

7 June, Trinity Sunday

16) For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17) For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. 18) He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. John 3.16-18

In this small excerpt note two instances of “for” although the Greek text has one instance which is *houtos*. It follows Jesus’ dialogue with Nicodemus and Moses having lifted up the serpent, an image of the impending crucifixion. *Houtos* carries this theme over into *apapao*, the verbal root for *agape* or love, so difficult to translate adequately. However, joining the excerpt at hand with the one preceding it sheds light on what it means.

As for belief in Jesus as God’s son, note that the verb *pisteuo* is used with the preposition *eis*, literally “into him.” This is the first of four occurrences of the preposition which means close attention is to be paid on how they show a relationship between God and the believer. Actually *eis* works very well with *agapao*, fleshing out its meaning all the more. Such *eis*-ness allows the believer to make the transition from death, i.e., to “have” it, *echo* here meaning to possess it.

As for the Father sending his son—*apostello* being the verbal root for *apostolos*—it is *eis* the world, a second example of this preposition. Such sending is bound up with saving the world through (*dia*) Jesus, not judging it.

Vs. 18 has the third instance of the preposition *eis*, “into him” which shields...hides...a person from being condemned or *krino* which also means to judge. Such hiding-*eis* makes the person invisible, if you will. So when the Father looks at his Son, he doesn’t see this person, only the Son alone. Thus the person *eis* the Son partakes of his divine nature.

Vs. 18 also has the fourth instance of *eis* but with a negative connotation. Just as the third *eis* makes invisible the believer with regard to the Son, so the one at hand makes the unbeliever bear the full implications of being condemned or judged.

14 June, Corpus Christi

51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." 52) The Jews then disputed among themselves saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53) So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; 54) he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55) For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56) He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. 57) As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. 58) This is the

bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever." John 6.51-58

Note the parallel between bread which is living, the verb *zao* referring to physical vitality which suggests a concrete presence with regard to bread. That bread, of course, is a clear reference to the manna in the desert. It should be noted that in addition to this manna quails were provided in equal abundance though that receives scant mention yet should be kept in mind. So if a person eats this bread which is *zao*, he will *zao* forever. There will be no need to gather it daily as did the Israelites gather both quails and manna. The bread which Jesus will give (though *zao* isn't explicitly mentioned but certain implied) is not simply for the world but but the *zoe* or life of the world, that noun being derived from *zao*.

The Jews hearing this disputed among themselves, that is to say, *machomai*. This is a verb with a stronger connotation, to fight or to engage in warfare. It shows their lack of understanding with regard to Christ as living bread vis-a-vis the manna (and quails) of their ancestors. Actually Jesus' words turn out to be a complete embarrassment to them, the real source of this in-fighting. He must have had a certain amusement observing such intense *machomai* but had to intervene before it got out of hand. He decides to expound upon this *zoe* by being as blunt as possible which is sure to enrage the Jews even more. *Zoe* is only possible by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. In addition to giving nourishment, both will allow a person to abide in Jesus and visa versa. The verb is *meno* which has a permanent sense of taking up residence. This *meno* works two ways: Jesus in him and the person in Jesus. The two merge will at the same time remaining distinct. No small wonder that such an intense relationship enraged the Jews even further.

Note that vs. 57 brings this *zao* another step further. Jesus applies it to the Father, and Jesus *zao* because of him. Such a twofold *zao* leads to a third, namely, the person eating him will have the same *zao*.

Finally Jesus drives home the importance of *zao* by comparing the Jews' fathers who ate the manna (and quails) but died. It's in sharp contrast to the person who eats Jesus, resulting in *zao*. Note that here Jesus speaks somewhat objectively of himself, "this bread" instead of himself-as-bread. Such a form of address makes this difficult to grasp notion more acceptable.

19 June, Sacred Heart

25) At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; 26) yea, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27) All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
Matthew 11.25-30

“At that time” or “at that *kairos*,” this word being well-known for a special event or occasion as distinct from the conventional way of telling time, that is *chronos*. Such a *kairos* makes Jesus’ words which follow all the more important insofar as they are present now as they were when first addressed.

