

GETHSEMANI ABBEY
VIGILS READINGS 13TH Week in Ordinary Time
July 1-7, 2018

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2018

A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark by St Peter Chrysologus [1](#)

Every gospel reading, beloved, is most helpful for our present life and for the attainment of the life to come. Today's reading, however, sums up the whole of our hope, banishing all grounds for despair.

Let us consider the synagogue official who took Christ to his daughter and in so doing gave the woman with a hemorrhage an opportunity to approach him. Here is the beginning of today's reading: An official came to Jesus and did homage, saying: *Lord, my little daughter has just died, but come and lay your hands on her and she will live.*

Christ could foresee the future and he knew that this woman would approach him. Through her the Jewish official was to learn that there is no need to move God to another place, take him on a journey, or attract him by a physical presence. One must only believe that he is present in the whole of his being always and everywhere, and that he can do all things effortlessly by a single command; that far from depriving us of strength, he gives it; that he puts death to flight by a word of command rather than by physical touch, and gives life by his mere bidding, without need of any art.

My daughter has just died. Do come. What he means is that the warmth of life still remains, there are still indications that her soul has not departed, her spirit is still in this world, the head of the house still has a daughter, the underworld is still unaware of her death. Come quickly and hold back the departing soul!

In his ignorance the man assumed that Christ would not be able to raise his daughter unless he actually laid his hand on her. So when Christ reached the house and saw the mourners lamenting as though the girl were dead, he declared that she was not dead but sleeping. In order to move their unbelieving minds to faith and convince them that one can rise from death more easily than from sleep. *The girl is not dead, he told them, but asleep.* And indeed for God death is

nothing but sleep. He can restore life-giving warmth to limbs grown cold in death sooner than we can impart vigor to bodies sunk in slumber. Listen to the apostle: *In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead will rise*. He used an image because it is impossible to express the speed of the resurrection in words. How could he explain its swiftness verbally when divine power outstrips the very notion of swiftness? How could time enter the picture when an eternal gift is given outside of time? Time implies duration, but eternity excludes time.

[1](#)Journey with the Fathers – Year B – New City Press – 1993 – pg 94

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2018

A Commentary on the Book of Judges by St. Augustine [1](#)

As regards the fact that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to God as a whole burnt offering, these are the facts: he had vowed that if he were to obtain victory, he would offer as a whole burnt offering whoever would come out of his house to meet him. Because he had vowed this and had won the battle and his daughter had been the one to meet him first, he fulfilled his vow. This event has become a difficult question to settle both for some who investigate the matter with piety and genuinely seek to know what this passage means and for some who out of ignorant impiety oppose the Holy Scriptures and call this a horrible misdeed that the God of the law and the prophets would have delighted in sacrifice, yes, even human sacrifices. First let us reply to their calumnies by noting that the whole burnt offerings of cattle did not delight the God of the law and the prophets – or as I prefer to say, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What pleases God about those sacrifices was that they were full of meaning and a foreshadowing of future things. We, however, have the very substance which was foreshadowed by these sacrifices that he wished to commend to us. Moreover there is also a very pertinent reason why those sacrifices have been changed so that they no longer are commended but even forbidden: it is so that we may not think that God is pleased by such sacrifices according to some carnal passion.

But we rightly ask whether human sacrifices must have foreshadowed future events. But if this were true, this type of sacrifice would not displease God. But in fact the Scriptures themselves clearly testify that human sacrifices displeases him. For when God wanted and commanded all the firstborn to belong to him and to

be his, he nonetheless wanted the firstborn of humankind to be redeemed by their parents, so that they would not entrust their firstborn children to God through immolation.

Now clearly God loves and rewards those sacrifices when a just man endures injustice and struggles for the truth even to the point of death or when he is killed by enemies whom he has offended for righteousness sake, as he has returned them good for evil, that is, love instead of hatred. In imitation of Abel, thousands of martyrs have struggled for the truth to the point of death and have been sacrificed by savage enemies. The Scripture says of them, "God has tested them like gold in a furnace and he has accepted them as a whole burnt offering." So too the apostle says: "I am being sacrificed".

But that is not how Jephthah made a whole burnt offering to the Lord out of his daughter. Rather he offered her as a literal sacrifice in the way that it was commanded for animals to be offered and forbidden for humans to be sacrificed. What he did seems rather similar to what Abraham did. In that instance the Lord gave him a special command that this ought to be done. He did not offer him by way of a general commandment that such sacrifices should take place at some time. Indeed the general rule prohibited it.

