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ARCHIVE

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/u/dream-hunter

July 23, 2026

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Saturday Saints- #17

May 24, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We have moved onto “P” as our letter for saints, and so we naturally come to today’s saint, Saint Patrick:

> **Saint Patrick** (Latin: *Patricius*; Proto-Irish: **Qatrikias*; Modern Irish: *Pádraig*; Welsh: *Padrig*) was a 5th-century Romano-British Christian missionary and bishop in Ireland. Known as the “Apostle of Ireland”, he is the primary patron saint of the island along with Saints Brigit and Columba.
>
> The dates of Patrick’s life cannot be fixed with certainty but, on a widespread interpretation, he was active as a missionary in Ireland during the second half of the fifth century. He is generally credited with being the first bishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland.
>
> When he was about 16, he was captured from his home in Great Britain, and taken as a slave to Ireland, where he lived for six years before escaping and returning to his family. After becoming a cleric, he returned to northern and western Ireland. In later life, he served as an ordained bishop, but little is known about the places where he worked. By the seventh century, he had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland.
>
> Saint Patrick’s Day is observed on 17 March, the date of his death. It is celebrated inside and outside Ireland as a religious and cultural holiday. In the dioceses of Ireland, it is both a solemnity and a holy day of obligation; it is also a celebration of Ireland itself.

(Taken from the wiki on St. Patrick, found here.)

Saint Patrick is one of those saints whose life is so filled with legend it is hard to tell what is true, and what isn’t. Some stories are obviously just that, stories, probably folklore that was pagan in origin that was associated with St. Patrick in order to preserve it. What is certain, however, is that St. Patrick remains one of the most recognized and influential saints to ever life. His mark on Ireland is felt even to this day, and probably will continue to be felt for a long time yet.

What really impresses me about him as a Saint is the fact that he, out of Christian piety, returned to the land where he had been a slave. It would have been easy for him to have shunned Ireland, and never set foot there again. But his faith in the Lord, and his love for his fellow man, was greater than any lingering emotional scars that resulted from his enslavement. There are some who think that Saints are held high regard because they were perfect in their lives, but this is not so. Many were far from perfect, and more than a few lived terrible, sinful lives before they repented and turned to lives of holiness. Rather, what makes someone a saint (besides later recognition) is that they inspire the faithful- they give us hope and the courage to do more with our faith. Saint Patrick is an example

of one such person.



Saint Patrick

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #25

May 25, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage today is inspired by my post, Incoming Question, and some of the commentary that followed it. From the Gospel of Mark:

> [17] And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” [18] And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. [19] You know the commandments: ‘Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” [20] And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth.” [21] And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” [22] At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.
>
> [23] And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” [24] And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! [25] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” [26] And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” [27] Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.” [28] Peter began to say to him, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you.”

(Mark 10:17-28)

This passage, and its companions in Matthew and Luke, is one that has been misinterpreted quite a lot since the time of Christ. Many Christians have interpreted it as meaning that riches are incompatible with attaining heaven. Along with that, they have adopted a binary mode of thinking and conclude that poverty is essential to Christian piety. This is simply not supported in Scripture or Tradition, but it is one of those constant heresies (which is what it is) that pops up every now and then. To understand what Jesus is saying, look again at what he tells the rich man to do. Jesus gives him two commands: the first is to sell his possessions, and the second is to give the proceeds to the poor.

The first part is later explained by Jesus: riches make it difficult for us enter heaven. How so? Well, the eye of a needle was a type of narrow gate/entryway in the city walls at the time of Jesus. Camels were the common transport animal used by merchants in that part of the world for long distance caravans, thanks to their ability to carry a lot of goods and to sustain themselves on only small amounts of water. In caravans, they were loaded up with goods, so that they ended up quite bulky. As a result, a camel would have a very difficult time indeed to pass through one, thanks to all of the possessions, or baggage,

piled up on them. What Jesus was saying to his disciples is that riches are often baggage that pile up on us during our life, and keep us from entering the narrow gate that leads to the path to heaven. The more possessions we have, the more worldly distractions we have to keep us from focusing on God and entering the gate. If we want to enter through that gate, we need to cast away the baggage that we have piled up on us.

For some of us, we don't have to cast a lot away. For others, we have to cast most or all of it away. For the rich man, his worldly possession were blocking him from entering the kingdom; he needed to give them *all* away. While he didn't go out and do wrong to others, as he explained, they were keeping him from putting God at the center of his life. They were an impediment to him, and so he needed to get a rid of them.

There is another component as well, namely that of giving the proceeds of his possessions to the poor. The rich man had indicated he kept the commands, he didn't do wrong to others. But he never expressed that he was going out and affirmatively doing right, either. Alms-giving was something he didn't mention. So it seems as thought he was refraining from evil, but that is not the same thing as actively doing good. Jesus was encouraging charity in him, which is one of the essential virtues of Christian faith. In other words, Jesus was trying to get the rich man to think of others, and not merely himself. One result of this would be to also help the rich man think of God more as well.

The subject of alms-giving is one that the Old Testament touches on as well. Here is what the Archangel Raphael had to say on the subject from the Book of Tobit:

> [8] Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A
> little with righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give
> alms than to treasure up gold. [9] For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will
> purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness
> will have fulness of life; [10] but those who commit sin are the enemies of their own
> lives.

(Tobit 12:8-10)

The Book of Sirach also had this to say:

> [30] Water extinguishes a blazing fire:
> so almsgiving atones for sin.
> [31] Whoever requites favors gives thought to the future;
> at the moment of his falling he will find support.

(Sirach 4:30-31)

> [9] Help a poor man for the commandment's sake,
> and because of his need do not send him away empty.
> [10] Lose your silver for the sake of a brother or a friend,
> and do not let it rust under a stone and be lost.
> [11] Lay up your treasure according to the commandments of the Most High,
> and it will profit you more than gold.

> [12] Store up almsgiving in your treasury,
> and it will rescue you from all affliction;
> [13] more than a mighty shield and more than a heavy spear,
> it will fight on your behalf against your enemy.

(Sirach 29:9-13)

I find the language on alms-giving helping you to escape death to be especially powerful. As Christians, we can understand this in a way that the writers of Tobit and Sirach could not- it is not simply that charity helps one to escape death, but helps us to achieve life, and lasting life at that.

Another thing that I found interesting is how Jesus' warning against wealth builds upon earlier scripture. The Book of Sirach contained a similar admonition, along with praise for those who use wealth well:

> [5] He who loves gold will not be justified,
> and he who pursues money will be led astray by it.
> [6] Many have come to ruin because of gold,
> and their destruction has met them face to face.
> [7] It is a stumbling block to those who are devoted to it,
> and every fool will be taken captive by it.
> [8] Blessed is the rich man who is found blameless,
> and who does not go after gold.
> [9] Who is he? And we will call him blessed,
> for he has done wonderful things among his people.
> [10] Who has been tested by it and been found perfect?
> Let it be for him a ground for boasting.
> Who has had the power to transgress and did not transgress,
> and to do evil and did not do it?
> [11] His prosperity will be established,
> and the assembly will relate his acts of charity.

(Sirach 31:5-11)

Being rich and serving God are not impossible, as all things are possible with God. Money is not evil in and of itself, but it *is* a constant source of temptation. So we always need to be careful that we don't acquire money for the sake of having it. Instead, money needs to be a tool for us to achieve good in the world, and to carry out the works of God. Let us keep in mind these words of our Savior:

> And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

(Matthew 25:40)

The Sound Of Inevitability

May 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Fair Warning: *This post is my attempt to delve into philosophy, political philosophy and other "deep" matters. These are not fields where I have any special knowledge/training, or have an in-depth education, and it will show. Please excuse the (overly) amateur nature of this post.***]**

I.

For some time now I have been of the opinion that the present outbreak of rebellion in women against male authority, a problem with many names but which can be encapsulated best by the appellation "feminism", was inevitable in the West, and in the United States in particular. Several different factors are at play right now in the United States, any one of which would create the present crisis (which I believe it so qualifies as). Working together they have created an unstoppable juggernaut which has reshaped the culture over the last century or so to a breathtaking degree. What we have now would be largely unrecognizable to someone who lived at the turn of the 20th century. The social order which we might refer to as "Patriarchy" is now entirely gone. Whatever appears to be left of it is in fact a hollow shell, devoid of substance or meaning.

Two comments stand out in convincing me to write this post. Both took place in my post One Body, where I discussed unity within the church. However, both commenters used the opportunity of division within the church to point out greater divisions within the whole of society. The first comment comes from Denise:

> I've thought for a while that one of the ironic things about the Christian part of the manosphere is the emphasis on authority, but limited to the need for women to submit to the authority of men. At the same time, there is a general denigration of the authority of church leaders (of whatever denomination). The need for authority permeates our lives, and wherever people are unwilling to submit themselves to the right authority over them, there will be problems.

This comment elicited a response from reader mdavid:

> I've never really thought about things this way, but the more I reflect it's pretty dang amusing. Think about it this way: individualistic men of the West, each claiming to be their sole spiritual authority to interpret the bible…get exactly what we ask for: division. And our women, following us, soon become a perfect reflection of their men, indeed made from our very (disobedient) rib to continue the analogy.
>
> In this light, it's sort of funny to complain about women being disobedient to the very men who are themselves repulsed by earthly spiritual authority. Hey, I don't want to obey imperfect earthly authority (even though Jesus demanded it) so I'll

> follow Christ directly! Well, then, why shouldn't my wife say exactly the same thing to me? I sure can't claim perfection for myself nor my earthly spiritual leaders. So the modern western wench is a pretty damn appropriate punishment, the more I think of it. God is clever but never malicious. He is merely giving us what we demand…earthly freedom for us and ours. Ouch.

Both of them touched on one aspect of the problem of female rebellion- the overall dislike of authority in the West. But so much more is at play. I am writing this post in order to examine some of the reasons why Patriarchy was doomed centuries ago, and to show that what is happening now is merely the fulfillment of a destiny set in place long before our time.

II.

Right now there are three major factors, or impulses, that are driving the current trend of female rebellion within the West. I use the term impulse because they are actively pulling society/the culture along; they are *not* reactive in nature. Each of these impulses is tied to the dominant ideology and political philosophy of the West, which has many specific flavors but overall can be summed up as "liberalism" (note the small '"l"). All three are linked to one another to different degrees, as while they manifest differently and have varying effects, their ultimate point of origin is the same. The three impulses are:

- The Anti-Authoritarian Impulse
- The Egalitarian/Equality Impulse
- The Freedom/Liberty Impulse

Each of these impulses has worked on its own to stoke the fires of female rebellion, each in its own unique way. While the paths they have trodden may be different, the final destination is the same: the destruction of Patriarchy. Now to explain all three in a little more depth.

A.

The Anti-Authoritarian Impulse derives from the liberal opposition to authority and the exercise thereof. This is especially true for "imposed authority," that is, authority that comes down from above where the person below has no say in the matter. One of the driving forces in the creation of what we can call liberalism was a hostility to this kind of situation. It is principally applied to matters of state, and expressed most commonly in the idea that "just government comes from the consent of the governed." Liberalism believes that authority cannot be imposed unilaterally from above; it is only valid when assented to by the governed.

As one might guess, this particular impulse manifests as a direct rebellion against authority. It is the most forward of the impulses, and the easiest to understand in its effect (subtle it ain't).

Also, this impulse is nothing new. Its origin is as old as Man himself, for it is born of the

spirit of rebellion that lurks in the heart of every man and woman. The story of the Fall in the Book of Genesis contains the perennial example of the rebellion against authority. So its no surprise that liberalism adopted anti-authoritarianism into its official "plank." The Reformation also had a huge impact on the development of liberalism, as liberalism was strongest and germinated soonest (from what I recall of my history lessons) in those regions/nations that embraced Protestantism. [This post isn't aimed to fight that particular conflict over again, merely to show the ideological consequences of the Reformation. So lets keep it topical here.]

B.

The Egalitarian or Equality Impulse is a fairly broad one, as it encompasses both the liberal belief that everyone *is* equal to some degree or another, as well as the belief that everyone *should* be equal. Some expressions of this include ideas such as "political equality", "equality of opportunity" and "equality of outcome." Ultimately it comes down to treating people the same in some form or fashion, and recognizing them as being the same. Each plays off the other. After all, if everyone "is" the same, then they should be treated the same. And if everyone is treated the same, then they will "be" the same.

Its origin in liberalism is interesting. It has ties to classical philosophy, especially the *polis* of ancient Greece, where in many instances the citizens of a city-state were considered equal brothers (Sparta is an interesting example of this). Another pagan connection would be various Anglo-Saxon and Viking traditions, which hewed to a sort of "band-of-brothers" belief that fellow warriors were equal to one another. The notion of trial by your peers is an example of this, as it has a history tied to this tradition, dating back to when Germanic tribes first invaded what we now call Britain and Ireland. There was also a Christian connection as well, owing to the thought of some famous Christian theologians who emphasized the equal worth of human beings in the eyes of God. There is more, but it is beyond the scope of this post.

All of these sources flowed together into the thinking of the Enlightenment, where liberalism was born, and emerged as the idea we now call "Equality." While it has, even now, many flavors, the Egalitarian Impulse carries a lot of weight in the liberal West.

C.

The Freedom or Liberty Impulse is, stated simply enough, the liberal belief that everyone should be free to act how they wish as much as possible. Usually it is explained as the ability of a human being to act in whatsoever manner they wish, so long as they don't intrude on the rights of a fellow human being. Otherwise, so long as someone else isn't directly affected, you are free to do whatever you want.

Much of its origin can be traced to the English Enlightenment, which drew heavily on the centuries old tradition of "English Liberty." That itself drew on even older traditions dating back to the Norman conquest of England, when certain individuals were granted special privileges based on service to the crown, blood ties and the like. Originally (to the best of

my musty knowledge of history) it mainly manifested itself as a list of rights to be free of certain obligations. Freedom from certain taxes and duties, for example. A freedom "from,", if you will. Over time it morphed into a freedom "to" do certain things. As a matter of political philosophy, this was actually a huge shift, and helped lay the groundwork for the impulse as we understand it today.

III.

The United States in particular is a product of all three liberal impulses. One can look through American history and be bombarded by different ideas and beliefs that all had their origin in one or more of these impulses. Perhaps no document is a better example of liberalism's core tenets than the Declaration of Independence:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.–That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, –That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

You can see all three impulses at work here-

- "all men are created equal" is the Egalitarian impulse
- "certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" is the Freedom impulse
- "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" is the anti-authoritarian impulse
- "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government" is also the anti-authoritarian impulse

You will find similar influences in pretty much every major American political document or speech. The three impulses pervade everything; they are so commonplace we pretty much take them for granted at this point. An interesting question would be if they are more prominent in the US than they are elsewhere. My personal belief is that the Anti-Authoritarian and Freedom impulses are more pronounced in the US, whereas in the rest of the West the Egalitarian impulse is dominant. That is not to say that the US lacks the Egalitarian impulse, it clearly doesn't. But it isn't as strong, and takes a somewhat different form than it does in, say, Europe.

The reason for this is that liberalism has had several different variants over the years. The US has long been a haven for what political philosophers call "classical liberalism", which is the form of liberalism that developed during the Enlightenment. It is marked by a

strong resistance to authority, a preference for Equality of Opportunity over Equality of Outcome, and a strong believe in “individual rights, i.e., “freedom.” Europe, on the other hand, has been influenced far more by “socialist liberalism”, which is a post-Enlightenment variant of liberalism which was a product of the Romantic era. It is marked by a strong preference for Equality of Outcome, which drowns out to some degree the other impulses. However, despite the different flavors they represent, both expressions of liberalism lead to the same place, as the next section will explain.

IV.

This leads me back to the original point of this post- how the rise of “feminism” in the West was inevitable. Liberalism, as the dominant ideology in the West, made sure that all three impulses exerted a great deal of influence on Western culture and thought. They are everywhere. Their influence and effect is inescapable. And each was capable by itself of encouraging female rebellion. How did they do it? Let us examine each in turn.

A.

The Anti-Authoritarian impulse

This is easy enough to understand. This impulse has, over time, encouraged all segments of society to rebel against any form of authority, and it has weakened the authority that can be exercised. Male authority over women is treated like any other kind of authority- it is opposed on principle and tolerated only when those over whom it is exercised consent (stated another way, consent must be had for authority to be exercised). Naturally enough, most women don’t consent to men exercising authority over them. And why shouldn’t they? Individually they often benefit from rebelling, even though society as a whole will suffer.

Left unchecked, this impulse will expand its scope and reach. And there is no checking it, as it is a core belief of the ideology of liberalism. To check the anti-authoritarian impulse would be to renounce a part of liberalism itself, which it would not, *could* not do. No form of authority can escape its grasp accordingly.

The authority that a husband can exercise over his wife in marriage would be one such authority. It was always scheduled to be on the chopping block, no matter what. After all, if the authority of the state and the church has been rejected, why not the authority of the husband over his wife? Compared to the first two, the authority of the last is trivial. Christianity, as we have learned, does not provide an immunity to this. The same thought processes which affect secular thinking affect religious thinking. An example- “so what if the Bible says that wives are to submit to their husbands… there is no reason you have to follow it anyways.”

What has happened in the West over the last many centuries is that the authority of the state and the church has been reduced and limited to an incredible degree (although it should be noted that the rise of socialist type policies and practices runs counter to this- the subject of the impulses competing with one another is a matter for another post,

however). The authority of the husband over his wife, and of men over women, would always be targeted because any authority would eventually find itself a target. And no defense could be raised against it, because those elements of society which could mount it had already been neutered.

B.

The Egalitarian Impulse

Again, this has two components, one that stresses that everyone is equal, and a second which emphasizes that everyone should be treated equally. Both work together towards the same end.

If women are equal to men, then it follows that men cannot exercise authority over them. After all, authority is exercised by a superior over an inferior, not by one equal over an another. Also, if women are equal to men, than they should be treated the same. It isn't logical or consistent to treat those who are the same any differently, hence women and men must be treated the same. And if women and men are to be treated the same, then there is no room for male authority over women.

The problem with the Egalitarian impulse is that it could never be easily limited. Once the concept of Equality was acknowledged as an ideal, there was no stopping it. Anyone and everyone would claim the mantle of its power for themselves. How do you distinguish one group as worthy of equality, and not another? As long as it held value in the minds of the populace, people would be hesitant to argue against its further application to another "worthy" group. In holding up Equality as an ideal, liberalism provided a ready made tool to hammer male authority with. The two are incompatible, something had to give. With liberalism being the dominant ideology, the loser was inevitably going to be male authority.

C.

The Freedom Impulse

Male authority over women necessarily entails restrictions on female liberty. That is the nature of authority- it's exercise limits what you can do. Here we had another inevitable conflict in the making. Again, the idea behind this particular liberal belief is that you should be able to do what you want to do. Support of any kind of restriction on liberty, of anyone, carries with it the charge of hypocrisy (again, with some exceptions based on the other impulses interacting). Whether or not it is true, people don't like to be called hypocrites. Defending against that charge would require showing that restricting female liberty was of greater social value than promoting greater liberty. The problem with that defense is the fact that liberalism never had as a core component of its ideology the belief that men needed to exercise authority over women. Rather, it was inherited from previous ideological systems as a kind of "leftover", a tradition that was preserved because it made sense. Some philosophers made stronger arguments in favor of it, but

those ideas were never part of the core ideology of liberalism. They were dressing, in other words.

All of this means that when push came to shove, the liberty impulse was destined to win. People in the West have been conditioned to believe that more liberty is inherently a good thing. Indeed, liberty itself is seen as a good of the highest order, so of course the more of it, the better. If you oppose greater liberty for, say, women, why then… the question is raised about what kind of person are you? Only someone opposed to liberty, such as a fascist/national socialist, would oppose liberty. After all, that is what liberalism has essentially taught people in the West. Because liberty was more highly valued by liberalism than any exercise of authority by men over women, it was inevitable that women would seek and be granted the freedom they so desired.

V.

In conclusion, this was always going to happen. The seeds of female disobedience and rebellion were planted centuries ago. Men, in their desire to acquire more liberty for themselves, to level the playing field, and to escape the church and the state exercising any authority over them (without their say so) created an ideology to suit their ends. But in their individualistic pursuit of greater self-actualization and power, they failed to appreciate that they were paving the road for women to follow right behind them. And follow they did.

Churchianity is the natural result of these liberal tendencies allowed to run their course. Notions of Equality, Freedom and a hostility to Authority are so deeply engrained in our minds by the surrounding culture they incline us to undermine core tenets of the faith. Despite clear teaching to the contrary, wives are not submitting to their husbands, women are preaching and exercising authority over men, and marriage and divorce are treated flippantly. Those are just a small sample of what Churchianity offers. And it is only going to get worse.

In their haste to get what they wanted, our forefathers blindly tore down the barriers that kept our inner demons at bay, and undermined the foundation of Western Civilization. As many around these parts have argued for some time, that foundation was Patriarchy and Patriarchal marriage (for a good explanation of how that is the case, see here). When the present system collapses, and it most certainly will, it will not be because people the people running it were incompetent. Or because they didn't try it hard enough or long enough. No, everything will fall apart because there could be no other outcome. The liberal order was **destined** to collapse.

So the next time you hear a woman complain that there are no good men left, the next time you hear a father bragging about his careerist daughter, the next time you hear a man lamenting how his wife blew up his marriage and ruined the lives of their children, the next time a preacher tells the men of the church to "man up", the next time you hear a story on the news about more and more children being born out of wedlock, know well that you are hearing:

Saturday Saints- #18

May 31, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's short post features a saint with a name beginning with "Q." Surprisingly enough, there aren't a whole lot of them. So here is Saint Quintian of Rodez:

> **Saint Quintian** (*Quintianus, Quinctianus, Quintien*) (died ca. 525) was a bishop of Rodez and a bishop of Clermont-Ferrand (*Arvernes*) in the sixth century, and participated in the Councils of Agde (508) and Orleans (511).
>
> Tradition makes him a native of Africa and a priest of Carthage who fled to France due to the persecutions of the Vandals. At the death of Saint Amantius (*Amans*) in 487, Quintian succeeded him as bishop of Rodez. During the war between the Franks and the West Goths, he was a zealous supporter of Clovis I. To avoid the persecutions of the Arian Visigoths, he fled Rodez to proceeded to Auvergne, where he was hospitably received by Bishop Euphrasius (*Eufrèse*). King Theodoric I appointed Quinctianus successor to Sidonius Apollinaris (grandson of the famous Sidonius Apollinaris), Bishop of Clermont. On the death of the latter, Quinctianus succeeded to the See of Clermont, which he occupied until his death on November 13, 525 or 526.

The source of info on him is his wiki, from which the above is drawn.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #26

June 1, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A shorter post today, as I hope to devote more time to other posts that I am working on. The first passage is from the Song of Songs:

> Upon my bed by night
> I sought him whom my soul loves;
> I sought him, but found him not;
> I called him, but he gave no answer.
> [2] "I will rise now and go about the city,
> in the streets and in the squares;
> I will seek him whom my soul loves."
> I sought him, but found him not.
> [3] The watchmen found me,
> as they went about in the city.
> "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?"
> [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.
> [5] I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> by the gazelles or the hinds of the field,
> that you stir not up nor awaken love
> until it please.

(Song 3:1-5)

The Song of Songs, or Song of Solomon as it is otherwise called, is not my usual fare when it comes to reading scripture. But I've been reading through the Wisdom books in my bible lately and it is included amongst them. This passage makes that connection appropriate, because there are two important messages contained in this passage (at least, as far as I can tell).

To begin with, this passage makes it very, very clear that women are sexual creatures, just like men. Verse 4 in particular, once you understand the metaphors involved, showcases that women can be just as passionate as men. The notion that women, at least good women, are "pure" and thus uninterested in sex is something that pops up all the time in Christianity. Yet not only is there no scriptural support for that position, scripture (such as this passage) indicates quite the opposite. Rather than examine this issue in depth in this particular post, my next post will focus on this particular manifestation of the Madonna/Whore complex.

The next bit that I found interesting is the final verse. While it can be read several ways,

one interpretation that strikes me is as warning against stirring up “love” before its time- with the love in question being best described as *Eros*. Essentially, the verse warns the women of Jerusalem (representing the women of Israel I would wager) about awakening their passions too soon. In this case I would equate “too soon” with being before marriage. In other words, women are warned about not stirring up or awakening *Eros* in a man before marriage.

Now, I think that this makes sense as a warning- it helps to ward women away from sexual immorality. It does, however, create some problems for Christian men looking to marry in the present environment. A number of Christian bloggers and commenters around these parts, and I would be included among their number, advocate marrying a woman only if she demonstrate clear sexual attraction for you. Marrying a woman who doesn’t show passion towards you risks being stuck in a sexless marriage.

So here we have two bits of advice, or two warnings, that seem butt up against one another. They can’t co-exist, because passion or *Eros* is tied up with a woman’s demonstrating sexual attraction. Or can they? I’m curious what my readers think. Can a woman avoid awakening love, while still expressing enough attraction to a man to convince him that he isn’t signing up for a lifetime of “friends without benefits?”

One more quick thing. I was re-reading Proverbs, as part of writing another post, when something clicked in my mind reading this passage:

> [15] Drink water from your own cistern,
> flowing water from your own well.
> [16] Should your springs be scattered abroad,
> streams of water in the streets?
> [17] Let them be for yourself alone,
> and not for strangers with you.
> [18] Let your fountain be blessed,
> and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
> [19] a lovely hind, a graceful doe.
> Let her affection fill you at all times with delight,
> be infatuated always with her love.
> [20] Why should you be infatuated, my son, with a loose woman
> and embrace the bosom of an adventuress?

(Proverbs 5:15-20)

The main point of this passage is a warning against adultery, of course. But I realized that infatuation (I’ve also seen it translated as intoxication, which I think is a better fit) isn’t treated as negative in and of itself. Only when it is directed towards another women is it wrong. If anything it encourages men to be intoxicated with their wives. To me, this passage suggests a strong element of choice- choosing to focus on your wife after you are married, and before marriage choosing as a wife a woman who will intoxicates you easily. Which means that yes, the attractiveness of a woman does matter, and men

should consider it when they are marrying.

[Speaking of what to look for when marrying, I've been slowly working on a post concerning that for some time now. I hope to finish it later this week, or early next week.]

A Complex Problem

June 3, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

This post is something of a follow-up to Complex and Reflected, wherein I examined and discussed the Madonna/Whore complex in men. Since I have more questions than answers when it comes to the topics of this post (more on those later), this post will end up looking quite a bit different from the original. Not only will it be shorter, but it is going to be filled with unanswered questions, which I hope my readers will take a stab at answering. So expect some major rambling.

What I want to explore in this post is the "Madonna" part of the Madonna/Whore complex. I am curious about a few things:

- Why Christians will at times promote the idea that women, at least the "good" ones, are not sexual creatures
- What kind of impact does the complex have on the "good" women living in a culture where it exists
- Are "good" women in some way responsible for promoting or sustaining the complex, and if so, how

I am going to address each in its own section, mostly for ease of organization. This post won't be long enough to really require it, but my OCD demands as much.

II.

In this section I want to delve into why Christians, including theologians, will sometimes promote the idea that good Christian women are asexual, or are supposed to be.

I should start by saying that I never grew up hearing this, but then again, I didn't hear a whole lot about sexuality from the Church growing up. Most of what I know, including back then, about the Church's stance on sex is what I found out for myself.Perhaps some other Catholics were taught that women were asexual angelic creatures while growing up, but I wasn't. However, some of the Protestant men who populate the 'sphere have indicated in the past that they did grow up hearing that kind of lesson. I would appreciate it if they could fill in exactly what they heard along those lines.

One possible reason I could see for this kind of thinking to have developed arises from the original Madonna herself, Mary the mother of Jesus. In Catholic and Orthodox circles she is greatly venerated, and held up as the paragon example of womanhood. Furthermore, Tradition holds that she was always a virgin, and goes even further to say that through Grace she was born without sin (a doctrine known as the Immaculate Conception). I can see where holding up as the paragon of womanhood a woman who was a virgin could lead to the impression that an absence of sexuality is essential in a "good" woman.

Of course, that doesn't apply to Protestant sects, who don't hold Mary in such high regard. So something else is at play there. My suspicion for them is that Victorian impulses might have moved from cultural/social lines of thought to religious lines of thought without people giving it much consideration, or fully realizing what was happening.

If anyone has any thoughts of their own, do tell.

III.

Another interesting question is the impact that the Madonna/Whore complex has on "good" women.

The most obvious effect on them would of course be sexual frustration. Women are sexual creatures, after all, even "good" ones. Not being a woman, I can only imagine the kind of frustration they feel. Perhaps if there are any bold female readers here who might have experienced it at some point they could fill in. Or if they know women who have experienced it, if they could speak for them.

I know that on SSM's blog there were several posts which covered the health benefits of sex for women, so that is another obvious loss. I suspect that "good" women who are married in these cultures suffer from higher rates of depression and anxiety because of their minimal sex lives.

Perhaps most insidious is the emotional wall of separation between husbands and wives. While the exact manner is different, women bond emotionally through sex just as men do. Without regular sex with their husbands, I imagine that wives won't feel as connected to their husbands as they could be. This distance can only harm the marriage.

IV.

Lastly, I wonder what role "good" women might have in perpetrating and promoting the Madonna/Whore complex in men.

One thing I don't understand is why more mother's don't try and teach their sons to avoid this mentality. If they have suffered from it, surely they realize how unhealthy it is for men to have this complex. So why not try and influence their sons in another direction? Are they unwilling to acknowledge its a problem? Do they not care for their daughters-in-law well-being? Barring that, what about their sons? Do they not care for them? This is all something I just don't understand.

Perhaps the mothering instinct of the "good" women is also to blame. They go overboard in taking care of their men, and so men stop looking at them as mates and more as a mother figure. I don't think I need to go into detail about how they could interfere with a man's desire to be sexually drawn to a woman. Maybe if women were more inclined to adopt behaviors and attitudes different from a man's mother the complex wouldn't be so much of a problem.

Another thing that helps keep this cycle going is the silence of many of the "good"

women. They don’t speak up against this complex, or at least don’t seem to. Instead, most of its opponents are the “whore” part of the complex, those women who men will sleep with but not marry. Is it fear that drives them to silence? Shame? I truly don’t understand this. Are they so submissive that they won’t, can’t voice their despondency? Or is it pride, an unwillingness to void aloud a deep felt desire because they don’t want to appear weak?

V.

That brings this post to an end. If anyone wants to take a stab at answering any of the questions I raised, or even those that I didn’t, feel free to do so in the comments. A topic like this lends itself better to an ongoing discussion than a detailed post anyways.

More Random Thoughts

June 6, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's Post is going to be a bit of a (semi-)random link dump, with some commentary thrown in. You might notice a common theme or two.

I.

The Truth will set you free… but lies will get you thrown in the slammer. At least, it will get you thrown in jail if you lie to the police and waste their resources:

> AN ENNISKILLEN mother-of-two who lied to police about being gang raped by three Lithuanian men because she didn't want her husband to find out she was having an affair has been jailed for three months.
>
> 33-year-old Magdalena Brojek told police and her husband that she was abducted by three foreign men and raped at an unknown address.
>
> Brojek, of The Sidings, Breandrum, Enniskillen, pleaded guilty to a single charge of wasting police time by making a false report when she appeared before Enniskillen Magistrates Court.

While part of me is glad to know this woman is being punished for her lies, another part realizes that it isn't the nature of her lie which got her in trouble with the police, but the fact that her lie cost the police money. Of course, if you are a minor then you get away with just a slap on the wrist. Because she was only 15, and because the article hints at some serious problems she had, I suppose I can live with her receiving such a pathetic punishment.

However, that would change entirely if someone innocent had been named as the rapist. If you are old enough to know how to allege a rape against someone on your own, then you are old enough to pay the price. And if you falsely accuse a specific individual of raping you, then as far as I'm concerned you should spend as much time in prison as the victim of your fraud would have if convicted.

II.

Lots of folks are getting ready in Brazil for the World Cup. Prostitutes are no exception to this.

> So what are Brazil's sex workers doing to prepare for increased traffic during the World Cup? At the top of the list: learning English. There will be six matches played at the city's Mineirão stadium, and according to Laura Mario Do Espirito Santo — a founding member of Aprosmig, a union for prostitutes within the state of Minas Gerais — "[English] gets you ahead."
>
> …
>
> For Santo and the members of Aprosmig, pride is huge. They are proud of their

> profession and the independence it provides them. They can pay their bills and support their children with the money they make, and they don't have to rely on anybody else. "I never asked anyone for anything," says Santos, "…why should I be ashamed? Why should any of us?" There is even an annual Miss Prostitute pageant that Santos hopes will aid in diminishing prejudice against the profession. However, she says, "There is still much prejudice though, especially from housewives because their husbands come to us."

This topic can lend itself to all sorts of discussion, which I'm sure will surprise no one. Prostitution has had an interesting history throughout Christianity. Many of the early fathers of the Church argued against outlawing it, stating that to do so would risk social upheaval. They knew that without an outlet, the male sex drive can be a dangerous thing. Of course, there is a lot to be said about why it wouldn't be checked otherwise, but that is a topic of another day. Anyways, in most Christian countries, until the last century or two, prostitution wasn't illegal. Oftentimes it was permitted for the tax revenues it brought to local authorities. And it was also quite common and prolific as well. With all of that established, there are two things I want to focus on.

