

NT-MK44

01.28.18

A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark by Bl. John Henry Newman ¹

At the time appointed Christ came forth from the Father and showed himself in this external world, first as its Creator, then as its Teacher, the revealer of secrets, the mediator, the effluence of God's glory, and the express image of his person. Neither cloud nor image, emblem nor words, are interposed between the Son and his eternal Father. No language is needed between the Father and him, who is the very Word of the Father; no knowledge is imparted to him, who by his very nature and from all eternity knows the Father and all that the Father knows. Such are his own words: *No one knows the Son but the Father, neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.* Again he says: *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,* and he accounts for this when he tells us that he and the Father are one, and that he is in the bosom of the Father and so can disclose him to humankind, as he was still in heaven, even as he was on earth.

Accordingly the blessed apostle draws a contrast between Moses and Christ to our comfort. *The Law, he says, was given by Moses. But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ In him, God is fully and truly seen, so that he is absolutely the way, and the truth and the life. All our duties are summed up for us in the message he brings us.* Those who look towards him for teaching, who worship and obey him, will be degrees see *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his face,* and will be *changed into the same image from glory to glory.* And thus it happens that people of the lowest class and the humblest education may know fully the ways and works of God; fully, that is, as human beings can know them; far better and more truly than the most sagacious of this world from whom the gospel is hidden. Religion has a store of wonderful secrets which no one can communicate to another, and which are most pleasant and delightful to know. *Call on me,* says God by the prophet, *and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things of which you have no knowledge.* This is no idle boast, but a fact which all who seek God will find to be true, though they cannot perhaps clearly express their meaning. Strange

truths about ourselves, about God, about our duty, about the world, about heaven and hell, new modes of viewing things, discoveries which cannot be put into words, marvelous prospects and thoughts half understood, deep convictions inspiring joy and peace, these are a part of the revelation which Christ, the Son of God, brings to those who obey him. Moses had much toil to gain from the great God, some scattered rays of the truth, and that for his personal comfort, not for all Israel; but Christ has brought from his Father for all of us the full and perfect way of life. Thus he brings grace as well as truth, a most surprising miracle of mercy.

[1](#)Journey with the Fathers – Year B – New City Press – 1999 – pg 76

DEAD-41

01.29.2018

A Reading from the Spiritual Exercises of Gertrud the Great.¹

Earnestly wish with the cherished one to become inebriated with the wine of love and in union with God to become unconscious to the world; in the embrace of the cherished one to expire from yourself into God; and already almost totally stripped of your humanness, to go pleasantly to sleep on the breast of Jesus. Thus, dying daily to yourself in love and living for God alone, you may, at the hour of death, trustfully run up to death, looking on it as the end of your exile, the door of the kingdom, and the gate of heaven. And say this with prayer and verse:

Hide me, most loving Jesus, in the hiding-place of your face from all those plotting crafty devices against me, and let my soul not be confounded when it speaks with its enemies at the gate; but fill it full of gladness with your mellifluous face.

O God, love, you are the consummation and the end of all good: to the very end, you cherish what you choose; whatever comes into your hand, you do not toss out but preserve most diligently for yourself. Ah! By right of possession make all my being and my consummation's end your own forever. Spare me now no longer, but wound my heart to the spirit's very marrow until you leave no spark of life within me. Rather, take away with you my entire life, reserving for yourself my soul in you.

Who will grant me to be consummated in you, O charity, and to be delivered by your death from the prison of this body and to be freed from this sojourn? How good, O love, to see you, have you, and possess you for eternity. On the day I depart this life, may you

¹Gertrud the Great of Helfta. Spiritual Exercises 1989, Cistercian Publications, p.88-9

yourself be present, regardful of great consolation, and may you bless me then in the beautiful dawn of the manifest contemplation of you. Now, O love, I here leave you behind and commend to you my life and, at the same time, my soul: allow me, allow me now to rest and fall asleep in you in peace. Amen.