Exomologeō is the verb to thank, the preposition *ex-* (from) being prefaced to the verbal root which means to confess, to promise, to concede. Here it is directed to the Father who is Lord of both heaven and earth or that realm which is above and that one which is below. While this familiar up-down imagery is representative of two distinct spheres, for the Father both are one and the same. Such gratitude toward the Father may appear out of place in light of what Jesus had just completed saying with regard to Capernaum which will suffer a worse fate than Sodom. This, in turn, is preceded by having upbraided “cities where most of his mighty works had been done” [vs. 20]. The authorities who confronted Jesus can be counted among the “wise and understanding” of vs. 25 who hadn’t a clue as to what Jesus was saying. Compare their blind groping with the “babes” or *nepios* also as infant, child. In other words, these so-called grown up babes heard Jesus’ words and were able to understand them because they hadn’t been hidden but were revealed. Note that they didn’t get this through their own efforts but from the Father, the verb *apokaluptō* meaning to reveal in the sense of uncovering something which is already present. Such infants, if you will, were given the ability to peel back any coverings with regard to events and see beneath the surface. In other words, they were able to grasp what really was going on. As for the “wise and understanding,” they hadn’t a clue as how to go about such looking beneath the surface.

Jesus continues by inferring that these so-called infants could see that all things had been handed over to him by the Father, *paradidomai*. The preposition *para-* prefaced to the verbal root suggests that everything was put at the side (*para*) or in the vicinity of Jesus after which he could take them up. No one is allowed to pry into this handing-over-beside, if you will, that being a privilege exclusive between Father and Son. Yet at the same time knowledge of this relationship is possible. It is literally a knowing-upon or *epi-gignosko* by the Son of the Father, not the other way around. To appreciate this requires revelation, a second use of the verb *apokaluptō*. So there’s a connection between *apo-kaluptō*, *para-didomai* and *epi-gignosko*. Putting it a bit awkwardly, this comes off as a revealing-from, a handing-over-beside and a knowing-upon.

After this Jesus shifts gears, so to speak, by inviting to himself those who labor and are heavy laden. Given the nature of society at the time, this would include virtually everyone except those who are very rich and who are lording it over everyone else. To all under their thumb Jesus will give rest or *anapauō* which implies putting an end to their labors, this having special appeal to those who are slaves. Nevertheless, a yoke is involved which must have confused those listening to Jesus, yoke representing field work as done by oxen. Nevertheless, the yoke is offset by Jesus calling himself gentle and lowly in heart, *praus* and *tapeinos* after which he brings up a second time this *anapausis* or rest. If he hadn’t called the yoke easy and his burden light (*chrestos* and *elaphros*, the latter also as useful, serviceable), many would not have taken this to heart.

21 June, Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

26) "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. 27) What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. 28) And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. 30) But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Matthew 10.26-33

Those whom Jesus encourages not to fear refers to persecution which he details in the previous verses, the most treacherous kind coming from family members. In light of this, note the twofold parallels when it comes to hearing and then telling:

covered → revealed

kalupto → *apokalupto*

hidden → not known

krupto → *ou gignosko*

This is followed by another set:

dark → light

skotia → *phos*

As for this darkness, it implies that Jesus was speaking not just secretly but in words that were obscure and not comprehended fully. To bring them to light would require the descent of the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost. Only then in the light of the Spirit could they be proclaimed which is exactly what the disciples had done immediately afterwards and never ceased doing:

whispered → proclaim

eis to ous akouete (akouo) → *kerusso*

The phrasing of the last reads literally "into the ear hear" and is not unlike the dark just noted. The *kerusso* at hand is after the manner of a herald making an announcement from a high vantage point so everyone can hear his message.

