

SUN 11.10.19

Commentary on the Gospel of Luke by St. John Henry Newman [1](#)

God spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and called himself the *God of Abraham*; and Christ tells us that in this simple announcement was contained the promise that Abraham should rise again from the dead. In truth, if we may say it with reverence, the all-wise, all-knowing God cannot speak without meaning many things at once. He sees the end from the beginning; he understands the numberless connections and relations of all things one with another. Look at Christ's words, and this same character of them will strike you; whatever he says is fruitful in meaning, and refers to many things. It is well to keep this in mind when we read the scripture.

When God called himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He implied that these holy patriarchs were still alive, though they were no more seen on earth. This may seem evident at first sight; but it may be asked how the text proves that their *bodies* would live; for, if their *souls* were still living, that would be enough to account for their being still called in the Book of Exodus servants of God. Our Blessed Lord seems to tell us that in some sense or other Abraham's *body* might be considered still alive as a pledge of his resurrection, though it was dead in the common sense in which we apply the word. His announcement is, Abraham *shall* rise from the dead, because in truth he *is* still alive. He cannot in the end be held under the power of the grave, any more than a sleeping man can be kept from waking. Abraham is still alive in the dust, though not risen thence. He is alive because all God's saints live in him, though they seem to perish.

We are apt to talk about our bodies as if we knew how or what they really were; whereas we only know what our eyes tell us. They seem to grow, to come to maturity, to decay; but after all we know no more about them than meets our senses. We have no direct cognizance of what may be called the substantive existence of the body, only of its accidents. Again, we are apt to speak of *soul and body*, as if we could distinguish between them, and knew much about them; but for the most part we use words without meaning. It is useful to make the distinction, and scripture makes it; but after all scripture speaks of our nature, in a religious sense, *as one*. Soul and body make up one person, which is born once and never dies. Philosophers of old time thought the soul indeed might live forever, but that the body perished at death; but Christ tells us otherwise. He tells us the body will live forever. In the text he seems to intimate that it never really dies; that we lose sight indeed of what we are accustomed to see, but that God still sees the elements of it which are not exposed to our senses.

God graciously called himself *the God of Abraham*. He did not say the God of Abraham's soul, but simply of "Abraham". He blest Abraham and gave him eternal life; not to his soul only, without his body, but to Abraham as one man.

[1](#)Journey with the Fathers – Year C – New City Press – N.Y. - 1997 – pg 132

MON 11.11.2019

A Reading About St. Martin of Tours, from a letter of Pope St John 23rd.¹

If St. Martin was a bishop and a zealous pastor who can well be imitated in the practice of charity, he was also and first of all a monk. You might even say that the only reason he was such a marvelous man of action was that he was first of all a man of prayer. And from this point of view too, he has a great lesson to give to the Christians of today.

Eager for solitude and union with God, this giant of the apostolate lived in constant prayer: "he never turned his mind away from prayer," according to the expression -later picked up by the liturgy- of his contemporary and first biographer Sulpicius Severus, who adds that once he was elevated to the episcopacy, the servant of God "remained what he had been before and bore the dignity of bishop without abandoning the design of life and the virtue of a monk."²

Was not his principal means of evangelization to found churches and monasteries everywhere?...And thus it was that, thanks to him, monasticism was introduced into France.

Throwing light on this side of the activity of the great convert-maker is a way of reminding us of the immense benefits that the monks brought to their country; it is a way of drawing their attention, which is so easily distracted at the present time by the agitated pace of modern life, back to the lasting greatness and beauties of monastic life; it is a way of inviting them to hold this form of life, and, in general, the grace of a religious vocation, high in their esteem...

¹Letter to the Archbp. of Tours on the occasion of the French "Martin of Tours Year," Dec. 10, 1960. Cf. Christian Readings II, p.312.

²PL 20, 166.

The example of St. Martin, which has been confirmed by the experience of centuries, shows what invaluable instruments for spiritual elevation cloisters are in Christian society and what an effective contribution they make to the apostolate of the Church....

May the great Bishop, model of the monk and the pastor, succeed in stirring up a new spirit of fervor for the service of God.

TUES 11.12.19

GOD ENTERING OUR HUMAN CONDITION, from the writings of Karl Rahner³

Here we are on the earth, our homeland forever; and yet, this does not suffice. This adventure to escape from what is earthly does not spring from cowardice, but from loyalty to our own nature. What are we to do? Listen to the good news of the resurrection of the Lord! Is Christ the Lord risen from the dead, or not? We believe in his resurrection, and therefore we confess that he died, that he descended into the kingdom of the dead, and that he rose on the third day. But what is the significance of all this and why is it a blessing for the children of the earth?