OT-NUMB02

01.30.18

The Book of Numbers – by Dom Damasus Winzen ¹

The pattern of extending salvation to the whole of humanity was fulfilled when, after the death of Christ, the refusal of the Jews brought the new generation of the gentiles into the promised land of salvation, extending the Kingdom of God over the whole of humanity. We Christians are, therefore, the “little ones” to whom admission into God's rest is open. To us is addressed the warning of the psalm: “Today, when you hear his voice, harden not your hearts as your forefathers did in the time of trial in the desert”. They had seen the miracles of God. They had the good news of the promised land preached to them, but the message they heard did them no good because they did not accept in faith what they heard. Likewise we have seen God's glory and heard the good news of the gospel preached to us, but we may still not be admitted to God's rest if we do not keep the confidence we had at first in Christ unshaken to the very end. Let us, therefore, as long as we can speak of “today” - that means, as long as the promise of admission to God's rest is still open – admonish one another: “Today when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”.

When the census of the six hundred thousand took place the Levites were not numbered among them. They were chosen by God to be custodians of the tabernacle and immediate helpers of the priests. Levi, their ancestor, was the third of the sons of Jacob, but God gave the Levites the place of the firstborn because they were the only ones who, when the people had apostasized and adored the molten calf, remained with Moses, faithful to God's law. The Levites, taken by God in exchange for the first born sons, are therefore another prophetic sign pointing to the great “revolution” which the mercy of God would work in the days of Christ when the children of the kingdom, “god's firstborn sons, God's firstborn sons, would be cast out and God would raise up children to Abraham out of the gentiles. By repeating this “pattern” time and again in the course of the history

of salvation, God impresses upon us the fact that the order of salvation is not based on human blood but on God's grace.

The love which descends from God takes hold of all only through the medium of a divinely established order. The people of God is not a "crowd"; it is a "church", a legitimately constituted and organized assembly. The central part of the book of Numbers, chapters 2-21, is mainly devoted to showing the external and internal, spiritual order of the people of God. Its center is the tabernacle where the law is kept, and where the cloud of the divine presence appears. It is strictly separated from the people, because the God of Israel is not the "incarnation of the national spirit" nor is his law the "will of the people". It is of divine, not human, origin, and God's presence among his people is the free gift of his sovereign will. For the same reason, those who are appointed by God to serve at the sanctuary are separated from the rest of the people to form the inner circle immediately surrounding the tabernacle. "And the one who draws nigh shall be put to death".

Within the priestly order itself there is a strict division of authority and function between the "sons of Aaron and the Levites". The former alone are priests in the full sense of the word and are authorized to serve "within the veil". The Levites "are wholly given unto Aaron and his sons from the children of Israel" to help the priests before the tent and to carry its furnishings on the march. - over -

The Levites exercise their offices in strictest obedience. "According to the commandment of the Lord they were appointed by the hand of Moses, each to his service and to his burden". This divine order of authority, the very backbone of the life of the people of God, was threatened by Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their followers. They "rose up in face of Moses" and, without being legitimately called, "assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them: "You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the Lord is among them, why then lift up yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" Who will not recognize in these words the voice of the political demagogues of all ages? And who would not feel the piercing power of Moses' retort: "You take too much upon you, sons of Levi!" In this rebellion the whole order of divine grace was at stake, not only for

Israel but for all ages to come. The destruction of the rebels had, therefore to be such as clearly to reveal, once and forever, the divine purpose: that the priestly dignity of each member of God's people should never be used as a pretext to abolish divinely authority. Exaltation of body and soul into heaven was the Father's answer to the voluntary self-abasement of the divine high priest, Jesus Christ. The usurpers of priestly dignity were punished when "the earth broke assunder under their feet: and opening its mouth, devoured them with their tents and all thir substance."