[1](#)Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture – O.T. - vol. IV – InterVarsity Press – Downers Grove, IL – 2005 pg 138

TUESDAY, JULY 3, 2018

From a Sermon by St. Peter Chrysologus [1](#)

When Thomas heard from his fellow disciples that they had seen the Lord, he answered: Unless I see the wounds made by the nails and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. Why did Thomas thus demand proof before believing? Why was he so devout toward the suffering Christ, but so resistant to the risen Christ? Why did a pious hand open again the wounds made by a wicked hand? Why did the hand of a follower strive to plunge anew into the side opened by the spear of a wicked soldier? Why did the pitiless curiosity of a servant renew the suffering caused by raging persecutors? Why did a disciple inflict these sufferings on the Lord, these pains on God, and test the heavenly physician by his wounds? When

the Lord died, the devil's power collapsed, the prison of hell was thrown open, the fetters of the dead were broken, tombs were destroyed; when the Lord rose again death's nature was completely changed. The stone before the Lord's most holy sepulcher was rolled away, and the linen cloths were loosened; at his rising in glory death took to flight and life returned; his body arose never to die again. Why then, Thomas, were you the only one to make such a shrewd inquiry, demanding that the Lord's wounds be shown as the only way to convince you? Suppose those wounds had vanished with all the other marks of suffering – what danger to your faith would not your curiosity engendered?

My brothers and sisters, piety made this search and devotion these demands to ensure that impiety should not thereafter raise doubts about the Lord's resurrection. It was not only the doubts in his own heart that Thomas was healing, but everyone else's as well; and as he was to proclaim these things to the nations, this energetic advocate was diligently trying to discover how he could support the profession of so great a faith. Beyond question his spirit of prophecy was greater than his doubt. For why should he have made such a request unless he had learned from the Lord by prophetic inspiration that these wounds alone were to be retained as proof of the resurrection? Furthermore, the Lord of his own accord had shown the others what this man subsequently demanded. The text says: *Jesus came and stood in their midst and showed them his hands and his side.* For he who had entered through closed doors and was with good reason thought by the disciples to be a ghost could not prove himself to their doubting minds except by the wounds that told of his passion. Then he came and said to Thomas: *Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put out your hand and put it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.* Do this so that when you reopen these wounds which have already poured forth water and blood to cleanse and ransom all humankind, faith may pour out over the whole world. Thomas answered: *My Lord and my God!*

See how scripture shows not only a human body but also, through the suffering this body endured, that Christ is, as Thomas acclaims him, God and Lord. Truly he is God who lives again after being dead, who rose after suffering a mortal wound; for although he endured so much suffering and received such great wounds, he lives and reigns as God for countless ages. Amen

[1](#)A Word in Season – vol. IV – Augustinian Press – 1991 – pg 106

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4, 2018

The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church - from a Pastoral Letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops – 1990 [1](#)

In the Catholic social vision, the human person is central, the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status. The test of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human life and human dignity. We believe that people are more important than things.

Flowing from our God-given dignity, each person has basic rights and responsibilities. These include the rights to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, to raise a family, to immigrate, to live free from unfair discrimination, and to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family. People have a fundamental right to life and to those things which make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, health care, education, security, social services, and employment. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society, to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.

The human person is not only sacred but social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. No community is more central than the family; it needs to be supported, not undermined. It is the basic cell of society, and the state has an obligation to support the family. The family has major contributions to make in addressing questions of social justice. It is where we learn and act on our values. What happens in the family is at the basis of a truly human social life. We also have the right and responsibility to participate in and contribute to the broader communities in society. The state and other institutions of political and economic life, with both their limitations and obligations, are instruments to protect the life, dignity, and rights of the person; promote the well-being of our families and communities; and pursue the common good. Catholic social teaching does offer clear guidance on the role of government. When basic human needs are not being met by private initiative, then people must work through their government, at appropriate levels, to meet those needs. A central test of political, legal and economic institutions is what they do *to* people, what they do *for* people, and how people *participate* in them.

Poor and vulnerable people have a special place in Catholic social teaching. A basic moral test of a society is how its most vulnerable members are faring. This is not a new insight; it is the lesson of the parable of the Last Judgment (see Matthew 25). Our tradition calls us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our sisters and brothers, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response. We must seek creative ways to expand the emphasis of our nation's founders on individual rights and freedom by extending democratic ideals to economic life and thus ensure that the basic requirements for life with dignity are accessible to all.