The incarnate Son of the Father has died; he who is the eternal fullness of divinity, the necessary, the boundless, the holy One, who is the Word of the Father even before time exists, and who is at the same time the Son of God's fullness and the child of earth's indigence. But death does not mean--as we myopically suppose like the quite un-christian spiritualists--that his mind and his soul, the vessel of his eternal divinity, have wrenched themselves away from the world and the earth, and flown to God's vast splendor beyond the world. Death does not mean that his soul has escaped, simply because the body, which held it down to the earth, is broken in death, and because the murderous earth has shown that the child of everlasting light could find no homeland in her darkness.

"Was crucified, died, and was buried," we say, and to that we immediately add, "he descended into the lower regions and he rose from the dead." With this addition, "died" takes on a meaning entirely different from the notion of escaping from the world, the sense we are accustomed to give to death. Jesus himself said that he would descend into the heart of the world (Mt 12:40), into the heart of all earthly things where everything is linked together and is one, where death and futility hold sway in the midst of this consolidation. Down into death he has penetrated. He let himself be conquered by death--holy stratagem of eternal life--so that death would gulp him down into the innermost depths of the world. In this way, having descended to the very womb of the earth, to the radical unity of the world, he could give the earth his divine life forever.

WED 11.13.19

The Tractate on the Common Life by Baldwin of Ford (CF 41 : 189-191)

If someone were to be judged on his own merits — as if the merits of others, which are shared in common through charity, were not there to give him support — how could he bear the weight of the divine judgment? Many and great are our iniquities, and the prophet says, “If you, O Lord, keep count of our iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?” All our good works are insufficient, and all our righteousness is like filth. And as it is written, “The sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the glory to come which shall be revealed in us.”

Shall we then despair? In no way! Far from it! For God is charity! O God who is charity, I suffer violence, answer for me! What shall I say, or what will he answer for me? But if — or rather because — I am old enough to speak for myself, will declare with my mouth what I believe in my heart. I believe, O, Lord, in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints. Here is my hope, here is my trust, here is my confidence, here is my security — however small it may be — which I have in the confession of my faith, in the generosity of the Holy Spirit, in the unity of the Catholic Church, in the communion of the saints. If it be granted me from above to love you and to love my neighbor, then even though my own merits are poor and meager, I have a hope which is above and beyond all my merits: I am sure that through the communion of charity the merits of the saints will profit me and that the communion of the saints can make good my own imperfection and insufficiency. The prophet comforts me when he says, “I have seen an end of all perfection, but your commandment is exceeding broad”.

O charity, so broad and so extensive, how great is the house of God, how vast is the place of his possession! We need not be distressed in our heart; we need not be confined by the boundaries and limits of our insignificant righteousness. Charity extends our hope to the communion of the saints, and we can therefore share with them their merits and their rewards. But the sharing of their rewards is [reserved] for the time to come, for it is the sharing of the glory which shall be revealed in us.

There are thus three sorts of sharing, three forms of communion, three ways in which we have things in common: the sharing of nature, which is associated with the sharing of sin and the sharing of wrath; then the sharing of grace; and thirdly, the sharing of glory. By the sharing of grace, the sharing of nature begins to be restored and the sharing of sin is removed, but by the sharing of glory, the sharing of nature will be fully and perfectly restored and the

sharing of wrath wholly removed. It is then that God shall wipe away all the tears from the eyes of his saints. It is then that all the saints will be as one heart and one soul, and they will have all things in common when God will be all in all.

Our hope is that we, too, may come in common to this communion and come together as one and therefore we pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may be with us all always. Amen.

THUR 11/14/19

A Prayer for Hope by Karl Rahner, SJ

Lord accept my poor heart. It is often so far from you. It is like a waste land without water, lost in the innumerable things and trifles that fill my everyday life. Only you, Lord, can focus my heart on you, who are the centre of all hearts and the Lord of every soul. Only you can give the spirit of prayer, only your grace is capable of granting me to find you through the multiplicity of things and the distraction of mind of everyday routine, you the one thing necessary, the one thing in which my heart can rest. May your Spirit come to the help of my weakness, and when we do not know what we should ask, may He intercede for us with inexpressible sighs, and you who know men's hearts will hear what your Spirit interceding for us desire in us.