1Pathways in Scripture – Dom Damasus Winzen – Word of Life –
Ann Arbor, MI – 1976 – pg

01SN3109

01.31.2018

A reading about **St. John Bosco**, by Archbishop L. Mathias. [1](#)

Don Bosco has struck the imagination of all who have known him and his work. There is no doubt that he was one of the most wonderful of men, and even in that galaxy of great names which is the catalogue of Saints, he occupies a place apart.

[Paul Claudel said that “In the Church there are some who made a profession of sanctity...; who, from the very first, had the Calendar of Saints as a goal. Don Bosco had no time for this, and we can readily believe that if he became a saint it was not his fault.”]

Genius as well as Saint, it is often difficult to see where the one ends and the other begins. Simple as a child and mostly to be found in the dust and clamor of a playground crowded with children, he plays also with miracles and prophecies, which he seems to make for fun. His speech is simple: so simple that children listen fascinated to his new kind of eloquence — an eloquence very different from that of the pulpit orators of the time. And his mind is so wise, that ministers, kings and popes listen to his advice.

A poor man, of poor parents, more millions passed through his hands than through those of many a banker. He spent them with the prodigality of an American playboy, when it was a question of the salvation of souls; but he was as tight with each cent as the peasants he came from, when it was a question of his person, or his comfort. He had the shrewdness of a captain of industry and a trust in God that made him undertake even the impossible when he saw it was for God's glory.

Above all, he was the most lovable of men. To know him was to love him, and often to be so fascinated as to be physically unable to leave him.

His chosen, or better, his God-given mission was education, and he is **the** educator of modern times. A man who could do with children

what no man has ever done; he could attach to himself the little ruffians that roam the streets and make of them lovable, ideal young men.

Indeed, Don Bosco as a man, as a Saint, as an Educator occupies a place apart. [He had a tremendous love for God and for souls, and not much for anything else.] His motto was **“Give me souls, and take all the rest away.”**

1From the Preface to *Saint John Bosco*, by A. Auffray; Salesian House: Tirpattur, India, 1959.

GN-VOC06

02/01/18

The Call of God – from a book by Hans Urs von Balthasar ¹

The higher the mission to which one is called by God, the more imperative it is that one consent to the call. For there is question here of the transferral to a human recipient of the personal word of God Himself. But this word can be received only if one is prepared to accept full responsibility for it. It makes no difference whether the answer is given with repugnance, as Moses gave it; or generously and freely, as Isaiah gave it; or reluctantly, as Jeremiah gave it. The “yes” of God's chosen one must be given before the office is laid upon his shoulders as the “burden of God”. But it is also possible to flee from God's call, as Jonah did.

Mission, then, requires the human's “yes” - an act not less important than the act by which God calls His chosen one. For man's response to the call of God must be no less decisive and unlimited than the call itself. And yet the two words – God's word and man's word – are not to be regarded as equal. On the contrary, man's word is but the acceptance of God's call and mission – his simple cooperation in the eternal “yes” of God. His answer must be so absorbed into and enveloped by the word of his calling that it forms an indissoluble union with it. The act by which man chooses a vocation is but the acknowledgment of the choice God has made of him.

The surrender of man's will to God's elective will means the sacrifice of his personal freedom insofar as it is regarded or exists as an entity distinct from the divine will (“Take, Lord, receive all my liberty...”, so that man's will may live from the divine will and may have no other object than the divine freedom of choice itself. The identification of one's own self with the mission received from God is an act of perfect faith and, as such, is the union of our work with the work of God in us. It is, at the same time, that which the Lord called “truth” and equated with true freedom: “If you abide in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn 8:31-32).

But the conferring of mission, which occurs at a particular historical moment in the life of the one called, is but the starting-point of what will be thereafter a constant “being led by the Holy spirit”. When one has given one's full “yes” to the call he has received, the Holy Spirit does not let him fail. It is as if God himself assumed the responsibility for the one He has called. As he makes his choice, the one chosen by God enters into the very unity between Father and Son. The call proceeds from the Father and leads the one called to the Son, who has been called by the Father from all eternity. When the Son calls the elect who are in the world, he does so in his role as mediator of the Father's call. The Father introduces the one called into the unity of the one and eternal call that has its source in the loving choice with which He chooses the Son.

