

Miscellaneous Notes Pertaining to Lectio Divina, #3

This document contains a list of various, unrelated observations compiled over time with regard to lectio divina. The probable time period is 1975-89. They are offered for what they are worth.

Psalm 68 is one used in reference to Christ's Ascension. The verse that stands out is: "Blessed be the Lord who daily bears us up; God is our salvation" [vs. 19]. Nice the way "daily" reads in Hebrew, *yom yom* or "day day." The verb *hamas* (to bear burdens) connotes a slave carrying a heavy load, so it suggests duress. Also note that "salvation" in Hebrew is *yeshuah*, the proper name for "Jesus." Applied to the ascended Christ, in his natural dwelling place he continues to function as an indentured servant, and one always under the gun at that.

In general terms, Protestantism strives to put people in direct contact with God minus human mediation which the initial reformers perceived as clerical hierarchy, sacraments and liturgical rites. This has a certain sentiment parallel with early monasticism—but most monks would balk if it were actually implemented. This makes you stop for a moment and consider the essence of Protestantism: with the stress on direct contact with God there's little concern for how our physical bodies relate to the transcendent realm. The act of faith here seems to be one of the intellect; you do it with little or no follow-up or support. The body is left to fend for itself. Since bodies will invariably exert themselves, the physical outlet of energy is manifest through the way God supposedly blesses people on how well they do at work, at making a living. Also Protestants don't have much allegiance to a formal hierarchy though some denominations fashion their clergy on the Roman model. This lack of organization on a larger scale tends make Protestants ally themselves with secular governments for protection, endowment and the like. This can make them susceptible to a two-fold danger of tyranny: that of the individual claiming direct divine inspirations and that of the state claiming jurisdiction over its (Protestant) adherents. There are many Protestants, especially of the fundamentalist variety minus excesses associated with this inclination who are most faithful to the Word of God and lead exemplary lives. However, seem to divide their time between ordinary existence as we all know it and "jumps" of faith...punctuations of affection, if you will...which assail heaven. These periodic assaults aren't grounded on feast days, days commemorating real people and real events; they seem more like forced gestures which say, "Now we're justified by faith, but a short time afterwards we'll be consumed by sin until we make another willful assault of faith."

It's relatively easy to dispose oneself to God's presence either at the Divine Office or alone in your room for prayer. Then there comes the real test when you rub elbows with people such as at work. One elderly monk (over a hundred years old) was asked how he had cultivated a spirit of recollection while doing his assignments. Without missing a beat he responded that never could he bring the two together, that it was useless trying to do so. That surprised many, but it was right from the heart. His response seems to have upset a lot of preconceptions which is why his works, so spontaneous, made a deep impression.

De Lubac in his **Meditation sur L'Eglise** (p. 148) says that the Church's prime function is not so much to exhort people to a superior form of life as to furnish a milieu in which this can be nursed, a climate in which it can grow. A remark well suited for monastic/contemplative existence. De Lubac made this observation in the larger context of the Church in modern society, and it bespeaks a point of contention that's in the back of every monk at one time or another: how our self-contained existence relates to

society as a whole and visa versa. De Lubac goes on to speak of bishops, of their prime function as teachers and guardians of the faith. Well and good, but can a monk put himself inside a bishop's mind, and can a bishop put himself in the mind of a monk? Given the state of clerical training, I wonder how a bishop gets this sense of faith because such men rarely if ever have cultivated the contemplative dimension. Maybe it comes via osmosis or just enough to inspire people in their charge.

“He God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me” [Ps 18.47]. The verb for “subdued” is *davar* which fundamentally means to speak. Thus we could take this verse at God “speaking” peoples under the psalmist, of putting them under his control by his word...*Logos* as Christ, later on in the New Testament.

“He had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave” [Ps 105.17]. The Hebrew rends this literally as “his soul (*nephesh*) came into iron.” A striking image of Joseph's bondage, not only of being in prison but the very bonds confining him as penetrating his soul.

Two documents vital to Western Civilization: **The Republic by Plato** and **The Rule of St. Benedict**. Both deal with legislating for small communities, not large countries such as we have today. For example, Plato write his book for the administration of city-state or *polis* and Benedict, his **Rule** for a monastery. Because both have certain similarities...again, for small groups of people...these two documents might be worth comparing.

If I recall correctly, the Roman Forum has a cave by the Rostrum which led to the underworld. There used to be a cap over it warning people. Every so often they'd remove this cap and post a sign that the spirits were roaming about the Forum, something like a day off. A great image for how to let off steam or let what's bothering you get out for fresh air! The lesson I got from this was the importance of devising an external act—you could say rite—which expresses your inner state. It leads to a further consideration: that the tendency to debunk myths, etc, goes only so far, missing their positive and wholesome side.

At the conclusion of Mass the priest gives a blessing: “May Almighty God bless you, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Use of the word “may” implies two things: a wish on the Church's part and the possibility that God may *not* want to bless the people. I.e., it's up to him whether he wants to effect such a blessing (just a little different twist on the subject!).

Along the lines of the last paragraph, it can be fun during the liturgy to close you eyes and listen intently to the words being spoken. They're address to one or all of the three Persons of the Trinity on behalf of the Church. You can put yourself in their place when hearing the words, as though they were addressed to you as one of the three Persons. It livens things up and gives a different perspective on what's going on.

Two passages speaking of different realities:

-Phl 3.20: “but our commonwealth is in heaven.” *Politeuma* is the term for this citizenship; the verb *huparcho* (to be) suggests the beginning of something.

-Col 2.8: “according to the elemental spirits of the universe and not according to Christ.” *Stoicheia* for “elemental spirits” or the first principle from which a series arises, here with respect to the *kosmos* or universe, its physical composition. In brief, *politeuma* implies a transformation of *stoicheia*

as a type of “beginning” proper to heavenly citizenship.

Some much of monastic life consists of watching and waiting throughout the night and day. Some of its tediousness derives from our innate resistance...an unwillingness to believe...that happiness can come through this practice because the task at hand is too easy whereas we’re expecting, even preferring, an arduous enterprise. Gregory of Nyssa uses the Greek term *diastema* for (temporal) interval; it’s a key term with him, and our happiness consists in accepting the *diastema*...the interval... aspect of life (cf. the Gregory of Nyssa Home Page for references to *diastema*). The construction of appropriate images to mirror or experience of watching and waiting is crucial because *diastema* can extend before us like a desert without end. Scripture presents us with images appropriate for the negative perception of *diastema*: watchmen in a fortified city, shepherds in the field and waiting at a gate. They are self-contained images yet vulnerable to outside destructive forces which threaten to bring them down.

A contrast between two scriptural excerpts. Pardon the abundance of Greek terms, but the text makes infinitely better sense with them:

Wisdom 6.12-16 (description of Wisdom)

-vs. 12: glorious (*lampra*), never fades (*amarantos*), easily (*eucheros*) seen by those who love (*agapao*) her, found (*eurisketai*) by those seeking (*zetounton*) her.

-vs. 13: hastens (*phthanei*) to make herself known (*prognosthenaï*) to those who desire (*epithumountas*) her.

-vs. 14: he who rises early (*orthrisas*) to seek her (*ep'autan*) will have no difficulty (*kopiasei*), for he will find her (*euresai*) sitting at his dates (*paredron*).

-vs. 15: to fix one’s thoughts (*periautes*) on her (*enthumethenaï*) is perfect understanding (*phronteseos teleiotes*) and he who is vigilant (*agrupnesas*) on her (*di'auten*) shall quickly be without care (*amerimnos*).

-vs. 16: because she goes about (*perierchetai*) seeking (*zetousa*) those worthy (*axious*) of her, and she graciously appears (*phantazetai eumenos*) to them in their paths, and meets them (*hupanta*) in every thought (*epinoia*).

Matthew 25.1-13 (parable of the wise and foolish maidens)

-vs. 1: to meet (*eis hupautesin*) the bridegroom.

-vs. 2: five of them were foolish (*morai*) and five were wise (*phronimoi*).

-vs. 5: while the bridegroom was delayed (*chronizontos*), they all slumbered (*eenustaxan*) and slept (*ekatheudon*).

-vs. 6: at midnight (*meses nuktos*) there was a cry (*krauge*), behold (*idou*), the bridegroom, come out (*exerchesthe*) to meet him (*eis apantesin*).

-vs. 10: those who were ready (*etoimoi*) went in (*eiselthon*) with him to the marriage feast (*eis tous gamous*) and the door was shut (*ekleisthe*).

-vs. 12: truly (*amen*) I do not know (*oida*) you.

-vs. 13: watch (*gregoreite*) therefore, for you know (*oidate*) neither the day (*hermeran*) nor the hour (*horan*).

Is 62.2: “And you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give.” The verb *naqav* for “to give” is richer than at first glance, for it implies a boring or piercing as well as to specify

something; another meaning pertains to cursing. Thus when the Lord gives a “new name” he really means it by making it penetrate to one’s core. You could easily see how the idea of cursing is tied in because when engaged in such an act we’re really focused upon “boring” our curse deep into the other person.

A neat phrase I heard on the radio: “the redemptive quality of time.” I don’t know to what the announcer was referring but it’s true that the passage of time brings about forgetfulness even if sometimes you need lots of it to pass.

“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah” [Ps 95.8]. Reference to the Israelites complaining to Moses about the lack of water shortly after their miraculous escape from Egypt. This hardening of the heart is lethal for all Christians. It starts out innocently enough in that you can’t escape the pain of being aware of a misunderstanding or disagreement and try in numerous ways to sweep it under the rug; i.e., pretend that it’s not there, a gesture which is more subtle than first imagined. In a monastic atmosphere where silence is pervasive, even smallish sounds impact you in ways you previously thought were impossible since you’ve unconsciously held them as background noise, part n’ parcel of life-in-the-world. This example of physical sound is an analogy for the interior sound...reverberation, if you will...of an unpleasant situation. This incident (in the world would be shrugged off) works to take hold of you (i.e., reverberates) at deeper and deeper levels. It is compounded by a further misunderstanding which feeds into the original one and so on ad infinitum. An automatic response is to “harden” your heart not so much to shut out God but to erect a barrier which will prevent you from further painful inroads. Then you pass a threshold when the positive wall becomes a negative exclusion of God and people willing to help. If this grabs a monk for an extended period, he’s in deep trouble.

