

A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke by Hilary of Poitiers ¹

Sure of protection on the day of battle, Christ prayed: *Lord, do not allow the wicked anything contrary to my desire*. He who said: *I have come not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me* hastened to fulfill the task he had undertaken out of obedience, though in such a way as to remind us that he possessed a will of his own. In fact, he willed whatever the Father willed. His saying *I have come not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me* revealed who had sent him and whom he obeyed, but without detriment to his own power of willing.

Desiring to do everything the Father desired, Christ hastened to carry out his wishes with regard to his passion before the wicked could hinder him or prevent him from doing so. He had a great longing to eat the passover with his disciples, and he celebrated the paschal meal in haste. He had an intense desire to drink the cup of his passion, for he said: *Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me?* When the search party came to arrest him and asked which man was Jesus, he stepped forward of his own accord. He asked for the sour wine which he knew he was destined to drink, and having drunk it and achieved his great purpose he said: *It is accomplished*, thus expressing his joy at obtaining his heart's desire.

In the psalms Christ has often prayed for his life to be delivered from the sword. He had shown in advance that not one of his bones was to be broken, and he had prophesied that his tunic was to be acquired by lot. He prayed that all these things willed by himself might come to pass so that prophecy might be fulfilled: that the wicked should have no control over them, that sinners should not hinder the celebration of that passover for which he so ardently longed, that fear should not stop them from presenting him with the cup of his passion – for those who came to arrest him all fell to the ground at the Lord's first reply to them. He prayed that the sour wine that was to be offered him might be ready, that the soldier's lance might not pierce his side before he had given up his spirit, and that no pretext for breaking his bones should be given by his slowness in dying. He prayed that no prophecy should be unfilled, and that nothing should be allowed the wicked contrary to his desire, but that everything not only prophesied but also willed by himself should be accomplished. He prayed about these things not because there was any danger of their not being accomplished, but so that everyone should perceive that the prophecies referred to himself.

¹Journey with the Fathers – Year C – New City Press – New York – 2000 – pg 94

A Commentary on Genesis from Quodvultdeus of Carthage ¹

Impelled by the famine, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain from their brother, whom they had sold. Those who had crucified our Joseph, that is to say Christ our Lord, came to him to be revived by his bread and do take away the hunger which was distressing their souls. The former Joseph's brethren do him reverence; the latter, Christ's brethren, likewise do him reverence. On seeing his brothers, Joseph recognized them; but they did not know who he was/ This applies to us also: for his brethren knew him not. *For if they had known who he was, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.* Joseph was estranged from his brethren and said to them, through an interpreter: *you are spies, you have come to spy out the roads and tracks and the pathways of this country.* So also our Joseph, Christ our Lord, said to his persecutors through his interpreter Peter: *You have denied what is holy and just and you have killed the prince of eternal life.* Joseph's brethren are sorry for what they did. To those others also, Christ's persecutors, the word is: *Repent.* They, of the olden times, say: *We are at fault over our brother.* So also the Jews who had told Pilate: *His blood be upon us and upon our children,* now say to the apostles: *What are we to do, brethren?* Show us. So as not to be thought spies, Joseph's brethren state that they are the sons, twelve in all, of one father; and they say that one of them is no more (since it was he to whom they were telling this), while the youngest is at home with their father.

On hearing mention of his younger brother, Joseph, ardently longing to see him, says: *I will test your claim not to be spies by seeing whether your younger brother will come with you.* And he took Simeon apart from them, had him fettered in their presence, and put him under guard. Surely our latter day Benjamin and youngest brother, sought after by the Joseph who is Christ our Lord, is none other than Paul, formerly Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, as he himself says, calling himself the least of the apostles. Simeon, bound by the three bonds of his denial, he whom fear had bound and love released, this simeon we may take as Peter. That said, we had better acknowledge that it is by him that sins are bound and loosed: him indeed to whom it is said that *What you hold bound on earth will be bound in heaven; and what you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

