

NT-LK29
10.13.19

A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke by Bruno of Segni ¹

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus passed by the border between Samaria and Galilee, and when he entered one of the villages ten lepers came to meet him. What do these ten lepers stand for if not the sum total of all sinners? When Christ the Lord came, not all men and women were leprous in body, but in soul they were, and to have a soul full of leprosy is worse than to have a leprous body.

But let us see what happened next. *Standing a long way off they called out to him: "Jesus, Master, take pity on us."* They stood a long way off because no one in their condition dared come too close. We stand a long way off too while we continue in sin. To be restored to health and cured of the leprosy of sin, we also must cry out *Jesus, Master, take pity on us.* That cry, however, must come not from our lips but from our heart, for the cry of the heart is louder. It pierces the heavens, rising up to the very throne of God.

When Jesus saw the lepers he told them to go and show themselves to the priests. God has only to look at people to be filled with compassion. He pitied these lepers as soon as he saw them, and sent them to the priests not to be cleansed by them, but to be pronounced clean.

And as they went they were cleansed. Let all sinners listen to this and try to understand it. It is easy for Jesus to forgive sins. Sinners have often been forgiven before they come to a priest. In fact, their repentance and healing occur simultaneously, at the very moment of their conversion they pass from death to life. Let them understand, however, what this conversion means; let them heed the Lord's words: *Return to me with all your heart, with weeping and mourning and rend your hearts and not your garments.* To be really converted one must be converted inwardly, in one's heart, for *a humbled, contrite heart God will not spurn.*

One of them, when he saw that he was cured, went back again, praising God at the top of his voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. Now this man was a Samaritan. He stands for all those who, after their cleansing by the waters of baptism or healing by the sacrament of penance, renounce the devil and take Christ as their model, following him with praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, and nevermore abandoning his service.

And Jesus said to him: Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you. Great, therefore, is the power of faith. Without it, as the apostle says, *it is impossible to please God. Abraham believed God and because of this God regarded him as righteous.* Faith saves, faith justifies, faith heals both body and soul.

¹ Year of the Lord – Year C – New City Press, NY – 1984 – pg 124

From Tractate 15 on the Cenobitic or Common Life, by Baldwin of Ford (CF 41:156-157)

It is by no slight or mean or ordinary authority that the institution of the common life is supported and sustained. The primitive Church was built on the common life, and the infancy of the newborn Church began with the common life. It is from the Apostles themselves that the common life has received its form and expression, its title of honor, the privilege of its high position, the testimony of its authority, the protection which defends it, and the foundation of its hope.

It was the Apostles who were established by God as princes over all the earth; princes of the people, gathered together with the God of Abraham; strong gods of the earth who are exceedingly exalted; friends of God, who are greatly honored and whose principality is greatly strengthened; nobles of heaven, judges of the earth, to whom was made the promise that they should sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; members of the [celestial] senate, who receive swords in their hands to execute vengeance upon the nations and chastisements upon the people, to bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with manacles of iron, to execute upon them the prescribed judgement.

Such men as these, so powerful and so noble, were clothed in virtue from above, and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit they undertook to observe the common life. They confirmed it by their example, sanctioned it by their conduct, and handed it down to us so that we might also keep it. Thus, through the common life, we who are set upon the earth can begin to be fashioned in the likeness of the angels of God, for in the eternal life to come, we shall be united with them as their like and their equal. The common life was instituted by celestial models; it was brought down from heaven and adopted by us from the heavenly way of life of the holy angels.

If the fact that the common life came down from the angels of God to the Apostles and from the Apostles to us is still not sufficient to recommend it to you, then there is a further factor which we can add, something beyond all praise: the common life flowed out from the Fount of Life itself. I am speaking now of that fount of which it is written, *With you is the fount of life, and in your light we shall see light*. The common life, then, is a sort of radiance from the eternal light, a sort of emanation from the eternal life, a sort of effluence from the everlasting fountain, from which flow living waters, springing up into eternal life.

10SN1505
10.15.19

From a Work by St. Teresa of Avila ²

If Christ Jesus dwells in a person as his friend and noble leader, that one can endure all things, for Christ helps and strengthens us and never abandons us. He is a true friend. And I clearly see that if we expect to please him and receive an abundance of his graces, God desires that these graces must come to us from the hands of Christ, through his most sacred humanity, in which God takes delight.

Many, many times I have perceived this through experience. The Lord has told it to me. I have definitely seen that we must enter by this gate if we wish his Sovereign Majesty to reveal to us great and hidden mysteries. A person should desire no other path, even if he is at the summit of contemplation; on this road he walks safely. All blessings come to us through Our Lord. He will teach us, for in beholding his life we find that he is the best example.