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded” [Phil 3.14-15]. A separation is set out here between goal and the means to it: goal or *skopos* and pressing on or *dioko*, a verb which also means to persecute. Here the *skopos* is “persecuted” in that it’s pursued with the same intensity as one would vent anger on a person or a group of persons. Paul was familiar with such *dioko* (cf. Acts 22.4), only in the verse at hand he switches this energy to the divine *skopos*. He associates the focusing of *dioko* with those who are mature, *teleios*; this adjective connotes having in view the end result (the *skopos*), as though it were already present. Such maturity...end-mindedness...is rare these days. Plenty of folks have the energy of *dioko* but can’t quite align it with *skopos*. To be “thus minded” is to have phronesis, a term associated with *sophia* or wisdom. “In all wisdom (*sophia*) and insight” [*phronesis*, Eph 1.8].

Gen 18.6: “And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and said, ‘Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes.’” “Cakes” in the LXX is *egkruphias*, from the verb *egkrupto*, “to hide, to conceal.” Thus these cakes have a special or mystical meaning.

“Stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, of the sense of being the doer, of personality. If that is stopped, there is quiet. In this sense ‘knowing’ means ‘being.’” **The Teaching of Ramana Maharshi.**

Ps 48.8: “As we have heard, so have we seen.” Two importance “as” references to be considered in light of 1 Cor 15.49: “Just as we have born the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the

man of heaven.” Perhaps the “man of dust” image may be equated with the “as we have heard;” the “man of heaven” image may be equated with “so we have seen.” The former by necessity precedes the latter. If we get the pattern of hearing, we automatically get the pattern of seeing. Hearing’s pattern is readily available, but that of vision is less so. Both hearing and seeing have a location; that is, they achieve culmination “in the city of our God.”

A note regarding to the Feast of the Presentation: we see the mother (Mary) who contained the child (Jesus Christ) entering the temple or God who then contains the mother. Thus the temple-as-God embraces the God-in-temple. In this fashion, Mary could be said to imitate Christ’s words, “I am the gate; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved” [Jn 10.9].

Compare the Transfiguration with Christ’s baptism:

“This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” [Mt 17.5].

“And lo, a voice from heaven saying, ‘This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased’” [Mt 3.17]. Luke’s account (3.22): “And the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove.”

The Transfiguration event doesn’t mention the Spirit but says “Hear him.” The Baptism event mentions the Spirit but doesn’t command “Hear him.” However, Lk 9.35 does; it is mentioned with the voice coming from the cloud into which the disciples entered. Note the “triple in” of vss. 34 & 36 (Greek text): 1) “and they were afraid as they entered (*eiselelthein*) the cloud,” 2) “and when the voice had spoken (*en to genesthai*),” 3) “and told no one in (*en*) those days anything of what they had seen.” Thus the Transfiguration has a cloud but no Spirit, whereas the Baptism has the Spirit but no cloud.

The Transfiguration event may be seen in light of the following passages, for example, Ps 34.6: “Look towards him and be radiant.” The sense of the Hebrew for “be radiant (*nahar*)” suggests the flowing action of a stream which is derived from this verbal root. Consider this in light of Is 60.5: “Then you shall see and flow together (*nahar* again).” For more on this “*nahar* theme” consider Jn 7.37: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’” (cf. Num 20.2-13, Is 12.3, 44.3, 55.1). Here is a progression of sorts from viewing the transfigured Christ as *nahar*...light...to him as flowing water, also *nahar*.

Jn 12.26: “If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also.” Note the “where-there” sense of this verse which seems more important the person of Christ himself.

Three references to “palm tree:”

1) Ps 92.12: “The righteous flourish like the palm tree.”

2) Sg 7.7: “You are stately as a palm tree.”

3) Jn 12.13: “So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, ‘Hosanna!’”

The Greek for “palm tree” is *phonix* from which is derived the mythical bird phoenix which was reborn as soon as it was consumed by fire. Perhaps the connection stems from the fact that a palm tree’s branches are leafy much like a large bird’s. Each of the three citations above show different uses of this “phoenix.”

Five functions of Christ contained in one scriptural verse, Heb 1.3, all of which are ones of action: “He 1) reflects the glory of God and 2) bears the very stamp of his nature, 3) upholding the universe by his

word of power. When he had made 4) purification for sins, he 5) sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Compare the bride of the Song of Songs with Mary Magdalene:

Sg. 3.4: “Scarcely had I passed them when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother’s house and into the chamber of her that conceived me.”

Jn 20.17: “Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to the, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

This “mother’s house” and “chamber” may be paralleled with “my Father’s house” of Jn 14.2.

Perhaps no other character in the New Testament gets our attention as Mary Magdalene in that she combines the best embodiment of what Christ communicated. Although she was rebuked for clinging to him, surely she must have used this experience at Pentecost and clung to the Holy Spirit in an especially fierce way unlike the apostles. Since the Spirit is completely un-embodied as opposed to the physical Christ whom she knew well, Mary could now put no limits on her clinging.

“A light for revelation to the Gentiles” [Lk 2.32]. Note use of preposition “to” (*eis*, also means “into”), thus signifying Christ as being a “light into revelation.” Later in vs. 35 Simeon says to Mary, “that thoughts of out of many hearts may be revealed.” Note that such thoughts (*dialogismos*, singular) are composed of the preposition *dia* (through) and *logismos* (thought); *dia* joined to the latter connote that such “through thoughts” or “thinking through” will be revealed or come to light.

Eph 1.5: “He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.” This verse may be divided into six parts; note the use of prepositions which present a dynamic picture of this destining motion:

- 1) *Proorisas*: destined; with the preposition *pro*, “before.”
- 2) *Eis huiiothesian*: “to be his sons” or in Greek, “into sonship” or literally, “into son-placing.”
- 3) *Dia Iesou Christou*: “through (*dia*) Jesus Christ.”
- 4) *Eis autou*: “into him” in the Greek text.
- 5) *Kata ten eudokian*: “according to the purpose.”
- 6) *Tou thelematos autou*: “of his will.”

From the **Rule of St. Benedict** (4.46): “To desire eternal life with all spiritual longing.” It’s much more vivid, even sensual, in the Latin: *Vitam aeternam omni concupiscentia spiritali desdidere.*

Gen 26.19-25: A description of Isaac’s well digging. He does this twice (vss. 19 & 21), an action contended by the herdsmen of Gerar. Hence, Isaac calls the wells Esek or “contention” and Sitnah or “enmity.” The verb *chapahar* also implies a thorough searching or exploration. Isaac calls the third well Rehoboth or “broad place,” “room.” Later Isaac digs his fourth well and calls it Bneer-sheba or “well of the oath.” This well was dug after the Lord promised to bless Isaac as he did Abraham; the term here for to dig is *karah* in the sense of digging for a treasure. Thus the final well is dug only after God’s appearance in a dream. Tie in all these wells with Jn 4.6: “Jacob’s well was there (Sychar, a city of Samaria), and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well.” It was by this well (note, of Jacob as opposed to Isaac) that Jesus had the dialogue with the Samaritan woman: “But

whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (vs. 14).

With regard to all this well digging, Jacob was able to roll back a stone over the mouth of a well (cf. Gen 29.10) without any assistance. This stone was so large that a group of shepherds had to assemble so they could move the rock. Perhaps Jacob got his strength from “The stone which he had put under his head and set up for a pillar” (28.18). Jacob did this after his dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder; such was the well above where Christ carried on his conversation with the Samaritan woman.

“Spontaneity: a movement explicable without the intervention of any factor outside this movement itself, a movement which, on the contrary, contains in itself its own complete justification.” **Mystical Theology of St. Bernard** by Etienne Gilson, p. 91.

In the Book of Revelation are several definitions of Jesus Christ in the three-fold temporal dimensions of past, present and future:

-1.4: “from him who is and who was and who is to come.”

-1.8: “I am the Alpha and Omega...who is and who was and who is to come.”

-4.8: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

-11.17: “Lord God Almighty, who are and who was, that you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.”

-21.6: “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.”

-22.13: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Lk 2.21: “At the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.” St. Bernard comments on this text (**In Circumcisione** 1.3) that Christ’s name was called (*vocatum*), not imposed (*impositum*). He has this name as proper to himself: *a natura propria habet, ut sit Salvator; innatum ei hoc nomen, non inditium ab humana vel angelica creatura.*

Note, too, in Lk 1.31 when the angel announces to Mary that she will conceive and call the child Jesus—the first word of vs. 31 is *idou*, behold. Such beholding is essential to relate to the calling of the child’s name and is inseparable from it. Only a biblical name can be given with an *idou*, a fact which places the name as a revelation of the person and not merely a name imposed from without.

Acts 7.55: “But he (Stephen), full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” This occurred at the moment when Stephen was being stoned and Saul (later St. Paul) was looking on (vs. 58). *Atenizo*: the verb for “to gaze,” an intense regard or a look without extension, *a-teino*. Also note that Stephen was “full of the Holy Spirit and by being so filled (*pleres*), he became invisible with the invisible. Thus *atenizo* and *pleres* are two features of the same reality. The onlookers, including Saul, “blocked their ears” (vs. 57) when Stephen uttered these words; they were in a condition opposite that of Ps 48.8: “As we have heard, so we have seen.” Later on, Saul was converted on the road to Damascus and “suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me’” [9.3-4]? This light in the presence of Jesus Christ and his church (“me”) was for Saul an *atenizo* much like that with regard to Stephen. By way of note, the Church celebrates the feast of St. Stephen the very day after Christmas. It

is as though she were intimating that the atonement of Stephen formed a birth.

Catholic tradition is fond of saying that St. Joseph never spoke a word, a fact backed up by scripture. However, he had three dreams in which an angel spoke to him: Mt 1.20-1 (to take Mary as his wife), Mt 2.13 (to flee into Egypt) and Mt 2.19 (to return from Egypt). I.e., in each dream a speaking angel appears to a silent Joseph. This is his way of communicating, through another (angelic) being.

Jn 16.12-16: Here Christ speaks about the Holy Spirit who is to descend upon the apostles at Pentecost. The Spirit's functions in these verses may be outlined as follows:

- 1) "He will guide you" or better, "will put you on the way," the way being Christ himself.
- 2) "Whatever he hears he will speak."
- 3) "He will declare to you the things that are to come."
- 4) "He will glorify me."
- 5) "He will take what is mine and declare it to you."

A quick note regarding the notion of image and likeness as found in Gen 1.26: "Let us make man in our image and likeness." The text doesn't say "as our image and likeness." Only Christ is "*eikon* of the invisible God (Col 1.15).

Ex 31.18: "And God gave to Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Later upon returning to the Israelite camp, Moses saw the people worshiping the golden calf and "threw the tables out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain" [32.19]. Thus the tables which were written on the summit of Sinai were shattered at its base. After some time, Moses again ascended Sinai and he, not God, "wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments (Hebrew, words)" [34.28]. This was done after Moses "was there with the Lord" (vs. 28) forty days and forty nights. Perhaps the tables written by God had to be shattered; they were too powerful, so a second set had to be written by human hands. Thus these latter tables could be approached more readily by people.