1The Christian State of Life – Hans Urs von Balthasar – Ignatius Press – San Francisco – 1983 – pg 398

02SN0204

02.02.18

A Commentary of Origen on the Presentation ¹

Let us reflect on the way everything was prearranged for Simeon to embrace the Son of God. In the first place, he had been given a revelation by the Holy Spirit that *he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Anointed*. Then, he did not enter the temple by chance or routine, but he came there under the prompting of the Spirit of God, *for all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God*. If you too wish to embrace Jesus and enfold him in your arms, strive with all your might to follow the guidance of the Spirit and come to God's temple. Now, at this moment you are standing in the temple of the Lord Jesus, which is his Church, the temple built of living stones. When your life and conduct are really worthy of the name of Church, you are standing in the Lord's temple.

If, led by the Spirit, you come to the temple, you will find the child Jesus, you will lift him up in your arms and say: *Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace as you promised*. Notice at once that peace is joined to death and dismissal, for Simeon does not say only that he wishes to go, but adds that he wished to go in peace. This is the same promise as was made to blessed Abraham: *You shall go to your ancestors in peace when you have reached a ripe old age*. Who dies in peace? Only the person who has *the peace of God which surpasses all understanding*, and which guards the heart of its possessor. Who departs from this world in peace? Only the person who understands that *God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ*, and who, being in no way at enmity with God or opposed to him, has acquired complete peace and concord through good works, and so is allowed like Abraham to go in peace and join the holy patriarchs.

But why speak of the patriarchs? Shall I not rather go on to speak about Jesus, the prince and lord of the patriarchs, about whom Saint Paul says: *It is better to die and be with Christ*? That person possesses Jesus who dares to say: *It is no longer I who live – it is Christ who lives in me*.

And so, as we stand in the temple and hold the Son of God and embrace him, let us pray to almighty God and to the child Jesus that we may be found worthy of discharge and departure to better things, for we long to speak with Jesus and embrace him. To him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen

1Journey with the Fathers – Year A – New City Press – 1992 – pg
146

MY-81

02.03.18

From A Homily by St. Cyril of Alexandria ¹

Mary, Mother of God, we salute you. Precious vessel, worthy of the whole world's reverence, you are an ever-shining light, the crown of virginity, the symbol of orthodoxy, an indestructible temple, the place that held him whom no place can contain, mother and virgin. Because of you the holy gospels could say: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

We salute you, for in your holy womb he, who is beyond all limitation, was confined. Because of you the holy Trinity is glorified and adored; the cross is called precious and is venerated throughout the world; the heavens exult; the angels and archangels make merry; demons are put to flight; the devil, that tempter, is thrust down from heaven; the fallen race of man is taken up on high; all creatures possessed by the madness of idolatry have attained knowledge of the truth; believers receive holy baptism; the oil of gladness is poured out; the Church is established throughout the world; pagans are brought to repentance.

What more is there to say? Because of you the light of the only-begotten Son of God has shone upon those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death; prophets pronounced the word of God; the apostles preached salvation to the Gentiles; the dead are raised to life, and kings rule by the power of the holy Trinity.

Who can put Mary's high honor into words? She is both mother and virgin. I am overwhelmed by the wonder of this miracle. Of course no one could be prevented from living in the house he had built for himself, yet who would invite mockery by asking his own servant to become his mother?

Behold then the joy of the whole universe. Let the union of God and man in the Son of the Virgin Mary fill us with awe and adoration. Let us fear and worship the undivided Trinity as we sing the praise of the

ever-virgin Mary, the holy temple of God, and of God himself, her Son and spotless Bridegroom. To him by glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[1](#)A Word in Season – vol. 1 – Exordium Books – 1981 – pg 152