¹ A Word in Season - vol VII – Augustinian Press – 1999 – pg 92

A Commentary on Genesis from Quodvult dues of Carthage ²

Joseph ordered his brothers' sacks to be filled with corn and the money they had brought to be returned to each one. This was to show that the grace of Christ, who is our Joseph, does not come from works, for otherwise grace would not be grace. Joseph's brethren come for the second time with Benjamin as they had promised; and for the second time five thousand Jews come to Christ, followed by Paul, the least – or the last – of the apostles. Joseph saw Benjamin, his brother and his mother's son, and he wept at the sight. Jesus saw Paul savaging our mother the Church and he took pity on him. The same Paul says that Jesus appeared to him, as it were born after his time. Benjamin's delivery and birth, on the other hand, hastened his mother's death, and so he was called the child of grief. Thus Paul, our Benjamin, says: *I am not worthy to be called an apostle, for I persecuted the Church of God.* Joseph said of his brothers, to the head of the household: *Take them into the house, for they are to eat bread with me.* So our Joseph says, through the prophets, to his brethren: *Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have made ready for you.* Joseph gave his brethren gifts; and Christ our Joseph made gifts to men when he sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Joseph's gifts to his younger brother were more lavish than those to the others. This is what Paul, our Benjamin, said of himself in his preaching: *I have labored more than all those: but not I, but God's grace working in me.* Again, Joseph ordered his brothers' sacks to be filled with corn and the money to be given back. Our brethren remonstrate to Joseph at receiving grace upon grace. Joseph orders his own goblet to be placed secretly in Benjamin's sack, and it troubled his brethren when it was sought and found in Benjamin's sack. The cup of Christ's suffering, given in secret, is recognized for what it is by grace, when afflicting Paul's body. For this is what he meant when he berated the entire synagogue, as if to say he had found the cup in his sack. *For I bear in my body the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

² A Word in Season – vol. VII – Augustinian Press – 1999 – pg. 95

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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

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

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A Reading from the Homilies on Genesis, by Origen.³

We should observe in reading the Holy Scriptures how "to go up" and "to go down" are employed in each individual passage. For if we were to give diligent consideration, we would discover that almost never is anyone said to have gone down to an holy place nor is anyone related to have gone up to a blameworthy place. These observations show that the divine Scripture was not composed, as it seems to most, in illiterate and uncultivated language, but was adapted in accordance with the discipline of divine instruction. Nor is Scripture devoted so much to historical narratives as to things and ideas which are mystical.

You will find it written, therefore, that those who are born of the seed of Abraham have gone down into Egypt and again that the sons of Israel have gone up out of Egypt. Indeed Scripture speaks thus also of Abraham himself: "But Abraham went up out of Egypt into the desert, he and his wife and all that was his, and Lot with him." Then afterwards it is said also of Isaac: "The Lord appeared to him and said to him: 'Go not down into Egypt.'" But also the Ismaelites who were carrying resin and oil of myrrh, who also themselves came from the seed of Abraham, are said to go down into Egypt with whom also Joseph is said to have gone down into Egypt. But also after these words Scripture says; "Jacob, seeing that there is traffic in grain in Egypt, said to his sons: 'Why are you idle? Behold I hear that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy food for us, that we may live and not die.'" And a little later, Scripture says "The brothers of Joseph went down into Egypt to purchase grain."

To be sure, when Simeon had been detained in Egypt and his nine brothers were released and returned to their father, it is not written that they went up out of Egypt, but "loading the grain on their asses," Scripture says, "they departed." For they would not properly be said to go up whose brother was held bound in Egypt, with whom they too, anxious in mind and soul, were afflicted, bound, as it were, by certain bonds of love. But when their brother has been received and Joseph has been recognized, but also after Benjamin has been presented to their eyes, when they return with joy, then it is said that: "They went up out of Egypt and came into the land of Canaan to their father Jacob." It is at that time when they also say to their father: "Joseph, you son, is living and has dominion over all the land of Egypt." For by necessity those who announce that Joseph is living and holds dominion over all Egypt are said to go up from the lowest and humble places to steep and lofty ones.

³Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus. Tr. Ronald E. Heine. The Catholic University of America Press, 1982. Homily XV p.203-4.

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.