

NT-MK13

10/07/18

A Homily on the Gospel of Mark by Jacob of Serugh ¹

In his mysterious plans the Father had destined a bride for his only Son and presented her to him under the guise of prophetic images. Moses appeared and with a deft hand sketched a picture of bridegroom and bride but immediately drew a veil over it. In his book he wrote that a man should leave his father and mother so as to be joined to his wife, that the two might in very truth become one. The prophet Moses spoke of man and woman in this way in order to foretell Christ and his Church. With a prophet's penetrating gaze he contemplated Christ becoming one with the Church through the mystery of water. He saw Christ even from the Virgin's womb drawing the Church to himself, and the Church in the water of Baptism drawing Christ to herself. Bridegroom and bride were thus wholly united in a mystical manner, which is why Moses wrote that the two should become one.

With veiled face Moses contemplated Christ and the Church: the one he called "man" and the other "woman" so as not to reveal the full splendor of the reality. After the marriage celebration came Paul. He saw the veil covering their splendor and lifted it, revealing Christ and his Church to the whole world, and showing that it was they whom Moses had described in his prophetic vision. In an outburst of inspired joy the Apostle exclaimed: This is a great mystery! He revealed the meaning of the veiled picture the prophet had called man and woman, declaring: *I know that it is Christ and his Church, who were two before but have now become one.*

Wives are not united to their husbands as closely as the Church is to the son of God. What husband but our Lord ever died for his wife, and what bride ever chose a crucified man as her husband? Who ever gave his blood as a gift to his wife except the one who died on the cross and sealed the marriage bond with his wounds? Who was ever seen lying dead at his own wedding banquet with his wife at his side seeking to console herself by embracing him? At what other celebration, at what other feast is the bridegroom's body distributed to the guests in the form of bread?

Death separates wives from their husbands, but in this case it is death that unites the bride to her beloved. He died on the cross, bequeathed his body to his glorious spouse, and now every day she receives and consumes it at his table. She consumes it under the form of bread, and under the form of the wine she drinks, so that the whole world may know that they are no longer two but one.

¹Journey with the Fathers – Year B – New City Press – 1993 – pg 122

OT-JER16
10.08.18

A Commentary on the Prophecies of Jeremiah by St. Jerome ¹

Whatever is discerned by the eyes arrives to the judgment and understanding of the soul through every other sense, through hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, but is retained even more by the mind. Thus the prophet was commanded to go to the potter's house and there to hear the instructions of the Lord. "when," he says, "I arose and went down to the potter's house, he was making something on the wheel. When I discerned that the vessel he was making out of clay suddenly fell apart," this occurred by the providential agency of God, that the artisan's hand, unwittingly, would create a parable by its mistake. Then the potter who had destroyed his clay vessel on the turning wheel made of it something else, as seemed to him the thing to do. And immediately the Lord said to the prophet< "If this potter has such power that he can make something out of the same clay that disintegrated am I not able to do the same for you who seem to have perished?" Moreover, that he might signify the freedom of the will, the Lord said that he would announce punishments and rewards to the nations and to this king or to that king. It was not that these events that he had predicted were to happen, but rather that good may be brought out of evil if they repented, or evil brought out of good if, after their resolutions, they returned to sin. Our point here was not that God was ignorant of what the nations and the kings would do, but rather that he had endowed the human person with his own will, so that he would receive either a reward or punishment on the basis of his own merit. Yet, what happens is not entirely dependent on the person, but also on the grace that God has bestowed on all, for the freedom of the will must be restrained so that the grace of God would excel in all things, according to the prophecy: "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain; unless the Lord keeps the city, do the guards watch over it in vain". For "it is not of the one who wills or the one who runs, but of God who has mercy."

You may as well accuse God of falsehood because he said by the mouth of Jonah: "Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But God will reply by the mouth of Jeremiah, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to break down and destroy it; if that nation concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them. And at that instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it does evil in my sight, that it obeys not my voice, then I will repent of the good that I said would benefit them."

¹ Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture – Old Testament – vol. XII – InterVarsity Press – Downers Grove, IL – 2009 – pg 145

GN-VOC13

10.09.18

The Meaning of Vocation – St John Paul II ¹

Without heeding the call of Jesus, it is not possible to realize the fullness of your humanity. He keeps calling you. He keeps inviting you. Yes, Christ calls us, but he calls you in truth. His calls demanding, because he invites you to let yourselves be “captured” by him completely so that your whole lives will be seen in a different light. He is the friend who said to his disciples, “No longer do I call you servants, but I have called you friends”. And he proved his friendship by laying down his life for you.

True living is not found in one's self or in things. It is found in Someone else, in the One who created everything that is good, true and beautiful in the world. True living is found only in God and you discover God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Try to get to know Jesus in a true and comprehensive way! Deepen your knowledge of Jesus which ends loneliness, overcomes sadness and uncertainty, gives real meaning to life, curbs passions, exalts ideals, expands energies in charity, brings light in decisive choices. Let Christ be for you the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Look for him in prayer, in sincere and assiduous dialogue with him. Let him share in the questions that come up, your problems and your own plans. Look for him in his word in the Gospels, and in the liturgical life of the Church. Have recourse to the sacraments. Confidently open your most intimate aspirations to the Love of Christ who waits for you in the Eucharist. You will receive the answer to all your worries and you will see with joy that the consistency of your life which he asks of you is the door to fulfill the noblest dreams of your youth.