The first concerns the last line that I quoted from the article, about husbands visiting prostitutes and housewives being angered by this. Since this seems to be an issue or a source of contention I suspect that it is common for married men to visit prostitutes in Brazil. This suggests several things- wives letting themselves go, older couples were the husband wants a younger lover, and sexual denial by wives. But most of all, it hints at the strong possibility of an active Madonna/Whore complex down in Brazil.

Which makes me wonder if prostitution is a key component of any society suffering from that complex. I would note that the M/W complex used to be prevalent in the West, and even here in America. But it died out long ago. And it seems to have died out at the same time that prostitution started to be cracked down upon, especially here in the US. If there is a causal link between the two, then I think it represents a strong argument against decriminalizing prostitution. I suppose the law could be set up so that it isn't legal for married men, such as was done in much of medieval Europe, but I don't think that really fixes the problem. After all, the problem isn't that they visit prostitutes after they marry, it is that they *want* to visit prostitutes after they marry.

The second thing that concerns me are these two lines:

> They are proud of their profession and the independence it provides them. They can pay their bills and support their children with the money they make, and they don't have to rely on anybody else.

There are a number of men around the 'sphere who argue that decriminalizing prostitution will be a major step towards combating feminism. I'm not so certain of this. Prostitution provides women with independence from any kind of lasting obligation to men. In fact, in some respects it is a great escape- they only need fleeting contacts/contracts with men, and after that they are own their own. Why would you need a husband when you can pay your own bills and support yourself? Why have the hassle of legal ties with another man? You certainly don't need a husband for children, heck, your

clients can satisfy that demand.
As far as I can tell prostitution “empowers” women in a manner that will support feminist tendencies. I suppose it would be possible to construct a system around the institution to control that influence, mostly by restricting the kind of influence prostitutes and their money would have outside that respective field. But absent such a system, I see nothing but trouble. The problem with idea of decriminalizing prostitution now is that no such system is in place. And no such system is likely to be formed at the same time, either. Counting on prostitution to weaken feminism to the point where you can then build a system to contain the feminism it creates just doesn’t quite work out. Meaning that there might be other, valid reasons to decriminalize prostitution, but fighting feminism is not one of them.

III.

Some of you might have heard of the rash of articles by feminists lately arguing that women need to stop putting off having children. This piece by Kirstie Allsopp is one of them. Lest anyone get any ideas that women, feminists even, are starting to wise up to the faults in their beliefs, think again. Yes, there is a lot of sense in what they have to say. An example:

> “Women are being let down by the system. We should speak honestly and frankly about fertility and the fact it falls off a cliff when you’re 35. We should talk openly about university and whether going when you’re young, when we live so much longer, is really the way forward.
>
> “At the moment, women have 15 years to go to university, get their career on track, try and buy a home and have a baby. That is a hell of a lot to ask someone. As a passionate feminist, I feel we have not been honest enough with women about this issue.”
>
> Allsopp is fully aware that there are people who will find her opinions grating, preaching as she is from a fabulous central London home. “But I don’t say it from a position of smugness. I only whistled in there by a miracle when it came to children. This isn’t something I’ve just decided in an arbitrary way. [Fertility] is the one thing we can’t change. Some of the greatest pain that I have seen among friends is the struggle to have a child. It wasn’t all people who couldn’t start early enough because they hadn’t met the right person.

This is a lot more sense that you normally find in a feminist, but don’t be fooled. There is nothing traditional minded about this at all. Another snippet:

> “I don’t have a girl, but if I did I’d be saying ‘Darling, do you know what? Don’t go to university. Start work straight after school, stay at home, save up your deposit – I’ll help you, let’s get you into a flat. And then we can find you a nice boyfriend and you can have a baby by the time you’re 27.”

Notice how marriage has no place in that nice little life plan. Nor anything resembling a

stable family household or the like. Nope this is pure, unadultered female entitlement at work. Oh there is room for romance, and for experiencing life to the fullest later on, and for children. But you won't find any room for female obligations to men. Far from it. Ms. Allsop, and yes, she isn't married (and has had two bastard children with her "partner"), is merely trying to preserve female primacy. She knows that women are at a huge disadvantage compared to men in terms of fertility, something which offends her delicate feminist sensibilities. So even as she argues for women to start having children sooner, she wants to make men pay for their biological advantage:

> "But there is a huge inequality, which is that women have this time pressure that men don't have. And I think if you're a man of 25 and you're with a woman of 25, and you really love her, then you have a responsibility to say: 'Let's do it now.' I was lucky with Ben that he absolutely wanted more children immediately and he was very committed to that. But men need to know, men need to be taught in school that there is a responsibility, that if you love someone, decide if you want to have a child with that person or not."

Note that we have, as is the norm in the present age, female privilege and male responsibility. The man here has responsibility, but does he gain anything in return? Well, children, of course. That he is now financially responsible for. Oh wait, that's *more* responsibility on the man. Women love to decry men for "objectifying women." But that is mere projection. The truth is that it is *women* who do most of the objectifying- seeing men as walking ATMs or walking sperm banks, and sometimes both if they are lucky. Not to mention that they secretly long to be objectified in return.

Don't be fooled by this sudden "change of heart" on the part of feminists. It isn't a sudden epiphany on their part. They still acknowledge only as much reality as they are forced to. Rather, this is an attempt to preserve the feminist system that has been built in the West. After all, if all the strong, proud, independent women out there aren't having children, then who is? Why, those pesky religious folks who stand for everything feminism is against. We can't have them overturning the system now, can? Setting that aside, delaying children creates a risk that too many women won't be able to have it all. And, as Ms. Allsop points out, that is letting women down. Preserving society? Not important. Making sure that women can live out their perfect life script? The core value of Western Society.

IV.

Mrs. ktc helpfully reminded me of Robert Frost's take on diplomacy:

> A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday but never remembers her age

This got me thinking (yes, I know, a dangerous thing), and I applied some Game concepts to create a corollary to this:

> A player is a man who always forgets a woman’s birthday but never forgets her age

I’m sure that someone else has already created something similar, or even exactly the same, but I wanted to express this nonetheless. Some personal observations I have made recently have reminded me of the stark truth that attractiveness trumps all else when it comes to women interacting with me. For “players” it is often the case that they know only what matters to them about a woman -such as her age- and know nothing (and don’t care to find out) about what doesn’t matter- such as her birthday. And why not? As long as he is attractive to her, pretty much all other failings are simply ignored by the woman. In an interesting twist of fate, the female Hamster and the male player are often in agreement. Fancy that.

Fin

Saturday Saints- #19

June 7, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's post we reach back only a few centuries, to late Renaissance Italy. Today's saint is Saint Rose Venerini:

> Saint **Rose Venerini, M.P.V.**, (February 9, 1656 – May 7, 1728) was a pioneer in the education of women and girls in 17th-century Italy and the foundress of the Religious Teachers Venerini (Italian: *Maestre Pie Venerini*), a Roman Catholic religious institute of women, often simply called the Venerini Sisters. She was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 15, 2006.

(Full article can be found here)

Here are some excerpts from the wiki about her:

> In the meantime, Rose's sister Maria Maddalena married. There remained at home only Orazio and Rosa, by now 24 years old. Rosa began to gather girls and women of the area in her own home to recite the rosary. The way in which the girls and women prayed, and above all, their conversations at these gatherings, showed Rosa a sad reality: the average woman of the town was a slave to cultural, moral and spiritual poverty.
>
> After Venerini's first contacts with the Dominican friars at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Oak Tree, near Viterbo, she chose to follow the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola under the direction of the Jesuits, especially Father Ignatius Martinelli, who became her spiritual director. Under his guidance, she then saw a higher mission for herself, namely, the urgent need to dedicate herself to the instruction and Christian formation of young women, not with sporadic encounters, but with formal education.

She was highly successful in her efforts to form schools for young women in Italy. By the end of her life she was responsible for over three dozen of them, and had lain the foundations for many more to be built in the future. When she tried to start a school in Rome, it attracted the notice of the Holy See:

> On October 24, 1716, the Sisters received a visit by Pope Clement XI, accompanied by eight cardinals, who wanted to observe the lessons. At the end of the morning he addressed these words to Rose: "**Signora Rosa, you are doing that which we cannot do**. We thank you very much, because with these schools you will sanctify Rome ".
>
> From that moment on, governors and cardinals asked for schools for their areas. The duties of the foundress became intense, consisting of travels and hard work, interwoven with joys and sacrifices for the formation of new communities. Wherever a new school sprang up, in a short time a moral improvement could be

> noted in the youth

(The parts in bold are because of me, for emphasis)

I was somewhat surprised at first by the initial praise of Pope Clement, but then I realized it wasn't some early manifestation of feminism in the Church. Rather, his Holiness had Titus 2 in mind:

> [3] Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, [4] so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, [5] to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.
>
> (Titus 2:3-5)

Saint Rose Venerini was a Titus 2 woman. Her example of teaching moral guidance to young women to Italy regardless of their social standing or background should be an inspiration for all Sisters of the faith. I strongly encourage my readers to peruse (in the proper sense of the word) the entire article about her.



Saint Rose Venerini

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #27

June 8, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage today comes from the Book of Lamentations:

> 25 The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
> to the soul that seeks him.
> 26 It is good that one should wait quietly
> for the salvation of the Lord.
> 27 **It is good for a man that he bear**
> **the yoke in his youth.**

> 28 **Let him sit alone in silence**
> **when he has laid it on him;**
> 29 **let him put his mouth in the dust—**
> **there may yet be hope;**
> 30 **let him give his cheek to the smiter,**
> **and be filled with insults.**
> 31 For the Lord will not
> cast off for ever,
> 32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion
> according to the abundance of his steadfast love;
> 33 for he does not willingly afflict
> or grieve the sons of men.

> 34 To crush under foot
> all the prisoners of the earth,
> 35 to turn aside the right of a man
> in the presence of the Most High,
> 36 to subvert a man in his cause,
> the Lord does not approve.

(Lamentations 3:25-36)

One of the most important, and difficult, lessons that I have learned over the years is the importance, the necessity even, of suffering. It is a difficult lesson because it is something that runs completely counter to contemporary culture, which has become obsessed with happiness and comfort. If anything, modern life and culture has dedicated itself pretending that hardship doesn't exist. Of course, it fails dismally at this- only the select few at the top can pretend to live this way. Everyone else suffers as a result of the misguided principles of society's so-called elite.

Unfortunately, we have organized our culture and society in such a way that those who do suffer so don't know how to use that suffering to advance their own righteousness.

The result is ultimately wasted potential and what can only be labeled as pointless suffering. Perhaps that is what real tragedy is- pointless suffering. Because if we use our suffering to walk the path of righteousness and bring about the Kingdom on earth, then in truth it is only a temporary inconvenience. Such is the approach taken by Saint Paul in Philippians, which was another passage essential to my understanding of the truth:

> [8] Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing
> Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count
> them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him, not having a
> righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ,
> the righteousness from God that depends on faith; [10] that I may know him and the
> power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his
> death, [11] that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

(Philippians 3:8-11)

As Christians, we always need to take the long view of things. That doesn't mean we become anxious or fret about the future, only that we are future oriented. What we do today must be with the future in mind, because eventually we will be judged on what we have done. This particular lesson- looking to the future but not becoming anxious about it, is one of those that is easy to learn but hard to put into effect. At least for me, anyways. I think I've finally made some progress there, but I have a long way to go still.

Ashamed Of The Faith

June 11, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Escoffier, who sometimes posts at Veritas Lounge, left a superb comment recently over at Dalrock's blog, in the post Worse than fear. Worse than malice. His comment can be found here. The comment, like the original post, addressed why so many Christians, especially Christian men, are willing and eager to set aside scripture when it comes to matters such as marriage. I am going to repeat his whole comment as a block, both because it is that good, and for ease of reading; my comments will come afterwards:

> I want to add a supplementary / alternative reason to explain this embarrassment over the text of the Bible. It's been touched on but not really fleshed out.
>
> That is, that these nominal Christians under discussion are all moderns first and Christians second (if second). Worse, they don't even know they are moderns, or what it means to be a modern, or what modernity is.
>
> Modernity, to say the least, conflicts with the Bible. It was designed to, on purpose. Yet it has been so successful in taking over nearly all conscious and sub-conscious thought that hardly anyone any more recognizes it for what it is. That includes most contemporary Christians, to whom "modernity" is simply synonymous with "reality" or even "morality."
>
> There's a particular strand of modernity that's particularly relevant here, namely historicism, and specifically rational historicism (as opposed to radical or irrational historicism). This is the idea of "progress." "Progress" is cooked into the original conception of modernity, but it came to take on a different meaning much later. Originally, it more or less just meant "We can improve the material condition of man on earth; human beings have a lot more power than either the Bible or classical philosophy will admit."
>
> Rational historicism takes this idea much further and posits a unidirectional progress, which is worked out through impersonal forces (the so-called historical dialectic) over which man may be an unwitting instrument, but which he didn't design, doesn't direct, and can't control. "History" is nonetheless rational, moving "forward" (with occasional, necessary steps back) to ever-"better" states and eventually to an end state in which all dialectical conflicts are resolved, all moral and political problems solved, and final wisdom achieved (if not necessarily accessible to all). In pop-culture terms, the Star Trek universe is basically the cartoon version of this end state.
>
> Nearly everyone today believes in this "arc" at least in a simplified way. The present is believed to be inherently more enlightened that the past. We Don't Do That Anymore Because We Know Better. And the future will be inevitably more enlightened than the present.

> The source of this impression is ultimately perverted or corrupted or mistaken philosophy, but one does not need to have studied philosophy at all to have been affected, even "convinced." The astounding success of modern natural science and its offspring, technology, serves to "prove" to such people that "progress" is real and that the present is superior to the past. Technological progress is assumed to be coeval with moral and political progress.
>
> But it is never explained why this should be so. Actually, certain modern philosophers did try to make such a case, but they hardly proved it and their case is open to serious theoretical difficulties which have been pointed out by other philosophers. However, that whole dialogue may as well never have happened as far as the average modern person is concerned. He is simply unaware of it and takes on faith that the present is morally superior to the past.
>
> This, then, is a significant source of the embarrassment. The modern Christian (modern first, Christian second) is embarrassed by the evident conflicts between his nominal faith and his actual, if unconscious, modernity. Modernity trumps. So the offending Scriptures have to be dealt with one way or another. There are many possible ways: insist that it doesn't say what it seems to say, come up with Rube Goldberg interpretations to square it with modernity, call it "metaphoric," say that it was right for that time but not our time, and so on. The latter is a kind of "Living Constitution" framework for the Bible. It assumes that God has left to us the task of "updating" Scripture as the "times change." The changing of the times is held to be the true constant, and really the true God, but only implicitly.

To begin with, Escoffier's use of the word "moderns" can probably be translated quite accurately into "liberals", in the sense of the word as I used it in my post The Sound of Inevitability. As for which word is better or more precise/accurate (they aren't the same thing), I think that is a matter of semantics. Both can work, although for the remainder of this post I will use moderns and modernity instead [the same applies to liberalism and modernism as describing the same over-arching philosophy].

Escoffier is also on the mark when he states that most people "don't even know they are moderns, or what it means to be a modern, or what modernity is." Most people adhere to all sorts of philosophical beliefs without realizing it; they lack both the knowledge to categorize their beliefs as well as the introspection to observer them. This double barrier makes it especially difficult to explain to people their own beliefs, as even if you correct their ignorance they might still not get it. All of which means that for most people understanding what they actually believe is probably not feasible.

Escoffier is also correct that most people in the West are moderns first, and Christians second (assuming that they are Christians). There are a number of reasons for this:

- Training (or indoctrinating) of someone to be a modern begins at a very young age, often before matters of faith
- Everyone is immersed all the times in modern thinking and modes of thought,

whereas overtly Christian approaches are much more rare
- Modern thinking has already infiltrated a significant amount of Christianity, and corrupted a number of critical fields of doctrine
- Modernist thinking is baked into everyday assumptions of "how things work", as well as our understanding of history and our present place in it

And the list goes on. Now, I'm not sure if modernity was in fact explicitly designed to subvert Christianity. Escoffier might be on the right track here, but whether he is or not determining whether this is the case would take up a post by itself. So I will leave it be for now.

"Historicism" is an interesting strain of thought. From my experience most people are just like Escoffier describes: subscribers without realizing what they are subscribing to or even that they are subscribing to something at all. It is the dominant paradigm of the present age, and as Escoffier notes, pretty much everyone buys into it. I think these two sentences are a perfect summation of what most people believe:

> The present is believed to be inherently more enlightened that the past. We Don't Do That Anymore Because We Know Better.

Most people really do buy into the idea that we know better now, and it shapes their thoughts and beliefs when it comes to anything historical. And yes, that includes Scripture. And nowhere does this manifest more than when Scripture concerns women in some way:

- Wives required to submit to their husbands? Barbaric.
- Women not allowed to teach or hold authority over men? Outdated.
- Women required to cover their head while praying? Oppressive.
- Women advised to maintain a quiet, gentle spirit? Misogynistic.

As far as I can tell, pretty much every part of Scripture (or Tradition) that addresses women in some way is now interpreted through the modernist filter. And that means if it doesn't agree with modern thinking and beliefs about women, it must be discarded.

This brings us to the final paragraph of Escoffier's comment, which I will repeat again for ease of reading:

> This, then, is a significant source of the embarrassment. The modern Christian (modern first, Christian second) is **embarrassed** by the evident conflicts between his nominal faith and his actual, if unconscious, modernity. **Modernity trumps**. So the **offending Scriptures have to be dealt with** one way or another. There are many possible ways: insist that it doesn't say what it seems to say, come up with Rube Goldberg interpretations to square it with modernity, call it "metaphoric," say that it was right for that time but not our time, and so on. The latter is a kind of "Living Constitution" framework for the Bible. It assumes that God has left to us the task of "updating" Scripture as the "times change." **The changing of the times is held to be the true constant, and really the**

> **true God, but only implicitly**.

There are a couple of key points here. The first is that people are embarrassed by what Scripture says. And by people, I mean “Christians.” They really are ashamed of what the Bible has to say about things like marriage, divorce and “the role of women.” Those teachings are incompatible with modernist thought, and in fact scandalous nowadays. To be associated with them is to be a social pariah. As Escoffier points out, modernity trumps Christianity in terms of their values hierarchy. They have either forgotten, ignored or never learned the admonition of Saint Paul: “Do not be conformed to this world.˝ No, they have conformed, and in many cases do so with gusto.

Yet, for reasons which only they know, they don’t want to give up *all* of Christianity. They still want to keep some of it- usually the happy, nice, fun parts like the resurrection and grace and forgiveness. But the hard parts, and the parts that conflict with modernity? Those must be “dealt with.”

Ultimately, I think Escoffier is correct when he says that “the changing of the times,” that is, the belief in “Progress”, is the real God of most “Christians”, not the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. They do not keep the Great Commandment and “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” (Deut 6:4-5). It is the world, and its empty philosophy, that they truly love.

Update: Novaseeker has created a post highlighting Escoffier’s comment, and Dalrock has created his own post as well.

Unashamed Of The Faith

June 12, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is concerns a story from The Daily Blaze about two young girls, named "Precious" and "Hope", who escaped from Boku Haram in Africa:

> At first, the fighters pretended to be part of the local army, driving in similar vehicles and wearing clothing resembling military garb. Precious and the other girls believed they were there to protect them from the militants that were hiding in the tall brush.
>
> But then, the men started pulling some of the girls out of bed, giving them no time to get dressed. Others grabbed what they could, mainly Bibles and clothing.
>
> The men rounded up the hundreds of girls outside.
>
> …
>
> When the men had gathered the girls at the front of the school compound, one of them said, "We will release you but you have to get married. No more schooling," Hope said.
>
> Some of the men fought and shouted amongst themselves. One said, "We have to call our master before we let them go. Keep them."
>
> The Boko Haram militants had parked three large trucks and several smaller cars at the compound gate. Before loading the girls in, the men confiscated all of the Bibles and any clothing the girls had managed to grab.
>
> "The moon was so high and the fire was so bright there was no place we could hide or run," Hope said.
>
> The girls were told to get into the trucks, but it was too high for some and they couldn't reach. Some of the men pulled the small cars alongside and then brought the rice bags they had stolen from the school to be used as a step to climb up.
>
> When there was no room left in the trucks. Precious was standing alongside a small vehicle.
>
> There were three girls, however, the militants didn't have room for. One of the men shouted, "Are you Christian or Muslim?"
>
> One of the girls was a Muslim, so she was allowed to run home, Precious said.
>
> One of the Christian girls was pushed to the ground and a militant placed the muzzle of his weapon against her head.
>
> "Renounce your faith or we kill you," he said.
>
> **"It's better to die than to renounce Christ," the girl replied**, Precious said.
>
> He yelled it again, Precious said, pushing the girl farther into the hard earth. Then he let her up.

> "He said, 'Run home or we will kill you.' They let the three girls go and they went running home," Precious told Greve.
>
> Precious didn't know why they let those girls go. It didn't matter why.
>
> She was then shoved into the trunk of the vehicle.

I said earlier that this post concerned the girls who escaped from Boku Haram, but that exactly isn't true. The post is really about that young girl who would rather die than renounce Christ. That young girl showed more courage, more *conviction,* than all of the mainstream Churchian pastors out there (you know who they are) **combined.** She was pushed hard into the earth and had a gun up against her head. She had every reason to believe that death awaited her if she refused to renounce her faith. But she didn't.

Compare that to Protestant and Catholic leaders who will bite their tongues and not speak up about core Christian doctrine. Do they face death when they speak the Word? Hardly. They risk not death, but making women (and plenty of men) uncomfortable. And what will come about as a result of that discomfort? The worst that can happen is they lose their job, not their life. Yet, despite the far lesser penalty they would experience for defending their faith, these "Shepherds" will hem and haw and twist Scripture like a pretzel so as to not offend members of their congregations. Of course, that assumes that said "Shepherds" actually believe the Word in the first place.

As I think on it, this account reminds me of the tale of the Seven Brothers, from Second Maccabees. We in the West have become weak and soft. We've forgotten the true depth of sacrifice sometimes required of us for our faith. This is a difficult road to walk, even in the best of times. Yet so many of us aren't even willing to take minor steps to stand up for the truth of God's Word. I am no exception, I too have failed to walk the road when it was asked of me. Looking back on my life, I am now ashamed of the times when I was silent, when instead I should have spoken up. To the best of my abilities I won't make that same error again. I think all of us need to keep in mind that young girl, and be unashamed of our faith.

What We Mean By Marriage

June 14, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Ballista has just written a post over at Society of Phineas where he attacks the modern counterfeit of marriage. His post, Defending the Lie That is Marriage, is worth reading in its entirety, and I suggest my readers head over there first before finishing up with my post.

His post, and the comments which spawned it over at Deep Strength's blog, got me thinking about what we mean by "marriage." Ballista likes to use the terms "Marriage 1.0" and "Marriage 2.0" to distinguish between marriage as it was, and marriage as it is now. Certainly for the purposes of discussion such terms are a vast improvement, as they help us keep in mind what is actually being talked about. However, I think that we can go yet further with them. More divisions of what marriage is, and marriage was, are possible. This extends even beyond a categorization based on time, because when we talk about the institution of marriage we are really talking about two different things- the religious institution of marriage, and the legal/civil institution of marriage. They are not the same thing, not by a long-shot. **[Edit: As Christians, we should recognize that the State can call whatever it likes marriage, and that doesn't actually mean that it is marriage. But while the object may not be marriage, the name is, and so it is important to distinguish between them. This post aims to explore that distinction.]** So I'm going to use this post to try and break up the two of them, and then categorize them as well, so that when we talk about marriage, we can be as specific as possible.

I. The Religious Institution

Over the course of nearly two thousand years the Christian understanding and meaning of marriage has changed enormously. But most of that change has taken place in the last century or two. Prior to the last two centuries there was a general understanding of what Christian marriage was, and what it wasn't. Below are my attempts to categorize what Christians (including both Churchians and actual, devout Christians) mean when they refer to marriage in a religious sense:

A. Classical Christian Marriage

This is Christian marriage as it originally existed. Some of its features included:

- A holy union between a man and a woman which is joined together by God, bound by him and their oaths
- The purpose of marriage is to serve God, avoid sexual immorality and to raise Godly Children
- A clear hierarchy in the marriage structure: husband->wife->children
- Binding for Life- the marriage lasted until one party died, with only rare exceptions
- Spouses may not deny each other their conjugal rights

- Contraception was a defilement of the marriage bed
- Clearly defined roles for husband and wife- both worked, although often in different capacities

I used past tense here because, as a general rule, Classical Christian Marriage doesn't exist anymore- either as a practice or as what people have in mind when they think of marriage. Save perhaps for the most orthodox/conservative Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants, where you might see it. They are an exception, even among exceptions, however. Otherwise, this is not what Christians think of when they talk about marriage.

B. "Traditional" Christian Marriage

This is Christian marriage as it existed following the rise of modernism, but before the full manifestation of contemporary feminism. Its features include:

- A holy union between a man and a woman which is joined together by God, bound by their oaths to each other
- The purpose of marriage is to raise Godly children, as well as to civilize men and allow women to achieve their dreams of motherhood
- Recognition of the marital hierarchy, but often accompanied by exemptions and caveats
- Binding for Life- marriage is still *supposed* to be for life, but there are more "outs" available now
- Spouses are not *supposed* to deny each other their conjugal rights, but there are exceptions/exemptions
- Contraception is generally a bad thing, but sometimes *may* be necessary
- Clearly defined roles for husband and wife- the husband works and provides, and the wife raises the children and keeps the home.

When nearly all Christians talk about traditional marriage, or going back to what marriage "used to be", this is what they mean. Not classical marriage, but rather the religious understanding of marriage that was affected by culture and politics in the modern era. I say politics because legal definitions of marriage started to become prevalent at this point, and influenced people's understanding of what marriage was.

C. Contemporary "Conservative" Christian Marriage

This is Christian marriage as most "conservative" Christians think of it nowadays. It is thoroughly infected with modern feminist thought, even though its supporters may argue otherwise. It has been around for several generations now. Among its features you find:

- A holy union between a man and a woman who are in love, [DG: here is the newest addition] gay people should be able to get something similar so as to not discriminate
- The purpose of marriage is for the spouses to be happy
- Unclear notions of the marital hierarchy- there might be some nominal notions of submission and headship, but more likely than not marriage is treated as a

partnership of equals, i.e. “Mutual Submission”
- Binding for Love- marriage is “supposed” to be for life, but if one of a dozen different things happens, all of which tied to one spouse’s happiness or falling out of love, the marriage can be ended by either party
- Spouses shouldn’t sexually deny each other, but both get a say on what is appropriate or not, and besides, marriage is about more than sex and caring about it too much is a sin
- Contraception is a personal thing between a married couple and God
- Clearly defined role for the husband- he works and provides for and protects the family; the wife however has the right to decide whether she wants to work or wants to stay at home and choose if she wants to raise the kids herself

For most “conservative” Christians this is what they understand by marriage. As one can see by comparing it to what came before, it bears little semblance to what marriage used to be, what marriage is supposed to be. Yet for most Christians they can’t understand how marriage could be anything different- in large part because they haven’t seen anything different themselves. As for another idea of marriage, something more *traditional*, well, that is something they just are ashamed to think of, much less be associated with.

D. Contemporary “Progressive” Christian Marriage

This is what “progressive” Christians think of when it comes to marriage. Incidentally, this is probably the future of marriage as most Christians understand it. After all, “conservative” marriage now used to be progressive Christian marriage back in the day.

- A union between two [DG: soon to be any number] people in love
- The purpose of marriage is for the spouses to be happy
- No marital hierarchy- marriage is supposed to be a partnership among equals
- Binding for Love- marriage lasts as long as both spouses are happy and in love, once that ceases either may end the marriage for any reason
- Spouses decide for themselves what kind of sex life they should have
- Contraception is a purely personal thing between the couple, and there is nothing wrong with it anyways
- No defined roles for spouses- the spouses do whatever they want with regards to work and children

Everything above is a short summary of what “progressive” Christians think marriage to be. Of course, this is increasingly what the mainstream, “conservative” Christians will come to believe constitutes marriage.

That covers the religious institution of marriage. Now on to the legal/civil side of it.

II. The Legal Institution

The legal “understanding” or “definition” of marriage has changed a great deal in a much shorter period of time than has the religious understanding. In large part this is because

the State has played a minor (or even non-existent) role in marriage for most of Christian history. Only in the last few centuries has this changed- not coincidentally this happens to overlap with changes to the religious understanding of marriage as well. **[Edit: Remember that we are talking about the State definition of "marriage", not the institution/sacrament that God created.]** Here are my attempts to categorize the legal institution over marriage over time:

A. Marriage v. 0.5

This represents the legal state of marriage before significant government involvement. For much, but not all, of the history of Christianity, this was the norm. The exceptions would be the present, modern age, as well as in the very beginning of the Church under Roman rule. Some of its features:

- Minimal Government regulation- recognizing and regulating marriage was largely left up to the church, and not handled by the state
- Legal Separation- divorce, like marriage, was a private affair; there was generally no civil recognition of divorce, although legal separation of spouses, which handled property rights, was recognized
- Paternal Custody- the father gained custody of all legitimate children in the event of some sort of separation
- No wealth transfer- the state didn't enforce monetary sanctions on a spouse, as it wasn't involved in marriage; this means no alimony, property transfers or child support

As you can see, a pretty hands off approach. My basic understanding of history leads me to believe that this was the paradigm from the fall of Rome up to about the Reformation. After that, we saw the next legal stage of marriage develop.

B. Marriage v. 1.0

For a long time this was the classical legal understanding of marriage. It marked an era where government became involved in the field of marriage. The reasons for this are numerous- property disputes, dispute over custody, and moral concerns. Here are a few of its features:

- Government Regulation- government recognized and regulated marriage, marriage licenses were commonplace and were often necessary in conjunction with a Church wedding
- Fault-based Divorce- divorce was permitted in only a few circumstances, such as repeated adultery, abandonment or abuse
- Nature- marriage was a special contractual relationship between a man and a woman
- Paternal Custody- the father gained custody of all legitimate children in the event of some sort of separation; however, certain doctrines did give the mother limited custody, such as during the "tender years"

- Limited Wealth Transfers- In some instance, primarily/only when the husband was at fault, the wife was entitled to alimony payments; otherwise no child support or property transfers
- Coverture- husband and wife considered “one person” for many aspects of the law, with the husband in principal control of the marriage, although certain exceptions did develop towards the end of this regime
- Standing Consent- husband recognized as having the legal right to sex with his wife at any time, no such notion as “marital rape” is recognized, as they are both “one person” (you cannot rape yourself)

Up until the last century or so this was the standard legal understanding of marriage. However, starting with a number of exceptions and caveats developing in the late 1800s, this regime started to undergo a radical transformation. Partly this was due to cultural changes, but also legal changes that expanded upon existing exceptions and doctrines.

C. Marriage v. 2.0

Now we come to the vaunted “Marriage 2.0”, which was, until the last few years, the standard for a number of decades. Only the very oldest now living experienced a time before this legal regime was present. Its appearance was a result of the logical expansion of a number of doctrines, like the “tender years” doctrine, as well as the natural extension of concepts like “married woman’s property laws.” Below are a few of its features:

- Government Regulation- government recognized and regulated marriage, marriage licenses were standard and were often necessary in conjunction with a Church wedding
- Nature- marriage was a special contractual relationship between a man and a woman
- No-Fault based Divorce- divorce was permitted in all circumstances, without any party being “at fault”, essentially unilateral divorce
- Maternal Custody- the mother gained custody of all children in most instances of separation, usually only failing to do so when she was gravely at fault in some way, such as a drug addict
- Significant Wealth Transfers- Child Support is standard from the higher earning spouse, in addition alimony might also be required (usually of the husband), in addition property is split during divorce, with the nature of the split determined by the jurisdiction
- Egalitarianism- husband and wife are separate persons and “equals” before the law, and have equal rights in the marriage
- No Standing Consent- marital rape is recognized everywhere, spouses have no right to sex in marriage

Over the course of the last century Marriage 2.0 developed and flourished. For the longest of time it was the standard legal regime when marriage was concerned. While

“No-Fault” divorce was a large part of it, it wasn’t the only component which made Marriage 2.0 what it is. In addition, even when fault was still required some courts still treated it as no-fault anyways. All of these components added up to what constituted Marriage 2.0. I am using past tense here because this regime is in the process of being replaced by a new “edition” or “version”, one which is still forming.

D. Marriage v. 3.0

At last we come to the newest legal version of marriage. Of course, it is still in “Beta”, and can be considered v. 2.5 if we want to get technical. So, what are the changes? Well, to begin with have the removal of any requirement that both parties to a marriage be a man and a woman. Same-sex marriage is recognized under the new regime. Another possible change, one that I predict happening within 15 years, is acceptance of legal polygamy. So it will be a contractual relationship between “two or more” people. For the moment, at least, I think that the requirement of people will stick and animals or other objects won’t be included, but perhaps I’m being optimistic.