Finally, however, I ask you for the hardest and most difficult, for the grace to recognize the Cross of your Son in all the suffering of my life, to adore your holy and inscrutable will in it, to follow your Son on his way to the Cross as long as it may please you. Make me sensitive in what concerns your honour and not merely for my own well-being, and then I also will be able to carry many a cross as atonement for my sins. Do not let me be embittered by suffering but mature, patient, selfless, gentle and filled with longing for the land where there is no pain and for that day when you will wipe all tears from the eyes of those who have loved you and in sorrow have believed in your love and in darkness have believed in your light. Let my pain be a profession of my faith in your promises, a profession of my hope in your goodness and fidelity, a profession of my love, that I love you more than myself, that I love you for your own sake even without reward. May the Cross of my Lord be my model, my power, my consolation, the solution of all obscure questions, the light of every darkness. Grant that we may glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant us to become so mature in true Christian being and life that we no longer regard the cross as a misfortune and incomprehensible meaninglessness but as a sign of your election, as the secret, sure sign that we are yours for ever. For it is a faithful saying that if we die with Him we shall also live with Him and if we endure with Him, we shall also reign with Him. Father, we will to share everything with your Son, His life, His divine glory and therefore His suffering and His death. Only with the cross, give the strength

to bear it. Cause us to experience in the cross its blessing also. Give us the cross which your wisdom knows is for our salvation and not our ruin.

Son of the Father, Christ who lives in us, you are our hope of glory. Live in us, bring our life under the laws of your life, make our life like to yours. Live in me, pray in me, suffer in me, more I do not ask. For if I have you I am rich; those who find you have found the power and the victory of their life. Amen.

FRI

11.15.19

A Sermon of St. Bernard for the Dedication of the Church

My brethren, we ought to observe today's festivity all the more devoutly for the reason that it is so peculiarly our own. All the other sacred solemnities which we keep are common to us with the faithful in general. But this is so proper to ourselves that if we do not keep it, it will not be kept at all. It is our own feast, because it is the feast of the dedication of our own church. It is still more our own because it is the feast of our own selves. For what of sanctity can belong to these dead walls which cause them to be honored with a religious solemnity? They are undoubtedly holy, but it is because of your bodies. Will anyone question that your bodies are holy, since they are "the temples of the Holy Spirit"? Consequently your souls are sanctified because of the spirit of God "Who is in you", your bodies are sanctified because of your souls, and this house is sanctified also because of your bodies. The Psalmist prayed "Preserve my soul for I am holy". Truly "God is wonderful in His saints", not alone in His saints in heaven, but also those on earth. For He has His saints in both places and shows Himself wonderful in them all, beatifying those above, consummating the sanctity of those below.

Accordingly it is your own festival, dearest brethren, your very own, that you are celebrating today. You have been dedicated to the Lord and the Lord has chosen and adopted you as His own peculiar people. Oh, how wisely you have acted, dearly beloved, in renouncing all that you might have possessed in this world, since by doing so you have deserved to become the peculiar people of the world's Creator, and to have Him as your special possession, for He is undoubtedly "the portion and inheritance" of His own!

See, therefore, if it is not right to observe as a festival the day on which the Lord adopted us as His own and took formal possession of us through His ministers, thus accomplishing in fact what He had promised long ago, saying, "I in the midst of them shall be their God", while we should be "the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand". For when this house was consecrated to the Lord by the ministry of the Bishop, it was manifestly for our sakes it was done; not only for the sake of those who were actually present then, but also for the sake of all those who until the end of time shall serve God in this holy place. Therefore, dearest brethren, it is necessary that what has already been accomplished in the walls in a visible manner should be invisibly accomplished in ourselves.

SAT 11.16.19

A Reading from the Spiritual Exercises of St Gertrude.⁴

O wondrous Wisdom of God, how powerful, how very bright is your voice. Without exception you call to yourself all who yearn for you. You indwell in the humble. You cherish those who cherish you. You judge the cause of the poor. You show lovingly-kind mercy to all. You hate nothing of what you have made. You keep secret the sins of human beings, and you mercifully await their repentance. Ah, open for me, too, the vein of life, giving me a drink from the cup of indulgence that I may know what is acceptable with you at all times.

O Wisdom, you wield the holy sign of never-ending life in your right hand; for you everything follows prosperously. You and you alone are able to do all things. Abiding in yourself you renew all things. Ah, renew me in your self and make me holy that you may be able to transport yourself into my soul. You set up the friends of God; ah, ransom God's friendship for me. Cause me to watch for you in the morning that I may truly find you. Take possession of me that I may truly yearn for you.

Behold, O Wisdom, your pantry full of loving-kindness is already open. Ah, look upon me, the culprit, standing outside the door of your charity. Ah, fill the little cloak of my poverty with the blessing of your gentleness. Behold, before you is the empty little cup of my desire. Ah, may the latch of your fullness open. Teach my heart your chaste counsels, your lucid precepts, your faithful testimony. Make me remember your commandments to observe them. Do not treat me according to my sins nor repay me according to my iniquities, my Jesus. Just as you have truly been favorable to me with your blood, so also by virtue of your precious cross, make restitution to me for all the wastefulness of my life. O wise Love, shelter and cover over my negligence. Make amends for me for all my negligence through my Jesus, abandoned by free will to your judgment.

⁴"Exercise of Making Amends for Sins and of Preparing for Death." CF 49, Kalamazoo 1989, pp 129-131.