In vs. 28 Jesus mentions a second type of fear which those listening to him should not entertain, that is, anyone who may kill them which can involve those closest, the family members intimidated with regard to the first fear. While they may be able to kill the body, they cannot kill the soul (*psuche*), the verb *apokteino* more along the lines of condemning to death, of passing judgment. However, this second fear concerns the one who can kill both body and soul in hell or *geenna*. This refers to a small valley outside Jerusalem where children had been sacrificed, making it even a more fearful place or condition. So this second killing can imply being offered up to gods who are worshiped instead of the Lord.

In vs. 29 Jesus seeks to encourage those listening to such fearful and puzzling words by saying that his Father watches over the smallest of birds, a sparrow...and not just one but a whole flock of them. Note that that the Father doesn't intervene to prevent the sparrows falling or dying which implies the just mentioned persecution by those who are close relatives. It seems that the Father is involved in an indirect fashion, this being put in such a way that persecution is allowed to happen. Even smaller and far more many than sparrows are the hairs on one's head. We can assume that most people let their hair grow quite long, so this would involve a lot of hair. The Father being able to number such hairs pushes this image even further.

28 June, Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

37) He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38) and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39) He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. 40) "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. 41) He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42) And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." Matthew 10.37-42

Special attention in this Gospel is given to the conjunctive *kai* usually translated as "and." That is to say, *kai* occurs eight times as a bridge or connective between two actions or events. Also as here it serves to set up several contrasts. The conjunctive is more frequent in Hebrew and often goes untranslated. There it serves to move the action along quickly and to tie in what just happened with present goings-on as well as the more immediate future. Something similar may be applied with *kai* but not as much. Nevertheless, you can't help but notice it while reading the passage at hand. Actually awareness of this connective has a role in making the difficult words which Jesus says to be more acceptable without watering them down.

Here the Gospel contains a number of strong-sounding words from Jesus about following him. Because this is the goal, Jesus wanted to make sure that his listeners (and we can say today, readers) were able to make sense of them. In other words, *kai* connects these several elements and makes them easier to understand. If that works out, then it's easier to take up the challenge Jesus offers. So with in mind, let's take a look at each of the eight examples of *kai*:

1) The first in vs. 37 sets up a contrast between loving one's parents more than Jesus, *phileo* meaning to have deep feelings for and rightly applied in this instance. Though not mentioned, implied is the other kind of love applicable to Jesus, *agape*.

2) *Kai* connects this *phileo* with that of children which makes a person unworthy of Jesus, *axios* also as deserved, meet or due. We can imagine this applies to parents and the strong familial bonds of the time. To bring them into question as here is revolutionary, even threatening to the social order.

- 3) In vs. 38 which begins with *kai*, the *phileo-agape* tension shifts to taking up one's cross. This would be a familiar image among the people during the Roman occupation, for such executions must have been done on a regular basis.
- 4) The next *kai* in s. 38 relates to following Jesus, that is, with the cross or more likely, carrying the cross beam on the way to execution where the condemned is subject to being reviled by those among whom he is passing. The verb *akoloutheo* suggests being guided as one is following so as to prevent getting lost. Again, *axios* is found with regard to Jesus.
- 5) In vs. 39 *kai* sets up a contrast between losing one's life and finding it, that is, "for my sake." Note the two verbs, *heurisko* and *apolumi* also as to discover and to destroy utterly. A sharper contrast between two realities couldn't be made.
- 6) In vs. 40 there are two types of receiving or *dechomai* connected by *kai* which also means to welcome. The first is with regard to the person and Jesus who by his *dechomai* gets the Father as well.
- 7) Vs. 41 deals with two types of reception (*dechomai* again), that of a prophet and a righteous man. Presumably the reward at hand is huge for such distinguished persons.
- 8) Vs. 42 begins with *kai*, the little ones or *mikros* implying those of less importance, not necessarily children. In fact the *mikros* at hand is a disciple of Jesus. This is the second time a reward is mentioned, that is, along with the reception of a prophet and righteous man. Note that the water deliberately is called *psuchros* or cold which makes all the difference in a desert environment.