Of course, with same sex marriage certain doctrines no longer work. For example, “maternal custody” is likely to be set aside, because it won’t apply to gay couples. My suspicion is that new system for determining custody, based solely on availability and time spent with children, will be developed. Ironically, this might be to the advantage of some men. Otherwise, I don’t expect any significant shake-ups. It is, if anything, a logical development of what has gone before.

III. Interplay

What can be readily noticed is that Marriage 0.5 and Marriage 1.0 match up fairly well with both Classical and “traditional” Christian marriage. This is because the former was heavily influenced by the latter. Unfortunately, the development of “traditional” Christian marriage also influenced the legal aspects of marriage, leading to the slow expansion of Marriage 1.0. In fact, for a time there was probably a Marriage 1.5, mostly in the early part of the 20th century. But it was quickly swallowed up by Marriage 2.0. That in turn was also influenced by the “conservative” Christian take on marriage, and reciprocated by influencing “conservative” marriage in turn. Both fed off each others worst natures.

[Edit: Because there was such a strong similarity to what God intended to be marriage, and what the State called marriage, it was easy for most people to assume they were the same thing. In fact, most people still think that the State can determine what is, and isn’t marriage, and that includes most Christians. Zippy covered this subject before in a post here, I think most will find it worth a read, even if they aren’t Catholic.]

This brings us to the counterfeit that Ballista warned about. When most “Christian” leaders today talk about marriage, when they promote marriage, what they are really talking about/promoting is “conservative” Christian marriage under a Marriage 2.0/2.5 regime. Perhaps a few, a rare few, might even support “traditional” marriage. But that is still under the present legal regime. That is a far cry from what “marriage” was like a

century ago, when it was either classical or “traditional” Christian marriage under a Marriage 1.0 regime. These conditions might share the same name of “marriage,” but in reality they are very different ~~entities~~ notions.

Setting aside even any legal considerations, the form of marriage that Christian leaders push today is still not classical Christian marriage. While it might superficially resemble marriage as it originally was for Christians, beneath the surface are found significant mutations that warp the purpose and nature of marriage. Alas, these mutations have been around for long enough that they are now associated with how marriage “traditionally” existed a long time ago. The deceit inherent in traditional marriage is dangerous to someone who think that they are entering a truly Christian marriage for two reasons. The first is that they are not in fact living a Christian marriage as God intended. The second is that the “flaws” in traditional marriage make it vulnerable to the pressures of contemporary culture and the present legal regime- there is plenty to encourage a spouse to change their mind about marriage and blow theirs up on a whim.

As I end this post, I would encourage my readers to offer their thoughts on the interplay between the religious and legal institutions of marriage, as well as my analysis of how marriage has changed over time. Let me know if I’m on the right track, or point out where I missed the mark.

Saturday Saints- #20

June 14, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We have now come to the letter S for our saints, and so today's saint is Saint Sabbas the Sanctified:

> **Saint Sabbas the Sanctified** (439–532), a Cappadocian-Greek monk, priest and saint, lived mainly in Palaestina Prima. He was the founder of several monasteries, most notably the one known as Mar Saba. The Saint's name is derived from Aramaic סַבָּא (sabba') meaning "old man".
>
> …

> When he was seventeen years old he received monastic tonsure. After spending ten years at the monastery of Bishop Flavian, he went to Jerusalem, and from there to the monastery of Saint Euthymius the Great. But Euthymius sent Sabbas to Abba Theoctistus, the head of a nearby monastery with a strict cenobitic rule. Sabbas lived in obedience at this monastery until the age of thirty.

> …Patriarch Salustius of Jerusalem ordained him in 491 and appointed him archimandrite of all the monasteries in Palaestina Prima in 494. Sabbas composed the first monastic rule of church services, the so-called *Jerusalem Typikon,* for guidance of all the Byzantine monasteries. He died in the year 532. His feast day is on December 5.

For those interested in learning more about Saint Sabbas, the full wiki contains more about his life. While a life as a monk is not something I am called to as a vocation, I have a lot of respect for those who pursue it. The dedication and discipline involved are incredible, and I admire the fullness of faith and commitment to God that someone like Sabbas exerted throughout his long, pious life.



St. Sabbas

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #28

June 15, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Father's Day in the United States, and so in honor of that I decided to focus on this passage from the Book of Sirach:

> Listen to me your father, O children;
> and act accordingly, that you may be kept in safety.
> [2] For the Lord honored the father above the children,
> and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons.
> [3] Whoever honors his father atones for sins,
> [4] and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure.
> [5] Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children,
> and when he prays he will be heard.
> [6] Whoever glorifies his father will have long life,
> and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother;
> [7] he will serve his parents as his masters.
> [8] Honor your father by word and deed,
> that a blessing from him may come upon you.
> [9] For a father's blessing strengthens the houses of the children,
> but a mother's curse uproots their foundations.

> [10] Do not glorify yourself by dishonoring your father,
> for your father's dishonor is no glory to you.
> [11] For a man's glory comes from honoring his father,
> and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mother.
> [12] O son, help your father in his old age,
> and do not grieve him as long as he lives;
> [13] even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance;
> in all your strength do not despise him.
> [14] For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,
> and against your sins it will be credited to you;
> [15] in the day of your affliction it will be remembered in your favor;
> as frost in fair weather, your sins will melt away.
> [16] Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer,
> and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord.

(Sirach 3:1-16)

Saint Paul builds upon this in his Letter to the Ephesians:

> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), [3] "that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."

(Ephesians 6:1-3)

There really isn't much room for commentary here. Scripture is clear that we are to honor our parents, and although the holiday is a secular one (that largely exists to sell cards), that doesn't mean we cannot use it a reminder to honor our fathers. This is so whether they live or not- for even if they have gone to sleep we still can honor their memory through our lives, as how we live reflects on them.

[Incidentally, I think that they handled this well at Mass. Father's Day wasn't mentioned until the end, and when it was, it was treated both respectfully and briefly. Just the way it should be.]

The Differences Between “Classical” and “Traditional” Christian Marriage

June 19, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Prompted by my post What We Mean By Marriage, several of my readers have asked what the differences were/are between “Classical” and “Traditional” marriage. This post aims to help my readers understand the differences between the two. I should mention, before I go any further, that the terms “Classical” and “Traditional” Christian marriage are my own. They are not drawn from any other source, merely the names I have assigned to the respective notions of marriage as I understand them. So it is doubtful that they will match up with anything you have seen elsewhere in the ‘sphere or on the ‘net.

To begin with I am going to recap the main features of both “versions” of marriage. Keep in mind that these are the religious definitions/understandings of marriage, not the way that the State understood marriage. Lets start with “Classical” Christian marriage:

- A holy union between a man and a woman which is joined together by God, bound by him and their oaths
- The purpose of marriage is to serve God, avoid sexual immorality and to raise Godly Children
- A clear hierarchy in the marriage structure: husband->wife->children
- Binding for Life- the marriage lasted until one party died, with only rare exceptions
- Spouses may not deny each other their conjugal rights
- Contraception was a defilement of the marriage bed
- Clearly defined roles for husband and wife- both worked, although often in different capacities

Now we move on to “Traditional” Christian marriage:

- A holy union between a man and a woman which is joined together by God, bound by their oaths to each other
- The purpose of marriage is to raise Godly children, as well as to civilize men and allow women to achieve their dreams of motherhood
- Recognition of the marital hierarchy, but often accompanied by exemptions and caveats
- Binding for Life- marriage is still *supposed* to be for life, but there are more “outs” available now
- Spouses are not *supposed* to deny each other their conjugal rights, but there are exceptions/exemptions
- Contraception is generally a bad thing, but sometimes *may* be necessary
- Clearly defined roles for husband and wife- the husband works and provides, and the wife raises the children and keeps the home.

Before I talk about the differences, lets cover what they have in common. The first bullet point, while worded differently, is essentially the same between them. Both have the understanding that marriage is a holy union between a man and a woman that is joined together by God, and bound by their vows. Both also generally hold to the same idea that marriage is binding for life. Traditional marriage has more “outs” available- as divorce generally wasn’t available at all under Classical marriage. But otherwise they both had the same concept of marriage being for life.

Both have fairly similar views when it comes to denial of conjugal rights and contraception. Traditional marriage tends to be more “forgiving” of contraception, or at least attempts to try and limit the number of children (through whatever means were available). As for conjugal rights, again, they were not supposed to be denied. Perhaps the biggest change is that such matters were considered inappropriate topics of debate/conversation. As such, they were mostly swept under the rug.

This brings us to the differences. There are three areas where they diverge: the purpose of marriage, the nature of the marital hierarchy, and the roles of husband and wife. I will cover them in order.

A.

Here is a restatement of both of their views on the purpose of marriage:

- Classical Marriage: to serve God, avoid sexual immorality and to raise Godly Children
- Traditional Marriage: to raise Godly children, as well as to civilize men and allow women to achieve their dreams of motherhood

They both mention raising Godly children, as that component of marriage didn’t really change between the two iterations. So it will be skipped over for now.

As you can see, Traditional marriage doesn’t mention serving God and avoiding sexual immorality. I didn’t include them principally because those two components of classical marriage had dwindled in importance by the time traditional marriage showed up. It isn’t so much that they aren’t present, but rather that they were considered less important than the new components found in traditional marriage. Serving God, which I think under classical marriage was much more overt, is under traditional marriage more of an implied thing. Everyone sort of assumes it, but it doesn’t have the prominence it did before. Also, controlling sexuality and avoiding sexual immorality has receded as well. Sometimes it is mentioned and discussed, but more often than not it is skipped over. This is in part because discussions of sexuality tend to be considered “inappropriate” in many circumstances, and just aren’t talked about. And when sex is talked about, it is almost always in the context of lust and sinfulness, and not so much about how sexuality is a good thing in marriage. Actually, as I think on it, I might want to re-word classical marriage’s wording from “avoid sexual immorality” to something more positive, such as “provide a healthy, ordered and moral outlet for human sexuality.”

This brings us to the new components of traditional marriage, “civilizing men” and

“allowing women to achieve their dreams of motherhood.” Both of these components are ones that I believe are “baked in” to the common understanding of what “traditional” marriage is. By that I mean that people just instinctively believe them to be true. They may not be “official” teaching, but they might as well be.

When it comes to men, marriage is perceived to “civilize” them, mostly by forcing them “to be responsible” by starting a family and supporting it. While it is true that marriage imposes a considerable amount of responsibility on men, the notion that it civilizes them is absurd and has no basis in Scripture (or Catholic/Orthodox Tradition). In my view this component acts in many ways to infantilize men (or at least portrays them that way), because it impliedly argues that a man needs a woman in his life in order to keep him in line, i.e., civilized. It is inherently misandristic [by the way, what does it say about the world when WordPress recognizes Melisandra as a word, but not misandry?]. I would in fact argue that this component of traditional marriage is one of the first manifestations of feminism within Christianity [feminism being far older in origin than many suspect, but that is a topic for a later post].

Now to women. It seems to me that in “traditional” marriage there is a belief that women are entitled to marry so that they can have children- basically that marriage allows them to fulfill their “higher calling” as mothers. What concerns me about this perspective is the implication that women are “owed” marriage and “owed” children, when in fact marriage is a calling from God (what we Catholics call a Vocation), and children are a blessing from God (not something we are owed). Again, it seems to have this vibe of “female primacy” within it that looks an awful like the Feminine Imperative at work.

Summed up, and put crudely, traditional marriage contains the implicit understanding that marriage makes men less bad and women more good.

B.

The marital hierarchy in classical and traditional marriage is very similar, at least on paper. Both recognize wifely submission and headship by the husband. One minor difference is that traditional marriage is less likely to recognize that God is the true head of the marriage, such that you get God -> Husband -> Wife -> Children in order of authority (something I should have included in my description of classical marriage).

What I think is the real difference here is the belief that the husband should not be involved in some spheres of influence or authority. This is heavily influenced by the understanding of the roles of husband and wife in traditional marriage, which I will talk about in greater depth in the next section. Under traditional marriage the basic idea is that since women (wives in this specific instance) are better at certain things than men are, they should be given free reign to carry out those activities. In other words, while men are still technically the “head” of the marriage, they have limited to no authority over certainly “wifely duties.” Child-rearing is the most obvious example of this- wives need to be the ones to primarily raise children, especially young ones, because they are so much better at it and husband just need to accept that this isn’t something they can question. There are other fields within the marriage that are treated the same way.

Essentially, the authority of the husband is curtailed “for the good of everyone” in certain areas, because the wife is better suited to handle them.

This is a usurpation of the authority of the husband, all dressed up in language that makes it seem like it is beneficial for the marriage. Given this early chink in the armor of submission, it really shouldn’t be a surprise that “mutual submission” worked its way into the mainstream of Christian thought.

C.

Lastly, we come to the roles of husband and wife within marriage. Here is what I wrote before:

- Classical Marriage: Clearly defined roles for husband and wife- both worked, although often in different capacities
- Traditional Marriage: Clearly defined roles for husband and wife- the husband works and provides, and the wife raises the children and keeps the home.

The real change between the classical and traditional marriage understanding of the role of the spouses in the household is found in the role of the wife. Under both the role of the husband is essentially the same, as the husband protected the family and worked to provide for it. On the other hand the perceived role of the wife made a dramatic, although difficult to notice, shift during the transition between the two.

The home was/is the primary locus of the wife’s activity under both classical and traditional marriage. Yet what they did, what they were supposed to do, and what they were expected to do is not the same. The best way that I can explain it is that under classical marriage there were/are “Work at Home Moms”, while under traditional marriage there were/are “Stay at Home Moms.” Under classical Christian marriages wives were expected to be economically productive, just as men were. Proverbs 31 is an excellent example of this, for it lauds a wife who brings profit to her household. Anna, the wife of Tobit in the Book of Tobit, did “women’s work” to provide for her family .They might not be expected to, or capable of, providing for a household like the husband (and in fact couldn’t/can’t for some pretty obvious reasons), but wives/mothers still provided for the family. Of course, they still reared children and maintained the home, but that was all part of their general duties towards the household. However, under traditional Christian marriage the wife is often not seen as being required to economically support the family any longer. She fulfills her duties merely by raising the children and “keeping” the home. I suspect that upper-middle class and upper class attitudes were in large part responsible for this. Because of their relative affluence, wives no longer had to work to support the family, and keeping them at home became a status symbol.

Over time this altered the perception of what women were required to do in marriage. My suspicion is that early forms of feminism encouraged this change in perception, as it effectively reduced the burden on women and put more of it on men. It represented another shift in how a Christian marriage was supposed to be.

Again, these distinctions between “classical” and “traditional” Christian marriage are mostly in how people understand marriage, *not* in how those “versions” look when applied. It is based on perceptions and assumptions of everything that Christian marriage entails. There are many reasons why a wife might not be able to economically support the family in some way, but that is different from her believing that she doesn’t have to support (or bring benefit to) the family if it was viable for her to do so.

That brings this post to its conclusion. I hope that I answered most of the questions about the differences between “classical” and “traditional” Christian marriage that my readers had. If not, ask away in the comments, and I will try and answer as best as I may.

Drowned, Not Submerged, By The Law

June 20, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

To all of those who still think that Family Law in America has any traces of justice left in it, read this. Read the whole thing.

As far as I can gleam from the article, the father in question has defied no court orders. Nor did he fail to meet some prearranged deadline or statutory requirement. He merely didn't do something the judge feels would have been convenient. And that is enough for him to potentially (probably?) lose his daughter.

As for the judge, she ought to keep in mind the words of the prophet Isaiah:

> Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees,
> and the writers who keep writing oppression

(Isaiah 10:1)

Saturday Saints- #21

June 21, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's Saint is one who suffered greatly for his piety and his firm adherence to the faith, Theodore the Studite:

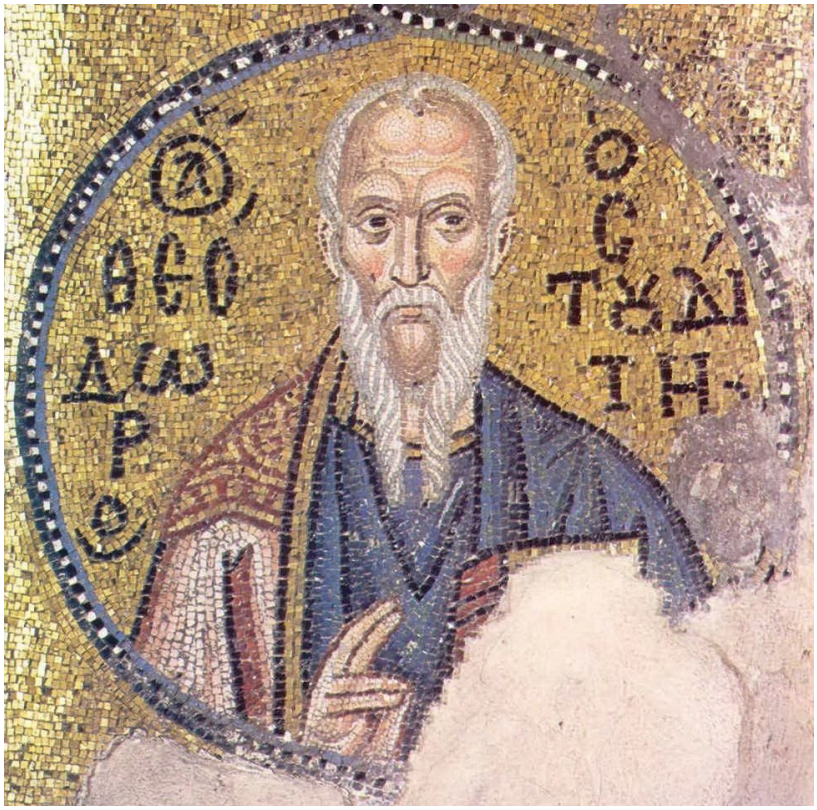
> **Theodore the Studite** (also known as **Theodorus Studita**, **St. Theodore of Stoudios**, and **St. Theodore of Studium**; 759–826) was a Byzantine Greek monk and abbot of the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople. Theodore's letter, containing suggested monastery reform rules, is the first recorded stand against slavery. He played a major role in the revivals both of Byzantine monasticism and of classical literary genres in Byzantium. He is known as a zealous opponent of iconoclasm, one of several conflicts that set him at odds with both emperor and patriarch.

(The full wiki article on him can be found here)

I first found out about Saint Theodore when I was looking at his contemporary Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople. What impressed me about Saint Theodore, and soured me to Tarasios, was the Moechian controversy and how each man responded to it. For those unfamiliar to that bit of history (like I was), here is what happened: The Eastern Emperor, Constantine VI, decided to divorce his wife (and send her off to a convent) and marry his mistress, who happened to be his wife's lady-in-waiting. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Tarasios, didn't speak up against this adulterous union. Theodore, on the other hand, did. Theodore demanded the excommunication of the priest who officiated the "wedding", along with those who received communion from him (which would have included the emperor). After declining an offer from Constantine to make peace (which didn't include Constantine repenting of his sin), Theodore was seized by imperial troops, flogged and banished.

Reading about that time made me realize how much we need spiritual leaders like Theodore in the Church right now. For Catholics, someone of that stature is needed to decry the abuse of annulments, which have basically become divorces in the Catholic Church. And Protestants could surely use someone willing to call out abuses of their own standards of marriage and divorce. Here is a question that I think we all should ask: how many Christian leaders do you know in the West who would be willing to face torture and banishment for speaking out against the rampant adultery and desecration of marriage that occurs daily?

The number, whatever it is, is not enough.


Saint Theodore the Studite

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #29

June 23, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was busier than normal this past week, and so had less time to attend to reading Scripture than I would have liked. Only two passages for this, neither of them lengthy. The first is from the Book of Sirach:

> [14] He who fears the Lord will accept his discipline,
> and those who rise early to seek him will find favor.
> [15] He who seeks the law will be filled with it,
> but the hypocrite will stumble at it.
> [16] Those who fear the Lord will form true judgments,
> and like a light they will kindle righteous deeds.
> [17] A sinful man will shun reproof,
> and will find a decision according to his liking.

> [18] A man of judgment will not overlook an idea,
> and an insolent and proud man will not cower in fear.
> [19] Do nothing without deliberation;
> and when you have acted, do not regret it.

(Sirach 32:14-19)

There are several gems of wisdom here that I found important. While straightforward, the first verse is difficult to accept. None of us likes to be disciplined (at least, I don't- I suppose others could). Indeed, we often go to great lengths to avoid punishment. I suspect that the acceptance of discipline, of both acknowledging wrong and acquiescing to measures meant to correct it, is necessary to keep the faith. Without that acceptance, we will never really understand that actions have consequences, an understanding without which we can never appreciate the sacrifice of the Cross.

Verse 17 also spoke to me. In fact, it reminded me of those who "Church Shop." If they are in a church that doesn't suit their fancy because it happens to tell them that their ways, then they will go elsewhere. Eventually they will find a "church" which gives them a decisions to their liking.

The last verse is especially important- vacillation is a sign of weakness and is something we must earnestly avoid. Once we have made our choice, we need to stick with it. This ties in perfectly with the second passage today, which is from a book I haven't covered before, Revelations:

> [15] "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! [16] So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

(Revelations 3:15-16)

As Christians, we cannot be lukewarm. We cannot stand on the sidelines in this world. Neutrality is not an option as a Christian, we must choose to act, and to act decisively. Sometimes that can be pretty difficult, as it isn't always clear what the right option is. Sometimes it seems like we don't have a choice. But we do- they may be unpleasant choices, but they are there for us to make. And verse 16 from Sirach above reminds us that those who truly fear the Lord will make righteous judgments- we *will* be able to tell light from darkness if we give ourselves completely over to God.

As an aside… NO Masses do not have to be awful. I have been to some that were actually quite lovely. But good grief, the bad ones are downright appalling. Even the worst Latin Mass I've attended was better than that travesty. The Latin might have been bad, but at least it wasn't being screeched at you from the "choir."

Random Musings- #1

June 23, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This brief post is a short collection of some random thoughts that I've had lately. Reader input is encouraged.

Balance

One thing that I have noticed in myself is a tendency to favor "balance" in certain situations. One of the more common ones is when I am writing something critical of women- I instinctively think of something to include which is critical of men in order to balance it out. Having noticed this tendency, I am doing my best to quash it, but it has proven remarkably difficult to suppress. Still, the fact that I know its a problem is probably the biggest step in its correction, because most men don't even realize that they have this problem.

This leads to an interesting point- are most Churchian leaders aware of this particular flaw? I believe it qualifies as a flaw because it often serves to detract or undermine any point they are making. Such leaders are quite prone to this; they will criticize men whenever they criticize women, and they will praise women whenever they praise men. My belief is that some of them know full well what they are doing- they are protecting their interests by not angering the most vocal and involved members of their "flock." Others, however, I think are so deluded and conditioned that they don't realize what they are doing. Whether it is a desire to be fair or non-judgmental or whatever, they have made it a habit to seek "balance" whenever women are concerned.

Anyone else have this tendency?

[This segment was motivated by this post by Cail Corishev.]

Being a King

For some time I have been trying to perfect the following phrase:

> I will treat you like a Queen… so long as you recognize that I am your King.

It is a pet project of mine- a ready-made quip when dealing with a woman I'm investigating for marriage potential who shows signs of being a "princess." The idea being that I would ask her if she would expect to be treated like a queen when we marry. If she says yes, I would mention this. It could also apply if her parents said something similar as well.

So far it doesn't seem quite perfect, but I haven't been able to tweak it to that Goldilocks level of "just right." Perhaps some of my readers would feel like adding their thoughts.

Removing the Mask

Rollo's most recent post, Controlling Interests, got me thinking about two different things.

The first is how brazen many women now are when it comes to living their lives they way they want to. And the second is how a fight is likely brewing between the female “haves” and “have-nots”.

The basic strategy which many (most?) women employ right now, which is regularly known as AF/BB (see Rollo’s post for more), is one that requires two distinct elements to pull off: deceit and desperation. Many, if not most, men would not be content to marry a woman whom they realize is choosing to marry them solely as a meal ticket, and effectively a sperm donor as well. It should surprise no one that men don’t like to be used in that way, and will balk at it if they realize that is what is happening. Hence the importance of hiding what is going on from them.

On the other hand, this repulsion at being used is mitigated/countered by a sense of desperation in many men in the West. Owing to the nature of the SMP, they have limited options when it comes to female companionship. Naturally, this makes them desperate, and they are willing to take on women they wouldn’t otherwise if it gets them at least some measure of opportunity with them.

What seems to be happening is that many women are now certain that male desperation in the future will be greater than any sense of male self-respect, and so they can do whatever they want and not have to hide it. Part of me wonders if women see the ability to be open about their intentions/strategy as a status symbol- a woman who can act that way is a woman of value, and therefore a woman to be envied. The problem with this strategy, though, is that it relies on male desperation not having any limits. I suspect this to be a grave mistake. This is because the average quality of women in the West has been dropping fast, perhaps even faster than male desperation has been rising. If that is the case, we will soon reach a point where most men will simply not accept the (Western) women who are available, no matter how desperate they might have become.

All of this plays into part of this subject- the looming fight between women. Women at the margins of “value” will start to feel the pinch first. The “where have all the good men gone?” articles out there seem to indicate that this has already begun. It will only increase in tempo over time as more and more women drop below the acceptable rate for most men. Combine this with many men being burned or realizing what a danger most Western women are, and you get a huge disparity in outcome between the female “haves” and “have-nots”.

What I am uncertain of, and curious about, is what shape this fight will take. Women are already starting to question the dominant paradigm in numerous ways, one example being the delaying of childbirth. Perhaps a similar reaction will take place, where women attack their brazen sisters from the margins, discouraging them from “painting women in a bad light”, or some such. Or they could always latch onto the tried-and-true method of “fixing” the problem by attacking men as insecure pigs.

So, what do my readers think of this matter? Will women “price themselves out of the market” faster than male desperation can compensate for? And how will women on the margins react to more and more men becoming aware of the con that is being pulled on

them?

Making It Worth The Investment

June 26, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

TempestTcup, who helps run the Red Pill Women Reddit, posted a comment some woman left there not too long ago. It is short, but I will post only the central paragraph:

> I am a very lazy person, and that makes it hard for me when it comes to most things feminine, because being traditionally feminine requires so much effort: I don't cook anything from a recipe, I never bake, I don't wear make-up, I don't decorate, I don't knit or sew or do crafts, I put minimal effort into my outfits, and I dislike shopping with a passion. However, I don't really have any traditionally masculine interests, either – I can't be bothered about sports, I don't play videogames, I don't read comic books, I don't hunt/shoot etc etc.
> I am interested in some of these things, I have a passing knowledge of many of them, but I don't really care very much. Because of this I sometimes find it hard to converse with women on either end of the spectrum (and with men, sometimes) because I am rarely passionate about the things they are passionate about.

This doesn't exactly paint a flattering picture of this (young?) woman now, does it? But her response is only the catalyst here. What interested me more than her indulgence of the sin of sloth were a couple of the comments made in response to the post. Commenter Cadders left this:

> Ummm.....craving leadership.....male leadership perhaps?

Tempest followed up with a comment of her own:

> True, but what male leader wants to put up with someone that catatonic? I bet it'd take a crowbar to wrench her out of her chair

And here Tempest gets to something very, very important. Few, if any, men would be interested in trying to lead that woman to a better state of life. It would be a major investment of time, and probably money. And for what gain? What kind of personality do you think that this woman possesses? I imagine it isn't particularly endearing. What we are talking about here is a total make-over for this woman- nothing else will do. Essentially, she has to become someone else entirely for any man worth his salt to want to be with her for the long term.

I've covered the subject of "training" a woman to be wife material before, in my post Some Assembly Required. In it I discussed what I could, and could not "train" in a woman to make her wife material. I also explained that I would, in fact, be willing to do that kind of "training", and invest in a woman who shows potential. The thing is, I'm only going to invest in a woman if she makes it relatively easy and inviting for me to do so. **[Edit:** And I would only do so in areas where I am really just helping her change herself- like losing

weight, for example] Dalrock's metaphor of the Two Beaches is appropriate here, I think. A woman who makes it easy for me to "train" her, who doesn't put up obstacles and fights me along the way? I'm willing to chance that. But a woman who turns this from a chore into a battle? Pass. **[Edit:** Not only would I not want to endure that kind of battle, but it would show she is beyond my ability to help/influence anyways.]

I mention all of this because the comment that Tempest highlighted reminded me of a young woman I worked with a few months back. For a while I considered whether I could, and should, "train" her towards being wife material. I knew she and I shared some similar views on life, and that she was a Christian. She did give off some Christo-Feminist warning signs, however, and that gave me pause. On the other hand I thought I could probably correct her in a relatively short time frame, and if that didn't work out then I could always leave before having invested too much time and effort. I also had reason to believe she was a virgin. Of course, much of the reason for that is that she was quite overweight. Enough so to easily push her out of the acceptable category, at least as she was. What she had going for her was the fact that she still had something of a pretty face, which hinted at good genes. I suspected she would actually be quite attractive if she lose the excess weight.

Given all of this, I was tempted to "train" her up. I didn't though, because she presented me with (to keep the previous metaphor going) an Omaha Beach like environment. Her personality was atrocious. She was extraordinarily difficult to work with, as she was flighty and controlling at the same time. She couldn't take orders or follow them, and yet couldn't lead at the same time. All in all, she thoroughly disabused me of the notion of trying to "train" her to be wife material. **[Edit:** Not only did I not want to "train" her, I knew that I *couldn't.*]

As Tempest alluded to before, I didn't **[Edit:** and don't] want to put up with someone like her. There were simply too many barriers in my ways to make it worthwhile. "Training" her was a long-term project that I rationally concluded was a bad bet- I had no assurance of success, while at the same time I was assured of a high cost. A woman has to *want* to change, and be *willing* to change, in order for a man, or me at least, to consider "training" her to be wife material. That young woman showed neither inclination. In short, she didn't make it worth the investment.

Saturday Saints- #22

June 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's Saint is St. Ulrich of Augsburg:

> **Saint Ulrich of Augsburg** (c. 890 – 4 July 973), sometimes spelled **Uodalric** or **Odalrici**, was Bishop of Augsburg and a leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany.

The full wiki on him can be found here. A couple of facts that I found interesting about St. Ulrich:

- He was the first Saint to be officially canonized by the Church
- As Bishop of Augsburg, he reformed schools and churches, and built new ones, in addition to monasteries
- While serving as Bishop he helped to bring peace between Emperor Otto I and his son Liudolf when the latter rebelled
- When the Maygars attacked Germany Ulrich acted as a general to help defend Augsburg; his actions were essential to protecting the city from being sacked when it was later beseiged
- He was known to have the highest moral character, and at least one letter was forged under his name to take advantage of that fact

[image]
St. Ulrich of Augsburg

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #30

June 30, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will have several passages with a consistent theme. The first passage, a long one, comes from the Book of Genesis:

> [9] While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. [10] Now when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. [11] Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and wept aloud. [12] And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.
>
> [13] When Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things, [14] and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.
>
> [15] Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" [16] Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. [17] Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful and lovely. [18] Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." [19] Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." [20] So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.
>
> [21] Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." [22] So Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. [23] But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. [24] (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) [25] And in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" [26] Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born. [27] Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." [28] Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to wife. [29] (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.) [30] So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.
>
> (Genesis 29:9-30)

Our second passage is from the Book of Numbers:

> [5] And Moses commanded the people of Israel according to the word of the Lord, saying, “The tribe of the sons of Joseph is right. [6] This is what the Lord commands concerning the daughters of Zeloph′ehad, ‘Let them marry whom they think best; only, they shall marry within the family of the tribe of their father. [7] The inheritance of the people of Israel shall not be transferred from one tribe to another; for every one of the people of Israel shall cleave to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. [8] And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the people of Israel shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that every one of the people of Israel may possess the inheritance of his fathers. [9] So no inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another; for each of the tribes of the people of Israel shall cleave to its own inheritance.’”

(Numbers 36:5-9)

The next passage comes from the Book of Sirach:

> [23] Do you have children? Discipline them,
> and make them obedient from their youth.
> [24] Do you have daughters? Be concerned for their chastity,
> and do not show yourself too indulgent with them.
> [25] Give a daughter in marriage, and you complete a great task;
> but give her to a sensible man.

(Sirach 7:23-25)

I should note that in the above passage, verse 23 reads in some authorities as sons, not children, and says “choose wives for them while they are young.” Then we move to another passage from Sirach:

> [19] My child, keep sound the bloom of your youth,
> and do not give your strength to strangers.
> [20] Seek a fertile field within the whole plain,
> and sow it with your own seed, trusting in your fine stock.
> [21] So your offspring will prosper,
> and, having confidence in their good descent, will grow great.

(Sirach 26:19-21)

Now we move to the New Testament, specifically the First Letter to the Corinthians:

> [39] A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 7:39)

As you might have noticed, they all bear a common theme: the matter of determining when and who to marry. These passages are just a sample of the passages and verses in

Scripture which address the matter. I chose them because I think they provide a good sample of what Scripture has to say on the subject. What they make clear is the following:

- In some circumstances parents chose whom their daughters, and their sons, would marry
- In some circumstances men could choose whom they would marry
- In some circumstances women could choose whom they would marry

Taken together, these passages explain that men and women, *and* parents, can be involved in the choice of spouses. With all of this in mind, I would go further and say that both children and parents should be involved in the process of spouse selection. Unfortunately, nearly all Christian parents today have abdicated this important role. In fact many go so far as to sabotage, through various means, their children when it comes to marriage. Not all mean to do ill, but that doesn't change the fact that many Christian youth suffer unnecessarily, and risk their souls, because their parents aren't as involved as they should be.