What more do we desire from such a friend at our side? Unlike our friends in the world, he will never abandon us when we are troubled or distressed. Blessed is the one who truly loves him and always keeps him near. Let us consider the glorious St. Paul: it seems that no other name fell from his lips than that of Jesus, because the name of Jesus was fixed and embedded in his heart. Once I had come to understand this truth, I carefully considered the lives of the saints, the great contemplatives, and found that they took no other path: Francis, Anthony of Padua, Bernard, Catherine of sienna. A person must walk along this path in freedom, placing himself in God's hands. If God should desire to raise us to the position of one who is an intimate and shares his secrets, we ought to accept this gladly.

Whenever we think of Christ we should recall the love that led him to bestow on us so many graces and favors, and also the great love God showed in giving us in Christ a pledge of his love; for love calls for love in return. Let us strive to keep this always before our eyes and to rouse ourselves to love him. For if at some time the Lord should grant us the grace of impressing his love on our hearts, all will become easy for us and we shall accomplish great things quickly and without effort.

² The Liturgy of the Hours - vol IV – Catholic Book Publishing Co – New York – 1975 – pg 1483

10SN1602
10.16.19

The Life of St. Hedwig from Butler's Lives of the Saints ³

Hedwig was born in Bavaria about the year 1174, the daughter of Berthold, count of Andechs. When she was only twelve she was married to Henry, duke of Silesia. Together they founded a large number of religious houses, the best known of which was a convent for Cistercian nuns at Trebnitz, near Breslau in modern Poland, the first convent for women in Silesia. These foundations helped both to develop the religious life of the people and to spread a common German culture throughout their lands. They also established hospitals and a house for lepers. Their seventh and last child was born in 1209, and Hedwig persuaded her husband to take a mutual vow of chastity. They lived apart, with Hedwig taking up residence close to the nunnery at Trebnitz, and often sharing the austere life of the nuns. She recommended fasting to those who wanted to live holier lives, saying that it could “master concupiscence, lift up the soul, confirm it in the paths of virtue, and prepare a fine reward for the Christian.

Much of the rest of Hedwig's life was spent in trying to keep peace between her warring sons Henry and Conrad and in attempts to make peace between her husband and his enemies. When Henry died in 1238, she comforted those who mourned him with the words, “Would you oppose the will of God? Our lives are his; our will is whatever he is pleased to ordain, whether our own death or that of our friends.” She took the habit at Trebnitz but did not take any religious vows, remaining free to administer her property for the good of the poor. We are told that she took great care to instruct the uneducated in their religion, on one occasion having an old woman share a room with her so that they could go through the Our Father together whenever there was a free moment. After ten weeks of patient teaching, the old woman could repeat and understand the prayer.

When her son Henry II was killed in 1240 fighting the Tartar invaders, Hedwig knew of his death three days before a messenger arrived from the battlefield. Other miracles were attributed to her; she cured a blind man, for example, and had the gift of prophecy, foretelling her own death in October 1243. She was canonized in 1267, and her feast was extended to the Western Church in 1706.

³ Butler's Lives of the Saints – New Full Edition – October – The Liturgical Press – Collegeville, MN - 1997

10SN1703
10.17.19

From a Letter to the Romans by St. Ignatius, bishop and martyr ⁴

I am writing to all the churches to let it be known that I will gladly die for God if only you do not stand in my way. I plead with you: show me no untimely kindness. Let me be food for the wild beasts, for they are my way to God. I am God's wheat and shall be ground by their teeth so that I may become God's pure bread. Pray to Christ for me that the animals will be the means of making me a sacrificial victim for God.

No earthly pleasures, no kingdoms of this world can benefit me in any way. I prefer death in Christ Jesus to power over the farthest limits of the earth. He who died in place of us is the one object of my quest. He who rose for our sakes is my one desire. The time for my birth is close at hand. Forgive me, my brothers. Do not stand in the way of my birth to real life; do not wish me stillborn. My desire is to belong to God. Do not, then, hand me back to the world. Do not try to tempt me with material things. Let me attain pure light. Only on my arrival there can I be fully a human being. Give me the privilege of imitating the passion of my God. If you have him in your heart, you will understand what I wish. You will sympathize with me because you will know what urges me on.

The prince of this world is determined to lay hold of me and to undermine my will which is intent on God. Let none of you here help him; instead show yourselves on my side, which is also God's side. Do not talk about Jesus Christ as long as you love this world. Do not harbor envious thoughts. And supposing I should see you, if then I beg you to intervene on my behalf, do not believe what I say. Believe instead what I am now writing to you. For though I am alive as I write to you, still my real desire is to die. My love for this life has been crucified, and there is no yearning in me for any earthly thing. Rather within me is the living water which says deep inside me: "Come to the Father." I no longer take pleasure in perishable food or in the delights of this world. I want only God's bread, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, formed of the seed of David, and for drink I crave his blood, which is love that cannot perish.

I am no longer willing to live a merely human life, and you can bring about my wish if you will. Please, then, do me this favor, so that you in turn may meet with equal kindness. Put briefly, this is my request: believe what I am saying to you. Jesus Christ himself will make it clear to you that I am saying the truth. Only truth can come from that mouth by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray for me that I may obtain my desire. I have not written to you as a mere man would, but as one who knows the mind of God. If I am condemned to suffer, I take it that you wish me well. If my case is postponed, I can only think that you wish me harm.