Mature in meditation and prayer the choice you are about to make and which, inevitably, you will have to make. If the Lord's voice rings out deep down in your heart, listen to it: “O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts”.

Who would dare to say no to the call of the Lord? No one can afford to make a mistake about his path in life. Therefore reflect well, pray to have the light necessary for your choice and, once it is made, pray even more to have the strength to persevere, always walking in a way “worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him”.

“Lord, help me to see”. Help me, Lord, to see what is your will for me at every moment and especially help me to see what is your design of love for the whole of my life, that is my vocation.. Give me the generosity to say yes to you and to be faithful to you in

whatever path you mark out for me. Let me be both salt and light in my place of work, in my family, and in the whole world.

1The Meaning of Vocation – St John Paul II – Scepter Publishers – Princeton, NJ – 1998 –
pg 21

OT-JER17
10.10.18

A Commentary on the Prophecies of Jeremiah by John Cassian ²

Holy Scripture may, by an improper use of terms, emply the term “evils” in place of “affliction” – not that these are properly and in their nature evils by those on whom they bare brought for their good. For when divine judgment is reasoning with human beings, it must speak with human language and feelings. For when a doctor for the sake of health with good reason either cuts or cauterizes those who are suffering from the inflammation of ulcers, it is considered an evil by those who have to bear it. Moreover all chastisements seems at the moment to be a bitter thing to those who are chastised, as the apostle says: “Now all chastisement for the present indeed seems not to bring with it joy but sorrow, but afterwards it will yield the most peaceful fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised by it”, and “whom the Lord loves he chastises, and scourges every son whom he receives; for what son is there that the father does not correct?” And so evils are sometimes used to stand for afflictions, as where we read, “And God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do to them and did it not.” And again: “For you, Lord, are gracious and merciful, patient and very merciful and ready to repent of the evil,” that is, of the sufferings and losses that you are forced to bring on us as the reward of our sins.

And another prophet, knowing that these things are profitable for some, and certainly not through any jealousy for their safety but with an eye to their good, prays thus: “Add evils to them, O Lord, add evils to the proud of the earth” and the Lord says, “See, I will bring evils on them, sorrows and losses, with which they shall for the present be chastised for their soul’s health, and so they shall at length be driven to return and hasten back to me whom in their prosperity they scorned. And so we cannot in any way assert that these afflictions were originally evil, for they are good for many and ultimately offer occasions for eternal bliss. Therefore (to return to the question raised), all these things that are thought to be brought on us as evils by our enemies or by any other people should not be thought of as evils but as things indifferent. For in the end they will not be what he thinks who brought them on us in rage and fury, but what he makes them who endures them. And so when death has been brought on a saint, we ought not think that an evil has happened to him but something indifferent. It is an evil to a wicked person, while to the good it is rest and freedom from evils. “Fpr death is rest to one whose way is hidden.” And so a good person does not suffer any loss from these evils because he suffers nothing strange, but by the crime of an enemy he only receives (and not without the reward of eternal Life) that which would have happened to him in the course of nature and pays the debt of human death, which must be paid by an

² Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture – Old Testament vol. XII – InterVarsity Press – Downers Grove, IL – 2009 – pg 150

inevitable law, with the interest of a most fruitful suffering and the recompense of a great reward.

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10.11.18

Spiritual Testament and Last Wishes by St. Pope John XXIII ¹

On the point of presenting myself before the One and Triune Lord who created me, redeemed me, chose me to be his priest and bishop, and covered me with unending graces, I entrust my poor soul to His mercy; I humbly ask pardon for my sins and deficiencies. I offer Him the little good, although petty and imperfect, that with His aid I have succeeded in doing, for His glory, for the service of Holy Church, for the edification of my brethren, begging Him finally to receive me, like a good and kind Father, with His Saints into eternal happiness.

I profess once again with all my heart my entire Christian and Catholic faith, my adherence and subjection to the Holy Apostolic and Roman Church, and my complete devotion and obedience to her August Head, the Supreme Pontiff, whom it was my great honor to represent for long years in various regions of the East and West, who at the end chose me to come to Venice as Cardinal and Patriarch, and whom I have always followed with sincere affection, aside from and above any dignity conferred upon me. The sense of my own littleness and nothingness has always been my good companion, keeping me humble and calm, and making me employ myself to the best of my ability in a constant exercise of obedience and charity for souls and for the interests of the Kingdom of Jesus, my Lord and my all. To Him be all glory; for me and for my merit, His mercy. "My merit is the mercy of the Lord. O Lord, You know everything: You know that I love You." This alone is enough for me.