Consequently, I am a major supporter of The Courtship Pledge, run by Scott and Mychael. Scott has asked me to write guest posts there, and I hope to the have first (which will be cross-posted here) up by the end of the week. It will expand on the line of thought started with this post.

Saturday Saints- #23

July 5, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Saturday, and that means another saint is featured in this post. The letter for today's saint is "V," which gives us Saint Vitalian:

> **Pope Vitalian** (Latin: *Vitalianus*; died 27 January 672) reigned from 30 July 657 to his death in 672. He was born in Segni, Lazio, the son of Anastasius.

Saint Vitalian lived during a divisive time in Church history. Relations between the Eastern and Western Churches had been deteriorating for many years. When he become Pope they were close to a nadir, and had been so for decades. During his Papacy Vitalian tried to improve relations with the Eastern Church, and also reached out to the Eastern Emperor (Constans II) as well. This was in many ways necessary, because the Byzantine emperor had enormous power and influence over the Eastern Church. In many respects the divide between East and West was a mix of theology and politics, as there were both difference in doctrine held by the leaders of the Western and Eastern church, as well as ties to local political leaders.

Some key points about Saint Vitalian:

- He improved relations between the Western Church and the Byzantine emperors, starting with Constans II and later including his son Constantine IV.
- He successfully improved relations with the Church in England, and sent Theodore of Tarsus there to be Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the church in England.
- He resisted efforts by the Bishop of Ravenna to break free of papal authority and essentially create a new, independent church in the west.
- When the Bishop of Lappa, John, was removed by a synod, he appealed to Pope Vitalian. John was imprisoned by the Metropolitian Paulus, who presided over the Synod, in response. John escaped and went to Rome, where Vitalian worked to have him restored.
- Organ music in church is believed to have originated during the time of his papacy.

Those interested in the history of the Church would likely find the full wiki on Saint Vitalian interesting, as it provides a more complete explanation of all of this. It can be found here.

[For those curious why I chose him for today's post, I did so because he seems to have been devout man that very much cared for re-uniting the church while still keeping true to the faith. Such features, sad to say, were not always present in church leaders of the time.]



Saint Vitalian

Keeping The Reward

July 6, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It is clear to anyone of good sense nowadays that something is very wrong within the Church when it comes to marriage. Divorce, once near unheard of, has become so commonplace as to be an accepted part of life. The median and mean age of marriage continues to get pushed back. And many young Millenials have decided that they simply won't marry, for a variety of reasons. Marriage among Christians has never been in a more precarious position.

This crisis has come about due to a multitude of factors: no-fault (aka unilateral) divorce, rampant promiscuity, legalized and easily available contraception and abortion, feminism and the elevation of romantic love are just a few of them. As Christians living in a post-Christian culture, there is little or nothing we can do about many of these. In many respects it seems that the only thing that Christian parents can do is educate their children in the faith and impart as much moral guidance in them as possible. But this isn't true. There is something that Christian parents can do, something that used to be done, the absence of which is amongst the many reasons why marriage is in such a poor state today.

What is this "something" that parents can do to help their children?

They can actively work to help their children marry young.

Parents used to do this- they used to seek out wives and husbands for their sons and daughters. They used to help arrange marriages for their children at a young age. [Contrary to popular myth, an arranged marriage is not the same thing as a *forced* marriage; the latter were terribly uncommon, generally found only among the nobility.]

Unfortunately, this practice, like so many others, has fallen to the wayside in recent decades/centuries. Our love of freedom and independence has lead most parents to let their children handle matters of marriage all by themselves. Ostensibly this is because young Christian men and women have the right to choose their own future for themselves. Yet in practice what is really going on is that young Christians are being thrown to the wolves- they are thrust out into a broken Marriage Marketplace that chews most of them up. A lucky few manage to make it through unscathed, but most are caught up in either promiscuity or involuntary celibacy.

Sadly, few Christians seem to be willing to take the steps which will help their children escape this fate. Again, the solution is very simple, with just two components:

1) Help their children find worthy spouse candidates…

2) and help them marry those candidates while they are young.

The excuses are many as to why parents won't help their children out here, and amusingly enough, they aren't original either. My research into the early history of the Church has lead me to discover that the advice I and others are giving now has been around for a long, long time. Here is what Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of

Constantinople and Doctor of the Church, had to say on the subject of parents raising their children and caring out their souls:

> Hear this, ye fathers and mothers, that your bringing up of children shall not lose its reward. This also he says, as he proceeds, “Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children.” (1 Tim. v.10.) Among other commendations he reckons this one, for it is no light praise to devote to God those children which are given them of God. For if the basis, the foundation which they lay be good, great will be their reward; as great, if they neglect it, will be their punishment. It was on account of his children that Eli perished. For he ought to have admonished them, and indeed he did admonish them, but not as he ought; but from his unwillingness to give them pain he destroyed both himself and them. Hear this, ye fathers, bring your children up with great care “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph. vi.4.) Youth is wild, and requires many governors, teachers, directors, attendants, and tutors; and after all these, it is a happiness if it be restrained. For as a horse not broken in, or a wild beast untamed, such is youth. But if from the beginning, from the earliest age, we fix it in good rules, much pains will not be required afterwards; for good habits formed will be to them as a law. Let us not suffer them to do anything which is agreeable, but injurious; nor let us indulge them, as forsooth but children. Especially let us train them in chastity, for there is the very bane of youth. For this many struggles, much attention will be necessary. Let us take wives for them early, so that their brides may receive their bodies pure and unpolluted, so their loves will be more ardent. He that is chaste before marriage, much more will he be chaste after it; and he that practiced fornication before, will practice it after marriage. “All bread,” it is said, “is sweet to the fornicator.” (Ecclus. xxiii.17.) Garlands are wont to be worn on the heads of bridegrooms, as a symbol of victory, betokening that they approach the marriage bed unconquered by pleasure. But if captivated by pleasure he has given himself up to harlots, why does he wear the garland, since he has been subdued?
>
> Let us admonish them of these things. Let us employ sometimes advice, sometimes warnings, sometimes threatening. In children we have a great charge committed to us. Let us bestow great care upon them, and do everything that the Evil One may not rob us of them. But now our practice is the very reverse of this. We take all care indeed to have our farm in good order, and to commit it to a faithful manager, we look out for it an ass-driver, and muleteer, and bailiff, and a clever accomptant. But we do not look out for what is much more important, for a person to whom we may commit our son as the guardian of his morals, though this is a possession much more valuable than all others. It is for him indeed that we take such care of our estate. **We take care of our possessions for our children, but of the children themselves we take no care at all**.What an absurdity is this! Form the soul of thy son aright, and all the rest will be added hereafter. If that is not good, he will derive no advantage from his wealth, and if

> it is formed to goodness he will suffer no harm from poverty. Wouldest thou leave him rich? teach him to be good: for so he will be able to acquire wealth, or if not, he will not fare worse than they who possess it. But if he be wicked, though you leave him boundless wealth, you leave him no one to take care of it, and you render him worse than those who are reduced to extreme poverty. For poverty is better than riches for those children who are not well-disposed. For it retains them in some degree of virtue even against their will. Whereas money does not suffer those who would be sober to continue so, it leads them away, ruins them, and plunges them into infinite dangers.

The above quote is from his Ninth Homily on First Letter to Timothy. Written over 1600 years ago, Saint John Chrysostom's words ring true now just as they did in the early days of the Church. There is so much wisdom contained therein that I am not sure where to begin in dissecting and analyzing these two paragraphs. Here is but a brief encapsulation of his sage advice and teaching, along with my thoughts about it:

– Parents ought to be concerned most of raising their children to be virtuous. Nothing else is nearly so important. If they raise them well, great will be their reward. Raise them poorly, and the punishment accordingly great.

- This sentiment is now mostly lacking in Christian parents. Rather than raise their children to be virtuous, they raise them to be *successful.* How many of you have heard parents brag about the successes of their children? About the great deeds they are accomplishing, or the bright future they have ahead of them? Then ponder, if you have the stomach for it, on how many times you've heard parents praise the virtue of their children, and deeds which clearly manifest that virtue (as compared to the modern equivalent of blowing a horn ahead of them).

– Rather than be given great license, young Christians need to be restrained, disciplined and mentored. Discipline applied at an early age will bear fruit later in life.

- This advice is so eminently true and obvious you almost wonder why it need be said. But sadly there are some Christian parents who clearly need it, because they spoil their children and give them free reign. What befalls those children later is entirely tragic, and entirely foreseeable.

– Train children to be chaste. The best way to do this is for them to marry young (especially sons). Promiscuity before marriage weakens the marital bonds, and invites future sin.

- Preaching young marriage is counter-cultural even in the Church these days. I know plenty of Christians who advocate that people "wait" to marry, including many parents. They seem to have little to no concern about the dangers of temptation when they thrust their children out in a world that is fully of vice and promiscuity. Speaking from personal experience, I know that it is extraordinarily difficult to

maintain a virtuous life while still single, especially in this culture. The temptations and frustrations are incredible, and many will not be up to the challenge.

– Parents take more care preparing their property for their children then they do actually raising their children. They spend a great deal of time thinking about who will work with their son, but not stop to think of who will marry him and whom he will spend his whole life with. If a child has strong morals, and is full of virtue, then they will get through life safely and securely. No amount of wealth can cover deficiencies in character or virtue.

- This part I found disturbingly prescient. I mean, isn't he describing the general phenomenon of parents sending their kids off to college to get an education and develop a career to a T? Parents are doing everything they can to prepare their children to succeed at life in all areas except (for many) the most important: marriage. This is an obvious recipe for disaster.

In conclusion, Christian parents these days need to reconsider how they are raising their children. Are they raising them to succeed at worldly matters, or are they raising them to excel at loving God and keeping His commandments? Unfortunately, most nearly everyone in the Church has, whether willingly or not, conformed to the world. While we may profess different things from our secular brothers and sisters, we act little different when it comes to raising our children. This needs to change.

A vital step in that change is the role Christian parents play when it comes to their children and marriage. Christian parents need to reject the secular approach of leaving marriage entirely to their children. Instead, they need to get involved early, and often, in their children's lives to help prepare and train them to marry well. The effort begun with the Courtship Pledge by Scott and Mychael is an example of how Christian parents can do their part to change how Christians look at and understand marriage. This project, and efforts like it, is critical to restoring Christian marriage and raising up a new generation of virtuous Christians who will bring light to the world.

I would entreat all Christian parents reading this to ask themselves what they are doing to prepare their children to live virtuous lives, what they are doing to help their children maintain their virtue, what they are doing to prepare their children for marriage, and what they are doing to help their children find and marry a worthy spouse. Then ask yourselves what more you can do for those entrusted into your care, so that you might not lose your reward.

[This is cross-posted over at the Courtship Pledge]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #31

July 7, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A couple of random passages in today's post. No general theme, just some scripture that I found interesting. The first quote is a verse from the Prophet Baruch:

> And the women, with cords about them, sit along the passageways, burning bran for incense; and when one of them is led off by one of the passers-by and is lain with, she derides the woman next to her, because she was not as attractive as herself and her cord was not broken.

(Baruch 6:43)

This verse got my attention because it reminded me of some of the petty (and malicious) behavior that seems especially prevalent these days in women. In particular I was thinking of "virgin shaming." While the reference to a cord being broken was to the specific cultic practice of cult/religious prostitution, I suspect that it has a metaphorical component as well. Which suggests that the odious practice of virgin shaming is not novel to the present day.

That brings us to the second verse of today's post, from the prophet Hosea:

> I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot,
> nor your brides when they commit adultery;
> for the men themselves go aside with harlots,
> and sacrifice with cult prostitutes,
> and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

(Hosea 4:14)

It always disturbs me to see Christians, or at least those who call themselves Christians, defend PUAs, at least on a moral level. Some even go so far as to claim that they are doing the Lord's work. This is blasphemy, pure and simple. The Lord doesn't abet or encourage evil, even though he can use it towards its purpose. Hosea here makes it clear that evil begets more evil, and the evil of women won't be corrected when men are no better. Our response as men shouldn't be to encourage other men to become as depraved as modern women, but instead encourage them to a higher road. In the present environment, such a road means either hold out for a "good" woman, or go their own way.

The final passage is from the first letter from St. Peter:

> So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. [2] Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, [3] not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. [4] And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will

> obtain the unfading crown of glory. [5] Likewise you that are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

(1 Peter 5:1-5)

Perhaps someone with a good understanding of the Greek here can clarify things for me, but when the word “elder” is used here, does it mean Presbyter? If so (and I believe that is the case), this passage reminds those in religious leadership to lead well, and those not to obey. This passage got my attention because I have long been confused by the double standard some Christians have when it comes to religious leadership. They will obey civil authorities, and preach the Gospel there, but won’t obey or respect religious authorities whom they disagree with. Such creative interpretations are anything but consistent with Scripture.

Random Musings And Links- #2

July 9, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Here are a few things that I've read recently that I think my readers might find interesting.

I found this post about punctuation in ancient Greek to be a fascinating read. It helps to explain some of the troubles with translating Scripture from the original Greek.

Courtesy of Mrs. ktc, here is a discussion on wifely submission at the Thinking Housewife which is very good in my opinion: The Importance of Wifely Submission. The comments especially are worth the read. She also posted a good quote last week of Pope Leo XIII on Inequality.

On a similar note, Deep Strength has a good post up on God and Marriage, examining authority and obedience, with a special emphasis on marriage. I left a few comments there, as did others, which I think are worth reading.

In that same post Infowarrior left an interesting link concerning Eleanor of Aquitane. I believe that she was one of the West's first feminists, and think that the story in that link provides some good evidence of it.

Elspeth wrote a post a few days back advising husbands that We Will Get Over It. We Will. Trust me. It generated some intense commenting in response, with Empath disagreeing… strenuously. In reply Elspeth walked back a bit when she examined The Chicken and The Egg of relationships. As I was busy (primarily work, but I also have another post in the hopper that will be released later today or tomorrow) I didn't participate. Having considered the matter some, I think that women *can* "get over it"… *if* they want to. The problem is that many (most really) women *don't* want to get over it. They like to revel in "emotional terrorism" and don't want to let go of that power, and the feelings its generates. Personally, I liken rebellious wives to drug addicts- if they don't want to get better, if they don't want to help themselves, there is nothing that other people can do to overcome this deficiency.

Allamagoosa discussed why the idea of "pregnancy transfers" isn't exactly as great as some feminists think it is.

Her husband NSR alerted me to a Youtube sound loop that someone created of the Enterprise-D engines idling. Not bad for a white noise effect, if that is your cup of tea.

Agapoula got hacked recently and had to switch over to a new blog as a result.

Over at Girls Being Girls, a Southern Girl's Guide to Flirting. I was intrigued by this line/suggestion:

> *"Be a good listener, but play hard to get."* I like that she said both, if you are overly submissive and eager, he might think there's no challenge. If you are too aloof and cold, he will be insulted.

I'm curious- are any of my male readers looking for a "challenge" in women. Speaking

only for myself, I don't care for that at all. Finding a good woman to marry these days is hard enough as is. A woman deciding to play hard to get doesn't make this any easier. Perhaps it is just my INTJ at work, but I don't like hard to get- at least, not until after I'm already sure that a woman like me. Before that I don't care for it at all.

Over at Free Northerner's, an intriguing post on the Traditional Family. If I get time I might respond to it later.

CaseyAnn has a brief, but interesting post about Modern American Posture. This has long been a problem for me, as I used to slouch a lot- although I have gotten much better in the last few years.

A few days back Zippy had a good post up about how Sola Scriptura is Positivist. I think all my Christian readers, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant alike, would find it thought-provoking.

Apparently July is the month to celebrate all the tasty things that will kill you.

Moving on to things less likely to kill you… I am *not* a Zucchini person, but if you are then Mrs. C has you covered. Update with picture here.

Finally, Hearthie talks a little bit about her journey to become a better "First Officer."

Slipped Through The Cracks

July 11, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my last major post, I discussed the important role that parents need to play in helping their children marry. As a brief summary, I advocated that parents: 1) help their children find worthy spouses and 2) help their children marry those worthy spouses while young. Such an effort would help children to maintain a virtuous life and keep away from sexual immorality, something which pervades every drop of modern culture.

But what about those for whom this advice comes too late? Once children are "out of the nest" the ability to help them in this way diminishes rapidly. What about young Christian adults whose parents didn't help to prepare or aid them in marrying young? Parents can make up for this to a degree- while training and preparation might not be possible any longer (or of limited value), they can still help their children find worthy spouses. Unfortunately, not everyone grows up with God-fearing or responsible parents, or even an intact home. Those with parents who aren't willing or aren't able to help are truly in a forlorn position.

Its understandable for those parents who still have young children to not be overly concerned with young Christians who have "slipped through the cracks." When the world at large is constantly attacking you on every front, and seeks to destroy or corrupt everything you hold dear, there is a natural inclination to enter a "bunker" mentality. Everything not connected to you and yours is simply pushed out of your mind and disappears into the nebulous aether of "out there." Again, understandable. But in my view a mistake.

I believe that this is a classic instance of similar interests aligning such that "if we don't hang together, we shall surely hang separately." That means parents with young children should try and help single, young Christian adults to find worthy spouses to marry, and that young, single Christian adults should try to help parents with young children prepare their children for marriage and help them (as time passes) to find spouses for themselves. Setting aside the moral considerations (in my view this is a great act of Christian charity here), there are strong self-interest reasons to work together in this manner.

The first reason to do this lies at the heart of success for both groups: networking. More than anything else, the collapse of the old networks between between members of faith communities is the single biggest impediment to devout, young Christians marrying. In the past you used to be able to count on friends and family to help you find a spouse, or to help your children (or grand-children) find a spouse. Coupled with the relative dearth of actual, devout, God-fearing Christians (as compared to "Churchians" -those who attend church for the social value but are not Christian in act or belief), it is extremely difficult for many young Christians to find suitable mates. Those who are fortunate enough to be born to a rebuilt network, such as a traditional church or a home-schooling group, fare somewhat better. But even they suffer from the limited pool available. If both groups of

Christians- parents and singles, work together they can rebuild the old networks of faith communities much faster than if they operate solo. Every new person that is brought into the network is another chance to branch out and bring even more people into the fold. In mathematical terms the growth of the network is exponential, not linear.

The second reason lies in future hopes and opportunities. If your youngest son is still in diapers, it might not seem beneficial to you or your family right now to help a 20 or 30 year old Christian man find a wife to marry. But in 20 years your son might be looking for a wife, and if that man you helped two decades earlier now has daughters… well, that might make all the difference in the world. Naturally the same logic applies for a young Christian woman as well. Remember, you reap what you sow. As for Christian singles, helping those who are parents now can benefit any future children you have. Or grand-children, for that matter. This kind of project requires long-term planning and thinking, and that means laying the foundation for the future, today.

In my next post in this series I hope to cover some of how both groups can actually help another, both in the moment and in the future.

Saturday Saints- #24

July 13, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is Saint Wolfgang of Regensburg:

> **Saint Wolfgang of Regensburg** (c. 934 – October 31, 994) was bishop of Regensburg in Bavaria from Christmas 972 until his death. He is a saint of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches (canonized in 1052). He is regarded as one of the three great German saints of the 10th century, the other two being Saint Ulrich and Saint Conrad of Constance.

Saint Wolfgang lived an eventful life. He was a missionary, a bishop, a religious reformer, a tutor of royalty and at the end of his life became a hermit. More can be read about him at his wiki, found here.



St. Wolfgang

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #32

July 14, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A couple of short snippets from St. Paul's letters make up today's post. We begin with the Second Letter to Timothy:

> [10] Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Ico′nium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed **all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted**, [13] while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived.

(2 Tim 3:10-13)

For too long we Christians (at least in the West) have forgotten that part I put in bold. Indeed, we have done everything in our power to forget or ignore this. But the time will come, and in fact has already arrived, when we can do so no longer. We cannot hide from the fact that the world will persecute us for trying to live a godly life. The servants of the Adversary grow less subtle day by day. We all of us will have to make a choice soon- whether to flee persecution by abandoning our faith, or accept it by keeping fast to the Lord.

The next passage is from the Letter to Titus:

> [3] Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, [4] so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, [5] to be self-controlled, chaste, **good managers of the household,** kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

(Titus 2:3-5)

It never ceases to amaze me how many Christian women grow up without being taught what is explicitly commanded here. I know very few young women, Christian or otherwise, who cannot even manage themselves much less a household. There is no excuse of Christians to fail in this, yet we do all the time. In fact the long-standing pattern has been for Christian parents to teach their daughters anything and everything but how to manage their household. Instead, young Christian women go pursue an education and a career. And when they marry, *if* they marry, and if they still claim to be Christian, many if not most will try to keep up with that career and work away from home even after having children. This is a clear sin, and yet it embraced wholeheartedly by almost all Christians. They are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it." (2 Tim 3). There is a lot more that can be done with that passage, but time constraints require me to stop for now.

A Warning And A Lesson

July 16, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is inspired by the comments of this post over at Dalrock's. It will be divided into two parts, the first of which responds to a comment by "Bee", while the second features some of my thoughts and commentary concerning a comment left by "stringtheory."

I.

Here is part of what commenter Bee said in response to Deti talking about the incorrect, inaccurate and often outright deceptive teaching in church on the nature of men and women:

> What would you teach a class of teenage, Christian men to give them the correct perspective?
>
> Would you encourage the young men to marry young?

(Link to comment here)

I'm going to address them in order, starting with the question of "What would you teach a class of teenage, Christian men to give them the correct perspective?"

Well, the first thing I would do is advise that they read the Wisdom Books in the Bible. Proverbs, Sirach and Song of Songs especially. I know that most Protestant Bibles don't have the Book of Sirach, which I think is a tragic loss for those who have never read it. Fortunately there are plenty of online resources where Sirach can be read in several different translations. So if you don't want to buy a new Bible that would be a viable alternative. Both Sirach and Proverbs mesh well together in terms of explaining positive and negative traits in women. They warn men about the consequences of choosing a wife poorly and can help keep women off a pedestal. Song of Songs is useful for disabusing men of the notion that women are asexual creatures, which can again help keep away the pedestalization. All of that makes for a good, solid foundation.

Other passages in the Bible provide good lessons as well. Genesis has valuable insights of course. Potiphar's wife's advances on Joseph provide stark warning about female nature. Samson provides all kinds of object lessons. Both the story of David and Solomon have great value as well. All of these will tie in to what will be taught later about female nature.

Before going any further, I would tell these young Christian men that male sexuality is not inherently evil or twisted or anything of that sort. God created us as sexual creatures (save perhaps those with St. Paul's gift), and that is a good thing. Teach them that sex is both proper and good inside of marriage- for it unites man and woman together as one flesh and is the avenue by which offspring come about- which is what God desires.

With that taken care of, I would explain to those teenage men what women find attractive in men. Help them understand the differences between Attraction traits and Desirability

traits. Then I would explain to them why women find those traits attractive. Make it clear to them that most people out there, Christian or non-Christian, don't understand this. Consequently, they will need to be suspicious of anything else they've been taught before which clashes with this. Inform them that there is a lot of bad teaching out there, and they need to be able to distinguish the truth from lies.

Then I would move on to explain other aspects of female nature. Some important examples include:

- Hypergamy
- The Good Genes/Good Provider dichotomy and how that plays out
- Fitness Tests
- The impact of a woman's sexual history on marital stability
- The inability to negotiate desire
- The differences in how women communicate as compared to men

The Feminine Imperative (an ephemeral concept if there ever was one) would also be something that would need to be explained to them. While difficult to describe, it has a huge impact on nearly all aspects of our culture, and learning it is critical for men to understand why the present culture (within and without the Church) is what it is.

By the end of all these lessons, these young men should be able to see women for what they are: fallen, sinful creatures… just like men. This brings us to the second question- "Would you encourage the young men to marry young?"

The short answer to this is yes, I would. I've explained before why young marriage is a good thing. Young marriage would (or to be more accurate, *could*) help these young men avoid sexual immorality. However, that would be an incomplete answer. Because at the same time I would also encourage the young men to prepare for marrying young. That means getting serious about their life right away. If they pursue an education, don't waste time on needless classes. Take what they need, and only what they need. Finish as swiftly as possible, so as to minimize debt and get into the workforce as soon as possible. Consider trade school if not looking at college or university. Also consider community college combined with a full or part-time job.

At the same time, it would also be necessary to encourage the parents of the young men to support their sons marrying young. Most Christians these days, parents especially are opposed to young marriage, on a variety of grounds- none of them really good. Expect a lot of resistance here. And that leads into the real problem with all of this. You see, encouraging young men to marry young is rather pointless unless you can encourage young women to marry young. Right now that isn't happening, in fact it is the exact opposite. This provides the perfect lead-up to part two-

II.

Commenter Stringtheory left the following comments:

> On a recent camping trip, one of the guys was telling us about how his 28 year old son had started taking antidepressants. His son has never suffered from depression but told his dad he was able to say the right things and get a prescription. He's taking them to try and kill his sex drive because he's simply tired of pursing women with no success. The dad is upset and angry. His son is reasonably attractive, a working professional with a decent income, but all the girls he asks out turn him down, or if he does go out they want to have sex right away and his son wants to wait until marriage. So instead of being tempted with porn or fornication he's cutting out the source of his temptation. We were all talking about the morality of this. Is it wrong to kill one's sex drive to avoid marriage or immorality?

(Link here)

> I should correct my above statement. The question wasn't "Is it wrong to kill one's sex drive to avoid marriage or immorality?" but rather to avoid immorality. I want to make clear that my friend's son wants to get married, but he simply can't find any non-virgins and doesn't think his prospects are going to get better any time soon. About six months ago he did strike up a friendship with an 19 year old who was (presumably) a virgin and things seemed to be moving along but it got quashed by the girl's parents and church elders who thought that his interest was inappropriate given the age difference. After that he had had enough and started down the chemically eunuch route.

(Link here)

Most of my regular readers will likely understand why I sympathize with that young man. He sounds like a slightly younger version of myself, trying to clear much the same hurdles. Before answering stringtheory's question, I want to continue where I left off- how young women are not encouraged to marry young.

I don't recall if it was Novaseeker or Cail Corishev who once said something along the lines that there are few things that Christians fear these days so much as a young women with potential marrying young. Whether or not that accusation is true (I think it is for many), stringtheory's account, and that of other Christians in this part of the web, does demonstrate that many if not most Christians do not want young, attractive virgin women to marry good, virtuous men. They just don't. If there was no age gap, as there was here, then another reason would have been given for why the relationship should not have been. As for why so many Christians act in this manner, there are two different forces working together here- one relating to women and one relating to men.

When it comes to women, most Christians oppose on principle the idea of a young, (attractive) virgin marrying. Of course, if one or more of those traits is not present, then the opposition tends to melt away. She's no longer young? Why then, of course she should marry. She's not attractive? Well, it won't be such a loss if that man, older or not, marries her (although this is still not favored- its just tolerated more). She's no longer a

virgin? Well, it would be good for that men to marry her and “save her” from her past mistakes. So for those young men that Bee was asking about… well, it really doesn’t matter if you encourage them to marry young or not. Because everyone else in church is encouraging the women the men want to marry (and should marry) to *not* marry. At least, not right away. Not until they get more “life experience” and other such nonsense. This really is one of the great tragedies of our age- the Christian women who should marry, and would make (all other things being equal) the best wives- those who are young and virgins, are for the large part essentially commanded that they shouldn’t marry until they are no longer young.

This brings us to the men. Based on what I have seen, and what others have relayed to me, it appears as though many Christians don’t want good, virtuous Christian men to marry well. Oh, they would never admit to it and would instead deny the accusation vociferously. They would protest and say that *of course* they want those nice men to marry well. But the women they want to marry, those young (hopefully attractive) virgins from the paragraph before, are basically off-limits to them. As for what women they are “allowed” to marry, that is, to court without scandal or reprisal? Yeah…. Honestly, sometimes I get the impression that a lot of Christians see good, virtuous men as janitors or sanitation workers who are expected to pick up the “trash” in church. If you continue to follow stringtheory’s comments in that thread he basically describes that exact phenomenon in action. Undoubtedly it is one of the major reasons why so many men are leaving the church right now. These men are essentially being punished for their virtue, which sure doesn’t help encourage it any, as incentives matter.

Before I close I also want to address the question of “Is it wrong to kill one’s sex drive to avoid [sexual] immorality?” I know that I have read some of the works of the early Church Fathers who discussed physical castration, and they made it clear that it was a sin. One’s body is holy, a gift from God, and is not to be disfigured. I think that the same reasoning would apply to chemical castration as well. Your brain is part of your body, and using chemicals to alter your brain chemistry to suppress, hinder or eliminate certain brain functions is harmful. Yes, the intent might be good, but the action itself is not just or ordered. Jesus was not being literal when he said we should cut off our hand if it caused us to be sin- he was applying a metaphor, as per his usual style. However, reasonable minds might differ and I am curious what my readers think about the subject. Is is acceptable to use chemicals to suppress one’s sex drive so as to avoid sexual immorality? Let me know in the comments.

Saturday Saints- #25

July 19, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's saint we reach farther to the East, towards Russia. Our saint for today is from the Eastern Church, and is Xenia of Saint Petersburg:

> **Saint Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg** (Russian: Святая блаженная Ксения Петербургская [**Xenia Grigoryevna Petrova** – Ксения Григорьевна Петрова]; c. 1719–1730 – c. 1803, Saint Petersburg) is a patron saint of St. Petersburg, who according to tradition, gave all her possessions to the poor after her husband died.
>
> Her husband had been Colonel Andrey Fyodorovich Petrov, a chanter at the Saint Andrew Cathedral. After his death, Xenia became a "fool-for-Christ" and for 45 years wandered around the streets of St. Petersburg, usually wearing her late husband's military uniform.
>
> St. Xenia's grave is in the Smolensky Cemetery of St. Petersburg. It has been marked by an ornate chapel since 1902. She was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church on February 6, 1988. Her feast day in the O.S. is January 24, which is February 6 in the New Calendar.
>
> St. Blessed Mother Xenia is noted for her intercessions in helping those with employment, marriage, the homeless, for fires, for missing children, and for a spouse. She is venerated in several countries. There are about 40 churches and chapels built in her name.

I hadn't heard of her until I started searching for a saint whose name began with X. Upon finding her story, I was fascinated, in large part because of her acting as a "fool for Christ." While I had heard of the term before, I had never known much about it, or how it was more prevalent in the Eastern church as compared to the Western church. Reading up on it was certainly a learning experience. Those who are interested in learning more about her can read the wiki on her, or this article on the Life of St. Blessed Xenia of Petersburg.



St. Xenia

A Feature, Not A Bug

July 20, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Over at the Femininity building blog Girls Being Girls, Jenny laments how There's No Character In The Dating Scene Anymore:

> Character isn't very important in our dating scene anymore. It used to be you would know the girls a guy dated before he approached you. You would hear the stories of how he treated them. You would know if he's worked since he was ten or if he plays basketball for hours every day after school. Our dating market has somehow managed to isolate dating from character.

Jenny may not have realized it, but she has hit on something of considerable significance. To use software engineer's parlance, what she has discovered is a feature, not a bug. Only instead of being an excuse, this really *is* a feature. The "dating market" replaced the "marriage market" in large part so this very phenomenon could take place.

You see, under a courtship system or market there was a certain amount of knowledge that was known and expected about everyone involved. A man wouldn't have found it easy to court a woman as an unknown factor- her family wouldn't have tolerated it. Instead, he had to introduce himself, to build history and rapport with her family or be backed up by trusted individuals who vouched for him. Or even better, he was a known factor because he grew up in the same community and his history was known to all involved. On the flip side, a man who courted a woman would also have access to a lot of information about her. Perhaps he grew up with her in the same community. If not, he could observe her family and talk with them. In addition, he could talk with members of the community who knew her well.

The point being that under a courtship model no one could really be an unknown. Everyone had history. Which leads to this statement by Jenny:

> **The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior**

She is absolutely correct in this. Past behavior does give us a strong idea on what someone will do in the future. And that was a problem for a lot of people. For some their past behavior haunted them and acted as a huge handicap in the courtship/marriage market. For others it served as an obstacle, limiting what they could get away with. Yet others disliked marriage in general. All of them worked together to undermine the courtship model and to bring about something altogether new: The "dating scene", which is in reality a sexual marketplace ("SMP"), because sex, not marriage, is the main goal now of most of its members. This new SMP has as its cornerstones mobility (provided through changes to the economy as well as new technology) and a lack of connectivity and history, which might perhaps be labeled "system memory."

The first cornerstone, mobility, is all about the ability to move about to new locations, to new "markets." If one particular area dries up, or you build a bad reputation there, you

can always move to a new, fresh location. In other words, you can escape your past behavior.

