⁹ the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 1977) 68.