A definition of myth: "A representation or a picturing of spiritual reality. Through images the myth provides an insight into the structure of this reality with its values and dangers and its directions and purpose, showing man how he can and must deal with it. Whenever any religious group is alive and vital, it will use mythological motifs to establish and offer this connection...A ritual is the implementation of a myth." **Myth, History and Faith** by Morton Kelsey, p. 120.

Prov 3.21: "Do not let them (wisdom and discretion) depart from your eyes. The verbal root here is *luts*; an alternate meaning is to be perverse. As a noun *luts* is used in Gen 28.19: "And Jacob called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." With Proverbs in light of this Genesis verse, one is being advised to keep Bethel (House of God) before one's eyes, not Luz.

Several verses with reference to the verb "to hide," the same Greek word being used:

- 1) "But let it be the hidden (*kruptos*) person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious" [1 Pt 3.4].
- 2) "In whom are hid (*apokruphoi*) all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" [Col 2.3].
- 3) "For you have died, and your life is hid (*kekruptai*) with Christ in God" [Col 3.3].
- 4) "But we impart a secret and hidden (*apokekrummenen*) wisdom of God which God decreed

before the ages for our glorification” [1 Cor 2.7].

5) “And to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden (*apokekrummenou*) for ages in God who created all things” [Eph 3.9].

6) “To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden (*kekrummenou*) manna” [Rev 2.17].

Jn 20.22: “He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Here is the only instance of the verb *enephuo* which the LXX uses in Gen 2.7: “And (God) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” Refer both verses to 2 Tim 3.16: “All scripture is inspired (*theopneustos*) by God...”breathed by God.

The feast of the Circumcision which used to be celebrated on January first may be better viewed as “feast of the holy name” because on that day, that octave of Christmas, that Christ received his name, Jesus. The divine command of circumcision hearkens back to Gen 17.12 when God made a covenant with Abraham where he changed his name from Abram to Abraham.

“And going into the house (Magi) they saw the child with Mary his mother” [Mt 2.11]. Note use of “house,” not a manger, a verse reminiscent of Sg 1.4: “The king has brought me into his chamber.” The Magi were drawn to the house by the sight of a star; the bride is drawn to the king’s chamber by the fragrant anointing oils (vs. 3). Thus we have two drawings, one by sight and the other by scent.

Also at Christ’s birth we have the shepherds coming to see the event: “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us” [Lk 2.15]. A verse paralleled by Ex 3.3: “I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” Both instances have people coming to Christ as opposed to Adam running away from God (cf. Gen 3.8). With Moses standing on “holy ground (*‘adamath*), he may be a type of Adam (*‘Adam*) who was taken from the earth (*‘adamah*) and is therefore in a new paradise. God’s voice from the bush summons Moses, unlike Adam, who was driven outside the garden by the same voice.

Compare the use of two verses:

Hab 2.4: “But the righteous shall live by his faith.” St. Paul quotes this verse with a different twist in Rom 1.17: “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” There are two uses of two different prepositions: In the first we have “in” (*b-*) and in the second, “from” (*ek*).

One could with justification perform the following operation upon the Bible: cut out the Song of Songs and add it at the end of the existing Old and New Testaments thereby having three testaments. The reason is that the Song may be taken as the fulfillment of the previous two; it is “what happens” after the Book of Revelation comes to an end with the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem.

It’s interesting to compare the Orthodox Jewish attachment to the letter of the Torah with the early Cistercians’ attachment to the letter of St. Benedict’s **Rule**. The latter fulfills the former by equating their passion of following Christ as closely as possible. “Les vieux auteurs demeurirent attaches a cet ideal des anciens jours, des jours du Sinai et de des foudres, mais embelli, sublime par les deux echos du Sermon sur la Montagne.” **St. Bernard et la Bible** by Charles Dumontier, p. 79.

Two examples of “searching” using different forms of the same verse; former is by God and latter by

man:

-1 Cor 2.10: "For the Spirit searches (*erauna*) everything, even the depths of God."

-1 Pt 1.10: "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched (*exeraunesan*) and inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of God."

The feast of the Annunciation occurs on March 24 (provide Holy week doesn't interfere) or nine months before Christmas Eve, December 24. Mary's pregnancy of nine months thus fills most of the year, awareness of which is helpful when the Angelus rings three times a day.

Jn 3.14: "And as (*kathos*) Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so (*houtos*) must the Son of man be lifted up." The first part of this verse with "as" is active where Moses does the lifting. The second part with "so" is passive where Christ is lifted up (by the Father).

"Darkness in a cave is like no other darkness anywhere. Outside, even on the blackest nights, with the moon down and stars obliterated by clouds, the human eye can adapt enough to perceive the dim outlines of the world. But in a cave you literally cannot see your hand before your eyes. There is an alien quality to that darkness, a quality that prickles deep in our bones. It isolates us within our skins, shrinking the world to a sphere measured by the length of our arms, which may be the reason why touch is the most intimate of senses because it can only communicate news of what has already invaded our vulnerable immediacy, news of what is already at hand." **The Ozarks**, from *The American Wilderness* in the Times-Life series by Richard Rhodes, p. 47.

Ex 20.24: "And altar of earth (*'adamah*) you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings." I.e., an altar of "Adam-ness" which can be applied to Jesus Christ as the new or second Adam.

Compare Joshua's taking of twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan River with Christ's choosing of his twelve disciples:

-Jos 4.8-9: "And the men of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel."

-Lk 6.13: "And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve whom he named apostles."

-"See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition to the elemental spirits (*stoicheia*) of the universe and not according to (i.e., the *stoicheia* of) Christ." Here are two types of "elemental spirits" which are very different from each other yet parallel. They bear a certain kinship to the so/as parallel mentioned above with regard to Jn 3.14. The *stoicheia* are the first principles or beginnings of creation which in ancient terminology consists of earth, air, fire and water.

1 Jn 1.4: "And we are writing this that our joy (*chara*) may be complete." The "our" refers to the apostolic group which now has the authority to transmit *chara* as derived from Jn 15.11: "These things I have spoken to you in order that my *chara* may be in you, and that your *chara* may be full." The sentence structure of both verses is similar; note that Christ says "these things I have spoken to you:" direct transmission as opposed to "we are writing this."

Several examples of "clothing:"

-Jud 6.34: "The Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon." The verb here is *lavash*, to cover as with a cloak."

-1Chron 12.18: "Then the Spirit came up (*lavash*) Amasai, chief of the thirty."

-2Chron 24.20: "Then the Spirit of God took possession of (*lavash*) Zechariah."

Lk 24.49: "But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

A definition of dogma which I came across but can't recall the source: "The expression of an irrational whole by means of imagery."

"For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" [Lk 1.44-5]. These two verses may be outlined as follows:

-behold (*idou*): an indication that something is about to happen.

-voice (*phone*) of your greeting came to (*eis*) my ears: Mary's voice which is equivalent to this *idou*; *eis* as "into" signifies full presence-within.

-the babe in (*en*) my womb: the place for receptivity of *idou*. Compare John's leaping in the womb with vs. 47: "My spirit rejoices in (*en*) God my Savior."

-leaped for (*en*) joy: the response of John to *idou*; full presence "in" joy.

-blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment (*teleiosis*): realization of what God spoke to Mary.

-from (*para*) the Lord: the source of *idou*.

In Mt 11.2 John the Baptist is in prison and hears about "the deeds of Christ." Perhaps his hearing does not come from human reports but by the same non-verbal transmission of Christ's presence he experienced in his mother's womb. The Song's words (5.6) may apply to John: "My soul went out at his word" (LXX).

Two examples of the Hebrew verb *shaqat*, to desire, within two different contexts; the first is given as a punishment and the second as a fruition:

-"Yet your desire shall be for your husband" [Gen 3.16].

-"I am my beloved and his desire is for me" [Sg 7.11].

St. Bernard's **Song Commentary** (71.9) has the phrase, *si pie considerare*. It may be taken as a way to do *lectio divina*: *considero* implies a careful regard and weighing; it is related to the Greek *eido*, "to see, appear, look alike." *Pie* (from *pious*) is an important concept in Latin implying dutiful activity and being affectionate both with regard to the gods and one's family; it also has patriotic implications.

"Truth doesn't bite; it likes to have company." From an anonymous monk.

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" [Jn 20.22]. Compare with Col 1.15: "He is the image of the unseen God, the first born of all creation." The breathing of the historical Christ is now being done by the cosmic Christ.

The seventh and final seal of Rev 8.1 has no contents but consider the words "there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." This verse culminates with the following seven plagues before and after. *Sige* for "silence" is used as opposed to *hesuchia*, an important break in events in such a crowded

book as Revelation. For a definition of *sige*: “[It] describes a quiet condition in general, inclusive of silence.” **Thayer’s Greek-English New Testament Dictionary.**

In chapter 17 of John’s Gospel the verb *tereo* (“to keep”) occurs four important times:

-1) vs. 6 has the apostles who have kept Christ’s word (*logos*); it can evoke the keeping of Christ as *Logos* or paying close attention to him as expression (*Logos*) of the Father.

-2) vs. 11 has the role reversed: the Father is now being addressed...”Holy Father, keep them in your name.”

-3) vs. 12 has Christ who “kept them in your name which you have given me.” Also in this verse is the verb *phulasso* (“to guard” as a prisoner): “I have guarded them and none of them is lost but the son of perdition.”

-4) vs. 15 has Christ asking his Father to keep the disciples in the world.

In Mk 1.6 we read of John the Baptist being “clothed with camel’s hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist.” Compare with Gen 3.21: “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.”

Two instances of memory:

-Bar 5.5: “Arise, O Jerusalem...look toward the east and see your children gathered from west and east, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God remembered them.”

-Jn 14.26: “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” This verse recapitulates that of Baruch above.

Contrast the banishment of Adam and Eve from paradise with the angel’s welcoming gesture at the birth of Christ: “At the east end of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life” [Gen 3.24]. “And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them” [Lk 2.9]. Both instances have angels involved with people; the former is to keep them away and the latter to invite them. The two are accomplished by means of light: flaming sword and the Lord’s glory. A few verse later (Lk 2.15) the shepherds say to each other, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing (*rhema*),” a word meaning that which has been spoken. It is used in vs. 19: “But Mary kept all these *remata*, pondering them in her heart.”

In vs. 17 we read “And when they saw it they made known the *rhema* which had been told them concerning this child. Note the progression from outward sign to inward realization:

1) Shepherds perceive *rhema* as an external event.

2) Shepherds made known *rhema* to other people.