5 July, Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

25) *At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; 26) yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27) All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*
 Matthew 11.25-30

"At that time" or "at that *kairos*" or special opportunity which comes immediately after Jesus condemns Capernaum, one of the places where "his mighty works had been done" [vs. 20]. However, the people there failed to repent, the verb *metanoëo* from which derives *metanoia*, usually applied to a conversion or change of heart. So the *kairos* at hand involves this refusal to *metanoëo*. Note that what Jesus is about to say is rendered as "declared" or *apokrinomai*, more of making a response which, of course, refers to the harsh words he had uttered about Capernaum. And to say

that that city was worse than Sodom (he leaves out Gomorrah) is just about the worse thing anyone could utter. For all the Jewish people the fate of Sodom and what it symbolized was burned into their collective memory.

Instead of continuing his invective, Jesus at once—at an opportune time which is what *kairos* is all about—shifts to thanking his Father for a specific reason, the verb being *exomologoumai* more as to make an acknowledgment marked by gratitude. It is precisely the Father alone who had revealed “these things” to babes or *nepios* which usually applies to infancy. The verb at hand is *apokalupto* or to uncover which seems to refer to those having the character of a *nepios*. Whether this is natural or acquired isn’t stated. Nevertheless, they could grasp the sense of Jesus’ recent condemnation while those who are wise and have understanding (*sophos* and *sunetos*) saw the same thing but failed in their ability to *apo-kalupto* what was meant. In other words, such uncovering comes from the Father alone who approves of Jesus words just now. As for this uncovering, it pertains to what the Father had hidden (*krupto*). To this Jesus adds that it is the Father’s *eudokia* or gracious will that effected it, this noun also as satisfaction, approval.

In vs. 27 Jesus claims that all things were given him by the Father. Note the passive-ness of *paradidomai* where the preposition *para-* prefaced to the verb intimates a handing over which is beside (Jesus). This form is used so as to make clear that Jesus didn’t cause the *paradidomai* although he alone knows the Father, *epigignosko*. The preposition *epi-* means that which is upon, so the knowing at hand is one which is “upon the Father,” to put it somewhat literally yet directly. Such *epigignosko* can be imparted by Jesus to anyone he wishes, that is, to reveal the Father. The verb is *apokalupto* which above was used in reference to so-called babes relative to having insight into Jesus’ recent condemnatory words.

Again in vs. 28 Jesus shifts his tone by addressing those with him, most likely the same people who heard his words about Capernaum, Sodom and the day of judgment (cf. vs. 24). He invites those who labor and who have heavy burdens to approach him, these words intended to put his audience at ease. In those days, who with the exception of the elite did not labor and be overly burdened? Such words suggest the drudgery proper to slaves. The two verbs are *kopiaio* and *phortizo*, to be tired or weary and to heap up with burdens. Indeed, the prospect of receiving rest was attractive, *anapauro* suggestive of putting an end to. Then again, some may have been reluctant to approach Jesus after his harsh words about Capernaum along with those whom he considered as babes. Many wondered among themselves if they fell into either one or the other category.

The yoke which Jesus extends may not seem attractive to some people, especially the wise and those with understanding. It will compel those who submit to it to learn from Jesus, *manthano* being the verb which in this context would have the Jewish overtones of studying the divine Torah. Given Jesus’ dubious reputation among the religious authorities, that *manthano* just might go against the Torah. Jesus is fully aware of this which is why he adds that he’s gentle and lowly, *praus* and *tapeinos*, also as humble, dejected as well as abased in the power to do anything. Being such will produce rest or *anapausis* whose verbal root is *anapauro* in the paragraph above.

And so Jesus concludes these encouraging yet somewhat divisive words with repeating that his yoke is easy and the burden this yoke suggests as pulling is light. The two adjectives are *chrestos* and *elaphros* or good, kindly as well as beneficial and light which also can mean being nimble, a quality you don't associate with a yoke.