⁴ The Liturgy of the Hours – vol. IV – Catholic Book Publishing Co – New York – 1975 – pg 1490

10SN1809
10/18/19

The Right Use of Material Possessions, commentary by Joseph A Fitzmyer,SJ⁵

No other New Testament writer, save perhaps the author of the Epistle of James, speaks so forthrightly as does Luke about the use of material possessions by Christian disciples. More than the other evangelists Luke either preserves sayings of Jesus about this topic or puts on his lips statements that concern wealth, money, and material goods in general. In Acts Luke further sketches an idyllic picture of the early Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem with its common ownership of property and the sharing of wealth and possessions as a model for the community of his own day. Luke was clearly not happy about what he had seen of the use of wealth and possessions by Christian disciples.

So he portrays Jesus speaking about this matter both in sayings that he has taken over from Mark and "Q" and also in a number of sayings that he has composed himself or derived from his own source "L." For instance, in Mark Jesus tells a rich young man to sell what he possesses, give the proceeds to the poor, and come, follow him, whereas in Luke Jesus tells "the magistrate": "Sell all that you have". Again in Mark, the first disciples called leave their nets to follow Jesus, but in Luke they leave "everything" to do so.

The contrast between the rich and the poor surfaces often in the Lucan story, in Mary's Magnificat, in the instruction of John the Baptist to the poor, in Jesus' interpretation of Isaiah 61:1-2 in his Nazareth synagogue sermon, in the first beatitude and first woe, in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, and in Jesus' advice to "invite the poor" to dinner instead of rich neighbors who might reciprocate.

In the special Lucan material, in particular, one detects a twofold attitude toward material possessions: (1) a moderate attitude, in which the Lucan Jesus advocates a prudent use of such possessions to give assistance to human beings who are less fortunate: "Give to everyone who begs from you", as well as in the story of the dishonest manager a radical attitude, which recommends the absolute renunciation of all wealth: "Everyone of you who does not say goodbye to all he has cannot be a disciple of mine"; or "No servant can serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon". For Luke all of this is not merely a question of haves and have-nots, since there is an eschatological dimension to the topic, which the first beatitude and the first woe make clear, as well as does Mary's

⁵Luke the Theologian, Joseph A Fitzmyer,SJ, Paulist Press, 1989, p.137-138

Magnificat. Having and not having material possessions ultimately symbolize an important aspect of the disciple's inner response to the call of God and to his visitation of his people in and through the ministry of Jesus. Material possessions are liable to stand in the way of the proper response, and Luke is concerned that they do not.

10SN1910
10.19.2019

The North American Martyrs, from Butler's Lives of the Saints.⁶

On March 16, 1649, the Iroquois attacked the village at which Brebeuf and Lalemant were stationed. The torture of these two missionaries was as atrocious as anything recorded in history. At the height of the torments Father Lalemant raised his eyes to Heaven and invoked God's aid, whilst Father de Brebeuf set his face like a rock as though insensible to the pain. Then, like one recovering consciousness, he preached to his persecutors and to the Christian captives until the savages gagged his mouth, cut off his nose, tore off his lips, and then, in derision of baptism, deluged him and his companion martyrs with boiling water. Finally, large pieces of flesh were cut out of the bodies of both the priests and roasted by the Indians, who tore out their hearts before their death by means of an opening above the breast, feasting on them and their blood, which they drank while it was still warm.

Before the end of the year 1649 the Iroquois had penetrated as far as the Tobacco nation, where Father Garnier had founded a mission in 1641 and where the Jesuits now had two stations. The inhabitants of the village of Saint-Jean hearing that the enemy was approaching, sent out their men to meet the attackers, who, however, took a roundabout way and arrived at the gates unexpectedly. An orgy of incredible cruelty followed, in the midst of which Garnier, the only priest in the mission, hastened from place to place, giving absolution to the Christians and baptizing the children and catechumens, totally unmindful of his own fate. While thus employed he was shot down by the musket of an Iroquois. He strove to reach a dying man whom he thought he could help, but after three attempts he collapsed, and subsequently received his death-blow from a hatchet which penetrated to the brain.

Father Noel Chabanel, the missionary companion of Garnier, was immediately recalled. He had started on his way back with some Christian Hurons when they heard the cries of the Iroquois returning from Saint-Jean. The father urged his followers to escape, but was too much exhausted to keep up with them. His fate was long uncertain, but a Huron apostate eventually admitted having killed the holy man out of hatred of the Christian faith.

⁶Butler's Lives of the Saints, ed. Michael Walsh, Harpers San Francisco, 1985, p.136-137.

These martyrs of North America, SS John de Brebeuf, Isaac Jogues, Anthony Daniel, Gabriel Lalemant, Charles Garnier, Noel Chabanel, Rene Goupil and John Lalande, were canonized in 1930.