3) Mary pondered *rhemata* in her heart; *rhema* here becomes an inward pondering which first started with the angel greeting the shepherds.

Mt 2.2 has the Magi saying “We have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him.” The Magi didn’t have a revelation by an angel but by a star which is equivalent to the *rhema* to the shepherds. The star-as-*rhema* “went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was” [vs. 9]. After having offered their gifts, the Magi “departed to their own country by another way” [vs. 12]. Outwardly their reason for a change of route was out of fear concerning Herod. While the

Magi came to Christ by a star's guidance and having presented their gifts to him and Mary, they were no longer in need of a star's guidance because "I am the light of the world. He who follows me no longer walks in darkness but has the light of life" [Jn 8.12]. I.e., the Magi have come to realize what are "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" [Col 1.27]. The Magi will come again with the Queen of the South: "[She] will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here" [Lk 11.31]. By way of note, the queen of Sheba came to Solomon because "she heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord" [1 Kg 10.1]. Note that she didn't come for Solomon nor even for his wisdom but "concerning the name of the Lord." Her astonishment at Solomon's gifts reads literally, "And there was no longer any breath (*ruach*) in her" [vs. 5]. Compare this "lack of breath" with the Magi: "They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" [Lk 2.10].

In Mt 2.9 we have the wise men who "went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was." The Greek text has *paidion* for child as well as *oikia* for house (vs. 11). This suggests that the wise men came to the holy family much later than at Christ's birth or even shortly thereafter. Compared with Lk 2.16 we have "[the shepherds] went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger." The Greek for babe is *brephos* who would be unable to comprehend the wise men's gifts, but a *paidion* could do so.

Lk 2.41-52 has the story of Jesus at twelve years of age in the temple. Here (vs. 43) he is a *pais* (*paidion*: diminutive of *pais*) teaching there. The distinction between *paidion* (at Magi's visit) and *pais* (teaching in the temple) isn't that crucial here. Nevertheless, it may be said that Christ taught Mary the significance of the Magi's visit in the same way he taught the teachers in the temple. Also, compare the verb *sumballo* of Lk 2.19 (ponder) with *diatero* of vs. 51. The former literally means "to bring together, to ponder, to consider;" the latter, "to keep continually or carefully." *Diatero* is connected with Christ as *pais* who is teaching Mary. Later (Jn 17.11, 12, 15) Christ prays to the Father to *tereo* his disciples as noted in another section. Another instance of this transmission of the mystery of Jesus Christ is when Mary and John the Evangelist stood at the cross. Jesus commended his mother into John's care or as the Greek has it, *eis ta idia*, "into his own" [Jn 19.27]. John's *idia* could absorb Mary, as it were, because earlier he had laid "close to the breast (*en to kolpo*) of Jesus" [Jn 13.23]. We could say that John learned from Mary's earlier *sumballo* and *diatero* experiences.

Jn 6.45: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God,'" quoting a passage from Is 54.13 where the Hebrew verb is *lamad*, a term often used in conjunction with the Torah. Christ's words are situated in the larger context of his teaching about himself as "living bread;" in vs. 46 he says "Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God." This verse, in turn, is reminiscent of Jn 1.18: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." John's verse is reminiscent of Ex 33.20: "For no man can see my face and live." This was uttered in the desert, so it parallels Christ as living bread when he borrows from Moses in Ex 16, also uttered in the desert.

Another note regarding the verb *lamad*: it can be used as referring to training for battle which is perhaps why Is 54.17 (consider in it night of vs. 13 quoted above, *lamad*) says "No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper," that is, no *lamad* regarding battle will be against you.

A definition of meditation: “The work at hand should be given a place in the framework of the meditation, as an illustration of its subject.” **Heart of Buddhist Meditation** by Nyanaponika Thera, p. 50.

As noted in Notes on the Psalter, also in this Home Page, “blessed” is the very first word of Psalm One, *‘ashry*, and derives from the verbal root *‘ashar*, to go straight on, to guide, to direct.” Thus *‘ashry* suggests a forward, almost aggressive movement in relationship to God. One translation by a Jewish scholar (**The Psalms**, Samson R. Hirsch, p. 1. Feldheim Publications, Jerusalem, 1978) renders Ps 1.1 as “Forward strives the man.” Ps 84 has three instances of this word worth noting:

- 1) vs. 4: “Blessed are those who dwell in your house.”
- 2) vs. 5: “Blessed is the man whose strength is in you; in whose heart are the ways of them.”
- 3) vs. 13: “Blessed is the man who trusts in you.”

All three uses of *‘ashry* are bound up with forward, eternal movement which can related to vs. 7: “They will go from strength to strength; every one of them appears before God in Zion.” The Greek word *makarios* (blessed) as used in the beatitudes are a weak translation of this dynamic *‘ashry* movement.

In St. Bernard’s **Song Commentary**, Sermon 84 begins with Sg. 3.1: *In lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit amina mea.* *Lectulus* is the diminutive of *lectus*, “chosen, picked,” whose verbal root is *lego*, “to collect, gather, pick.” Thus with a typically Cistercian play on words, *Lectulus* may be related to *lectio* (*divina*), a selective (picky, you might say) type of reading.

The synoptic Gospels depict Jesus Christ as being sent into the desert after his baptism, for example, Lk 4.1-2: “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness.” Christ is both full of the Spirit from his baptism (3.21-2) and led into the desert by the same Spirit. Compare this with Pentecost: “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” [Acts 2.4]. Again, Spirit (*Pneuma*) is associated with “filled” (*pleroo*). Christ is in the desert after Luke gives his genealogy which commences with Christ and works backwards “to Adam, son of God” [32.38]. Adam too was tempted but in Paradise; it is significant that Christ is similarly tempted right after Luke gives his genealogy.

Because Christ was *pleres Pneumatos*, he did not have to eat, mythologically speaking if you will. All satisfaction was met in the *pleroma*. The mention of *Pneuma* in Luke’s temptation account points to its function: Christ went to the desert for forty days, symbolic of Israel being in the desert for forty years. *Pneuma’s* function was to teach Christ as man the Israelite experience. He teaches by way of the memory, that is, bringing to mind in Christ the desert period of forty years. “He [Holy Spirit] will teach you all things” [Jn 14.26]. Since this same Spirit is present with Christ, there is reason to believe that the same teaching process is at work with him.

Perhaps King Solomon in Sg 3.6 may be applied as a type of Christ: “What is that coming up from the wilderness, like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of the merchant?” Myrrh and frankincense were offered by the wise men when Christ was very young and thus mark his ministry which culminates in his offering of self. Solomon as “coming up from the wilderness” may be applied to Christ as he began his ministry after being in the wilderness.

“Behold, a stormy wind came out of the north and a great cloud, with brightness round about it and fire flashing forth (*exastrapton*, LXX) continually” [Ezk 1.4]. “Their legs were straight and the soles of their

feet were like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished bronze" [vs. 7]. Compare these two verses with the transfigured Christ: "And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white (*exastrapton*)" [Lk 9.29]. I.e., the same word is used in both instances. Later in Ezk 2.1 is a voice speaking: "then the Spirit entered me and set me upon my feet." Compare with Christ's words (Mt 17.7): "Rise and have no fear."

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared" [Lk 24.1] Note the phrase for "early dawn," *orthrou batheos*; *batheos* signifies "at the depth... the very darkness point...of dawn."

"And Moses went up...to the top of Pisgah...and the Lord showed him all the land. "This is the land I will give to your seed. I have caused you to see it, but you shall not go over there. So Moses...died there...and he (God) buried him, but no man knows of his sepulcher unto this day" [Dt 34.1-6]. This interesting passage may apply to St. Joseph whom the Lord also "knew face to face." It gives good reason for Joseph's silence after he had seen the Promised Land or Jesus Christ. No need to utter words, for God "caused him to see it with his own eyes." Such "causing" implies being taught by God much like Adam in Eden. Like Moses, Joseph died outside the Promised Land in that while corporeally present, it (Christ) was not present in all fullness. Nevertheless, God himself buried Joseph like Moses in a place unknown to others.

A definition of Midrash: "...the Midrash being to the Bible what imagination is to knowledge."
Messengers of God by Elie Wiesel, p. 60.

During a lecture some years ago, a rabbi from a local synagogue was asked about the sacraments, if he had the equivalent thereof. While he responded no, should Jews ever possess one, right away they would make STUDY the chief and perhaps only one. With this in mind, consider that most monastic saints—East as well as West—are depicted with a scroll or book in their hand, a fact which parallels the Jewish "sacrament" of study.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet" [Rev 1.11]. The "Lord's day" refers to our modern Sunday, first day after the earlier six of creation. Perhaps the Book of Revelation in which this verse is situated may be viewed as the description of how a new creation comes into being following the pattern of Genesis. Furthermore, John (2.1-3.22) gives messages to seven churches, these messages being like the days of creation. Afterwards John finds himself "in the Spirit" again (4.2), only this time to see the struggle between the heavenly and earthly realms.

Keeping in mind this keenness of vision with regard to John the Evangelist, it was prefigured in Jn 21 4 & 7: "Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach...That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'" John was able to perceive Christ at this time of day when light was dim and perhaps mist was on the sea's surface. Furthermore, John and his companions were "about a hundred yards off" from the shore (vs. 8), a considerable distance which enhanced the marvelous ability of John to see under those conditions.

"See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" [Lk 24.39]. Here the risen Christ asks his disciples to touch (*pselaphao*) him.

Consider this verse in light of 1 Jn 1.1: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched (*pselaphao*) with our hands, concerning the word of life.” This Greek verb means “to feel, grope about, search after, caress.” It is like feeling a piece of fruit in the market to test its ripeness. Luke has *pselaphao* with “see,” reminiscent of Ps 34.8: “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” The Hebrew *taham* (taste) implies discernment, of testing the quality of a thing.

The notion behind *pselaphao* may be amplified further: “And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” [Rom 8.27]. This verse is twofold: The Father’s searching of hearts and his knowing the Spirit’s *phronema* . . . mind . . . in these same hearts. The Father doesn’t know from first hand experience, so to speak, about human hearts and uses the Holy Spirit to obtain such knowledge. This act of searching (*erauno*) by the Father is a form of *pselaphao/taham*. He thus “tastes” and “sees” by the Holy Spirit. Romans continues in vs. 29: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” This conforming (*summorphos*) is akin to *pselaphao*; the former is a kind of conreatization of the latter’s probing.