The second cornerstone, a lack of history and connectivity, means that most people in the dating scene don't really know each other. Perhaps they have some similar friends or connections (otherwise how would they meet?), but those connections are far more tenuous than they would have been in the past. Outside of these potential sparse connections, those in the dating scene have little in the way of methods to learn about someone, apart from what that person reveals themselves.

Taken together, these two core components of the "dating scene" mean that you can always "start over." This is especially easy if you are wise enough to avoid social media, and not let yourself build up an online presence (ironically the internet and social media in particular undermine this new system, hence the push to allow people to erase their internet history). Just move to a new location and you can begin anew. It is the perfect system for cads and harlots to ply their trade and largely escape the consequences of it.

This didn't all happen overnight though. It took time for the SMP to replace the Marriage Marketplace. But as Jenny has realized, that transformation is now complete. What little bit was left of the old courtship or marriage market is now gone. All that remains is "dating", with all of its ugliness still intact. Again, this was not accident. It didn't "just happen." Isolating "dating from character" *is the whole point of dating in the first place*. If character still really mattered we wouldn't even be talking about dating, we would be talking about courting. Boyfriend and Girlfriend wouldn't exist as words, instead we would still use suitor. If you are lamenting how the "dating scene" looks now, understand this: what you are seeing now is not failure. It is *success.*

[Cross-posted at The Courtship Pledge]

Recommended Reading:

The Boyfriend Invention

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #33

July 21, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was in a conversation recently with a friend and the subject of women serving others came up. When I started to consider what I would write about for today's post, that conversation resurfaced and I decided to search for some passages that concerned women serving. Here are a few, starting with the Gospel of Mark:

> [29] And immediately he left the synagogue, and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [30] Now Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever, and immediately they told him of her. [31] And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her; and she served them.

(Mark 1:29-31)

Then we move to the Gospel of Luke:

> Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, [2] and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Mag′dalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, [3] and Jo-an′na, the wife of Chu′za, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

(Luke 8:1-3)

This brings us to St. Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians:

> Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? [2] If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.
>
> [3] This is my defense to those who would examine me. [4] Do we not have the right to our food and drink? [5] Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife,[a] as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

(1 Cor 9:1-5)

I left the footnote in place for the passage from 1st Corinthians because some translations render it as "believing wife", while others render it as "believing woman" or "believing sister." Either way, it was clear that the Apostles were accompanied by women who served, who might have been their wives or sisters in the faith.

I mention all of these because women have a divine calling to serve others, especially men of the faith. It is also a noble calling- that is, one which doesn't demean or degrade women. Unfortunately, it appears as though the long tradition of valuing and encouraging this divine service has been abandoned. Most faith traditions seems to have replaced it

instead with the overall secular paradigm of “women can do anything and everything that men can do (and often better!).” What this means is that women, Christian women, are often encouraged to act just like Christian men. I consider this a tragic loss to the faith, as a huge gap has been left which cannot be readily replaced.

This gap is what drove the conversation that started this line of thought. We were discussing how many women these days don’t like the idea of serving others. Or at least, serving their family or loved ones. Serving someone random guy or gal who happens to be your boss (aka a career)? That’s just great! And empowering! And you Go Grrllll! But serve the man to whom you are bound for life, and your children by that man? Why that’s awful! And degrading! And You Deserve More!

As for those who do serve others through mission trips and the like, even that is corrupted. Because it seems to me, and to those I’ve talked with, that those mission trips are really all about *her.* About how great and wonderful she is. Which means that she isn’t serving others, but herself.

Sadly, even when you point this out to most Christian women they just don’t get it. Or maybe they do, but they don’t want to accept it. Either way, the church is the worse off for it.

Clarifying The Lesson

July 24, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a follow-up to my earlier post A Warning And A Lesson. There was some confusion about that post, which I'm hoping to clear up.

I am going to begin by addressing this comment from The Unreal Woman:

> So a young woman's family actually bothering to provide vetting in her process of finding a husband is now horribly wrong? Either you want courtship and the interference from the adults who know the young woman well that it will entail or you want to just do what you want without other people interfering.

To make it clear, I do not have a problem with someone's family vetting a potential spouse. In fact, I am a major supporter of it. The lack of familial involvement in the marriage process in the last few generations has, in my opinion, been one of the major reasons why the marriage market is so messed up right now. I would be a hypocrite to support the Courtship Pledge if I opposed family involvement and interference in the courtship process.

At the same time I've received some e-mails from people who suggest that while *I* may not have a problem with parental input, there is a general consensus among men towards the opposite belief. I think that this view has merit, based on what I've seen and heard, especially talking to men around these parts. A lot of men are highly suspicious of parental involvement in the present marriage market, and frankly I have trouble blaming them. Most parents these days act only as a negative force when it comes to courtship. By that I mean that the only thing most of them ever do is exercise a form of veto power. Few if any will actually go to the trouble of helping their children (principally daughters) to find good, marriageable spouses. So its understandable if men are leery at this prospective system- the sum total of their experience with it has likely only been negative. When all you've ever heard is *No* its easy to suspect that you won't ever hear a *Yes.*

[As a side note, a much better method exists that what these veto-parents utilize. Right now the general strategy is to wait for a daughter to bring a man to their attention, and then determine if he is suitable or not. Oftentimes this will be met with a rejection, which can be problematic if the woman has already got some feelings for him and/or thinks he would be a good husband. A superior method would be for parents to go out, screen men and then introduce the ones who are suitable to their daughter. That way, his approval is already "baked in." I think daughters would also approve, as they would be the ones having the "final say" under this system.]

Another thing I want to clear up is the role of the example I provided. I included that story from stringtheory mostly to buttress my argument that encouraging men to marry young is of limited utility in the present age. I don't know any of the players in that story. In legal terms it must be something like triple hearsay or something. That is to say I don't

know any of the background details. I don't know if there were some perfectly valid reasons for the parents to reject that young man as a suitor. It might not have been his age at all, but something else, and they only used his age as an excuse. Or perhaps the parents didn't think their daughter was ready for marriage, or that she would be suitable for him. The point is, I don't know the full details. None of us do.

I will note that TSK was right in pointing out that the young man did respect the parent's wishes. He didn't try and elope with their daughter. Heck, he even respected the wishes of the elders of his church, despite their patently unbiblical perspective (which was apparent in later comments by stringtheory).

Something that surprised me about that post is that no one asked me what the warning was, and what the lesson was. I hope that means it was obvious, but in case it wasn't: The lesson was about what I think young Christian men should be taught about women, and the warning was that encouraging and preparing men for young marriage wasn't wise without also preparing them for the high probability that they won't be able to marry (or at least, marry well).

Another thing I want to discuss is the intersection of maturity, delaying young marriage, and age gaps. I agree in principle that for some young women it would be best for them to wait a few years to marry. They might not have the maturity at, say 18 or 19, to marry, but would in a few years of continued development. But I think that such cases are not common, and instead quite rare. From my own experience and observations, women (*very*) rarely become more suited for marriage as they age. Either they were raised properly, or they weren't. Adding more time to the clock won't change that. Rather, women who are older tend to become less suitable for marriage- they pick up more bad habits, they are more cynical and jaded, they are more used to independent living, they are more influenced by the general culture, and so on. So parents need to be careful about advocating it.

Also, there seems to be a general consensus in traditionalist circles that marriage is good for maturing men and/or encouraging them to settle down- the old "a weighted truck drives more surely" line. Yet the counterpart- that marriage and family life is good for maturing young women and so on and so forth, doesn't seem to get the same play. To be honest, this makes me suspicious. While I acknowledge that what works for men might not work for women, and vice-versa, I'm not sure this is the case here. Either one view or the other is likely equally applicable.

Lastly, I've had some people mention maturity and age gaps together. Frankly, this baffles me. Either someone is ready for marriage, or someone isn't. I have yet to be convinced that an age-gap really changes the metrics or dynamics (or whatever you want to call it) of marriage by itself. Or at least, so far as personality or maturity issues are concerned. This is purely anecdotal of course, but speaking from personal experience one of the women with whom I have "clicked" best was significantly younger than me. Big age gap, yet we both got along much better than with those our own age (and we both acknowledged as much).

There’s more that can be said, but I think I’ll leave it for another post in the future if I believe it needs to be addressed.

[Update: Allamagoosa has written a post in response to this one, you can find it here.**]**

Saturday Saints- #26

July 26, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We have come to the letter “Y” in our list of saints, and so today’s saint is Saint Yrieix:

> **Saint Aredius** (c. 510–591), also known as **Yrieix**, was Abbot of Limoges and chancellor to Theudebert II, King of Austrasia in the 6th century. He founded the monastery of Attanum, and the various French communes called St. Yrieix are named after him.

Here are some of the legends surrounding him:

> He was the son of Jocundus, a wealthy Roman. As a young boy he was sent to monastery at Vigeois to study. At the age of 14, he was sent to Metz, under Theudebert. He became the chancellor. Aredius left the court, where life was dissolute, to join Nicetius, bishop of Trier. He converted to Christianity; when he was singing psalms, a dove came down from the sky and flew around him, Aredius tried to shoo it away, but this one was placed above his head. The dove remained with Aredius during thirty days. When his father died, he joined his mother Pelagia in a villa in Attanum (Attane).

(All drawn from the wiki article on him)

[Side note: Some letters in the Alphabet are sadly lacking in saints whose names begin with them. Might I suggest to any of the faithful among my readers that if you should have any children, or more children, that those poor, forgotten letters receive some love too? We need more saints whose names begin with Q, and X and Y in particular.]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #34

July 27, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post starts with a verse from the Book of Deuteronomy:

> [5] "When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.

(Deuteronomy 24:5)

I found this verse fascinating because it is one which would, I think, baffle most modern Christians. We are a people who moves about a lot, and to whom marriage is often an afterthought. So the idea of spending a whole year tied to home and one's spouse no doubt would be foreign to many. Yet there is a great deal of logic and sense behind this. A whole year provides a good amount of time for the married couple to work towards having a child and an heir (something which would have been very valuable to the ancient Israelites). It also would work to help cement the bond between the married couple, especially through the conjugal act which would bring about that heir. Most of all, though, I think this law would keep worldly distractions at bay and make their marriage the priority of their life for that time.

A short passage from the First Letter from St. Peter:

> [14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

(1 Peter 1:14-16)

This passage, and those like it, are always a good reminder that God wants us to be holy, not happy. Happiness is a transitory, illusive thing. At least, so far as this world is concerned. It comes and it goes. But holiness is something that can and should always be with and about us. And ultimately, it leads to the only happiness that last- being united forever with our God who loves us.

Finally, a dark passage from Micah:

> [2] The godly man has perished from the earth,
> and there is none upright among men;
> they all lie in wait for blood,
> and each hunts his brother with a net.
> [3] Their hands are upon what is evil, to do it diligently;
> the prince and the judge ask for a bribe,
> and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul;
> thus they weave it together.
> [4] The best of them is like a brier,

> the most upright of them a thorn hedge.
> The day of their watchmen, of their punishment, has come;
> now their confusion is at hand.
> [5] Put no trust in a neighbor,
> have no confidence in a friend;
> guard the doors of your mouth
> from her who lies in your bosom;
> [6] for the son treats the father with contempt,
> the daughter rises up against her mother,
> the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
> a man’s enemies are the men of his own house.
> [7] But as for me, I will look to the Lord,
> I will wait for the God of my salvation;
> my God will hear me.

(Micah 7:2-7)

It seems to me that these are the kinds of days that the prophet Micah warned us about. We are beset at all sides, and even those close to us cannot be trusted. All mean to lead us astray or bring us to harm. in times like this it is easy to give in to despair. But we must now do as the prophet did then- look to God and trust in Him to lead us to salvation.

Nice For Me But Not For Thee

July 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few weeks back, on my Questions or Suggestions page, commenter Nathan asked these questions:

> "Is Girl-Game just the female equivalent of being the "Nice Guy?" If so, then why do we praise Girl-Game as a positive virtue while chastising being a "Nice Guy" as a negative vice?"

He then added this:

> I'm not suggesting being a "Nice Guy" is a good thing, but then why do we praise women for doing basically the same thing.

Sorry for taking so long to get back to you Nathan, hopefully this post will make up for that somewhat. I will begin by repeating (in a cleaned up format) what I said in reply to your original comment:

Men and women are very different, so what works for one may not work for the other, and vice versa.

As for a longer answer, Vox at AlphaGame has a post up linking to this study. Some snippets:

> Scientifically, nice (heterosexual) guys might actually finish last. A study published in Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin recently found that while men were attracted to nice-seeming women upon meeting them, women did not feel the same way about men. Researchers from the University of Rochester, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya in Israel investigated a possible mechanism explaining why women and men differ in their sexual reactions with receptive opposite-sex strangers.
>
> …
>
> In the first of three studies, researchers explored whether women or men perceived a receptive opposite-sex stranger as sexually desirable and, if so, whether that "responsive" quality registered as overtly feminine or masculine. The researchers found that men who perceived possible female partners as responsive found them to be "more feminine and more attractive." Past research suggests that physical cues of femininity stimulate sexual attraction because they suggest higher estrogen levels, better overall mate quality and solid reproductive health.
>
> On the other hand, women didn't necessarily perceive a responsive man as less masculine, but they also did not find a responsive man more attractive. What's more, when women perceived their male partner to be responsive, they were less attracted to the man.

> In other words, it appeared that in an initial encounter men liked nice ladies; women thought nice guys were kind of lame.

There is plenty more, I suggest everyone read the whole thing. Here is what Vox had to say on the matter:

> Men find nice women to be attractive. Women don't find nice men to be attractive. The Masters of Game have been observing this for years; science is finally beginning to test some of the Game hypotheses, and unsurprisingly, are confirming them. It's very simple. Being nice to an attractive woman is a display of low value. Being a jerk to an attractive woman is a display of high value. Women are drawn to DHV and repulsed by DLV. Because hypergamy.

Nice does not work for men. It just doesn't. At the very best it does nothing positive, and at the worst will torpedo a man's chances with a woman. Being perceived as "nice" lowers a man's perceived Masculine Power in the eyes of women, rendering him less attractive.

But the opposite is not the case- nice can and does work for women. I wouldn't exactly say that a nice woman is more attractive, but I would say that she is more desirable. So it won't be a huge help (although it cannot hurt) to a woman who has otherwise lost the genetic lottery, but for even an average woman it can make a significant difference. This is because men tend to classify women above their attraction floor into two categories: women who are to be used and then discarded, and women who are to be possessed and kept. Begin nice as a woman, in fact "Girl Game" in particular, is all about being perceived in that latter category.

So, in summary, being nice is a bad move for men and a good move for women. It makes a man less attractive and makes a woman more desirable. Women are "praised" for pursuing "Girl Game" because it works for them- we praise success, not failure, which is all that "Nice Guy Game" ever entails.

An R-Rated Subject

July 30, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's relatively short and hastily written post is going to address a subject that may not be for everyone. I'm sure that more than a few of my readers will not care for it at all. It is bound to generate some heated debate and disagreement.

The subject, of course, is romance.

Recently I was engaged in a conversation with a young woman who reads my blog on occasion and she indicated that she didn't believe that men cared about romance at all. I disagreed, and asked why she thought that. She pointed towards the manosphere/androsphere and the fact that most of the men in that community deride romance. Apparently for her discovering the 'sphere had been something of an epiphany, as it had informed her that men weren't interested in romance. While cautioning that the 'sphere isn't necessarily an accurate cross-section of men, I disagreed with her conclusion that the 'sphere demonstrates that most men aren't romantic or otherwise have no sense of romance.

If anything, I explained, the rise and "success" of the 'sphere owes to the fact that men *are* the more romantic of the sexes [an area where Rollo and I are in agreement]. The reason why so many men find their way here, in fact the reason the 'sphere exists, is in large part because many men were romantic for a large part of their lives. And that it didn't work very well for them.

Men might not be very romantic, but if so then women are even less romantic. For all their talk of romance and its associated trappings- flowers, poetry, letters and the like, women these days sure don't hesitate to associate themselves with men who display zero interest in romance. And by associate I mean sleep with, if not pursue (and sometimes get) relationships with, such men. As for those men who are interested in romance… well, the word Incel doesn't exist because some guy got bored and decided to make something up.

If the men in these parts don't seem very romantically inclined, I would argue it is because their romantic nature was burned out of them. By women. And by extension poor advice from other men. Men can only sustain so many rejections…. they can only watch for so long as women abandon the romantics for the players and cads whose idea of a gift is skittles… and men can only tolerate so much betrayal before their sense of romance collapses in on itself and dies like a red giant turning into a white dwarf.

She disagreed. Instead of believing that most men start as romantics, she argued that most men took to romance only because they thought it would work. That it would get them the female attention they so greatly (and desperately) desired. I started to compose an argument to rebut hers, but then realized that I was basing most of what I would say on just myself. As someone who was (from an early age) and still is, a romantic at heart, I would naturally disagree that most men are just mercenary about romance. The thing is, I

don’t actually *know* that most men are really like that. I’m not exactly an average male in a number of ways, and I know I’m not a representative sample.

So while I understand the sample size is small, I’m hoping my male readers here can chime in. Do you consider yourself a romantic? If you aren’t now, where you a romantic at some point in the past, before the world turned you away from romance? What caused you to lose your sense of romance?

Anomalous Behavior

July 31, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

There is something I wanted to quickly point out today. An important bit of knowledge that it is always good to keep in mind. We sometimes forget it here, partially due to the echo chamber effect, and partially because of the natural human tendency to impute our experiences onto others.

The “manosphere/androsphere” is not an accurate cross-section of society, whether American or “Western” in general. It is a biased sample, not a fair one, that skews heavily in certain areas. Most people (men in this instance) out there are “Blue Pill”, not “Red Pill.” They will not think or act the same as those who reside in this part of the internet. So patterns of behavior which might apply to men who have taken the “Red Pill” will not necessarily apply to those who are still “Blue Pill.” In fact I would go so far as to say that we should expect them to be quite different in a lot of ways.

Honesty is important, and an honest assessment will show that men in this neck of the woods are an anomaly. I certainly am. Now, that might change over time, and might even be changing now, but for the moment the majority of men are very different from those in the ‘sphere. These differences are even greater when we are talking about the Christian part of the ‘sphere.

One huge aspect of this difference lies in what a man might look for in a woman. A “Blue Pill” man will value and seek out traits and characteristics than a “Red Pill” man wouldn’t, and vice versa. For some “Blue Pill” men an education is a must for a woman, while for some “Red Pill” men it might not matter, or might even be a negative. Some “Blue Pill” men might expect and want their wife to work out of the home, whereas a “Red Pill” man might expect and want his wife to stay at home and home-school the children. Things like age, work status, dress habits, sexual history and more will all be different to some degree. They are even different between “Blue Pill” men. In addition, both will have different ideas about red flags or things to avoid in a woman. All of which is to say that a lot of what is said here only really applies to the men in these parts, not necessarily the men outside of the ‘sphere.

This has a lot of ramifications. One of them is advice to women. I and others around these parts have offered various bits of advice to women who frequent or come across our sites. However, a frank acknowledgement must be made: not all of it will work that well on outsiders, i.e., “Blue Pill” men. Sure, things like dressing in a feminine fashion and having long hair are universal (or near to it). But pieces of advice won’t always work, or will have a low chance of success. Or will carry with it hardships or consequences when applied to the general population. Chastity is a significant one, and one I’ve highlighted before. [Given the overall environment, only the most attractive women can easily marry while refusing to sleep with a guy beforehand.] Some of my advice on being more forthright and forward as a woman might also carry problems with it when interacting with “Blue Pill” men. Added together, I should probably include “caveat emptor” to all my

posts, or maybe “your mileage may vary.”

In summary, the manosphere is not an accurate representation of what average men are like in the world around us. For a variety of reasons we have found this place and call it home, and as a result think, act, behave and believe differently from everyone else. This isn’t the “real world.” So take everything I say with a grain of salt, and approach everything with an open mind.

Missing A Certain Little Something

August 2, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Over at Morning Sprinkles and Evening Gunfire, Allamagoosa has crafted a Response to "Teen Girls Define a Real Man." Her post addresses one of those dreaded "lists" that show up not infrequently in ~~Christian~~ Churchian circles. Alla does a superb job taking down this list, exposing its myriad of flaws. Here is how the list begins:

> *"Lori Hainline & Rebecca Chandler co-authored this list at the respective ages of 19 and 17. Their closing comment: This list is not exhaustive and men like this do exist!"*

And here is Alla's response to that intro:

> Well, that's a great start. Having (presumably) unmarried teen girls describe what a real man is. As opposed to married women or actual men. That said, I do agree with them that men like this do exist. I've gone to church and school with men like this, problem is the girls aren't dating them!

Now, some lists are better than others, and despite problems with subjectivity and doctrinal weakness, this one is better than most. But all of these lists share a common problem, which ties in directly to Alla's point that girls don't date "men like this." [Set aside the fact that Christians shouldn't be dating in the first place.] That common problem is not found in what they say, it is found in what they *don't* say. You see, something is always missing from these lists. A critical- no, essential trait which a man must have to qualify himself with regards to everything that actually makes it on that list. What is that trait, that quality?

That he be attractive, of course.

Nothing else matters if the man isn't [sexually] attractive. He can be absolutely devout. He can pray up a storm. He can be unafraid to profess his faith in public. He can do all of that and more besides, and yet it will avail him of nothing if he is not also attractive.

Women don't consciously understand this, as has been documented here and elsewhere many times before. Most will never realize what is going on if someone doesn't point it out to them. But what seems to be the case is that unattractive men are mostly invisible to women. While women may acknowledge they exist, they don't exist as *men*. Instead, they are classified as something else entirely, and are quickly forgotten about unless otherwise required. I believe it was Sunshine Mary who explained that unattractive men are "grey", while attractive men are "in color." They show up on women's radar and are the objects of attention, whereas the "grey men" merge with the scenery and are forgotten.

However it is explained, a list like this that doesn't include the caveat that a man also be attractive can never work. At best this list will be of some use when dealing with what one commenter referred to as "Righteous Alphas"- those Christian men who are both

devout and at the same time attractive to women. But they are few and far between these days. So they might as well not exist for the purposes of lists like these. On the other hand, there are far more Christian men out there who meet the criteria set forth in lists like this but aren't attractive to most women. At least, not attractive given the current state of female hypergamy (among other things). So ultimately these lists do nothing to screen for those men, and achieve no positive effect.

Once again, an example of something that seems good in theory but utterly fails in practice. I'm highly tempted to "flip the script" again and create my own counter-part to this list of desirable qualities in Christian women. We'll see if time permits next week for an attempt at satire.

As a side note, I think that Alla was on to something when she stated a belief that many of these lists exist to make Christian women feel better about themselves, and to make them look better (classier in her words) than they really are. I wouldn't be surprised if some of this was driven by a desire of women to elevate themselves among the herd.

Saturday Saints- #27

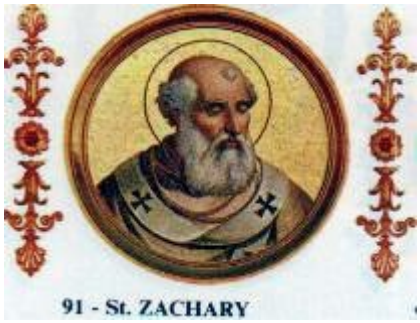
August 3, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We come at long last to the letter “Z”, which brings us to today’s saint, Saint Zachary:

> **Pope Zachary** (Latin: *Zacharias*; 679 – 22 March 752) was Pope from 10 December 741 to his death in 752. A Greek from Santa Severina, Calabria, he was the last pope of the Byzantine Papacy. Most probably he was a deacon of the Roman Church and as such signed the decrees of the Roman council of 732 and was on intimate terms with Gregory III, whom he succeeded on 5 December 741.

A few quick facts from the wiki on him:

- He was heavily involved in diplomatic efforts in Italy that preserved both the Church and the Byzantine Empire.
- He played a significant role in the end of the Merovingian regime in France.
- He forbade the trafficking of slaves in Rome and purchased the freedom of slaves who were going to be sold to the Moors.



St. Zachary

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #35

August 4, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is going to be a lengthy post, even though it will feature just one passage from the Bible. This is because the passage is Psalm 119, covering the Glories of God's Law. I am going to include the whole Psalm, although I will interrupt it at points to add commentary on noteworthy parts. Anything which I would like to emphasis will be in bold.

> Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
> who walk in the law of the Lord!
> 2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,
> who seek him with their whole heart,
> 3 **who also do no wrong,**
> **but walk in his ways!**
> 4 Thou hast commanded thy precepts
> to be kept diligently.
> 5 O that my ways may be steadfast
> in keeping thy statutes!
> 6 Then I shall not be put to shame,
> having my eyes fixed on all thy commandments.
> 7 I will praise thee with an upright heart,
> when I learn thy righteous ordinances.
> 8 I will observe thy statutes;
> O forsake me not utterly!

While I have been fairly good in my life when it comes to doing no wrong, I can't say that I've always been so good about doing right. They are not the same thing, as this Psalm makes clear. Walking in the Way of the Lord requires more than avoiding evil, it requires us to actively do good, to act righteously. Both are essential to following God properly.

> 9 **How can a young man keep his way pure?**
> **By guarding it according to thy word.**
> 10 With my whole heart I seek thee;
> let me not wander from thy commandments!
> 11 I have laid up thy word in my heart,
> that I might not sin against thee.
> 12 Blessed be thou, O Lord;
> teach me thy statutes!
> 13 With my lips I declare
> all the ordinances of thy mouth.
> 14 In the way of thy testimonies I delight
> as much as in all riches.
> 15 I will meditate on thy precepts,

and fix my eyes on thy ways.
[16] I will delight in thy statutes;
I will not forget thy word.

We live in a sinful world where temptation runs rampant. It isn't easy avoiding sin. The key is to guard your way, the path of your life, according to the word. And what does the word of the Lord say? Avoid temptation, flee immorality, and forsake that which leads you to sin. Better to cut off your hand than burn in fire eternal.

[17] Deal bountifully with thy servant,
that I may live and observe thy word.
[18] Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.
[19] I am a sojourner on earth;
hide not thy commandments from me!
[20] My soul is consumed with longing
for thy ordinances at all times.
[21] Thou dost rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,
who wander from thy commandments;
[22] take away from me their scorn and contempt,
for I have kept thy testimonies.
[23] **Even though princes sit plotting against me,**
thy servant will meditate on thy statutes.
[24] Thy testimonies are my delight,
they are my counselors.

It isn't easy to focus on God and spiritual matters when the world is out to get you. And the world *is* out to get every devout worshiper of the Lord. But it is essential all the same. Despite the hardships, the trials and the persecutions we face, we cannot cease meditating on God's commands.

[25] My soul cleaves to the dust;
revive me according to thy word!
[26] When I told of my ways, thou didst answer me;
teach me thy statutes!
[27] Make me understand the way of thy precepts,
and I will meditate on thy wondrous works.
[28] My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to thy word!
[29] Put false ways far from me;
and graciously teach me thy law!
[30] I have chosen the way of faithfulness,
I set thy ordinances before me.
[31] I cleave to thy testimonies, O Lord;

let me not be put to shame!
[32] I will run in the way of thy commandments
when thou enlargest my understanding!
[33] Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.
[34] Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law
and observe it with my whole heart.
[35] Lead me in the path of thy commandments,
for I delight in it.
[36] **Incline my heart to thy testimonies,**
and not to gain!
[37] **Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;**
and give me life in thy ways.
[38] Confirm to thy servant thy promise,
which is for those who fear thee.
[39] Turn away the reproach which I dread;
for thy ordinances are good.
[40] Behold, I long for thy precepts;
in thy righteousness give me life!

We must seek out the Lord, and follow his ways, for the right reasons. Worldly gain shouldn't be one of them. Rather, we must have our eyes on the prize: eternal life. Furthermore, we can often get caught up in the vain things of life, and lose sight of the goal. This can lead us to deadly peril, so we must strive earnestly to avoid this and to pray to God for the strength to overcome our lesser nature.

[41] Let thy steadfast love come to me, O Lord,
thy salvation according to thy promise;
[42] then shall I have an answer for those who taunt me,
for I trust in thy word.
[43] And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
for my hope is in thy ordinances.
[44] I will keep thy law continually,
for ever and ever;
[45] and I shall walk at liberty,
for I have sought thy precepts.
[46] **I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings,**
and shall not be put to shame;
[47] for I find my delight in thy commandments,
which I love.
[48] I revere thy commandments, which I love,
and I will meditate on thy statutes.

Speaking “truth to power” is a core part of being a Christian. Christ was the exemplar of his, but many of the prophets did the exact same thing. And so did the apostles and disciples as well. No matter where we find ourselves, we must speak truth to those we stand before, and rely upon God to protect us from what may come.

> [49] Remember thy word to thy servant,
> in which thou hast made me hope.
> [50] This is my comfort in my affliction
> that thy promise gives me life.
> [51] Godless men utterly deride me,
> but I do not turn away from thy law.
> [52] When I think of thy ordinances from of old,
> I take comfort, O Lord.
> [53] **Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked,**
> **who forsake thy law.**
> [54] Thy statutes have been my songs
> in the house of my pilgrimage.
> [55] I remember thy name in the night, O Lord,
> and keep thy law.
> [56] This blessing has fallen to me,
> that I have kept thy precepts.

Sin *should* make us angry. But we shouldn’t lose sight of what we are seeking to accomplish.

> [57] The Lord is my portion;
> I promise to keep thy words.
> [58] I entreat thy favor with all my heart;
> be gracious to me according to thy promise.
> [59] When I think of thy ways,
> I turn my feet to thy testimonies;
> [60] I hasten and do not delay
> to keep thy commandments.
> [61] Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me,
> I do not forget thy law.
> [62] **At midnight I rise to praise thee,**
> **because of thy righteous ordinances.**
> [63] I am a companion of all who fear thee,
> of those who keep thy precepts.
> [64] The earth, O Lord, is full of thy steadfast love;
> teach me thy statutes!

Praise to God should be given at all times, even if, perhaps especially if, it isn’t comfortable to us. I am especially weak at this.

[65] Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,
O Lord, according to thy word.
[66] Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
for I believe in thy commandments.
[67] Before I was afflicted I went astray;
but now I keep thy word.
[68] Thou art good and doest good;
teach me thy statutes.
[69] The godless besmear me with lies,
but with my whole heart I keep thy precepts;
[70] their heart is gross like fat,
but I delight in thy law.
[71] **It is good for me that I was afflicted,**
that I might learn thy statutes.
[72] **The law of thy mouth is better to me**
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

As difficult it might be for us to accept, suffering is often necessary to growth. Perhaps no better example of this exists than child-birth- a painful experience that brings new life into the world. Also, worldly treasure means nothing. No matter how much we accumulate in this life, we bring none of it with us into the next. Instead we should focus on spiritual treasure.

[73] Thy hands have made and fashioned me;
give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.
[74] **Those who fear thee shall see me and rejoice,**
because I have hoped in thy word.
[75] I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right,
and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.
[76] Let thy steadfast love be ready to comfort me
according to thy promise to thy servant.
[77] Let thy mercy come to me, that I may live;
for thy law is my delight.
[78] Let the godless be put to shame,
because they have subverted me with guile;
as for me, I will meditate on thy precepts.
[79] Let those who fear thee turn to me,
that they may know thy testimonies.
[80] May my heart be blameless in thy statutes,
that I may not be put to shame!

We should be a shining example to others of the faith. We all should strive to inspire, comfort and encourage everyone who follows the Way of the Lord.

[81] My soul languishes for thy salvation;
I hope in thy word.
[82] My eyes fail with watching for thy promise;
I ask, “When wilt thou comfort me?”
[83] For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,
yet I have not forgotten thy statutes.
[84] How long must thy servant endure?
When wilt thou judge those who persecute me?
[85] Godless men have dug pitfalls for me,
men who do not conform to thy law.
[86] All thy commandments are sure;
they persecute me with falsehood; help me!
[87] They have almost made an end of me on earth;
but I have not forsaken thy precepts.
[88] In thy steadfast love spare my life,
that I may keep the testimonies of thy mouth.
[89] For ever, O Lord, thy word
is firmly fixed in the heavens.
[90] Thy faithfulness endures to all generations;
thou hast established the earth, and it stands fast.
[91] By thy appointment they stand this day;
for all things are thy servants.
[92] **If thy law had not been my delight,**
I should have perished in my affliction.
[93] I will never forget thy precepts;
for by them thou hast given me life.
[94] I am thine, save me;
for I have sought thy precepts.
[95] The wicked lie in wait to destroy me;
but I consider thy testimonies.
[96] I have seen a limit to all perfection,
but thy commandment is exceedingly broad.

We need to love God’s laws for what they are, and because they come from God, not because of anything that they might do for us. Otherwise we will forget them and perish when we encounter true hardship and affliction.

[97] Oh, how I love thy law!
It is my meditation all the day.
[98] Thy commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,
for it is ever with me.
[99] I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for thy testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the aged,
for I keep thy precepts.
101 **I hold back my feet from every evil way,**
in order to keep thy word.
102 I do not turn aside from thy ordinances,
for thou hast taught me.
103 How sweet are thy words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 Through thy precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.

The best way to avoid falling into the snare of the Evil One is to avoid temptation in the first place. Avoid as much as possible all evil things and places.