I ask pardon of those whom I have unwittingly offended, of all to whom I have not been a source of edification. I feel that I have nothing to forgive anyone, for all who have known and dealt with me – including those who have offended me, scorned me, held me in bad esteem (with good reason, for that matter), or have been a source of affliction for me – I regard solely as brothers and benefactors, to whom I am grateful and for whom I pray and always will pray.

Born poor, but of honorable and humble people, I am particularly happy to die poor, having given away, in accord with the various demands and circumstances of my simple and modest life, for the benefit of the poor and of Holy Church that had nurtured me, all that came into my hands – which was little enough as a matter of fact – during the years of my priesthood and episcopacy. Outward appearances of ease and comfort often veiled hidden thorns of distressing poverty and kept me from giving with all the largess I would have liked. I thank God for this grace of poverty which I vowed in my youth, poverty of spirit as a priest of the Sacred Heart, and real poverty. This grace has

sustained me in never asking for anything, neither positions nor money, nor favors – never, not for myself, nor for my relatives or friends.

The goodness directed toward my poor person by all whom I met along the path made my life serene. As I face death, I recall each and every one – those who preceded me in taking the final step, those who will survive me and who will follow me. May they pray for me. I will repay them from Purgatory or from Paradise, where I hope to be received. I repeat it once again, not because of my merits, but because of the mercy of the Lord.

At the moment for saying farewell, or better still, *arrivederci*, I once more remind everyone of what counts most in life: blessed Jesus Christ, His Holy Church, His Gospel; and in the Gospel, above all, the *Pater noster* in the spirit and heart of Jesus and the Gospel, the truth and goodness, the goodness meek and kind, active and patient, victorious and unbowed.

My children, my brethren, *arrivederci*. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

[1](#)The Encyclicals and Other Messages of John XXIII – TPS Press – Washington DC – 1964 –
pg 465

OT-JER18
10.12.18

A commentary on the Prophecies of Jeremiah by Clement of Rome ³

Through your works you have revealed the everlasting structure of the world. You, Lord, created the earth. You are faithful throughout all generations, righteous in your judgments, marvelous in strength and majesty, wise in creating and prudent in establishing what exists. You are good in all that is observed and faithful to those who trust in you. You are merciful and compassionate. You forgive us our sins and our injustices and transgressions and our shortcomings. Do not take into account every sin of your servants, but cleanse us with the cleansing of your truth and “direct our steps to walk in holiness and righteousness and purity of heart,” and to do what is good and pleasing in your sight and in the sight of our rulers. You, Lord, let your face shine on us” in peace “for our good” that we may be sheltered “by your mighty hand” and delivered from every sin “by your uplifted arm” deliver us as well from those who hate us unjustly. Give harmony and peace to us and to all who dwell on the earth, just as you did to our ancestors when they reverently “called on you in faith and trust,” that we may be saved while we render obedience to your almighty and most excellent name, and to our rulers and governors on earth.

³ Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture – Old Testament – vol. XII – InterVarsity Press – Downers Grove, IL. – 2009 – pg 160

MY-18
10.13.18

**A reading about the silence and prayer of Mary,
from a book by Adrienne von Speyr. ⁴**

A life of faith is a life of silence. Mary's existence as Mother is hidden in a great silence. All around and about her is silence. People knew nothing of her real life, of the mysteries of her virginity. Not even Joseph understood her. An angel had to enlighten him about her mystery. The silence that surrounds her is simply a reflection of her own silence. She did not become a subject of conversation, because she did not talk about herself. And in that way she safeguarded her secret. Later, too, when the Son appeared in public, she remained silent because it was not her task or mission to speak. But in her silence she participates in the dialogue between Father and Son which is the very substance of prayer. She remained silent out of respect, and in order not to drown the word of God with her own words.

Her silence also manifests her activity and her passivity, her strength and her weakness. Her activity and strength consist in her self-control, her weakness and passivity in allowing herself to be led. She is simply and solely the instrument of God. Strength and weakness, doing and suffering, all the tensions and stresses of life meet and join in her without occasioning the predominance of any one in particular. The priority is always decreed by the need of her mission. She did not cultivate, tend or encourage her good qualities for their goodness' sake (in the way that people do when they are conscious of their own gentleness and are disposed to go further in the same direction). She did not practice her virtues with a definite end in view; on the contrary, she quite simply allowed God to decide everything, to decree everything in accordance with her mission--and this is where her silence is so profound--without losing or giving up any of her complementary qualities. In her, silence is both complete self-renunciation and complete indifference.

All this co-exists in her with a perseverance that knows no limits, because her mission flows on accompanied by a parallel discretion that disturbs nothing. All her qualities participate to some extent in the glory of her conversation with the Angel: each decision is taken in the solitude and isolation imposed by the relation of her soul to God. Discretion, in this instance, is but another name for humility that asks no questions and never raises the dust. She asked the Angel of God one simple factual question, and with that she became the answer to all that God expected. Her life is therefore community in
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⁴ *The Handmaid of the Lord*, New York, 1955, pp. 19-21.