Not only does *pselaphao* has as its object “that which was from the beginning” but the hearing, seeing and looking. To drive home the point of this object of reflection this phrase may be inserted after each: “That which was from the beginning we have heard,” “That which was from the beginning we have seen,” “That which was from the beginning we have looked upon,” “That which was from the beginning we have touched with our hands.” There are two types of visual beholding, seeing and looking upon; the former is a simple look whereas the latter (from which *theoria* is derived) implies careful consideration. All perceptions take this “from the beginning” and move it to “the eternal life which was with the Father” (vs. 2). Note that the preposition *pros* (to) means “in the direction of,” a direct movement towards it which had origins “from (*en* or *in*) the beginning.”

“ . . . in the inner man, and that you may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” [excerpted from Eph 3.16-8]. Here the “inner man” which has no dimensions relates to that which is expressed in dimensions, four points of direction which compose space as we know it. Thus “If we have known Christ according to the flesh, we thus know him no longer” [2 Cor 5.16].

The first occurrence of the Hebrew verb *shamar* (to watch, guard) is in Gen 2.15: “The Lord God took the man and put in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.” *Shamar* may apply to an activity not especially physical but of attentive care much as a shepherd watches his flocks. We may say that the man in Eden had as his task to *shamar* what transpired there. Coupled with this injunction is the other, *havad*, to till, which has the alternate meaning of serving. *Havad* can therefore apply to treating Eden like a special treasure or serving it as a dear friend.

Shamar is later transferred to the keeping of the divine Torah and its commands, for example, Ps 119.4: “You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.” *Shamar* stands in the same relationship to the Torah or to man outside Eden as this garden was when man was inside it. By way of note, consider *shamar* in light of *tereo* (Lk 2.19) discussed above, Mary’s pondering of the angel Gabriel’s message.

Another use of *shamar*: “He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken” [Ps 34.20]. This passage

refers back to the paschal lamb, Ex 12.46, and forward to the crucified Christ, Jn 19.36. Note the play on words: *shamar* and *shavar*; to break.

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you (*epeleusetai epi se*), and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” [Lk 1.35]. Words taken from the angel Gabriel to Mary with regard to Christ’s birth. Later at Pentecost we read: “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place” [Acts 2.1], referring to Christ’s disciples. Note that Mary was not present, although earlier (1.14) she is with the disciples at prayer. Mary doesn’t need the descent of the Holy Spirit because it had already come upon her. Note the Greek verb cited above with the two “upons,” as though to emphasize the Spirit’s special presence with regard to Mary. The same idea is conveyed by a third one, “overshadow you” (*epi-skiasei se*). On the other hand, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost which enabled them to boldly speak about Jesus Christ. It was their task to speak from this fullness, whereas Mary doesn’t because she had begotten him through the three “upons” just mentioned. Perhaps Mary was looking upon the disciples after Pentecost as a mother would look upon her children.

The disciple Matthias was chosen to take Judas’ place in order to fill the mystic number twelve, the original number of Christ’s disciples (cf. Acts 1.15-26). The eleven disciples before this election formed a table, as it were, with one leg missing and unable to fully support and balance the weight placed (of Jesus Christ) upon it. Note that the account of Matthias’ election is followed immediately by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; it was as though the Spirit were waiting for this added support before he could rest upon them with safety and security. Now and only now “the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” [Rev 21.14].

At the crucifixion all the disciples ran away except for John; it may be paralleled with the running away of Adam and Eve from God. I.e., both ran away from the Tree of Life. The Spirit “found” the disciples at Pentecost; the “voice of God” found Adam and Eve in the garden, but notice the different results.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth...but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against his mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s foes will be those of his own household” [Mt 10.34]. Note the various ties which compose human relationships with the major exception of that between husband and wife; only those which result from this union are listed.

“The Spirit blows where he wills, and you hear the sound of its, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes” [Jn 3.8]. The Greek for “goes” (*hupago*) is found only once in the LXX, Ex 14.21: “Moses extended his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove back (*hupegage*) the sea by a strong east wind all night.” This verb has the sense of leading or bringing “under” (*subducere*) or receding. It is interesting to see that the Holy Spirit does this; implied is avoidance of direct confrontation. Note too that the act of *hupago* with regard to the Red Sea took place in the darkness of night.

A note regarding Sts. Peter and Paul...Peter received the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 16.19) with the power of binding and losing. Paul did one better: he was snatched into heaven (2 Cor 12.4) and “heard things which no man can utter.”

“And she (Martha) had a sister called Mary who sat (*parakathestheisa*) at (*pros*) the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching” [Lk 10.39]. The verb is composed of two prepositions, *para* (about) and *pros*

(towards); the latter direction-towards-which is emphasized even further by a second preposition *pros* regarding Mary's presence at Christ's feet. Consider this verse in light of 1Cor 7.35: "But to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion (*euparedron*) to the Lord." *Euparedron* contains the preposition *para*; compared with Mary's *parakathestheisa*, we could say that true devotion is a cultivation of this *para*-ness.

"I tell you, although he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs" [Lk 11.8]. The word *anaideia* (importunity) also means shameless persistence, a good image of prayer as intended in this context about obtaining the Holy Spirit (vs. 13). *Anaideia* is akin to *parresia*, boldness or freedom of speech. "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold" [2 Cor 3.12].

In Eph 1.3-14 (twelve verses) are nineteen occurrences of the prepositions *eis* or *en* (into or in). They may be outlined as follows:

- who blessed us in Christ
- with (*en*) every spiritual blessing
- in the heavenly places
- he chose us in him
- he destined us in love
- in him
- to (*eis*) the praise of his glorious grace
- in the beloved
- in him
- for (*eis*) the fullness of time
- all things in Christ
- in him
- in him, according to the purpose of him
- who accomplishes (*en-ergountos*) all things
- to live (*eis to einai*) for (*eis*) the praise of his glory
- in Christ
- in him you who have heard the word of truth
- and have believed in him
- to (*eis*) the praise of his glory

St. Bernard (**Song Commentary**, 7.7) quotes Ps 63.8: *adhaesit anima mea post te...Videndo adhaerebat, et adhaerendo videbat*. I.e., Bernard equates adhering to God with seeing God; first comes this adhering, then the vision. Keep in mind Ps 34.8 mentioned earlier: "Taste and see that the Lord is good," where tasting (*taham*) may be paralleled with adhering. This adherence is proper to one being made in God's *eikon* as noted in Jn 1.4: "In him was life, and this life was the light of men." Here light is directly located within a person and primary emphasis is upon life as found in God himself.

"My soul clings to you" [Ps 62.8]. *Davaq* is the verb here, representing single-mindedness as in Ps 86.11: "Unite my heart to fear your name." The verb for "to unite" is '*achad*, "make one." Such oneness hearkens back to the theme of light of the last paragraph. Cf. Lk 11.34: "When your eye is (literally) simple, your entire body is full of light." *Aplous* (simple) is a refinement of '*achad*, for it implies a relaxation or natural state lacking tension.

Two more uses of *davaq*, “to cling, each with a different context:” “My soul clings to the dust” [Ps 119.25] and “I cleave to your testimonies” [vs. 32].

The Hebrew word *sod* alludes to a sitting together, an assembly, deliberation, familiar conversation, acquaintance. *Sod* can refer to either human or divine relationships, for example, Ps 25.14: “The friendship (*sod*) of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.” Thus *sod* is an expression of *lectio divina*.

St. Bernard (**Song Commentary**, 13.4) speaks of Joseph not as usurping Pharaoh’s wife because a wife is man’s glory (1 Cor 11.17). To tamper with the husband/wife relationship would be interfering with the deepest bond in human life. Later in section 4 Bernard quotes Is 48.11: “I will not yield my glory to another.” Parallel these two glories: glory is equaled by Bernard as a wife which can’t be shared with another person as well as with (God’s) a human being.

“The myth is a myth because it is *muein* (Greek: to be closed, shut up, silent) and not *legein* (Greek: to speak), because it is silence and not speech.” **Faith, A Constitutive Dimension of Man** by R. Panikkar, p. 224.

“Because your steadfast love (*chesed*) is better than life” [Ps 63.3]. The particle or preposition *min* (from) is prefixed to “life” and implies a separation. In this verse that which is most characteristic of God, his *chesed*, is “separate” from what we hold dearest, life. Perhaps when uttering this the psalmist had in mind Ex 30.5: “I am the Lord your God, a jealous God.”

When considering the Holy Family, it is quite an unusual group. You have a child who claims to be God, a mother who is a virgin and a (supposed) father who never speaks a word but has dreams.

Torah: instruction, doctrine, (the) law. It comes from the verbal root *tor*, “to travel about, follow after.” Consider this verbal root as in Num 13.16: “These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out (*tor*) the land.” The spies were to *tor* the land much as they *tor* the Torah. Also derived from *tor* is “turtle dove,” a bird which makes a deep-throated yet soothing coo which this verb imitates. Such is the case with studying the Torah...“The turtle dove is heard in our land” [Sg 2.12]...the “Torah is heard in our land.”

After Jesus Christ was baptized, he ascended the Jordan River while John the Baptist remained in the midst of its waters. John remained there to restore those twelve stones which Joshua (“Jesus”) had removed (cf. Jos 4.3). While John remains there, Jesus ascends to later call his twelve disciples. This juxtaposition of twelve stones and twelve disciples discharges “He who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist” [Lk 7.28].

“You are the salt of the earth” [Mt 5.13]. Here salt is placed not on the earth’s surface but within in. “You are the light of the world” [vs. 14]. Here light is placed within the world much like the salt within the earth. Note the use of *ge* (earth) and *kosmos* (world).

In some passages within this section I made some remarks about St. Paul’s use of “so”/“and” (or “like” or something similar) to compare two diverse yet similar realities. This so-as process may be applied to Rom 5.15-21 and takes the following outline; sometimes the literal translation is used to highlight:

- Not as the trespass | thus the gift
- If many died through one man's trespass | much more have the grace of God and the gift... abounded for many
- The judgment following one trespass brought condemnation | the free gift...brings justification
- If...death reigned through that one man | much more will those who receive the abundance of grace (etc.)
- As one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men | so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men
- As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners | so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous
- Law came in to increase the trespass | but where sin increased, grace abounded
- As sin reigned in death | grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ

St. Benedict's **Rule** (#19) deals with the monk's attention at the Divine Office or liturgy. Some phrases in Latin, very succinct, and better to leave in the original:

- servite Domino in timore*
- psallite sapienter*
- in conspectus angelorum psallam tibi*
- in conspectus divinitatis et angelorum eius esse*
- et sic stemus ad psallendum, ut mens nostra concordet voci nostrae*

"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" [Phil 3.10]. I like the use of *koinonia* (share; here it's a noun), a term used a lot to describe various aspects of the Christian community. *Koinonia* as related to Christ's suffering is a direct way of saying that such afflictions can effect this close relationship with him. It's emphasized by "being like him in death," much more vividly put in the original text by the verb *summorphizomai* or "with form." This aligning of our human form with God's form is much like saying to be conformed to our divine *eikon*. Vs. 11 continues with "that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." *Exanastasis* is a variant of resurrection (the usual term being *anastasis*); note the preposition *ex* (from) coupled with *ana-* as it to give it more meaning. The verb form implies a shooting forth in order to produce growth. For another use, cf. Acts 15.5: "But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up."