105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to observe thy righteous ordinances.
107 I am sorely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to thy word!
108 Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me thy ordinances.
109 I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget thy law.
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from thy precepts.
111 Thy testimonies are my heritage for ever;
yea, they are the joy of my heart.
112 I incline my heart to perform thy statutes
for ever, to the end.
113 I hate double-minded men,
but I love thy law.
114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in thy word.
115 Depart from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commandments of my God.
116 Uphold me according to thy promise, that I may live,
and let me not be put to shame in my hope!
117 Hold me up, that I may be safe
and have regard for thy statutes continually!
118 **Thou dost spurn all who go astray from thy statutes;**
yea, their cunning is in vain.
119 All the wicked of the earth thou dost count as dross;

therefore I love thy testimonies.
120 My flesh trembles for fear of thee,
and I am afraid of thy judgments.

While it may seem like the wicked get away with whatever they like, they are merely assuring their inevitable doom. Their sins will catch up with them on the End of Days, and they will find all their works to be vain and worthless.

121 I have done what is just and right;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Be surety for thy servant for good;
let not the godless oppress me.
123 **My eyes fail with watching for thy salvation,**
and for the fulfilment of thy righteous promise.
124 Deal with thy servant according to thy steadfast love,
and teach me thy statutes.
125 I am thy servant; give me understanding,
that I may know thy testimonies!
126 It is time for the Lord to act,
for thy law has been broken.
127 Therefore I love thy commandments
above gold, above fine gold.
128 Therefore I direct my steps by all thy precepts;
I hate every false way.

It can be difficult to endure, to wait for the Lord to act. We might never see His judgements come about in our lifetimes. And this tries the soul. So it is important to encourage and comfort one another while we await that final Day of Judgment.

129 Thy testimonies are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.
130 The unfolding of thy words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.
131 With open mouth I pant,
because I long for thy commandments.
132 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is thy wont toward those who love thy name.
133 Keep steady my steps according to thy promise,
and let no iniquity get dominion over me.
134 Redeem me from man’s oppression,
that I may keep thy precepts.
135 Make thy face shine upon thy servant,
and teach me thy statutes.
136 **My eyes shed streams of tears,**

> **because men do not keep thy law.**

Sin should also cause us to feel sorrow and pity. We know the price for our redemption has already been paid, which makes it all the worse to see our brothers and sisters fall into inequity and dissolution. So much has been given to us, and yet we squander it. It is enough to weary the soul of anyone.

> [137] Righteous art thou, O Lord,
> and right are thy judgments.
> [138] Thou hast appointed thy testimonies in righteousness
> and in all faithfulness.
> [139] **My zeal consumes me,**
> **because my foes forget thy words.**
> [140] Thy promise is well tried,
> and thy servant loves it.
> [141] I am small and despised,
> yet I do not forget thy precepts.
> [142] Thy righteousness is righteous for ever,
> and thy law is true.
> [143] Trouble and anguish have come upon me,
> but thy commandments are my delight.
> [144] Thy testimonies are righteous for ever;
> give me understanding that I may live.

Jesus was unafraid to confront those who desecrated the Temple of the Lord. Are we also unafraid to confront those who pervert the faith? This is a question I think all of us need to ask nowadays.

> [145] With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O Lord!
> I will keep thy statutes.
> [146] I cry to thee; save me,
> that I may observe thy testimonies.
> [147] I rise before dawn and cry for help;
> I hope in thy words.
> [148] My eyes are awake before the watches of the night,
> that I may meditate upon thy promise.
> [149] Hear my voice in thy steadfast love;
> O Lord, in thy justice preserve my life.
> [150] They draw near who persecute me with evil purpose;
> they are far from thy law.
> [151] But thou art near, O Lord,
> and all thy commandments are true.
> [152] Long have I known from thy testimonies
> that thou hast founded them for ever.

153 Look on my affliction and deliver me,
for I do not forget thy law.
154 **Plead my cause and redeem me;**
give me life according to thy promise!
155 Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek thy statutes.
156 Great is thy mercy, O Lord;
give me life according to thy justice.
157 Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,
but I do not swerve from thy testimonies.
158 I look at the faithless with disgust,
because they do not keep thy commands.
159 Consider how I love thy precepts!
Preserve my life according to thy steadfast love.
160 The sum of thy word is truth;
and every one of thy righteous ordinances endures for ever.

All of this has been accomplished. Our Lord and Savior died that we might be redeemed from death. And an Advocate has been sent to aid us, to defend us against The Adversary. Likewise, all of us have been given a new life in Him, through a New Covenant sealed by blood.

161 Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of thy words.
162 I rejoice at thy word
like one who finds great spoil.
163 I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love thy law.
164 **Seven times a day I praise thee**
for thy righteous ordinances.
165 Great peace have those who love thy law;
nothing can make them stumble.
166 I hope for thy salvation, O Lord,
and I do thy commandments.
167 My soul keeps thy testimonies;
I love them exceedingly.
168 I keep thy precepts and testimonies,
for all my ways are before thee.

This I fail at completely. Most of the time I only praise God as I should once a day. We should never fail to thank Him and glorify Him throughout our lives. He has given us so much, it is the least we can do to thank Him for all He has done for us.

169 Let my cry come before thee, O Lord;

> give me understanding according to thy word!
> [170] Let my supplication come before thee;
> deliver me according to thy word.
> [171] My lips will pour forth praise
> that thou dost teach me thy statutes.
> [172] My tongue will sing of thy word,
> for all thy commandments are right.
> [173] Let thy hand be ready to help me,
> for I have chosen thy precepts.
> [174] I long for thy salvation, O Lord,
> and thy law is my delight.
> [175] Let me live, that I may praise thee,
> and let thy ordinances help me.
> [176] **I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant,**
> **for I do not forget thy commandments.**

Whether we realize it or not, or acknowledge it or not, all of us at times are the single sheep that has gone astray. And He never fails to seek us out to bring us back to the flock. The question is, are we looking for Him that we might find our way back?

Adult Man Defines “A Real Woman”

August 6, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Donal Graeme authored this list at the age of [redacted]. His closing comment: This list is not exhaustive and women like this do exist!

A real woman . . .

… doesn’t strive to be an equal to men. She understands that she was created to be a helpmeet, a suitable helper, to man and lives accordingly. *(Genesis 2:18, 1 Corinthians 11:9)*

…is quiet in church and asks men for spiritual guidance. *(1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11)*

…is chaste and ignorant of the sinful ways of the world. *(Titus 2:4, Sirach 26:15)*

…will embrace her femininity and not dress or present herself as a man. She will keep her hair long. *(Deuteronomy 22:5, 1 Corinthians 11:6)*

A real woman . . .

…isn’t embarrassed to cover her head when praying or spreading the Word of God. *(1 Corinthians 11:2-16)*

…knows that being wise and sensible is essential to being a Godly woman. *(Proverbs 2:1-10, 1 Samuel 25:3, Tobit 6:12)*

…won’t spend her prime years chasing a career and instead seeks to get married while she is still young, pretty, and fertile. *(Proverbs 5:18, Sirach 15:2, Sirach 26:20)*

A real woman . . .

…won’t try and usurp leadership when it isn’t her place. She doesn’t try to take over the role of men in church in order to prove something. *(Titus 2:4, Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:1, 5-6, 1 Timothy 2:12)*

…is kind so that “the word of God may not be discredited.” *(Titus 2:4, Proverbs 31:26)*

…knows better than to believe everyone, especially when they tell her things she wants to hear. *(2 Timothy 3:6-7)*

…would never think to gossip or spread lies. *(Proverbs 16:28, 1 Timothy 5:13, 2 Timothy 3:2-3)*

A real woman . . .

…will never date or become romantically entangled with a non-believer. *(2 Corinthians 6:14-15)*

…values her purity for the valuable thing that it is. She is not ashamed to live and act differently from the world in order to guard herself. *(Sirach 26:15, 1 Corinthians 6:13-20)*

… won’t be controlled or swayed by her base impulses. *(2 Timothy 3:6)*

… would never desecrate her body with a tattoo. *(Leviticus 19:28)*

A real woman . . .

… will never dress like a slut. She isn't ashamed to dress differently from non-believing women. *(1 Peter 3:3-4)*

…doesn't act like a bitch. She is polite and gracious to everyone she meets. *(Proverbs 11:16, 1 Peter 3:4, Sirach 26:25)*

…will keep her body fit and healthy. She doesn't eat too much and won't let herself become fat. *(Proverbs 23:21, 31:17, Philippians 3:19)*

…never gets drunk. *(Titus 2:3, Sirach 26:8)*

A real woman . . .

…loves her children and family. She won't sacrifice them or eat them because it is convenient. *(Titus 2:4, 2 Kings 6:26-30, Lamentations 4:10)*

…is pleasant and expresses joy all the time. She never sulks about and laughs when things don't go her way. *(Proverbs 31:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:16)*

…doesn't blame others for her own problems, especially men, and instead embraces responsibility. *(Proverbs 12:27)*

…listens to the wisdom and teaching of her elders. *(Titus 2:4)*

A real woman . . .

…controls her temper and her emotions. She refuses to let anger control her and bother those around her. She can deal with mood swings and rejects her innate emotional nature. Instead she approaches life from a clear-headed and logical perspective. *(Proverbs 14:29, Proverbs 17:27, Proverbs 25:24, Sirach 25:20)*

…works hard, is capable of providing for a family and is financially responsible. *(Proverbs 31:13-22)*

…will not speak unless it is absolutely necessary. She refuses to chatter or nag. *(Sirach 26:14, 27, 1 Peter 3:4, James 1:26)*

… is a wonderful cook, and cooks every meal from scratch using fresh ingredients, unless her husband dictates otherwise. *(Proverbs 31:14-15, Sirach 26:13)*

[This post was inspired by this post by Allamagoosa.]

[Update: Added some suggestions from folks and tweaked the wording of the post somewhat.]

Victory or Defeat

August 8, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A number of bloggers have been covering the relatively recent phenomenon of "Women Against Feminism", or "I Don't Need Feminism Because…." Free Northerner has a post up today, Motte & Bailey Example, where he offers some thoughts on the subject. A snippet:

> The WAF are rejecting modern feminism while fully accepting the equality nonsense of first-wave feminism and the women-in-the-workforce concepts as givens, then thinking these are not a part of feminism. Sadly (and to their own detriment), the women are only rejecting contemporary feminism while accepting all of feminism's original values and goals. If modern feminists weren't so utterly stupid and evil they'd rejoice and call it a day, they won so very hard that even anti-feminists uphold feminist goals and values.

I recommend reading the whole thing.

Vox at Alpha Game has a short post up as well, Nothing Angers A Slave-Owner More. Some brief thoughts by him:

> Aging feminists are angry that women are wisely beginning to turn away from an insane and incoherent ideology that is societal and civilizational suicide. And that anger is a positive sign that the equalitarian wave is finally beginning to recede.

He is responding to a feminist attack against WAF, so it is worth reading the entirety of his post as well.

I'm still compiling my own thoughts on the subject, and a full post will have to wait until later. I might even do two, as I've been meaning to write a post on the different "strains" of Feminism for a while now. But I do have a few I can share right now. Here they are:

- The "Women Against Feminism" are, despite thinking otherwise, still actually feminists. They just don't realize it. They are rebelling against the more visible and extreme "strains" of feminism right now, but fail to realize that they are still believers in the older, less virulent strains.
- The WAF are not taking their stand, for the most part, for altruistic reasons. One way or another they see this as beneficial to them, or to those close to them. Perhaps they have seen a father, brother, boyfriend/husband who has suffered because of the more virulent strains of feminism, and it has turned them against that strain.
- The emergence of WAF represents an overreach by radical feminists. As I mentioned above, women are doing this because it is advantageous. This signifies that radical feminism is causing some kind of problem for these women. What is it? Something to be addressed in another post.
- There are reasons to see what is going on as both a victory, and a defeat, for civilization. FN points out, correctly, that feminism is in the air we breath, and thus

in some respects civilization has lost. On the other hand Vox points out the emergence of this movement is a defeat for the enemies of civilization, as it challenges some of their beliefs and actions.

- WAF is probably a sign that the non-egalitarian elements of feminism (the outright hatred of men) are on the wane, but the egalitarian aspects are still going strong. That isn't as much improvement as some might think.
- I see what is happening as an opportunity. It might be possible to reach out to some of these young women and convince them that they need to go further in their rejection of feminism. Not all, of course, as they are benefiting (often greatly) from the fruits of earlier waves/strains of feminism. But if we don't try we won't win any of them over.

That is all for now. If anyone else has some thoughts on the subject, feel free to mention them in the comments.

Saturday Saints- #28

August 9, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Having completed the alphabet with the letter Z in the previous post in this series, we now return to the letter A. Today's saint is Saint Alypius:

> **Saint Alypius the Stylite** (Greek: Ἀλύπιος ὁ Στυλίτης) was a seventh-century ascetic saint. He is revered as a monastic founder, an intercessor for the infertile, and a protector of children. During his lifetime he was a much sought-after starets (guide in the Christian spiritual life).

I find St. Alypius interesting because he was apparently quite influential (two monasteries were founded near to him), and also because at the same time he lived much of his life on top of a pillar. In my studies of the early saints I've discovered that it was a popular practice for ascetics in the first millennium of Christianity to live like that. Apparently it found favor with the Lord, as St. Alypius lived to be over a 100 (118 reportedly). You can find out more about him at his wiki, located here.



St. Alypius

Unbalanced Equation

August 10, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

When I wrote my post Victory or Defeat I was expecting that there would be some strong disagreement with a few of the arguments that I made. In particular I was expecting opposition to this statement of mine:

> The "Women Against Feminism" are, despite thinking otherwise, still actually feminists. They just don't realize it. They are rebelling against the more visible and extreme "strains" of feminism right now, but fail to realize that they are still believers in the older, less virulent strains.

However, there was far less disagreement than I expected. Commenter Denise went the furthest with this comment, but even that was more of a round about attack on some assumptions I was (apparently) making. I suspect the lack of disagreement is because my blog is a low-traffic one that collects relatively few trolls or individuals opposed to my views.

But enough of that. I wanted to expect on a relatively short but important comment left by Lovelyleblanc7, who is clearly wiser than her years would suggest. Here is what she said in response to a comment of mine:

> **WAF, MRAs, and feminists are all the same.** They shoot themselves in the foot. These days, MRAs are starting to become worse than feminists, which is saying a lot.

The part in bold is what it important to understand. More than important, vital, to understand what is going on and why our culture is in its present condition. LLB7 has correctly diagnosed that (radical) feminists, WAF and MRAs are all essentially the same, although they may not realize it. They are just different flavors of the same thing. You see, they are all proponents of the same societal outcome, despite being, on paper, vehemently opposed to one other.

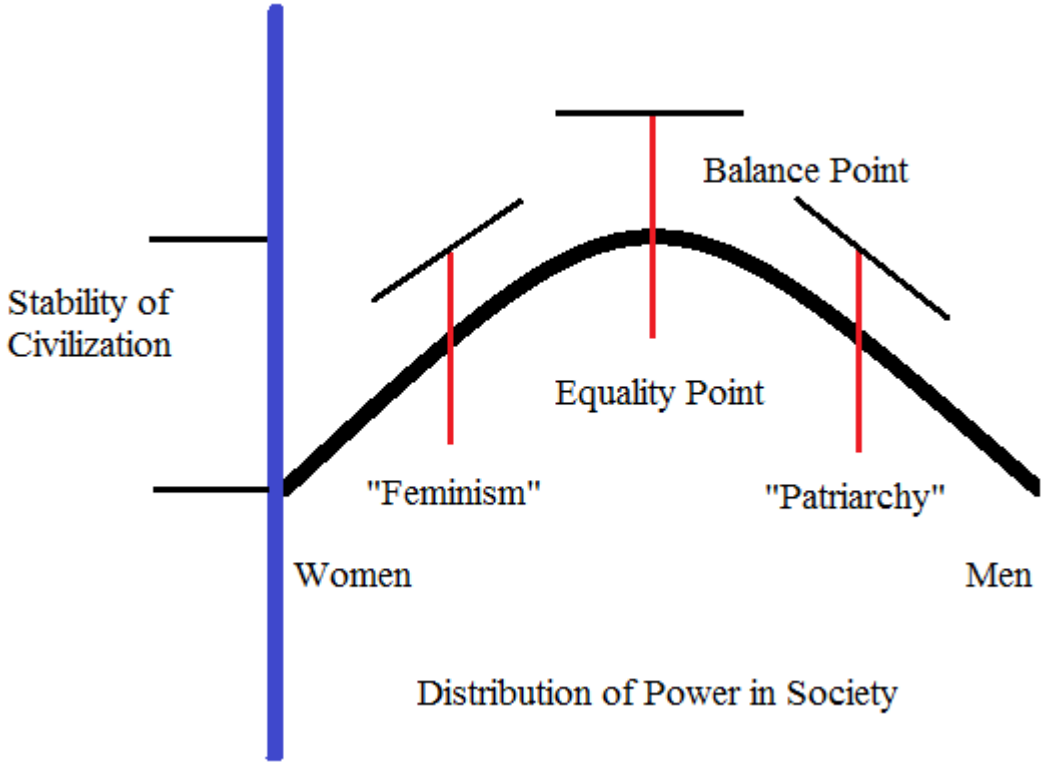
MRAs and WAFs are Egalitarians- they argue for equal treatment of men and women by society.

Radical feminists (as opposed to the more mundane types) are Female Supremacists- they argue for superior treatment of women by society (although they sometimes try and disguise that fact).

Totally different, right? Wrong. Here is the catch: *Egalitarianism inevitably leads towards the outcome of Female Supremacy.* Egalitarian philosophy, when applied to society and culture, creates conditions that will naturally push society towards the outcomes and views espoused by radical feminists.

Egalitarians argue for a society where everything is balanced. Where men and women have equal power and rights. In their minds a society organized this way is the fairest, most stable and the most likely to succeed. WAFs and MRAs oppose radical feminism

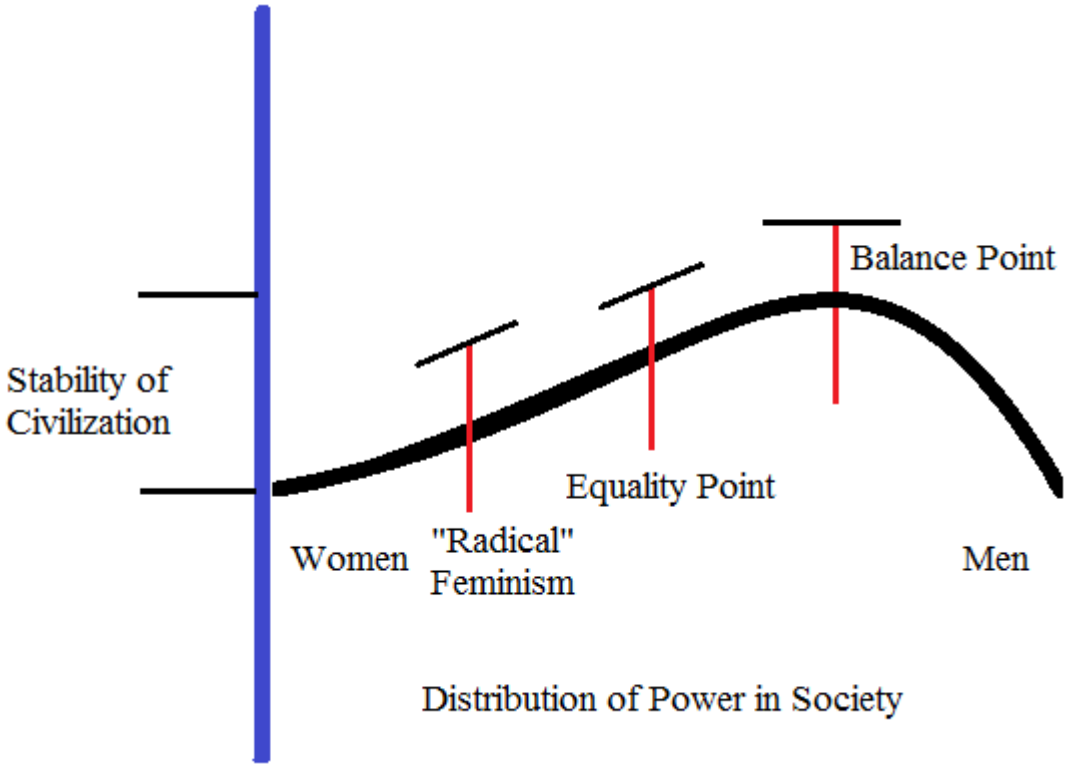
because they see it as unbalanced, and unfair to men. They oppose patriarchy because they see it as unbalanced, and unfair to women. It is their earnest belief that an Egalitarian society is one that is best for everyone. Here is what a graphical representation of it might look like:



The equality point is balanced, and hence, optimal. Power is distributed in society equally between men and women. Society is stable and everyone benefits. Feminism and Patriarchy, on the other hand, are unbalanced. When a society reaches those states it quickly slides into oppression of one sex or the other. Hence the need for the balance point of Egalitarianism- it keeps that oppression from happening.

This is a nice, neat picture. Everything has a place, and it shows that Egalitarians are smart, reasonable people with the best interests of everyone in mind. Too bad this picture is misleading. And not just misleading, but flat out wrong.

It is wrong because the balance point, the optimal distribution of power between men and women is not at the center point, the point of equality. Rather, the balance point is off to the right, towards the male side of power distribution. Here is a graphical representation of how civilizational stability really works:



This graphic demonstrates why Egalitarianism will ultimately, and always, lead towards the radical feminist position. You see, at the point of equality society the slope of social progression is already turned downwards. A society that reaches this point is already on the slide towards the oppression of men and social instability. Egalitarianism is just a stop on the path towards radical feminism and the oppression of men.

Why is the balance point towards the right side of the equation? The Feminine Imperative, of course. For those not quite sure what that is, here is my attempt to define it:

A biological impulse within all human beings which causes us to favor female interests over male interests within the overall social group.

The FI is not all powerful. Social condition, aka Culture, can override it to some degree. Individual men can be especially selfish and oppose efforts to divert resources towards women. But even when there are forces acting to suppress it, the FI yet remains, always pushing, always asserting itself. Unless active efforts are put in place to restrain it, it will insert itself into all aspects of human endeavors.

Now, the Feminine Imperative is not an evil thing. It has served a valuable biological purpose in the early stages of human history, by ensuring that resources and protection were afforded to women to the degree necessary to ensure the survival of the species. But outside that context of day-to-day survival, the Feminine Imperative is dangerous, as it unbalances the overall equation. Favoring female interests over male interests on a massive, organized scale, which is what civilization is all about, means that you will get a system where men are marginalized and ultimately oppressed. Kind of like the present system.

Only by having the overall distribution of power favor men can you ensure that the Feminine Imperative be sufficiently restrained that it won't lead civilization into oblivion.

A number of bloggers have addressed this before. Here is one piece by Free Northerner. What he, and many others, refer to as patriarchy is merely a balanced equation- a system where the distribution of power favors men so that the FI is restrained, yet women are protected from abuse and oppression at the hands of men.

The WAF don't realize this. They think that they are being fair, reasonable and just women. Sadly, they don't realize that their push for "equality" is a well-intentioned but misguided effort to keep in place a system which will, if not checked, bring about the very things they claim to be against. Those who oppose "setting back the clock" because they don't want to give up what they've gained from feminism and Egalitarianism don't appreciate that they cannot keep those powers and yet have a harmonious society. Culture and societies are dynamic, not static. They are ever moving. Either they give up those rights, privileges and powers and restore balance, or they accept that our culture and society will continue to slide towards a despotism of the petticoat.

For those of my readers who are Christians, you should be able to make the connection between this graphic and [accurate, proper] Christian teaching and doctrine. Various powers granted to men but not to women aim to stifle the worst of the Feminine Imperative, as well as other negative aspects of female behavior. Various protections and guarantees granted to women mean to protect them from the worst aspects of male behavior.

Oh, and for those women (or even men) who don't care if men suffer as a result of women's new-found power… understand that the new gravy train is of a limited duration. Once a civilization veers too far from the balance point and ends up in oppressive territory, it starts to collapse. The Balance point is also the point of the greatest stability for a civilization. The further away you get from it, the less stable a civilization becomes. Where does it all lead? Just ask Thomas Hobbes:

> In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."

[*I lost some of what I wrote on this post. I've recovered what I can for now, but I know I'm still missing a few things. I'm uploading this post as is, but expect it to be altered and updated when/if I remember what was lost.*]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #36

August 11, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage in today's post comes from the Second Letter to the Corinthians:

> [6] The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. [7] Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. [9] As it is written,
>
> "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
> his righteousness endures for ever."
>
> [10] He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources[c] and increase the harvest of your righteousness. [11] You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; [12] for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God.

(2 Cor 9:6-12)

As I've mentioned before, I much better at not doing wrong than I am at doing good. Passages like this remind me that if I want there to be good in my life, I need to do good as well. Otherwise, I am expecting to reap bountifully while having sowed sparingly, and that is foolish indeed. I need to sow righteous seeds into all areas of my life if I wish my future to be one I would want to harvest.

The second passage is from the Letter to the Philippians:

> [4] Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. [5] Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. [6] Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
>
> [8] Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. [9] What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

(Phil 4:4-9)

I am not a joyful person. Never have been. Just not part of my overall personality. Not that I cannot be happy from time to time, but I have never really been joyful as it is properly understood. I've long recognized my trouble finding joy is a real weakness of

mine, but its been one that I've not been able to quash. I have tried for a long time, and will continue yet to embrace a spirit of joy. God willing I will find it eventually.

However, I have made progress in what I spend my time thinking about. I've tried to adopt a much more positive attitude in recent years, and to not focus on what is wrong in life. And to a large extent I've succeeded. I am much less likely to wallow in negative thoughts these days, and I can see that it has benefit my life. While there is plenty out there which is worthy of trepidation and despair, giving into to those feelings never makes things better. Quite the opposite. Whether or not my life takes a turn for the better, my change in attitude has certainly led me to feel better about life. And that shows the true wisdom found in the Apostle's words.

Random Musings And Links- #3

August 12, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is a bit of a catch-all. No specific theme, just a few updates, some links I found interested and random thoughts.

Forgotten, Not Ignored

While I've tried my best to respond to folks that have e-mailed me since I started this blog, I know that I haven't responded to everyone. Some folks have slipped through the cracks and I have/had forgotten to respond to them. In the last few days I've tried to respond to as many folks as possible, so if you've sent me something in the past but didn't get a response check your e-mail. And if you haven't gotten a response back from me, its not because I'm ignoring you but because your e-mail got lost in the avalanche of e-mail I've received over time. You can always re-send it and I will try and get back to you as soon as possible.

New Additions

I've added a few new links to my side-bar in the last few weeks.

To begin with, frequent commenter Feminine But Not Feminist has finally started her own blog. You can find it, Be Feminine Not Feminist, here. Her first post is a take-down on the subject of the notion of a "strong, independent woman." At the moment I have her included in my Feminine blogs section.

The second new addition is the blog Finer Femininity. It is a blog run by a Traditional Catholic woman with a lovely and large family (11 children, plus grandchildren) who aims to help women become the best possible mothers and wives. I think that many of my female readers would find it a valuable blog to read. I'm torn where to place it, but for the moment have it included in my Parenting/Families section of my blogroll.

Lovelyleblanc has started a new blog, A New Shade of Feminine, aimed at helping black women fully embrace their femininity. I imagine it will have helpful tips for other women as well. I've included it in my Femininity section.

Interesting Links

Here are a few of the more interesting or edifying posts that I've read in the last few weeks. As always inclusion doesn't necessarily mean endorsement.

Novaseeker over at Veritas Lounge asks the question: Was Marriage 1.0 A Dysgenic Mating Subsidy?

A few weeks back Cail Corishev wrote a post on PTSD Flashback Sex that is rather dark but a valuable read all the same.

Cane Caldo offered some advice to men facing rebellious wives in You Can Win Both.

Lady Sigyn discussed Judging A Book By The Content Of Its Characters.

Empath has a dark post asking women if it is Worth It. Should be sobering to some.

CaseyAnn warns us that Carpets are piled high with toxic pollutants. (I always like the look of tile and stone floors before, but now I view them on a whole different level)

Ballista asks: Does Fornication Matter When It Comes To Marriage?

On a related note, Wintery Knights asks: Should women who get pregnant after premarital sex expect the men to marry them?

Deep Strength responds to a commenter at WK's site with a post of his own- Individual and societal responses in civilization.

Allamagoosa wrote a post on Age Gaps which some might find interesting.

Martel is back with a post on Being a Baby.

Free Northener talks about Cyclical History. There is nothing new under the sun.

Seriouslypleasedropit gets both philosophical and religious with The Miracle. Not an easy read, but some might find it interesting, especially those interesting in more philosophical matters.

Maeve tells us Some Fun Things to Celebrate in August.

Vox Day argues why Saving civilization is not "manning up."

Rollo wrote a post examining the phenomenon of "spreadsheet guy." I've been meaning to respond in depth to his post, but haven't been able to focus my thoughts enough to get anything worthwhile written down.

NSR has a short but good post on respect in Get Yourself High.

This post by ZippyCatholic is a quick read, but the comment section is long and worth reading in full. Lots of debate concerning freedom, subsidiarity, liberalism and authority.

The Different Strains Of Feminism

August 13, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my last couple of posts on Women Against Feminism (see here and here) I made the claim that feminism is everywhere- or as Free Northerner (and others) have said: in the air we breath. All of this centered around the argument that the WAF are feminists, whether they realize it or not. Central to this is the fact that feminism has been with us so long, and has been so successful, that our understanding of what constitutes feminism has shifted without our realizing it.

This post is going to cover what I think are the major "strains" of feminism. I use strains because a strong argument can be made that feminism is a disease of sorts, one that has been with us for a long time. Now, as far as I can tell there are three 'major' strains. While it is possible to break them up further, I think that all of them fall under one of these three main categories. They are "Traditional Feminism", "Egalitarian Feminism" and "Supremacist Feminism." Here are some brief explanations of them. If anyone can think of any other major categories, do argue for them in the comments. I hope to use this post as an opportunity to really delve into this particular subject.

–**Traditional Feminism**

- This strain of feminism existed before the term "feminism" was invented or used in the manner we understand it now. ~~It has existed for centuries in the West, and can be traced back to the hijacking of chivalry by aristocratic women in feudal Europe. Consequently another name for this might be Pseudo-Chivalric or just Chivalric Feminism. Here is an example of it in action.~~
- Unlike the latter strains, Traditional Feminism is not about women gaining "structural power" for themselves, but instead limiting, circumventing or suborning male structural power. Its goal was to turn female protections into female privileges. One example of this is excluding men from certain activities, on the grounds that it is a woman's role or activity *only,* as compared to something women should do because they are better at it.
- Pedestalization is very big part of this form of feminism, which was the dominant strain until the last century or so. Until recently, it was found most often among "conservative" women. Nowadays it is fairly rare, largely due to the success of Egalitarian Feminism. [To understand strike-throughs see bottom update.]

-Egalitarian Feminism

- This strain of feminism is more recent, [probably] originating in the last few centuries. ~~It was a product of the liberalism or modernism, whichever term you prefer. One of the original proponents of Egalitarian Feminism was Abigail Adams. Most of "First-Wave" Feminism falls under the Egalitarian Feminism category. So does the Suffragette movement, assuming you separate it from first-wave feminism.~~

- The main goal of this strain is to equalize the structural power of men and women. Equality is the name of the game here, although primarily equality of opportunity. This strain pushed the 19th Amendment, pushed to have female jurors, and otherwise open to women anything that was closed (or perceived to be closed) to them. It is less about female privilege than it is about ending perceived male privilege.
- Most “conservative” women today (and men for that matter) are infected by this particular strain. The WAF are also infected by it. What makes it so dangerous in a way is that it is difficult to detect. Because of the earlier success of Egalitarian Feminism (back when it was recognized as feminism), it has become the default mode of thought in Western society. So in a way “Egalitarian Feminism” won, and is no longer recognized as feminism. It just is- it is the proper state of affairs.

-Supremacist Feminism

- This is the strain that is sometimes referred to as “Radical Feminism.” ~~It is a recent phenomenon, dating back less than a century or thereabouts. “Second-Wave” and “Third-Wave” feminism belong to this category. Most modern self-identifying feminists fall under this category.~~
- The principal goal of this strain is to elevate female interests and/or to denigrate male interests. Whether it is “woman good” or “man bad”, those who are infected with this strain are not concerned with equality (or at least equality of opportunity). Instead “Social Justice” or Equality of Outcome are their goals. Ending “male privilege” is important, but to them leveling the playing field requires that women be elevated to compensate for millennia of abuse and oppression at the hands of men. Here structural power is shifted away from men and towards women- an example is the way that colleges and universities address reported rapes on campus.
- When feminism is referred to by most these days, it is Supremacist Feminism that they mean. Given how much success feminism has had thus far, most everyone sees only this as feminism. They have no idea it is only the latest in a long progression of feminist efforts. When “conservatives” and the WAF speak out against feminism, this strain is what they are attacking- at least in theory.

I’m curious if folks agree with my categorization effort. I know these categories aren’t perfect, as there is some overlap between them. But overall I think they accurately portray feminism has it exits and has existed.