[1](#) Pastoral Letters & Statements of the U.S. Catholic Bishops – vol. VI – National Conference of Catholic Bishops – United States Catholic Conference – Washington DC – pg 217f

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 2018

THE FAITHFUL HEART OF RUTH, from a Commentary by Gaston Brillet¹

Famine drove a family from the land of Bethlehem to the land of Moab: a father, a mother and their two sons. The father died. The sons took Moabite wives. In their turn, the two sons died. The mother decided to return to Bethlehem. This decision led to a contest in loyalty and tenderness.

The mother advised the young women to remain in their own country and to allow her to return alone to her own land. Why should they share her misfortunes? They had their own lives to lead: they could marry and have a family. Tearfully they refused. At last one of them yielded. But the other, Ruth, insisted on staying with Naomi: "Where you go, I will go; where you live, I will live; your people will be my people, your God my God."

Poor and alone, they reached Bethlehem. To earn their daily bread, Ruth went to the fields to glean among the reapers. All Naomi's love was centered on this girl who was now more than a daughter to her.

¹MEDITATIONS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Gaston Brillet, C.Or. Trans. by K. Sullivan, RSCJ, (Desclee Co. N.Y. 1959) pp.86-89.

At this point in the tale a new figure is introduced. This is Booz. Like the two women, he had a finely spiritual nature. He was moreover their kinsman and had his part to play in their devoted and generous plan. He owned the field where Ruth had been gleaning and from his workers he learned her story. Prudent and resourceful Naomi now proposed a line of conduct that was audaciously pure but that could succeed only with souls of steadfast integrity. Although he did not know the scheme in advance, Booz cooperated with all possible delicacy, dignity and generosity. According to the national law, another kinsman had a prior claim. Faithful to the tiniest demands of duty the latter is allowed to decide the issue. He ceded his rights and Booz married Ruth.

In this beautiful book, which is often called an idyll, we must follow the long drama of fidelity. And it is the lesson of fidelity that we must carry away with us. Fidelity is a whole world in itself and its existence depends on fidelity. We are reminded of the words of the Prophecy of Osee: "Heaven shall win answer, the Lord says, answer from Me; and from heaven, earth; and from earth, the corn and wine and oil it nourishes". (2:21ff) The formula is striking. The idea is found in many places in the Bible. One creature depends on another, all are for all. When we consider humankind we find that this is no longer true--and the Bible never ceases to repeat this--we cannot count on ourselves, we deceive ourselves, we lie to ourselves. – over -

Nevertheless, the human heart is still alive and responsive to all forms of fidelity-- a faithful conscience, a true faith, a loyal love. The book that contains truth and beauty, tells us to our amazement and for our consolation that "God is faithful," that Jesus is "the faithful witness" and that the just one will be welcomed at heavens' threshold with this simple greeting: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

FRIDAY, JULY 6, 2018

A reading about the language of redemption in the Old Testament,

from a book by John Oesterreicher.¹

It is the enduring marvel of Scripture that the language of ancient Israel became the means by which God's ways with [humanity] were revealed. The same vocabulary that served to describe [the] redemption of a firstborn child or slave was used to extol God's redemption of the oppressed and the sinner....

[The word] *ga'al*, "to vindicate," was harnessed to convey God's intervention on behalf of his people. Indeed, no harness was necessary. *Ga'al* and its corresponding noun *go'el* lent themselves most easily to their theological application.... Shortly before her liberation [from Babylon], God awakened a prophet who, though firm like Isaiah, proclaimed words of supreme consolation: "*I will help you, says the Lord; your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel*" (Isa 41.14). Here and in a dozen other passages of the Second Isaiah, "redeemer" stands for *go'el*, the relative who was blood-bound to vindicate his own.... A hero in her defense, he delivered her from the yoke of domination....

No matter how often Israel's devout ask for delivery from bondage and pain, ultimate redemption is freedom *from* sin and *for* God. For Israel's Maker and Ruler, her Deliverer and Redeemer is truly her *Go'el*, her Next-of-kin.... He claims exiled Israel as his wife. Sing she must, be jubilant, and forget the shame of her loneliness: her Creator has become her Husband, the God of all the earth her freedom-bringing Kin (cf. Isa 54.1, 4f.)....