The risen Christ says "Do not lay hold of me" [Jn 20.7] yet later says to Thomas "Put (*phere*) your finger here and see my hands; put out (*phere*) your hand and place (*bale*) it in my side" [vs. 27]. Verbs of direct action, used here as if Christ wanted Thomas to touch his wounds, not so much his entire body as in the case of Mary, vs. 7.

"Do not quench the Spirit" [1 Ths 5.19]. The verb *sbennumi* implies its opposite, a burning by the Holy Spirit who should be left to burn and to devour. Two verses with a similar intent: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit" [Eph 4.30]. "For our God is a consuming fire" [Heb 12.29].

Mt 12.38-42 has Christ speaking of Jonah preaching to the inhabitants of Nineveh and how he was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, symbol of his coming death and resurrection. When

Jonah was shut up in the whale he uttered a heart-felt prayer for deliverance which can be applied to Christ as he lay in the tomb (cf. Jon 2.2-9). Peter speaks of this: "In which he went and preached to the spirits in prison" [1 Pt 3.9], a preaching not unlike Jonah's to Nineveh. Jonah's preaching did not stop with Nineveh but reached, as it were, to the Queen of the South (Sheba) noted when Christ spoke of her right after Jonah (cf. Mt 12.42). The queen exclaimed to King Solomon, "Happy are your men! Happy are your servants" [1 Kg 10.8]! The adjective "happy" is derived from the verbal root *'ashar* which as noted above connotes a forward or striving motion...always in progress.

"Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy" [1 Pt 1.8]. Note play of words, *horontes/pisteuontes* (see/believe). Such "not seeing" is a kind of being in Christ or being a son of God which is a superior realization concomitant with "inexpressible joy;" the adjective *aneklaetos* here is privative of *eklaleo*, "to speak out, divulge," yet its link with joy is a better kind of non-verbal divulging or emitting of joy at "not having seen." Vs. 9 continues with the implication that the "inexpressible joy" is ongoing: "As the outcome of our faith you obtain the salvation of your souls." The verb here is *komizo*, "to take care of, provide, receive." It also intimates getting back what is rightfully one's own. Thus *komizo* used with *telos* (outcome).

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" [Mt 13.44]. Note that the man first sells all his possessions despite the fact that he has found the treasure in the field which he easily could have taken legally or not. With the resulting money, he purchases the field...because this field is a special type which grows treasures; if he were to legally or not take the treasure, the field would not continue to produce more treasures.

"You shall love the Lord your God...with all your might" [Dt 6.5]. Exceptionally vivid and strong words: *vekal-me'odeka*, from the adverb *me'od*, excessive..."with all your excessiveness."

"I spread out my hands to you" [Ps 143.6]. The verb *parash* means "to break into pieces, expand." Applying this to one's hands symbolizes intense longing for God..."I break into pieces my hands."

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" [Mt 16.19]. Compare with Gen 3.24: "And at the east end of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life." Thus keys and sword represent two opposites of the same reality.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ according to Matthew's account starts from Abraham and works forward in time. Somewhere in his **Song Commentary** St. Bernard remarks of this progression, "Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills" [Sg 2.8]. Building on this, we could say that when the genealogy reaches Joseph, the following words may be applied: "Behold, he stands behind our wall (traditionally perceived as the Old Testament); he looks forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattices" [Sg 2.9]. Then Matthew's genealogy takes on a new twist with John's "genealogy:" "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" [3.6]. To conclude these remarks, Bernard compares Mary to an aqueduct (**In Nat. B.V.M.**, #1.4), somewhat akin to the function of a genealogy and parallels it with Jacob's ladder: *Cuius* (aqueduct) *nimirum summitas, instar profecto scalae illius quam vidit Patriarcha Iacob caelos tangere, immo et transcendere coelos, and vividissimum illum aquarum, quae super coelos sunt, posset attingere fontem.*

The two liturgical seasons of Advent and Paschal Time have a lot in common because they both await someone. The first awaits Jesus Christ and the second awaits the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Apply the following two verses pertaining to Mary to Paschal Time and note their referral to the Holy Spirit:

-“She was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit” [Mt 1.18].

-“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” [Lk 1.35].

Then consider those references to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this time with reference upon the word “fulfill” (*pleroo*):

-“When the day of Pentecost had come (been fulfilled)” [Acts 2.1].

-“It filled all the house where they were sitting” [vs. 2].

-“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit” [vs. 4].

In Jn 2.13-22 we have Jesus driving out the money changers from the Jerusalem Temple. He then adds “Destroy (*luo*) this temple and in three days I will rebuild it.” Note the verb *luo* which more basically implies a losing or dissolving, not necessarily a physical brick-by-brick dismemberment.

“I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up” [Ps 30.1]. This verse contains two contradictory movements: “extol” and “draw up.” The Hebrew of the latter is *dalah* which also means “to hang down” and from which is derived *dal*, “door.” When God thus “doors” the psalmist, we can move to Jn 10.9: “I am the gate...the *dal*.”

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them” [Rev 20.11]. The two most basic and unquestioned features of reality flee before God’s presence and literally leaves you with no reference point. This reality is foreshadowed by Ps 103.22: “Bless the Lord in all places of his dominion,” only now this “place” has been transformed into a singularity, to borrow a term from astrophysics, to describe the collapse of space and time within a black hole. Vs. 12 speaks of opening the book of life in the presence of the dead which is actually a scroll which opens and closes with great swiftness. Two echoes of this Revelation verse: “Its rising is from the end of the heavens and its circuit to the end of them; and there is nothing concealed from its heat” [Ps 19.6]. “The sea looked and fled, Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs” [Ps 114.3-4]. Note that Ps 19.6 has in the next verse, “The Law (Torah) of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.” Like the book of life in Revelation, once the Torah is opened, the new creation is revealed which is why chapters 21 and 22 depict the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem to replace the fleeing of earth and sky. It is interesting that this city is called a tent (*skene*, 21.3; from Lev 26.11-12) which like a scroll, can be rolled up in a flash.

The Hebrew verb *shawah* means “to make even, flat, lay out smoothly, to equal. An instance is Ps 16.8: “I keep the Lord always before me.” This “keeping before is thus like making oneself on the same level as God or being conformed to his image. Note that the psalm has “before me” as if he set the Lord as an object in front of him and then laid himself out flat upon it. One instance which shows a feature of *shawah*: “When (the plowman) has made plain the face thereof.” One more reference, Ps 18.33: “He made my feet like hinds’ feet.”

In Ephesians 5.29-33 St. Paul speaks in marital images with regard to the union between Christ and his

church using Gen 2.24, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves (*proskollethesetai*; Hebrew is *davaq*, discussed elsewhere) to (*pros*) his wife, and they become one flesh.” Note the double use of *pros* which connotes a “being at” as with “and the Word was with (*pros*) God” [Jn 1.1]. The use of *pros* enhances the being-present-in of “in (*eis*, into) one flesh.” A bit later (vs. 32) Paul says “It refers to (*eis*) Christ and to (*eis*) the church, thereby applying the marital *pros/eis* to the church. No small wonder that in 2 Tm 1.14 Paul says “Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells (*en-oikountos*) in (*en*) you.”

Heb 4.12 speaks of the penetrating capacity of the Word of God as applied to a two-edged sword “piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” The next verse continues with the effect of this capacity: “And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare (*tetrachelismena*) to the eyes of him...” Related to this Greek verb is the word *trachelos*, the bending back of one’s neck to be slit. The last words of vs. 13, “with whom we have to do,” *pros hon hemin ho logos*, are difficult to translate...something like “to whom we the word (in sense of an affair).

Erasmus on marriage:

“Should no marriage be honored above all the sacraments because it was the first to be instituted, and by God himself? The other sacraments were established on earth, this one in paradise; the others as a remedy, this one as fellowship in felicity. The others were ordained for fallen nature, but this one for nature unspoiled...The excitation of Venus, which is necessary for marriage, is from nature and whatever is of nature is pure and holy...Why restrain from that which God instituted, natural sanctions, reason persuades, divine and human laws approve, the consent of all nations endorses and to which the highest examples exhort? What more sweet than to live with her with whom you are united in body and soul, who talks with you in secret affection, to whom you have committed all your faith and fortune?...Friends flit like swallows but a wife is faithful and only death dissolves marriage, if indeed it does. If you suffer adversity, you have one who will console you and try to make your trouble her own. If you stay at home you have a respite from the tedium of solitude. If you are away you long for a kiss. Absent you desire, restraining you rejoice. By marriage the number of your loved ones is increased. You acquire another father and mother. What more charming than to have a little Aeneas who will cherish you in your old age and in whom you are reborn!” **Erasmus of Christendom** by Roland Bointon, pp. 49-50.

Note the four elements which are equated to Christ our “boast:” “He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our 1) wisdom, our 2) righteousness and 3) sanctification and 4) redemption” [1 Cor 1.30]. This verse begins with the phrase (literally), “from him (Father) you are in Christ Jesus...” thus the four elements just listed have being in (*en*) Christ and are from (*ex*) the Father. “Compare this quote with Jer 9.23: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.”

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth” [Ps 119.104]! The Hebrew *malats* more properly means “to be smooth” than “to be sweet.” In the context of Ps 119 which praises God’s law and precepts, this is the only occurrence of *malats*; God’s words seem to have a slipperiness or difficulty to grasp in the mouth. Although present in the mouth, they cannot be appropriated or manipulated.

“So that your alms may be in secret, and your father who sees in secret will reward you” [Mt 6.4]. Two mentions of “secret” here, one for prayer and one for God the Father. Some manuscripts have *en phanero* which is the Syriac version—*begalya*—for the Father’s action of “rewarding.” The Greek *en phanero* has the exact opposite meaning of “in secret,” that is, “in manifestation.” There is a similar occurrence of *begalya*’ in vs. 6 with regard to praying “into your room” as well as in vs. 18 with regard to fasting.

“Whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old” [Acts 3.21]. The Greek for “establishing” is *apokatastasis*, a term celebrated by Origen meaning the restoration of all things in Christ. This restoration is linked with the “times of refreshing” of vs. 19, “times” being *kairos* (singular), a special event or circumstance. Look back to 1.6 where the disciples ask Christ, “Lord, will you at this time (*chronos*) restore (*apokatastasis* used verb) the kingdom to Israel?” Note the other translation of time, *chronos*, the passage of events without attribution of significance, the opposite of *kairos*. For another use of *apokatastasis*, cf. Mt 17.11: “Elijah does come, and he is to restore all things.” This should be taken in conjunction with John the Baptist and is a statement made right after the Transfiguration, a preview, as it were, of *apokatastasis*. For a reference using the verb, cf. Mk 3.5: “He stretched it out (withered hand), and his hand was restored.”

An excerpt pertaining to analog time:

“That is the beauty of analog (time, as opposed to digital). Because—like its linguistic companion, the analogy—it tries to reproduce the contour of reality. It lives in context. There is a before and an after. The digital watch gives you precision, but leaves you wondering where you are. Analog is a return to a certain harmony that the digital world chops away...Digital arbitrarily cuts up the continuum of information into bite-size bits, selects pieces and presents them back glued together to simulate the original continuum...The digital watch tells you the time. It does not represent it...Analog devices represent reality as a continuum on which things (seconds, degrees, sound waves) are assigned a location. Romantic, but not quite as practical as digital devices.” From an article in **Time Magazine**, *The Joy of Analog*, by Charles Krauthammer, May 26, 1986.

“If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits (*stoicheia*) of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world” [Col 2.20]? These *stoicheia* come from the Stoic tradition and ultimately may be reduced to earth, air, fire and water. Their combination makes up the visible world to which the Christian tradition requires a death. Note, however, that a bit later Paul exhorts, “Seek the things that are above (*ano*)” [3.1], that is, above the *stoicheia*.

Mt 13.1-9 has the parable of the sower which produces four results: seed devoured by birds, seed on rocky ground, seed in thorns and seed on good soil. This fourth seed is refined further to thirty, sixty and a hundred fold. Despite the abundance of seeds, only one out of four produces...and of this, only one out of three yields one hundred fold. A few verses after this parable Christ quotes Is 6.9-10 with regard to the people’s dullness of mind to receive his words. He contrasts the people or first three seeds with prophets and the righteous or the fourth seed which had the longing...the *epithumia* (vs. 17)...to witness what the people see. “Things into which angels long to look” [1 Pt 1.12], that is, the same angels who say “Glory to God in the highest” [Lk 2.14].

“He turned the sea into dry land; men passed through the river on foot. There did we rejoice in him” [Ps 66.6]. A reference to the Exodus, more specifically, the very depths of the Red Sea. Note the specific locality signified by *sham*, “there, in that place.” Within the center of greatest danger the psalmist expresses Israel’s thanks, reminiscent of Jonah in the whale’s belly, 2.9: But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!”

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” [Phil 3.14]. A short sentence loaded with several meaningful prepositions:

-*kata skopon* (better, “according to the goal”)

-*eis to brabeion* (“into the prize”)

-*ano kleseos* (“upward call”)

-*en Christo Iesou* (“in Christ Jesus”)

“Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning” [Mk 13.35]. Each time of watching refers to night as opposed to day, or the night’s four watches, because we don’t know the time...the *kairos*...when Christ will come. *Proi* or “morning” refers to very early in the morning when the first streaks of light can be detected. Christ’s words of watchfulness are directed towards the doorkeeper; situated at the entrance, he is in the best position to notice the *kairos*.

“Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house” [Lk 2.49]? Note the indefinite *tois* (things) and the lack of a transitive verb; emphasis is upon being-in: *en...einai*. The Greek text lack’s “house.”

“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted” [Heb 12.3]. The verb *analogizomai* for “consider” is the root for “analogy.” I.e., there is an “analogy” between Christ and the person wishing to imitate him in difficult circumstances. This verse may be paralleled with Rom 12.6: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; if prophecy, in proportion to our faith.” The noun *analogia* for “proportion” suggests comparison.

“No one has gone up into heaven except him who has descended from heaven” [Jn 3.15]. Compare with Rom 10.6-7: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach.” Paul is quoting from Dt 9.4, 30.12-14. Note that the Deuteronomy text balances out this ascent/descent axis by the use of “near” or *qerev*...the verbal root means “to approach, be near, be at the center of.”

“The Holy Spirit...will remind you of all which I have spoken to you” [Jn 14.26]. The verb for “remind” is *hupomimnesko*, literally, “to remind under (*hupo*).” It’s almost as though the Holy Spirit will take over our faculty of memory and hence blot out perception of the past as it impinges upon present thoughts and action.

“But as he (Joseph) considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” [Mt 1.20]. The verb *enthumeomai* means a deep, prolonged pondering which here is followed by a sudden *idou*, “behold,” by the angel.

“And they (Adam and Eve) heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” [Gen 3.8]. Note that they heard God’s voice; they didn’t see him. Furthermore, this voice was doing a strange thing, that is, walking within the garden, taking a stroll, as it were. This hearing of God’s voice is what the serpent wanted to blot out from the minds of Adam and Eve as much as possible which is why other biblical books have the constant exhortation to listen to it.

“It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” [Rom 8.16]. Note the verb *summartureo*, “witness with,” *sum* (*sun*). This with-ness is communicated by verbs in the next verse: “fellow heirs” (*sugkleronomoi*), “suffer with him” (*sumpaschomen*) and “glorified with him” (*sundoxasthomen*).

The Book of Deuteronomy concludes with Moses being prohibited by God to enter the Promised Land although he could view it from Mt. Nebo (Pisgah). Perhaps there was no need for him to enter it because at Christ’s Transfiguration Moses appeared with him and Elijah (Lk 9.30) on top of Mt. Tabor which is clearly within the Promised Land. Thus from on top of Nebo Moses saw that he would one day be on Tabor. Recall too that Elijah was taken into heaven (cf. 2 Kg 2.11).

“In my Father’s house are many rooms” [Jn 14.2]. Compare with Gen 6.14: “Make an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark.” The Hebrew for “rooms” is *qinyim*, literally “nests.” Interesting to consider the Father’s house as having nests instead of rooms, like a dovecote.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” [Jn 1.5]. The verb here is *katalambano*, “to grasp, take possession of,” something which darkness can’t do with regards to Jesus Christ. Several references to *katalambano* in the positive sense:

-“Run that you may obtain it” [1 Cor 9.24]

-“Power to comprehend...breadth, length, height and depth” [Eph 3.18]

-“Not that I have already obtained this” [Phil 3.12]

From the pamphlet of a “delayed vocation” seminary in southern New England:

“It is well known that before the fifth century almost all vocations were adult and second career, as they were in the times of the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles. The same pattern applied uniformly to all Founders and early members of Religious Societies in any age of Church history. This included the pattern to be expected from Christ’s own words in extending the invitations (‘vocation’) to follow him in a special manner: ‘Leave wife and children; leave accumulated possessions; leave one’s established life also.’ This is surely an invitation to adult and second career vocations. It is likewise clear that after the 19th century, ‘vocation’ had become synonymous with ‘youth.’ By the middle of the 20th century, two things had happened: 1) The youth-vocation field suddenly began to vanish in a spectacular fashion; and 2) the youth-only mindset had become so strong and so universal that it could not recognize what was happening and doggedly held its ground, while a universal ‘vocation crisis’ built up throughout the world.”

“Then Naaman said, ‘If not, I pray you, let there be given to your servant two mules’ burden of earth (‘erets); for henceforth your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord’” [2 Kg 5.17]. Naaman was a foreigner sent to be cured of leprosy and was done so at Elisha’s command. The idea is that a god can’t be worshiped apart from his own land. The term ‘erets often signifies the

sacred territory or apartness of Israel with respect to other lands; to take some of it like Naaman was to bring this *'erets* back to his home and therefore to extend its sacredness there. Once *'erets* is transferred to a spot other than its own it becomes a *maqom* (place, in the specific sense) or more specific than the usual *'erets*. "Surely the Lord is in this *maqom* and I did not know it" [Gen 28.6]. Later in the New Testament the Magi come to worship Christ, perhaps from Syria, the land which contained Naaman's *'erets*. If so, the Magi knew that this *'erets* would dispose them to make the trip to THE *'erets* to worship like their predecessor Naaman.

"But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him'" [Mt 25.6]. Compare this with Sg 3.11: "Go forth, daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon." By way of note, this parable is a favorite of Jon Ruysbroek; worth getting hold of if you can.

"We need, therefore, to be exceedingly circumspect about tampering with our basic symbols, for we may be altering far more than we realize...The maleness of the Christian priesthood is part of the God-given, revealed symbolism that we verify by our lived experience, even though it cannot be justified by logical proofs. This symbolism involves the deepest intuitive roots of our relationship with the Eternal. We prefer to leave it as it is." Bishop Kallistos Ware, from the **Tablet** (5 February 1983).

Is 11.2 contains four references to Spirit, *Ruach*:

- Ruach* shall rest upon him
- Ruach* of wisdom and understanding
- Ruach* of counsel and might
- Ruach* of knowledge and fear of the Lord

The next verse continues by saying in Hebrew, "and shall make him of quick (*harychu*) understanding in the fear of the Lord." Here the verbal form of *ruach* is used... "quick" in the sense of the wind blowing. Later in vs. 10: "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand (*hamad*) for a sign of the people." *Hamad*, from which is derived *hamud*, "column, pillar," as in Ex 33.9: "The *hamud* of cloud and stood (*hamad*) at the door of the tent."

"Behold, he stands behind our wall, he looks forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattices" [Sg 2.9]. This verse may be applied to John the Baptist in prison (cf. Lk 7.18-35), that is, Jesus as coming near the prison and looking in at John. In this context compare Jesus' words (quoting Is 35.5, 61.1) to John, "The blind receive their sight, the lam walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them" [Lk 7.22]. Such words are similar to "The flowers appear on earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land" [Sg 2.12].

The Syriac word for "dove" is akin to the Hebrew, *yonah*, the proper name for the prophet Jonah. Not only was Jonah was like the Dove or Holy Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation but was cast within these same waters; he actually reached Sheol (2.3).

The practice of *lectio divina* is inverse to the apostles. They passed on what they received from Jesus Christ which ultimately became the New Testament. I.e., it was an outgoing process in time. For us today to reach Christ, we must return the inverse way by going through the Church, scripture, the apostles and finally, Jesus Christ.

St. Bernard (**De Diversis**, 2.8): *Odoremus saltem et a longe salutemus eam*. He's referring to Heb 11.13-14: "These all died in faith, not having received what was promised." I.e., such persons constitute the genealogy of Christ as the synoptic Gospels present it and like the Song's bride say, "Draw me after you, let us make haste" [Sg 1.4]...not just after you but in the bridegroom's "anointing oils" [vs. 3] or Bernard's *odoremus*. As far as Christ's genealogy is concerned, John's Gospel doesn't mention any, beginning with the Word's eternal relationship with the Father. Note that in 1.51 Christ says "And the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Such up and down motions are a form of genealogy but in the eternal sense.