[**Update**: I struck out most of the historical claims in this post, as others challenged their accuracy and they were probably right. I never studied the history of feminism, and haven’t devoted time to doing so since university, so I should have known better than to make any claims on this account.]

Saturday Saints- #29

August 16, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We move to the letter B, and today's saint- the Venerable Bede:

> **Bede** (/ˈbiːd/ ***BEED***; Old English: *Bǣda* or *Bēda*; 672/673 – 26 May 735), also referred to as **Saint Bede** or the **Venerable Bede** (Latin: *Bēda Venerābilis*), was an English monk at the monastery of Saint Peter at Monkwearmouth and its companion monastery, Saint Paul's, in modern Jarrow (see Monkwearmouth-Jarrow), Northeast England, both of which were located in the Kingdom of Northumbria. He is well known as an author and scholar, and his most famous work, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) gained him the title "The Father of English History".
>
> In 1899, Bede was made a Doctor of the Church by Leo XIII, a position of theological significance; he is the only native of Great Britain to achieve this designation (Anselm of Canterbury, also a Doctor of the Church, was originally from Italy). Bede was moreover a skilled linguist and translator, and his work made the Latin and Greek writings of the early Church Fathers much more accessible to his fellow Anglo-Saxons, contributing significantly to English Christianity. Bede's monastery had access to a superb library which included works by Eusebius and Orosius, among many others.

There is a very, *very* long wiki article on Saint Bede, which I won't try and summarize even further. Instead, I will leave the link to the wiki here. Those who are interested in the history of England, and especially the history of Christianity in England, will likely enjoy reading it.



The Venerable Bede

Update: Since I am on the subject of Saints, I found this article fascinating. It covers Pope Francis' recent beatification of South Korean martyrs who refused to give up their faith. I

had never realized that the Church in South Korea was founded by members of the nobility who learned of by reading books about it.

Whither Thy Sons?

August 17, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Quick post tonight, likely not another major post until next Wednesday.

In my post The Different Strains of Feminism, hoellenhund2 posted the following comment:

> I'm sure you know that one recurring them on tradcon blogs is that young, chaste tradcon women find it difficult to find potential husbands willing to court them, especially if these women are plain-looking. Common sense tells us that these women should be looking for potential husbands among the sons of tradcons, that such families are as likely to have sons as daughters. In other words, the sex ratio isn't lopsided, and young tradcons should be able to pair off.
>
> So…what gives? What about the tradcon married couples who have sons? We don't see them around the internet that much, do we? Are they raising their sons right? Why aren't such men courting these supposedly desperate women?

Before I could respond mdavid offered his thoughts on the matter. Without accepting or rejecting his ideas, here are a few of my own (some of which are quite similar to mdavid's):

1) Localized Sex Ratio Disparities-

While it is true that in a large enough sample size there should be a relatively similar number of men and women, this might not be the case for individual churches and communities. The smaller a group of families, the more statistically likely it will be for there to be an abundance of men or women at a certain age bracket. This would explain how you can have some commenters show up at my blog or others and talk about all the single women they know at church who can't find a man, and then the other commenters who talk about all the single men they know at church who can't find a woman. Both sets might be speaking the truth about their particular church/community. For myself, I know that the parishes (churches) I've attended over the years have all had gender disparities where there are more single men than women (and not by a small number either).

2) Sons Expected to Fend for Themselves-

One reason why we may not hear from more parents or family/friends of tradcon men having trouble finding potential wives is that many tradcons expect that young men will do the heavy lifting of finding a wife themselves. Since men are supposed to be active and looking for a wife, then if they haven't found one yet it is their own fault. Whereas if a woman hasn't "found" a potential husband yet, it is because the men aren't looking or there aren't any out there.

3) Women Make it Hard on Suitors

Another potential problem is that young women are making it difficult for young men to court them. Perhaps they aren't putting themselves in a position where young men can

meet them and get to know them. If I only ever see you at Church, it makes it awfully hard for me to contact you and establish some sort of relationship. (speaking from experience here). Not lingering at Church makes this even harder.

Maybe they present an attitude that chases away men or convinces them, for one reason or another, not to pursue. It is one thing to be modest, but another entirely to be an Ice Queen or a Princess.

4) Male Attrition

There is another major reason that could be at play here. And that is the fact that in traditional communities more men than women “fall away” from the faith. In one of my earlier posts (I cannot remember which at this point), I argued that women, as herd creatures, are more likely to assume whatever the dominant moral code of a community is. A traditional, conservative community is more likely to have traditional, conservative women. Men, on the other hand, are more willing to buck the trend and go off on their own. In a traditional community this means leaving the faith and conforming to the world. Hence if you have 100 men and 100 women in the 18-30 bracket in a traditional community, you might lose only 10 of the women to worldliness, but you could lose 30-40 of the men. This naturally leaves a disparity between the number of eligible young men and women in such a community.

Working with this is the fact that young men are expected to support families in a way that young women are not (in some cases to absurd degrees). This means that men naturally have to be exposed more to the world, and to the outside culture, than women, in order to support a family. Their greater exposure makes them more vulnerable and more are lured away as a result.

That wraps up my immediate ideas on the matter. I invite my readers to offer their own thoughts on the subject.

Update: In case it wasn’t clear, I wasn’t actually endorsing the notion that there is a dearth of traditional young men willing to court traditional young women. I was trying to explain why it seems like more people come to these parts from TradCon circles and complain about the lack of marriageable men, as compared to marriageable women.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #37

August 18, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passages today comes from the First Letter to Timothy:

> [3] As I urged you when I was going to Macedo′nia, remain at Ephesus that you may
> charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, [4] nor to occupy
> themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations
> rather than the divine training that is in faith; [5] whereas the aim of our charge is
> love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith.
> [6] Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain
> discussion, [7] desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either
> what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions.

(1 Timothy 1:3-7)

> Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith
> by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, [2] through the
> pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, [3] who forbid marriage and
> enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving
> by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For everything created by God is
> good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; [5] for then it
> is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

(1 Timothy 4:1-5)

Then we come to Second Timothy:

> [14] Remind them of this, and charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about
> words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. [15] Do your best to present
> yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed,
> rightly handling the word of truth. [16] Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead
> people into more and more ungodliness, [17] and their talk will eat its way like
> gangrene. Among them are Hymenae′us and Phile′tus, [18] who have swerved from
> the truth by holding that the resurrection is past already. They are upsetting the
> faith of some.

(2 Timothy 2:14-18)

Passages like these make me ashamed to be shocked at times by various “Churchian” teachings. There has been false doctrine and teaching around since the very earliest days of the Church. Even during the Apostolic period the leaders of the Church had to put down heresy. So really, it should come as no surprise to any of us that it shows up so often. The Evil One isn’t known as “The Prince of Lies” for nothing.

Also, passages like these help remind me to be careful when I talk about scripture. I still have a lot to learn when it comes to my knowledge of the bible, but sometimes I forget

this and shoot off my mouth. I need to keep in mind all those Proverbs about silence and wisdom.

This brings me to the final passage for today's post, from the Book of Sirach:

> [25] Where there is no fence, the property will be plundered;
> and where there is no wife, a man will wander about and sigh.
> [26] For who will trust a nimble robber
> that skips from city to city?
> So who will trust a man that has no home,
> and lodges wherever night finds him?

(Sirach 36:25-26)

As I've alluded to for a while, I have had some trouble finding, and then being accepted into, a Traditional Catholic community. While I found one fairly recently, I haven't had much success really integrating into the community. I recognize that some of this is my own introverted nature, but I know that it isn't all of it. Rather, those two verses from Sirach highlight the real problem- I am a single man with no family or other ties to this community. Such men are instinctively not trusted- we are outsiders, strangers. My suspicion is that this is only heightened if the man is known to be looking for a wife. On the other hand, I suspect that women don't experience these kinds of trust issues. Communities would be much more welcoming of them, as they don't represent the same (perceived) level of danger that a single man presents.

Unfortunately, there is no easy solution for me here. I have to slowly build up trust in the community, somehow. Good deeds and good works are probably my best bet at this point. I just hope that I can find means of carrying that out.

Update:

Also, I recently came across this chart of sorts detailing the kings of Israel and Judah, as well as the prophets who lived at the same time and the chapters of the Bible which covered each king. I found it a helpful reference, and I suspect some of you may as well. You can find it here.

Power To The People

August 21, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Last week Free Northern replied to my post Unbalanced Equation with his own post: Women Have No Power. Novaseeker replied with The Varieties of Power. Free Northerner replied in turn with his follow-up post, Private and Public Spheres. I recommend that folks take the time to read all of them (and if you have extra time, the comments) to understand my own post.

With this post I'm going to try to reply to FN some, add on to what Novaseeker said in his post, and then contribute some additional thoughts. Now, its not going to be so neat and orderly as that- rather, I'm going to address certain ideas and theories in turn, which may or may not have been covered by either or both of them. Because of time restrictions this post is going to be straight-forward and less coherent than most of my others. You've been warned.

First off, I disagree with FN that women as a "class" have "no power." And yes, that even includes political power, which does ultimately rest on violence, or the capacity for it. There are two things about female political/active power, however. It is much, much weaker than male political power. Female capacity and aptitude for violence and violent action is significantly less than that possessed by men. By whole orders of magnitude, in fact. Also, women cannot coordinate violent action as well as men, who are bred to that task. On the other hand, modern technology has greatly amplified female political power, far more than has been the case for male political power. Modern fire-arms and other instruments of destruction give women more violent potential than they have ever enjoyed before. Of course, physical capacity reduces the scope of weaponry that women can use, and their effectiveness with them, but the difference in violent capacity now and in the age of sword and spear is huge. All of which is to say that I might be able to best a female 5'4″ cop in hand-to-hand combat, but if we both have guns then the playing field is far and away more level than it would have been a few centuries before.

Second, I think that FN is right that White Knights are in many ways more dangerous than their feminist masters. They have all the male traits and potential for violence and coordinated action that their controllers lack. Even worse, many are convinced that they are doing the right thing, and many could even "good men" who have been duped into serving the Feminine Imperative. There are few things more dangerous than a good man who thinks he is doing the right thing. While women, even the most virulent feminists, might be cowed by a unified display of male strength, I would not expect the same from White Knights. Instead I would expect them to live up to their name and good down "fighting the good fight."

Speaking of unified displays of male strength, I think that it should be noted that men rarely act together as a "class." It isn't how we are wired. There isn't really a Team Man counterpart to Team Woman. So any argument founded on a notion that men can overcome women "as a class" fails as a foundational matter. While FN's point might make

sense from a theoretical perspective, it just down work in reality. Men don't act or organize as a class, and never have. Much of what made patriarchy possible was an extensive system of educating young men and imprinting on them the importance of maintaining male structural power, as well as functions to punish those who transgressed. Building up this culture was necessary to overcome the FI. The relative ease with which that system fell apart shows how essential it was for men to be formed into patriarchs- it isn't a natural thing. Men only amassed control of political power through deliberate effort and will- I would go so far as to say it was an essential component of civilization.

Oh, and another thing: the personal *is* the political, at least in the sense that political power is heavily influence by personal and private spheres of power. As anyone who has worked in the political field knows, politics is largely about managing personal connections and networks of like-minded people. This has *always* been the case. The best warlords in history were not the ones who were the greatest warriors, but those who could manage and lead a team of other leaders of warriors. All of which is to say that you cannot divorce the personal and political spheres. It just isn't how the world works. They constantly interact in ways that are difficult for those without experience in politics to understand.

In closing, I wanted to express my agreement with Novaseeker that purging feminism from our system will require some radical action. It isn't a quick fix, as the conditions which will bring about its return are baked into our present ideology and core beliefs. Notions of Freedom and Equality inevitably lead us towards feminism. This is because those ideas undermine the social instruments necessary to keep the FI in check. Individualism, Modernism, Liberalism… all will need to be excised from our culture in order for matters to be set aright.

I have more ideas that are still swirling about in my head. I may add them to this post, or write a follow-up. This one has taken far longer than it should have to write, and I'm still not happy with the finished product. But if I don't get it out now I never will. So don't be surprised to see this post updated over time.

Saturday Saints- #30

August 23, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is St. Cuthbert:

> Saint **Cuthbert** (c. 634 – 20 March 687) was a saint of the early Northumbrian church in the Celtic tradition. He was a monk, bishop and hermit, associated with the monasteries of Melrose and Lindisfarne in what might loosely be termed the Kingdom of Northumbria in the Northeast of England. After his death he became one of the most important medieval saints of Northern England, with a cult centred on his tomb at Durham Cathedral. Cuthbert is regarded as the patron saint of northern England. His feast day is 20 March.
>
> He grew up near Melrose Abbey, a daughter-house of Lindisfarne, today in Scotland. He had decided to become a monk after seeing a vision on the night in 651 that St. Aidan, the founder of Lindisfarne, died, but seems to have seen some military service first. He was quickly made guest-master at the new monastery at Ripon, soon after 655, but had to return with Eata to Melrose when Wilfrid was given the monastery instead. About 662 he was made prior at Melrose, and around 665 went as prior to Lindisfarne. In 684 he was made bishop of Lindisfarne but by late 686 resigned and returned to his hermitage as he felt he was about to die, although he was probably only in his early 50s.

More can be read about him at his wiki, found here.



St. Cuthbert

Random Musings and Links- #4

August 24, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For this post I'm going to begin with the links and then carry one to various musings and random thoughts.

I would direct my male readers, especially the unmarried ones, towards this post by Feminine But Not Feminist. Therein she has asked Men what they really think of young women who have had premarital sex. She hopes to use that post, and the comments by men that follow, to clue young women in to the consequences of engaging in premarital sex. Here are the four questions she is asking men:

> 1) What would you tell a young woman that wants to get married "someday", but thinks it's okay if she sleeps around for a while first?
>
> 2) Would you rather marry a girl that is a virgin, or one who has a lot of sexual experience, and why?
>
> 3) Does a woman's prior sexual experience make her bad wife material, and why?
>
> 4) If a woman is willing to have sex with you pretty early on, what do you think of her (even if you do decide to have sex with her), as opposed to a woman that isn't willing to give it up right away?

So stop by her blog and give your thoughts (please direct any towards her blog, not the comments here, thank you).

Free Northerner talks about his experiences courting a young woman in Courtship and Young Men. While we can never truly know the reasons why it didn't work out for him, FN's tale is far from unique. I've had many men comment on this blog and e-mail me about similar experiences. His post reminded me that parental madness during the courtship process is another explanation for why men aren't courting Traditional women in, which I examined in my post Whither Thy Sons? **[Update:** Free Northerner has followed up with another post- More on Courtship.**]**

A Northern Observer has a post up about a woman who decided not to stop at accusing her husband of abuse. Some poetic justice appears to be on the way, and is well deserved.

Ballista has an excellent post up about how Marriage Doesn't Wait for True Love. It is a superb take-down of the madness that the "Purity Movement" has become. Personally, I think that the problem started when the focus started to be on virginity as compared to chastity. One can be a virgin and not chaste (think a young woman addicted to 50 Shades of Grey and the ilk), and one can be a non-virgin and chaste (such as a young woman who was a virgin until her wedding night). Fortunately Catholic teaching on this is better, and this phenomenon is mostly restricted to Protestant sects. **[Update:** Or perhaps it is more common in Catholic circles than I thought, as Ballista alludes to with his comment

here. Personally I haven't ever seen that kind of stuff in anywhere in any of the Catholic circles I've traveled in, so I wonder if this is new, or just something I missed.**]** Unfortunately (and the reason why Catholics shouldn't crow), this teaching is hardly ever actually, you know, *taught.*

Elspeth asks What If It Doesn't Work Out? Like many of her posts, its a must-read, whether you are married or not.

Chad has been writing a story of power. You can find Part 1 here, Part 2 here, and Part 3 here.

Zippy talks about how people are Blaming the Prophets.

Margery responds to a feminist.

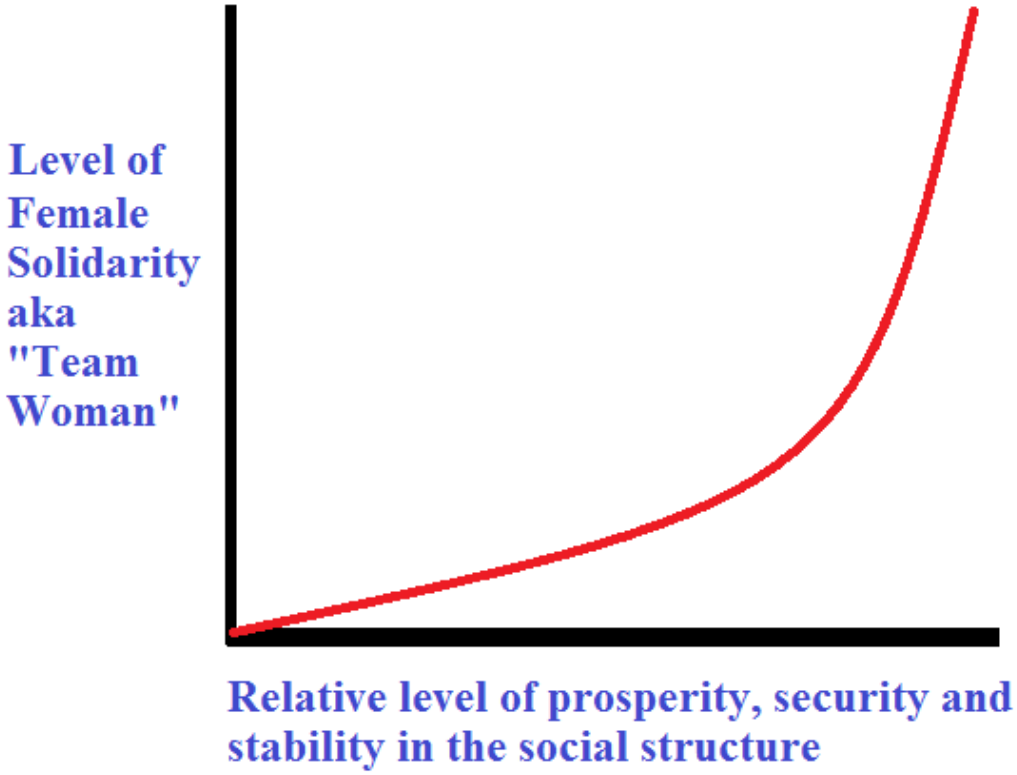
April over at Peaceful Single Girl examines Disney Weddings. The idolization (which is what this is) of weddings and the honeymoon period is not a new phenomenon, believe it or not. St. John Crysostomom addressed similar problems a millennium and half ago in one of his homilies. It is going to be the subject of a future post, one that will probably come in about 2 weeks or so.

Lovelyleblanc warns men that foreign women are no panacea to the problems in Western women.

That ends the link part of this post. Now to a few things bouncing about in my head.

Female Empowerment

First off, Elspeth has been taking exception to the traditional notions of "Team Woman" in the manosphere in my post Power To The People. She made a number of convincing arguments that the level of solidarity among women is heavily dependent on the environment, and went a long way towards convincing me of her point of view. I recommend that readers head over to the post and read them, starting with the first one here. With that in mind, here is a graphic which sets about illustrating how "Team Woman" would work under that particular model. As you can see, the level of female solidarity is directly connected to the overall prosperity and security of the social structure. Furthermore, the relationship is geometric.



Nothing to be Done

Something that has come up quite often, both in the comments of this blog and others, and in my e-mail correspondence, is the relative lack of opportunities available for young people looking to marry to connect with like-minded individuals. One young woman in particular has explained to me that she would love the opportunity to meet more people to see if anyone would be interested in her, but hasn't figured out how. In her present situation she just doesn't have a whole lot of options for meeting eligible young men. "Going out" means going to places where there won't be any devout Christians, or to places lacking in eligible, single men. She is not alone in voicing this concern, I've heard it from men and women alike.

The best place to look for such candidates is other churches, assuming that yours doesn't have any men or women who will work for you. The problem is that visiting churches to looking for marriage partners is a time limited window activity. Depending on when various churches hold services, you might not be able to visit more than one a week. And to really scope out a church and determine if it has anyone who will work for you takes several weeks, as people might not be there on any given week. For men this is even more difficult, as single men are basically outsiders at Church and are distrusted. All of which means that a lot of time and effort is required to search various churches for potential spouses. Of course, doesn't even take into consideration theological concerns. Or the fact that some parts of the country might not have many active churches. And the list goes on….

Unfortunately there is no easy solution to this problem. Online dating solves some issues, and brings up a whole different set. Matchmaking through personal connections is great, if you have the connections, and if your connections are of a mind to help, and if your

connections know potential candidates. The whole thing is very depressing, and I recommend that anyone caught in this trap to read their Bibles often. I find some of the Psalms to be especially comforting.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #38

August 25, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's beginning passage is a long one, as it is the whole of chapter 30 from the Book of Numbers:

> Moses said to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, "This is what the
> Lord has commanded. [2] When a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath
> to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to
> all that proceeds out of his mouth. [3] Or when a woman vows a vow to the Lord,
> and binds herself by a pledge, while within her father's house, in her youth, [4] and
> her father hears of her vow and of her pledge by which she has bound herself,
> and says nothing to her; then all her vows shall stand, and every pledge by which
> she has bound herself shall stand. [5] But if her father expresses disapproval to her
> on the day that he hears of it, no vow of hers, no pledge by which she has bound
> herself, shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her, because her father opposed
> her. [6] And if she is married to a husband, while under her vows or any thoughtless
> utterance of her lips by which she has bound herself, [7] and her husband hears of
> it, and says nothing to her on the day that he hears; then her vows shall stand,
> and her pledges by which she has bound herself shall stand. [8] But if, on the day
> that her husband comes to hear of it, he expresses disapproval, then he shall
> make void her vow which was on her, and the thoughtless utterance of her lips,
> by which she bound herself; and the Lord will forgive her. [9] But any vow of a
> widow or of a divorced woman, anything by which she has bound herself, shall
> stand against her. [10] And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself
> by a pledge with an oath, [11] and her husband heard of it, and said nothing to her,
> and did not oppose her; then all her vows shall stand, and every pledge by which
> she bound herself shall stand. [12] But if her husband makes them null and void on
> the day that he hears them, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning
> her vows, or concerning her pledge of herself, shall not stand: her husband has
> made them void, and the Lord will forgive her. [13] Any vow and any binding oath to
> afflict herself, her husband may establish, or her husband may make void. [14] But
> if her husband says nothing to her from day to day, then he establishes all her
> vows, or all her pledges, that are upon her; he has established them, because he
> said nothing to her on the day that he heard of them. [15] But if he makes them null
> and void after he has heard of them, then he shall bear her iniquity."
>
> [16] These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses, as between a man
> and his wife, and between a father and his daughter, while in her youth, within
> her father's house.

(Numbers 30)

I was quite surprised when I re-read this passage recently. It has been some years since I

read the Book of Numbers, and so I had forgotten all about it. As a result my memory of this passage had been, well, *corrupted,* by feminist attacks on Christianity without realizing it. What I had remembered, or thought I remembered, was that women couldn't enter a contract (pledge) without their husband or father's permission under the Mosaic law. Needless to say, this was something that feminists used to point out how the Judeo-Christian tradition oppressed women.

This passage does nothing of the sort. Far from oppressing women, it protects them and gives them a right that men lacked. Namely, women were given the opportunity to escape from a rashly made vow/contract through either their father's or husband's intervention. They could still enter into the contract in the first place, but in the event it proved oppressive they could potentially escape it. Is this law paternalistic? You bet. But oppressive it isn't. So long as their father or husband acted swiftly, they were protected from men who tried to take advantage of them via a contract. As a practical effect, I imagine that this would have made men much more circumspect about entering into contracts with women- if the terms were too advantageous to the man, he risked the contract's annulment.

Something I have found interesting while reading the New Testament is how Paul's ministry develops over time. As he and the other Apostles built up the Church (with the help of numerous saints like Timothy, Titus, Priscilla and Aquilla) they refined Church practices and teaching. For example, early in his ministry Paul had this to say to the Church at Corinth:

> [39] A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. [40] But in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I have the Spirit of God.

(1 Corinthians 7:39-40)

But several years later, when he wrote to Timothy (who he appointed Bishop in Ephesus) concerning widows he said this:

> [9] Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband; [10] and she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. [11] But refuse to enrol younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry, [12] and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. [13] Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. [14] So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. [15] For some have already strayed after Satan.

(1 Timothy 5:9-15)

While the exact details aren't clear, it seems to me as though a couple of things brought about this change in pastoral teaching by St. Paul. The first is that some younger widows had apparently gone astray from the faith when they didn't remarry, and by implication it seems that this wasn't a problem, or as much of one, for those younger widows who did remarry. Also, I suspect that St. Paul had become less convinced of the imminence of the *parousia,* the Second Coming. Thus he developed more of a long term pastoral mindset that was focused on helping Christians live in holiness for the whole of their natural lives.

What this shows is that pastoral practices are not fixed like doctrines. Whereas doctrinal teaching doesn't change, how one ministers to a particular Christian community will vary depending on the community and the times. It occurs to me that much of what Churchianity does is to take pastoral flexibility and apply that principle to doctrine as well. I'm sure that my readers, who come from many different Christian faith traditions, can think of examples of this. Right now in the Catholic Church there are those trying to do this with teaching and doctrine on divorce. Like St. Paul, we need to keep our eyes open for this kind of error and confront it when we find it.

The Male Hamster In Action- Exhibit # 1273

August 26, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men have a Rationalization Hamster, just like women. It is a more reclusive beast than the female variant, true, but it exists all the same. Most of the time it keeps its head low and maintains a low profile, such that we don't notice when it is at work at its wheel. But occasionally it gets revved up and engages in a full-fledged, undisguised rationalization that can rival anything the female Hamster can accomplish.

An example of such a moment took place recently in Dalrock's post "From celibate boyfriend to celibate husband (true love doesn't wait)." A commenter left this, one of the most brazen and hilarious examples of male Hamsterization I have ever seen. Unsurprisingly, if you switched out a few words here and there the comment would be pretty much indistinguishable from what the average female troll leaves at Dalrock's blog. If you have some free time, check it out.

Object of Contention

August 27, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

Mrs. ktc over at To our bodies turn we then had a post some days back (found here) in which she linked over to a discussion at The Thinking Housewife in a post called Looking for a Wife.

The discussion starts thanks to a commenter named George- a frustrated mid-30's Christian man who cannot find a wife. While there is a lot to dissect in his comment, and the ones that follow, I want to focus on one particular segment of his comment. Specifically, the parts in bold of his second to last paragraph:

> This lack of goal fulfillment is most dispiriting when it comes to family formation, as I feel that if I cannot find and marry a mate within a few years that it will be too late from a practical perspective to achieve my goal of having a family. **After 35 the single male is for better or worse seen as defective and a romantic discard, especially those who are shy and have had little experience in relationships. They are seen as losers and I have come to the conclusion that this is absolutely the correct way to view them. They are not up to their duties as men to procreate, provide, and protect and they have failed the game of life. This of course also means that I consider myself to be a loser.** *Is this the correct way to view such men?* I understand that not all men want to marry or have families, that some men abstain for religious or other convictions, and that events in life sometimes lead to undesirable but uncontrollable outcomes. But I have had plenty of time to do the heavy lifting and have failed to do so, frankly out of cowardice and fear, and also because it is very difficult to find traditionally minded women out there.

[Emphasis mine]

Comments were closed there, so I couldn't respond, which is a pity because I had a lot to say about this. This post is about objectification of men, and how it relates to George and to other men in Church. It will be in two parts- the first addresses George specifically, and the second men who find themselves in a position similar to George (somewhat older man who is moderately successful yet unmarried).

II.

My first, initial reaction was disgust. Here was a man who had completely, unreservedly accepted the feminist construction of man as an object designed to serve women. Under this view men exist only so far as they can provide for and protect women, and for a rare few, procreate with them. It is the ultimate objectification of men (unless someone can clue me in to one that is worse), turning them into mere tools for women. Ballista over at Society of Phineas has countless posts about this mindset. Plenty of other bloggers have addressed it as well, including Dalrock and Free Northerner, to name a few. And this

guy had bought into it hook, line and sinker. His question "*Is this the correct way to view such men?*" is a meaningless formality, and not a serious inquiry, as one can tell by both the proceeding and following sentences.

George's real problem is not his lack of a wife. That is a problem, true, but one that can wait. First he needs to recognize the poison that has infiltrated his mind and eject it, forcibly (much like removing snake venom from a wound). In its place he needs to accept that men (and women) exist to glorify God, first and foremost. Everything else comes second. To place anything about serving and glorifying God is Idolatry. And that is what George has (apparently unconsciously) done. Note how serving God never shows up in his comment in reference to himself. He is an idolater and doesn't even realize it. Until George transforms his mind, until he reassess his worth and value, everything else he does is moot.

What would I tell George?

I would tell him that serving God needs to be the primary focus of his life. Perhaps that means doing so as a husband and father. Perhaps it doesn't. Prayer and discernment are key- figure out your vocation, your calling so that you can do what God wants you to do. At the same time, recognize your value as a man doesn't depend on how well you can "procreate, provide and protect." Your value is based on how well you serve God. It is not based on how well you serve women. If society teaches something other than that, society should be ignored. Conform to God, not the world. Oh, and once that is done, remember you aren't looking for a woman whom you will serve as your wife. You are looking for a helpmeet, a woman who will help you serve and glorify the Lord.

III.

This brings me to another point. Even after a man stops objectifying himself, he needs to watch out for other people, especially ~~other Christians~~ Churchians, who will objectify him. Now, I gather from George's comment that he has relatively little, if any, sexual history. So what follows will be based in part on that assumption, as applied to him and to other single Christian with little to no sexual history.

I've written in the past that "sometimes I get the impression that a lot of Christians see good, virtuous men as janitors or sanitation workers who are expected to pick up the "trash" in church." I believe that this phenomenon is largely a result of ~~Christians~~ Churchians having come to objectify men (aided along by the feminine imperative, of course). They view men as tools or resources that can be used to solve problems. This is especially prevalent among those in leadership positions, who have to confront those problems in church and find solutions for them. One such problem is the former carousel rider and/or single mother. Both are problems in their own way, especially the single mother, who is almost certainly a net resource drain on the church. What I think happens is that is that when someone in leadership looks at that situation, he sees a problem that needs solving. And what do you do when you have a problem that needs solving? You look for the right tool to fix it, of course. Enter the single Christian man looking for a wife- *here* is the solution to the Church's problem! When he marries that ~~washed up harlot~~

single woman the man has the wife he was looking for, and the Church no longer has a drain on its resources. And if there were children, why they have a father now!

Of course, someone with that mindset is motivated by what is best for them, and best for the church as an organization. They do not have the best interest of single Christian men in mind. Certainly they never stop to consider what would make for a good wife for the somewhat older single Christian man with little to no sexual history. If they did they would realize that such women would certainly not be good wives for men in George's position (Truth be told, they might not be good wives for men in any position-but that is another matter). Of course, those who have that mindset would never stop to consider what would make for a good wife for men like George. If they did, they would have to recognize that it would be women whom the church would be in short supply of, and the kind of women that most people in the church don't want marrying anyways (devout, younger, not unattractive women with little to no sexual history).

I would say to George and to a man in a similar position the following: marry a woman because you want to marry her *and* because she is a good match for you and you are a good match for her, *not* because others want you to marry her. Unless God orders you to marry a harlot, you are under no obligation to wife one up. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise. You have no duty to rescue a woman from her past ~~mistakes~~ errors by marrying her. You do not owe it to a child that is not yours to marry his or her mother just so that child has a "father." You should take to wife a woman who is a good match for you (and vice versa), not someone that people in church are trying to offload on you. Marriage is meant to glorify God, through properly channeling human sexuality and rearing God-fearing children. It is *not* about reducing the monetary burden of a Church. Or for providing a happy, fairy-tale ending to all the women in Church. If anyone tries to press the issue, make it clear to them that you are a man, not a tool. You have inherent value and dignity. This means you aren't obliged to marry an unsuitable woman*. And don't hesitate to make that abundantly clear. If they don't respect that position, then leave that church, shake the dust from your feet, and find a new community of actual Christians.

IV.

In summary:

Men, don't objectify yourselves. You exist to serve and glorify God, not to serve and glorify women. Also, don't let others objectify you, especially when it comes to a wife. Marry a woman who is a good match for you. If you don't have much of a sexual history, ignore those who want you to marry a single mother or former carousel rider. If they don't accept your decision, leave that church and find a better one.

* *I should at this time emphasize that suitability is the most important thing here. A woman might have truly, earnestly repented of her past but that doesn't automatically mean she would make for a good wife. I am working on a post (hopefully out by Friday) which will examine what men should look for in a wife, and it will delve into further detail on this. But some qualities, like sensibility and good judgment, are crucial for a woman to have to make a good wife, and a man needs to look for them in a potential bride. Women*

who have grievously sinned (especially sexually) knowing what they were doing have demonstrated a serious lack of such traits. Furthermore, they might never gain good sense or judgment, despite their repentance.

Of course, that covers only character. As readers of my blog are well aware there are other reasons why a woman's past might not make her suitable as a bride, especially for a man with little to no sexual history. A woman whose innocence was stolen from her is not at fault for her past, but unfortunately that past can and usually does impact her marriage. A man must carefully discern whether such a woman is a suitable match for him, and also whether he is equipped to deal with the consequences of her tragic past. My suspicion is that few men with no sexual history are ready or capable of this. A similar reasoning applies to women who were not raised to see fornication as a sin- they are usually not a good match for such men.