With the coming of Jesus, the assurance: "*With enduring love I take pity on you, says the Lord, your redeemer,*" is no longer addressed to Jews alone but to all who wish to be Abraham's offspring by faith. Again, one of Israel's singers, offering his good wishes to a newly crowned king, is carried away by the spirit and proclaims the coming of a ruler unlike any other: "*He shall rescue the poor man when he cries out, and the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save.*" (Ps 71/72.12f.)

In Jesus, these words and other prophetic visions are fulfilled in a way that exceeded every expectation. At the synagogue of Nazareth, for instance, he

¹ *The Israel of God: On the Old Testament Roots of the Church's Faith*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963, pp. 44 ff.

presented himself to the people as the Bringer of glad tidings, the Healer of the broken-hearted, the Freer of captives, the Broadcaster of God's favor foretold by the prophet.... Even though the New Testament does not expressly give him the title **Go'el** — or, rather, its Greek equivalent — the whole of it testifies that he is the Next-of-kin: did he not call [his disciples] his *brothers* and lay down his life for his *friends*? *“One God there is, and one Mediator between God and humanity, the Man Christ Jesus who gave himself as ransom for all,”* St. Paul proclaims (1 Tim 2.5f.), while St. John delights in *“Jesus Christ the Just,” “our Intercessor,”* the Pleader of our cause before the Father, *“The Atonement for our sins—yet not only for ours but also for those of the whole world.”* (1 Jn 2.1-2).

What a Kinsman! He carries mankind's burden; he saves, not souls or bodies, but soul *and* bodies: the whole [person]. There is no greater realization of the wonder of the Ancient Dispensation, which revealed God as Israel's **Go'el**, than God's coming in the flesh. Made human, he is by this very fact [our] Advocate, Ransomer, and Redeemer. All ailment and anguish he carries as if they were his own. In the purest sense, he is Israel's, he is everyone's blood brother. He *does* avenge murder and lust, injustice and contempt, hatred and envy, and all [our] other transgressions, but not by shedding the sinner's blood, rather by giving his own, surrendering his life *“as a ransom for many”* (Mt 20.28). He is the unexampled Avenger who vicariously *“died for us,” “died for our sins,” “died for all”* (Rom 5.9; 1 Cor 15.3; 2 Cor 5.14).

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 2018

A Homily of Amadeus of Lausanne on the Blessed Virgin Mary (CF 18: 64-66)

We read in the Gospel that the Virgin was saluted by the angel, espoused by God,, that she conceived by the Holy Spirit, brought forth true God and true man, who should save his people from their sins, and of whose kingdom there should be no end. He it is who was promised to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations should be blessed. Of him the Apostle [Paul] fitly says: >Behold how great is he= who comes forth to save the nations. Truly great is he whom the Father sent into the world as his only begotten son, whom the spiritual Virgin poured forth, whom a Virgin conceived and brought to birth, and after the birth remained a virgin.

He is announced by the archangel, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and is revealed by John while he was still enclosed within his mother's womb. He is taken up by the aged Simeon with joy unspeakable and by him is foretold as the light of the nations and the glory of the people Israel.

Do you therefore see how wisdom reaches boldly from end to end and disposes all things pleasantly? From a child as yet unborn to a feeble old man it proclaims such consistent evidence and with such sweet harmony of truth plays upon the instruments. Hence it is said by the prophet: AThere is no one who can hide from its heat.@ He came forth from the Father, he returned to the Father. He went into hell, he returned to the throne of God. Who would be hidden from the heat of him whom an infant in the womb perceived, and by whom a chilled old man in the temple was set on fire? As if to signify that he willed to meet the Lord, the one rejoiced in what movement he could make. Taking into his arms Jesus whom he was awaiting with unspeakable longing, the other received divine love into the center of his being, and not able to endure in his frail flesh the sweet warmth of the being who is above the heavens or in his frame the power of the fire-bearing word, he prayed for the dissolution of his body, that when his mortal habitation was destroyed he might enjoy more freely the sweetness he already tasted and might announce to those dwelling in the shadow of death the birth of the Savior whom he was proclaiming among those one earth.

But what are we doing or whither are we being carried? See, while we desire to extol her that was blessed among women, we are praising the blessed fruit of her womb, and while we seek to commend the beauty of the tree, we keep close to the surpassing beauty of the fruit. For every tree is known by its fruit and is judged by its own yield. As the palm is assessed according to the sweetness of its dates, the olive tree by the richness of the olives, the wine by the juice of the grape, so the praise of the Son enriches the Mother and the divine birth heaps honor upon her that bore him.

END OF WEEKS READINGS