"Mary sat in the house" [Jn 11.20]. On the other hand, her sister Martha went out to meet Jesus. Mary is a second Noah ("whose name means rest") remaining in her ark, whereas Martha was like the raven and dove which Noah sent outside.

Christ is depicted as sitting at his Father's right hand in heaven, but the Holy Spirit after Pentecost may be seen as sitting at man's right hand side on earth.

Three types of "fullness," each with a different accent:

-temporal: "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son to redeem those who were under the Law" [Gal 4.4].

-divine: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" [Col 1.19].

-perfect stature or combination of the first two: "The church...which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" [Eph 1.23].

"In the morning watch the Lord looked down (*shaqaph*: as looking from a window) at the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and troubled the host of the Egyptians" [Ex 14.24]. The pillar of fire was for night and the pillar of cloud was for day, yet in vs. 24 the Lord used both pillars to confound Israel's foes. It occurred in the morning watch or dawn's first twilight where light and darkness blend and aren't fully distinct from each other...and hence the pillar of fire was in the process of changing into a pillar of cloud.

Mt 13-14 contains several parables, all descriptive of the kingdom of heaven and related to things hidden: pearls, yeast, net in the sea and seeds. The disciples ask Christ for an explanation..."then he left the crowds and entered the house." Even the house, like the elements of the parables, is a hidden place where the symbolism is revealed.

"Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" [Rom 8.23]. *Aparche* as "first fruits" is important in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa (cf. the Home Page) and Maximus the Confessor, referring to Christ as prototype of the new man in his resurrected state which the Christian now shares in seminal fashion. *Aparche* as it can best be realized now consists in the *stoicheia* of Col 2.20 which have been transformed. It thus is an in-between condition of spirit and matter. "The redemption of our bodies:" note (Greek text) the plural "our" and singular "body"...as though the plural represented the equally plural *stoicheia* and the singular "body" represented the equally singular "body" of *aparche*. Rev 3.14 is a kind of development on this theme: "The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation."

“And the Lord showed him [Moses] a tree which when he cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet” [Ex 15.25]. The verb *yarah* (to cast) also means “to lay a foundation, instruct,” from which is derived Torah. “Tree” or *hets* is close to *hetsah* (counsel), and in the context under discussion, is traditionally used as an image of Christ’s cross. Thus when God shows Moses the tree, he doesn’t point it out simply but *instructs*. . .*yarah*. . .him about it much like the Torah.

Chapters 12 through 15 of Exodus continually repeat the refrain “when the Lord brought us out from Egypt.” Reason for the repetition: it’s so easy to forget divine deeds however dramatic.

Three references with regards to God’s presence, each with a rather provocative image. Each starts out with an easily graspable and physical object which then expands ad infinitum:

-“The two tables of the testimony in his (Moses) hands, tables that were written on both sides” [Ex 32.15].

-“And the four (living creatures) had the same likeness, their construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel” [Ezk 1.16].

-“And before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass like crystal” [Rev 4.6].

In his **Rule**, St. Benedict speaks of stability (*stabilitas*) which refers to a monk abiding in his monastery from the day of his profession until the day of his death. *Stabilitas* also has a military connotation, that is, a constant state of readiness for action.

Proverbs 31.10-31 sings the praises of a good wife whose watchfulness extends to her household. Two mentions of “night” occur here:

-“She rises while it yet night and provides food for her household” [vs. 15].

-“Her lamp does not go out at night” [vs. 18].

One can’t but help think of the parable (cf. Mt 25.1-12) of the foolish and wise maidens where again, reference is made to night when the bridegroom (Christ) comes.

Mt 25.14-30, parable of the talents. Each servant is given a talent (5, 2, 1) to make them increase. A talent equaled more than fifteen year’s wages for a laborer, so it seems ironic for the master to say “You have been faithful over a little” [vs. 23]! The first two servants double their talents while the third hides it and later returns it. These first two resemble Mary who says “My soul magnifies the Lord” [Lk 1.46], that is, their souls continually double.

Chiastic structure: events being picked up and recapitulated in reverse order. An example is phante or “manger” as from which animals eat. “Manger” is thus a deeper cleft in the rock of a cave. At the end of Luke’s Gospel Christ is put in the “rock-hewn tomb” [23.53]. Thus at the beginning and end of Luke’s Gospel Christ—first as a baby, then as a dead man—is wrapped round and laid in a rock-crevice. Such is the sign the shepherds are given, an anticipation of Christ’s Passion.

The temporal interval between Christ’s birth and his baptism is some thirty years and is celebrated after the Epiphany about a week earlier. The “space” between these two feasts is the greatest or longest (temporal) span between any two given feasts yet just about the shortest, again temporally speaking.

Compare the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15) with that of the Pharisee and Publican (Lk 18). Both take place within the Father's home or temple. The prodigal can turn into his brother (Pharisee) who never left home, the two being an example of one person. Once reconciled to the Father, the prodigal looks on others like his brother as other prodigals. This is where he is akin to the Pharisee in the temple (home). It's the prodigal's challenge to remain like the publican "who would not lift so much his eyes to heaven" once he is transformed into the son who never left home. The challenge, it seems, is to remain at home, in the house: "but Mary sat in the house" [Jn 11.20]. She went out, unlike her sister Martha, only when "the Master calls for you" [vs. 28]. The prodigal-publican has thus changed into Mary and sees his brother the Pharisee as Martha. Here's where she must not judge him, otherwise he will revert to his former role of brother-Pharisee.

"For, even in the realm of worldly beauty, form cannot really be perceived without the beholder being taken up into it. The beauty is never a mere flat surface; it always has heights and depths. 'Whoever sees me, sees the Father' [Jn 14.9]." **Glory of the Lord** by Hans Urs von Balthasar, p. 604.

When Joseph died, he ordered his brothers to bring his bones out of Egypt when the Lord visits his people (cf. Gen 50.25). This happened at the Exodus, 13.19. In vs. 21 the Lord precedes the Israelites in a column of cloud and fire. It seems as if a condition for such a divine manifestation is the transferal of Joseph's bones from Egypt in an 'aron (coffin, ark), the same word for the holy ark in which the Law's two tablets were kept. It is more specifically called "ark of the testimony" [25.22].

Explanation, Description and Exposition

Explanation: This form of expression seeks to draw distinctions between three chief terms, beginning, middle and end or conclusion. It involves a rigorous intellectual (and willful) application of our faculties. The explanatory process is often necessary for the unearthing of a new discovery whether it be in the scientific or cultural fields of human endeavor. Due to its pioneer work of establishing operational principles, explanation is aware of its own bounded nature as standing in opposition to the relatively formless void from which it has just emerged. Our attention is aligned in accord with the place-to-place movement so familiar to the passage of energy (beginning, middle and end). Due to the advent of a new field of reference, explanation requires an organizational principle which we call the ego. This principle is essentially neutral, but any measure of success can make the ego assume willful control of the explanatory process. In this fashion, explanation assumes a polemic tone as opposed to its inherently heuristic structure.

Description: Once explanation has initiated a new field of discovery, it remains sterile unless filled out by a second gesture. This operation of expansion can be called the descriptive method. Description does not make new breakthroughs; instead, it circles around the field of explanation and softens it, so to speak, thereby enabling us to more fully appreciate what has been newly posited. Such a particular way of speaking about reality is characterized by adjectives, adverbs and verbs. Nouns take a second place for they belong to the explanatory process. It should be noted that the Hebrew language is primarily descriptive by nature. That is to say, Hebrew is founded upon the concept of the verb which implies ongoing motion as opposed to the static concept inherent within a noun. Furthermore, the Psalms embody Hebrew's descriptive mode best of all. They delineate the various moods of our soul without drawing (explanatory) conclusions.

Description has no beginning nor end. In this sense it is boundless just as the concept of a verb or adjective is constantly in motion. Description brings into play our artistic faculties as opposed to those of our intellect. Here the chief means of expression belongs to our imagination, our “image making machine.” This faculty presents various images which we then order to imitate or give form to a particular aspect of reality. Any embodiment of the descriptive process achieves its fullest expression when it makes the transition from imitation to pretending. This latter concept implies a closer identification with reality, so much so that it makes no distinction between it and the person so pretending. For example, we not only imitate the psalmist's expressions but we actually pretend to become these expressions in the technical sense of this term we have offered.

Exposition: This third form of articulation is founded upon the first two already posited. It may be perceived as the final result of the educative task belonging to explanation and description. We cannot advance on to exposition as from explanation to description, for the very notion of progress implies place-to-place movement. In explanation, progress is especially noticeable due to the intellect's work. But within description, progress is present but has become more refined or made more subtle. We refer to description's preference for verbs as opposed to nouns in order to verify this.

The expository method is perhaps the most difficult one to achieve in writing, for example. We are required to make that important jump from education (explanation and description) to exposition, something which can only be conceived in terms of an initiation. If we closely examine any religious rite of initiation, we observe that it presents the reality intended for a person to encounter all at once, not in bits and pieces. Furthermore, a rite relies upon the descriptive mode, not the explanatory one, as can be observed by the way in which sacraments are presented.

Exposition is akin to revelation, *apokalupsis*, the un-covering or (literally) the unveiling of a reality which had always been present. In order to become more sensitive to this covered reality, we must realize what covering actually implies. Concealment may be identified with lack of awareness, the absence of studious application. Usually the obstacles to uncovering are those faculties already mentioned under the two categories of explanation and description: will, intellect and imagination. To uncover something does not mean to destroy or to deny the cover itself. Rather, it points to a gesture we make by recognizing what a cover (in any form) actually is, namely, a perception of boundedness. Explanation or description can eliminate this cover. However, exposition draws attention to that which lies beneath the cover...it exposes or reveals a previously hidden reality. Exposition is difficult to master since the required studious application of awareness transcends our familiar educative process. I.e., it is not founded upon the faculty of memory (recollection of past for projection into the future) which is so essential for education.

With regards to writing, the expository method fully transcends imitation and opts for pretending which we have already introduced. To pretend means to expose a reality present yet covered. For example, refer to children when they engage in games of pretending. Within the gesture of expository writing we make a full transition from the covered (incomplete) nature of explanation & description to a reality transcending them both. Once this gesture has been made, we can apply the canon of parsimony which requires the correct minimum of explanation & description in order to facilitate our movement onto the plane of exposition. Perhaps this canon of parsimony which is closely related to a studious application of awareness is why the expository method is seldom achieved.

Desiderata

(found in Old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore; dated 1692)

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of treachery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are borne of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.