The important thing is prayer and discernment. Don't let anyone else manipulate you into what is likely to be a bad marriage.

It Is What Is On The Inside That Counts

August 30, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Over at the blog JustFourGuys Sir Nemesis wrote a post recently, titled How the Feminine Imperative Backfires. Sir Nemesis, in his examination of how the FI sabotages female interests when left unchecked, delved into "fat acceptance and inner beauty." His words:

> Liberal society has pushed to redefine ~~fat~~ plus-size women as being beautiful. At the same time, traditional churchians have pushed men to not care about looks and not be judgmental about looks. As a result, men find it difficult to voice their preference for fit women, which actually has negative effects on women.

To back this up he quoted a comment from Elspeth in my post Whither Thy Sons? Then he backed up his initial contention with a comment of his own and one by Novaseeker. I mention all of this to provide context for the next part. Elspeth responded to his post with this comment:

> Some context to my comments are in order so I'll offer it without overstaying my welcome, 😉 .
>
> First, I was not implying that men marry fat women. I was offering that a woman who is auditioning for a position of a man's wife should have no problem with making the necessary adjustments if they click in other areas and he makes it clear that fitness is important to him.
>
> Secondly, bear in mind that this conversation took place at the blog of a man who (along with many of his readers) are chaste Christian men looking to marry women equally chaste, preferably with their hymens intact. Unfortunately, most of those women in the pews are unattractive to them primarily because in their loneliness they often snuggle up to a pint of Ben and Jerry's every evening. **But they are chaste, and they are devout, and many might make excellent wives if the attraction issue were addressed.**
>
> My point was that it might be worth considering entreating a woman you like who meets the faith/chastity criteria to get in shape, join you on your fitness journey, and see what happens.
>
> My comments were not at all meant as promotion of fat acceptance (I am firmly against that entire movement) or any kind of attempt to shame men into marrying fat women.

[Parts in bold are mine.]

Elspeth was careful to use conditional modifiers in her comment, and so what follows next isn't a critique of what she said. But I do want to focus on what she said in the sentence that I put in bold-

> **But they are chaste, and they are devout, and many might make**

> **excellent wives if the attraction issue were addressed.**

Something that has been pointed out by a few people in these parts, including myself, Cail Corishev and reader/commenter mdavid, is that inner and outer beauty often align. By this I mean that a woman's exterior often reveals a lot about her inner character. Whether is the clothing she wears, the makeup she uses, or her appearance in such categories as weight, a lot is revealed about her. Jesus taught us that we can know a tree, and a person, by the fruit they bear in life. And a woman's appearance is an example of one such fruit.

I believe it was mdavid who pointed out somewhere on my blog that gluttony and sloth, the sins which combine in women to lead them towards becoming and staying overweight, rarely travel alone. My personal experience has backed this up. I don't really think that are very many devout and chaste Christian women who make for good wives if they could only lose some weight. Rather, it is been my experience that they often, if you scratch beneath the surface, have plenty of other sin issues besides sloth and gluttony.

I've mentioned before that I attend, whenever I can help it, a Traditional Catholic parish. One of the things that first struck me when I visited that parish was that the average woman there was much thinner than her counter-part at the non-Traditional parishes I've attended. Very few women were truly overweight, and I don't think this is a coincidence. This experience, when combined with other personal experiences, has led me to theorize that you can often (although not always) use weight as a proxy for other marriageable traits in a woman. In particular, a woman's weight combined with her manner of dress seems to be a fairly accurate indicator of her devotion and other positive traits. Likewise, I think that there is a correlation between a woman's willingness to lose weight and her overall quality as a wife candidate.

Of course, most of this is based purely on anecdote and personal experience. So I invite my readers to offer their thoughts and experiences on the matter. Am I on track here? Is it just coincidence? Or am I blinded by a woman's weight such that I'm missing a lot of perfectly acceptable wife candidates who merely need to lose a few pounds?

Saturday Saints- #31

August 31, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is Saint David of Menevia:

> **Saint David** (Welsh: **Dewi Sant**; c. 500 – c. 589) was a Welsh bishop of Menevia during the 6th century; he was later regarded as a saint and as the patron saint of Wales. David was a native of Wales, and a relatively large amount of information is known about his life. However, his birth date is still uncertain, as suggestions range from 462 to 512. The Welsh annals place his death 569 years after the birth of Christ, but Phillimore's dating revised this to 601.

A few interesting facts from the wiki on him:

- He was a major opponent of Pelagianism (a school of thought which rejected original sin)
- His monastic rule was very demanding- for example one could eat just bread with salt and herbs
- He is almost always depicted with a dove on his shoulder



St. David

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #39

August 31, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage in today's post comes from the Book of Deuteronomy:

> [11] "Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping his commandments and his ordinances and his statutes, which I command you this day: [12] lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, [13] and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, [14] then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, [15] who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, [16] who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. [17] Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' [18] You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth; that he may confirm his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as at this day. [19] And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you this day that you shall surely perish. [20] Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

(Deuteronomy 8:11-20)

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? This is pretty much what has happened in the West. We have forgotten the Lord, Him from whom all good things come. We in the West have achieved unparalleled prosperity over the last few decades, such that now nearly all of us have "idle hands." We think we don't need God any more- whether to provide for us or to explain the cosmos, and so have ignored Him. Even worse, we have chased after idols, whom many worship and even serve. What comes next is both tragic and predictable.

> [9] What has been is what will be,
> and what has been done is what will be done;
> and there is nothing new under the sun.
> [10] Is there a thing of which it is said,
> "See, this is new"?
> It has been already,
> in the ages before us.
> [11] There is no remembrance of former things,
> nor will there be any remembrance
> of later things yet to happen

> among those who come after.

(Ecclesiastes 1:9-11)

The Letter to the Hebrews is the source of today's third passage:

> [3] Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that
> you may not grow weary or fainthearted. [4] In your struggle against sin you have
> not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. [5] And have you forgotten the
> exhortation which addresses you as sons?—
>
> "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
> nor lose courage when you are punished by him.
> [6] For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves,
> and chastises every son whom he receives."
>
> [7] It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what
> son is there whom his father does not discipline? [8] If you are left without
> discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and
> not sons. [9] Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we
> respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and
> live? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines
> us for our good, that we may share his holiness. [11] For the moment all discipline
> seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of
> righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

(Hebrews 12:3-11)

This is kind of a radical statement, when you think about it: we know we aren't bastards because God disciplines us. But it makes sense- we correct those we care about, not those who mean nothing to us. God loves us, and sometimes love demands a harsh rebuke. Even though we don't appreciate it at the time, our guilt and chastisement is a sign of God's love and favor. Perhaps it is just me, but I find all of this very comforting.

Some Things Never Change

September 1, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Leane, who runs the most excellent blog Finer Femininity (a recent addition to my blogroll), wrote a post a few days back titled Girls: Faults and Ideals. Within she quoted from a book of the same name by J.R. Miller. He was a Christian writer who lived from 1840 to 1912. So a man from a very different era.

Yet despite the great span of time between now and when he wrote the book "Girls: Faults and Ideals," much of what he wrote then still rings true today. In the section that Leane quotes from, J.R. Miller provides answers from two questions that he asked of young (presumably) Christian men at the time. Here are the questions:

> 1. "What are some of the most common faults in young women of your acquaintance?"
> 2. "What are some of the essential elements of character in your ideal of true young womanhood?"

There are two responses in particular that I want to address with this post, although I encourage those who follow this blog to read the whole thing. The first response that I want to address, which covers faults, is this:

> "Frivolity, arising from want of purpose in life," one names, "even the most sacred duties and relations being marred by this frivolousness. The best years of life are wasted in small talk and still smaller reading, tears and sighs being wasted over a novelist's creations, while God's creatures die for want of a word of sympathy."

My first thought when reading this was *Wow.* If you were to add "pursuing an education and a career" into the second sentence, it would be a perfect descriptor of much of what passes for modern ~~Christian~~ Churchian womanhood. What this tells us is that the problems we see in women in church these days are not new at all. They existed well over a century ago, and probably for far longer.

One line in particular that really struck me was how "[t]he best years of life are wasted" by women. Something I have pointed out on this blog before, and will continue to point out, is that the general desire that most women exhibit to avoid commitment to a man is nothing new. Most women want to delay (true) commitment for as long as they possibly can. I cannot find the source at the moment, but I do remember reading a book written in the 1800s which talked of how older female relatives would often have to push young women to marry. Without that push many would continue to wait and wait, and in the process rebuff the courtship efforts of many would-be suitors, and before long would get to be an age where the stream of suitors would dry up.

Women's natural sexual strategy is serial monogamy, not "hard monogamy" (lifetime marriage). When this strategy is retrained by a moral order, such as Christian teaching

and doctrine, it doesn't make women suddenly switch over to prefer "hard monogamy." If anything it intensifies their natural hypergamy and causes them to be extremely "picky" in their choice of commitment. Hence it is very important for a young Christian woman's family raise her to recognize this instinct and help her overcome it. [The finer details of this are for another post, if not other blogs, to examine.]

Also worth mentioning is that last line about "God's creatures die for want of a word of sympathy." Clearly many women back then were no kinder to most men in church than they are today. This is another thing which needs to be taught to young women, and is among the traits that older women are to teach younger women listed in Titus 2:4-5.

Then we move to the second response:

> Another puts it down as "A want of firm decision in character and action," and says that too often, in times "when they ought to stand like a rock, they yield and fall;" and adds: "The young ladies of our land have power to mold the lives of the young men for good or for evil."

The last sentence is what interests me most. Women have a lot of "soft power" available to them, and can use this power to exert a great deal of influence over men. In my view, this power is perhaps greatest when it comes to young women acting as an incentive for young men. Men are willing to do an awful lot in order to win the affections of a woman, including task both dangerous and tedious. But if men know that such tasks will lead them on a path towards marriage to a desirable young women, nearly all will leap at that chance.

But of course, all of that hinges on three different factors. The first is that desirable young women are available for young men to marry. The second is young that men don't have plentiful and convenient options for female affection without marriage. The third is that marriage isn't a legal trap for men. While the third is determined by law and civil society with only indirect influence by young women (not enough are installed in elected or bureaucratic office as of yet, and overall they represent a small part of the electorate), young women directly control the first two factors.

If young women are not taking the steps to get ready to marry, or if they decide to not marry young, then the first factor will fall in its face. Likewise if women do things which render them unfit for marriage, or even questionable as marriage material. If they pursue a path which takes them out of the marriage market (either temporarily or permanently), then men won't see an incentive to be found in marriage and will adapt. At the same time, if men have access to loose women and won't suffer serious sanctions for consorting with them, their desire for marriage will drop dramatically. Here women must exercise restraint and act in a chaste manner- the supply of unchaste women has a direct relationship with the desire men have for marriage. When women are willing to sleep with men without marriage, only the most righteous of men will seek marriage (or at least, approach marriage with the proper attitude)- and there are few such men out there. Restraints on female sexuality are as much for modifying male behavior, as they are for

female behavior. Both are inextricably linked together.

Which links back up to how “[t]he young ladies of our land have power to mold the lives of the young men for good or for evil.” Women, by their actions, can influence men to act one way or another. All of this used to be understood. Women were pushed to marry young, and to be chaste, because it not only benefited them, but young men as well, and through them, all of society. This soft power is easy to overlook, but is more potent that many a law.

So when we look at the problems among young women in the Church, and that of the young men, and ponder what went wrong, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking this is a new travail that we face. For Scripture reminds us thus:

> Is there a thing of which it is said,
> “See, this is new”?
> It has been already,
> in the ages before us.

(Ecclesiastes 1:10)

What Qualities Should A Man Look For In A Wife?

September 3, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

Today's post is aimed at determining the qualities that Scripture says a man should look for in a potential wife. I first started this post some months ago, but put it on hold because it didn't feel "right." Something was off with it, but I couldn't put my finger on it. Occasionally I worked on it to add a quote or two, but mostly it has lain fallow. Then I wrote my post Adult Man Defines "A Real Woman," and it clicked for me what I was doing wrong. This line by commenter Feather Blade was particularly important in helping me understand where I was going wrong:

> No one is going to find a young woman with all the virtues that only *an entire lifetime of faithful service to God* can endow on one.

That comment plus a few others (and my own thought on the matter) helped me understand that I was making two mistakes with my post.

The first mistake is that I was mixing up *character traits* with *life skills*. They are not the same, and mixing them up creates the problem that Feather Blade warns about: you start looking to find in a young woman what only an older woman would have had time to acquire and possess. Character traits are essential qualities of moral character- qualities that are less a matter of training than they are of personal discipline and willpower. Examples include fear of the Lord, courage and kindness. Life skills, on the other hand, are qualities that are acquired as a result of training, eduction and practice. This includes skills such as cooking, good business sense and tailoring (to name but a few). These take time to develop- in some cases, a whole lifetime.

The second mistake is that I was simply going through the bible line by line, looking for positive qualities in a woman. This approach is problematic because there won't be any context for these qualities. As you will see, running Proverbs 31 line by line, or in small chunks, obscures the fact that it is talking about an older, more mature and more experienced wife.

Rather than simply delete everything and start over, I'm going to leave some of what I wrote so you get a sense of how the picture isn't very clear when you search for qualities line by line or even passage by passage. That will encompass Part 2 of this post, which is a rather ugly affair. Part 3 will be different- it will directly explain what the character traits to look are, and why they should be sought. Part 4 will conclude.

II.

…[previous lines were deleted to make way for the new intro] I tracked down as many verses as I could that offered advice and mentioned women who were/would be quality God-fearing wives. I will be quoting them below, and include some commentary, mostly

focusing on what is held as valuable or important in each verse/passage. Many of these passages are ones that I've covered before, but I am hoping to consolidate as many as I can in this post.

> A gracious woman gets honor,
> and violent men get riches.

(Proverbs 11:16)

Here graciousness is held to be trait worthy of honor, and thus recognition, in women.

> Like a gold ring in a swine's snout
> is a beautiful woman without discretion.

(Proverbs 11:22)

Other translations use wisdom or sense in place of discretion, but they all capture the essence of the same trait. This is, in my view, a very important passage. The analogy places something of great value in a position where it is utterly wasted. The overall lesson here is that beauty in a woman is an utter waste if she has no discretion- if she isn't wise. Two points are made: the first is that beauty is indeed, a valuable thing (else why compare it to a gold ring?), and the second is that sensibility in a woman is of even greater value than beauty.

> A good wife is the crown of her husband,
> but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.

(Proverbs 12:4)

The compare and contrast here makes it clear that a proper woman, a "good" one, is something to be esteemed, as compared to her improper or shameful counterpart. Essentially, a good wife is one who raises a husband's stature in the eyes of others, and a bad wife is one who lowers it.

> House and wealth are inherited from fathers,
> but a prudent wife is from the Lord.

(Proverbs 19:14)

Prudence, being a gift from the Lord, is a valuable thing indeed to have in a wife.

And this of course brings us to Proverbs 31. I will include only parts of it:

> [11] The heart of her husband trusts in her,
> and he will have no lack of gain.
> [12] She does him good, and not harm,
> all the days of her life.

Trustworthiness is valuable trait in a wife.

> [13] She seeks wool and flax,
> and works with willing hands.

> [14] She is like the ships of the merchant,
> she brings her food from afar.
> [15] She rises while it is yet night
> and provides food for her household
> and tasks for her maidens.

A good wife is one who is a hard worker. She is diligent and skilled with her hands. She can provide food for her family and keep the household well run.

> [16] She considers a field and buys it;
> with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

Good business sense is a sign of a good wife.

> [17] She girds her loins with strength
> and makes her arms strong.

A wife who keeps herself healthy, and stays fit and strong is truly worthy.

> [18] She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
> Her lamp does not go out at night.
> [19] She puts her hands to the distaff,
> and her hands hold the spindle.

Once again emphasizing good business sense, along with foresight and skill with her hands.

> [20] She opens her hand to the poor,
> and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Charity is a sign of a good wife.

> [21] She is not afraid of snow for her household,
> for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
> [22] She makes herself coverings;
> her clothing is fine linen and purple.

A good wife plans ahead for tough times.

> [23] Her husband is known in the gates,
> when he sits among the elders of the land.
> [24] She makes linen garments and sells them;
> she delivers girdles to the merchant.

Business sense and initiative are once again emphasized.

> [25] Strength and dignity are her clothing,
> and she laughs at the time to come.

A good wife is joyous and always demonstrates strength and dignity.

> [26] She opens her mouth with wisdom,
> and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

A good wife always speaks wisely and kindly.

(Proverbs 31:11-26)

Then there is this last part-

> [30] Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
> but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

(Proverbs 31:30)

Charm from a woman is not to be trusted. My understanding of the use of the word vain in the Bible is to indicate that it is fleeting, something one can only be proud of for a short time, before it is gone. Hence beauty is fleeting and not something that can be counted on in the long run. In contrast is fear of the lord, or faith, which is to be praised- that is, something of great worth that should be recognized as such.

> Do not deprive yourself of a wise and good wife,
> for her charm is worth more than gold.

(Sirach 7:19)

Wisdom is once again mentioned as a valuable thing in a wife. As is good- which probably means God-fearing in the eyes of the author.

[I am ending this section here. You have an idea now what I was doing, and where I was going- or not going, as the case may be.]

III.

In this section, rather than track down quotes/passages and then draw out valuable qualities from them, I will lead off with the valuable qualities to look for in a potential wife. The key character traits that a man should look for in a wife are as follows (and in what I perceive to be the order of importance):

1. God-fearing
2. Sensible
3. Courageous
4. Trustworthy
5. Diligent
6. Kind

If someone disagrees about the order I have, feel free to express your position in the comments. Now to explain a bit why each is important.

- **God-fearing-** This character trait, encompasses both faith and devotion, is of paramount importance. Proverbs 31 makes it clear that fear of the Lord is above all

else in valuable qualities found in a good wife. The rest of scripture backs this up. Throughout scripture we can see the cost to a man married to a woman who doesn't fear the Lord, and we can see the benefit to one who is married to a god-fearing woman. Moreover, fear of the Lord is the only real safeguard against the worst of female behavior- a man married to a non-believing woman is at the mercy of her capriciousness. This trait includes a number of manifestations of faith, including chastity.

- **Sensible-** Other words fit, depending on translation: Prudence, discretion, wisdom. But all signify the same essential character quality- the ability to exercise sound judgment. Of course, a woman's ability to exercise this will depend heavily on her circumstances. A younger woman will almost certainly be less wise than an older one- something to keep in mind. Look for if a women is willing and able to learn from her mistakes (or errors), or if she is insistent on obstinacy.
- **Courageous-** Bravery may seem like a masculine trait, not a feminine one, but that isn't so. Courage is essential to face the many travails of life, as well as to really live your faith as required. Standing up for you and your interests may require a lot of courage from her at times. So be wary about picking someone who will always fold in the face of difficulty or danger.
- **Trustworthy-** Does she keep her word? Will she do what she promised, or will she "forget" or make excuses for failing to do as promised? You want a woman you can trust. Without that, nothing, including your marriage itself, is secure. Keep in mind this is the woman who will be spending more time with your children than anyone else. Trust is huge.
- **Diligent-** Is she a hard worker? Most life skills take a long time to develop. Years, or even decades are required to learn trades, or to acquire the "instincts" to be good at something like real estate, or to recognize a good business deal from a bad one. Instead of focusing on those, look instead to see if a woman is a hard worker. Does she work until completion on a task, however annoying or minor? If so, then there is a strong chance she will demonstrate that same diligence inside your household.
- **Kind-** Encompassing graciousness, charity and a quiet, gentle spirit, kindness is a quintessential feminine trait. It is also one of the most valuable for a woman to posses. Now, not every woman will be able to express easily all forms of kindness, or graciousness. Some are developed over time. But even early on in life you can usually tell if a woman is inclined towards kindness or cruelty. Keep in mind that in a long marriage you will be with a woman for far longer than her beauty will last- make sure to pick a woman whose personality is one that is warm and inviting, and not contentious or quarrelsome. Else you might find yourself living on a rooftop….

Something that it is important to remember is that individual women will demonstrate these qualities in different ways. Just as every woman is unique, so too is how each woman demonstrates her possession (or lack thereof) of these qualities. You cannot simply ask a woman if she is, say, diligent, and get an accurate answer. Instead you must observe her. See what she does, and what she doesn't do. Just as you know a tree by the

fruit it bears, you know the qualities of a woman by what she does.

Note: I drew from many Books of the Bible to support this list. Proverbs and Sirach were especially prominent. However, other women were valuable sources of positive traits to look for, including Ruth, Abigal, Sarah (from the Book of Tobit), Esther and Judith. Also, Titus 2 and 1 Peter 3 also contributed.

[Update: Not all of these character traits are alike in how someone acquires them. Some, like diligence and trustworthiness, must be nurtured carefully from a young age in order to mature properly. Others can be acquired later in life. I think you can break them down into three categories in terms of how late in life they can be developed.

The first group, Fear of the Lord and Courage, are both amenable to change later in life. While someone can be taught the tenets of the faith throughout their life, the conscious decision to submit to God and to fear/revere Him as we should is an intensely personal choice. Such a choice is based on personal willpower and discipline, and is something that can manifest at any stage of life. A woman might have grown up an atheist, but can be convicted at some later point (such as when she turns 21) and become just as sincere in her faith as someone who was born to it. Likewise, courage is a matter of willpower. You cannot *teach* courage- you can give examples of it, but someone ultimately makes the choice for themselves to be courageous or not. This is something that can morph a lot during a lifetime.

The second group includes Kindness, Sensibility and Diligence. These are qualities that tend to require some nurturing to develop in a healthy manner. While not impossible, it is unlikely for a woman to have them without having had their seeds planted while she was young. Those who do change their ways and develop these traits later in life tend to be, in my experience, those women who had been reared properly but rebelled against it. Still, not impossible or unheard of for someone to acquire them without that foundation.

The last “group” is just Trustworthiness. I have never, in all my life, encountered someone who has ever changed in this regard. Either they can be trusted, or they can’t. Perhaps some folks will disagree with me here, but I can’t personally think of any examples which run counter to this. Whether someone can be trusted or not seems to be a fixed trait.

One last point- while these traits might be acquired later in life, one should never marry a woman expecting or hoping that she develops them. It is best, when one considers marrying a woman, to believe that she is at her best the day of your wedding, and will only get worse from there on out. While a cynical approach, I think it wise. It is simply folly to expect a woman to develop any of these traits after marriage. So only marry one who already has them- when she acquired them is less important than their presence and/or intensity.**]**

IV.

In summary, Scripture seems to indicate there are six qualities that a man should look for in a woman to determine if she will likely make a good wife: god-fearing, sensible, courageous, trustworthy, diligent and kind. Be careful not to mix up these important

character traits with various life skills that can take years or decades to acquire or hone. I expect to expand on some of the ideas introduced in this post with follow-up posts down the line, and also to respond to any disagreements that arise in the comments. So expect that this won't be the last word on the subject. Furthermore, I will probably update this post to correct mistakes and to fill in anything I've forgotten.

Final note- there is no such thing as a perfect woman. I rather doubt any of my readers need reminding of this. But it is important to mention all the same. None of us is perfect, and if we wait for perfection none of us will ever marry. So don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Look for a woman who has a good, solid foundation in these character traits and the capacity, and willingness, for growth.

What Qualities Should A Woman Look For In A Husband?

September 6, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

In my last post, What qualities should a man look for in a wife?, I was asked by Maeve to "write a post about what a woman should look for/expect in a husband." This was a reasonable request, and so I delved a bit into Scripture to create this counter-part for my last post. [Something that isn't clear from the title, but is baked into this post and the last one, is that it is for Christians.] The goal is some basic qualities that a Christian woman should look for in a man to determine if he is "husband material."

This post was a much easier endeavor, as I focused on *Character traits* rather than more specific *life skills*. However, before I mention what I think a Christian woman should look for, I wanted to mention a few suggestions brought up by commenters in the last post, as well as another set of traits mentioned elsewhere. That will be section 2. Section 3 will be my own thoughts. And of course Section 4 is the conclusion.

II.

Commenter Aquinas Dad suggested that the traits I was looking for had already been codified by the Church, a reference to the seven virtues:

Prudence
Temperance
Fortitude
Justice
Faith
Hope
Charity

While this is a good list of qualities for a potential husband to have, it is too broad and general to really be helpful to a woman trying to determine if a man would make for a good husband. Instead, we need to get a bit more specific (or particular, depending on how you want to define it) in order to get some identifiable qualities for Christian women to look out for.

While I was thinking about good qualities for a man to possess, I started to think of what might already be out there which could help. In particular, I was looking for something not written recently or by women. Searching around, I found in the Boy Scout Law something close to what I was thinking of. It has 12 points:

- Trustworthy
- Loyal
- Helpful
- Friendly

- Courteous
- Kind
- Obedient
- Cheerful
- Thrifty
- Brave
- Clean
- Reverent

A nice list, but a little shallow in some respects, and too long. It is possible to condense them down somewhat and make a shorter list. Besides, some of those points aren't really necessary qualities in a husband, although good ones for a man to have.

Moving back to my original post, Deti and Deep Strength also chimed in, offering their thoughts on the subject. Here is the final list that they came up with:

- God-fearing
- Independence (he doesn't need a woman)
- Interdependent on other men (is part of a "tribe" and has a place in it)
- Firmness of resolve (has a well developed worldview of facts and Truth, and is wedded to it)
- Industriousness (works a job and has some material things, or the potential for same)
- Temperate (even keeled in his day to day life, has basic mastery over his mind and body, does all in moderation and nothing to excess, easy going, slow to anger)
- Enforces his boundaries (1) enforce the boundaries and restrict others' behavior to remain within them; or (2) remove the offending person/situation/behavior. This can be applied to jobs, social situations, friends, girlfriends and wives.

All in all a good list, although I think again there can be some condensing. Plus a few things are missing as well.

With all of this in mind, lets move on to part 3 where I discuss what I think Christian woman should look for.

III.

I used the above examples as guidelines or templates, and then looked at Scripture to fill everything in and make sure I was on the right track. Here are the qualities,. in what I perceive to be the order of importance, that a Christian woman should look for in a husband:

1. God-fearing
2. Courageous
3. Honorable
4. Sensible
5. Resolute

6. Mission-Oriented
7. Temperate

Now for a bit more as to what they each mean.

- **God-fearing-** This is much the same as it was for my previous post. Devotion and faith all fall under this character trait. Scripture makes it clear that we are not to be yoked to unbelievers, and that Christian women shouldn't marry men who are not of the Lord. So this trait is absolutely essential. It is also the most secure safe-guard that a woman can have that the man she marries love her as Christ loved the church.
- **Courageous-** Courage is a quintessential masculine trait, and is pretty much required for a man to really achieve his full potential. It is essential to face the many travails of life, as well as to really live your faith as required. For a husband especially be extremely wary about marrying a man without courage. Odds are, he will fold easily and be unable to lead you and your family as is required. The end result is you will probably lose sexual attraction to him, and suffer an unhappy family life. Courage is also necessary for him to protect his family as needed.
- **Honorable-** This traits encompasses trustworthiness and loyalty. It means a man of his word- someone who will follow through on his promises and treat you as you both want and need to be treated. Outside of faith, this means a man who will do the right thing- by you and by others. Kindness is a plus, but honor is a requirement. One can also include a strong sense of Justice here too- always a valuable thing in a man.
- **Sensible-** Prudence and wisdom fall here, but so does mastery of self. His ability to exercise sound judgment means the difference between a head of the household who knows what he is doing, and head of the household who doesn't. Remember, you will need to submit to his authority, so pick someone who is going to make wise decisions. Also, someone who is in control of himself is very important, as it will keep trouble and sorrow away from your home. Well-grounded is another way to describe a man with this trait.
- **Resolute-** When he sets his mind on something, does he see it through to the end? Is he a hard worker? A resolute man is one who won't be distracted or easily driven off course. Diligence is a key example of this trait. It is a very important trait, as his hard work and resolve will ensure that there is food on the table and a roof over the heads of you and your family. Jobs come and go, but a strong work ethic takes a life-time to develop. Likewise, any task which is necessary to your family's well being requires a resolute man to see through to completion.
- **Mission Oriented-** This trait is somewhat difficult to explain. It means a man who is oriented towards a specific goal. He doesn't drift from place to place, or event to event. Instead he deliberates on what actions to take, and then sets about accomplishing his goals. While seemingly similar to Resolve (or Diligence), its not the same thing. Diligence kicks in *after* a man has begun to act- this trait is what

drives him beforehand. A man with this trait doesn't let distractions divert him from his goal. Nor does he pedestalize women- he knows that a wife isn't his mission but a key help in him achieving his mission.

- **Temperate-** Cool, calm and collected describes a man with this trait. A temperate man is one who controls his emotions, rather than let his emotions control him. You will find living with a temperate man to be much easier than living with a man ruled by his emotions, or subject to emotional outbursts from time to time.

Just as with my post concerning women, men will display these traits in different ways. All men are unique, even though they share many masculine qualities. And just like with women, you will need to observe a man to get a measure of how he fares when these character traits are concerned. Some can be easier to discover, perhaps in a conversation or two, while others will simply take time.

Just like with my previous post, Proverbs and Sirach were both pivotal in providing scriptural support. I also looked at many of the male figures in the Bible, and observed and analyzed their strengths and their flaws.

IV.

In summary, there are seven key character traits that Christian women should look for in a man to determine if he will make a good husband: god-fearing, courageous, honorable, sensible, resolute, mission-oriented and temperate. These are all character traits- more specific than the seven virtues but also not so specific as to include life-skills, which a man might not have had time to develop yet. As I close, I would like to note that there is no such thing as a perfect man. While I'm sure my regular readers don't need to be reminded of that, I feel it prudent to issue that reminder all the same. None of us is perfect, and if women wait for perfection they will wait forever and never marry. So don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Instead, look for a man with a solid foundation of these character traits, and one who demonstrates a capacity and eagerness to improve himself.

[I'm sure I have missed a few things, so don't be surprised to see this post get updated over time.]

Saturday Saints- #32

September 6, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's saint we have Saint Eulogius:

> **Saint Eulogius of Alexandria** (Greek: Εὐλόγιος) was Greek Patriarch of that see (Eulogius I) from 580 to 608. He is regarded as a saint, with a feast day of September 13.
>
> He was a successful combatant of the heretical errors then current in Egypt, notably the various phases of Monophysitism. He was a warm friend of Pope St. Gregory the Great, who corresponded with him, and received from that pope many flattering expressions of esteem and admiration.
>
> St. Eulogius refuted the Novatians, some communities of which ancient sect still existed in his diocese, and vindicated the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, against both Nestorius and Eutyches. Cardinal Baronius says that Gregory wished Eulogius to survive him, recognizing in him the voice of truth.
>
> It has been said that he restored for a brief period to the Church of Alexandria life and youthful vigour.
>
> Besides the above works and a commentary against various sects of Monophysites (Severians, Theodosians, Cainites and Acephali) he left eleven discourses in defence of Pope Leo I and the Council of Chalcedon, also a work against the Agnoetae, submitted by him before publication to Pope Gregory I, who after some observations authorized it unchanged. With exception of one sermon and a few fragments, all the writings of St. Eulogius have perished.

(All quoted from the wiki on him)



St. Eulogius

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #40

September 8, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Some of the comments over at this post at Elsepth's site are the inspiration for the first passage in today's post, from the Book of Genesis:

> [14] Then Rachel and Leah answered him, "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? [15] Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us. [16] All the property which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children; now then, whatever God has said to you, do."
>
> [17] So Jacob arose, and set his sons and his wives on camels; [18] and he drove away all his cattle, all his livestock which he had gained, the cattle in his possession which he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. [19] Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods. [20] And Jacob outwitted Laban the Arame′an, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. [21] He fled with all that he had, and arose and crossed the Euphra′tes, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

(Gen 31:14-21)

An interesting question arises of why Rachel stole those idols or images. I normally cite from the Revised Standard Version when making these posts, but I also have a paper copy of the New American Bible which is annotated. It uses the word image instead of idols or gods, and suggests that Rachel might not have stolen them for cultic purposes- that is, as idols to worship. Instead she might have stolen them because they were valuable, perhaps made of silver or gold. Given the complaint by the sisters about losing their inheritance, perhaps that is what really moved Rachel- an attempt to reclaim some of that lost inheritance.

Something else that I find fascinating is how a number of various cultic practices are either allowed or not treated disfavorably in the earlier sections of the OT, but later in the OT are forbidden. The process by which this happens is interesting because it shows a steady progression of God giving instructions to his chosen people on how to purify themselves and become holy. The problem, which has fully manifested by the time of Jesus, is that the focus of the Israelites/Jews moves from being holy to simply scrupulously keeping to the letter of the law. In the early Church this matter is debated intensely, with St. Paul taking the position that the Mosaic practices of Judaism were no longer necessary in so far as "purity" was concerned. As the next passages shows, the Church agreed with him:

> [22] Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsab′bas, and Silas, leading men among the

> brethren, [23] with the following letter: “The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cili′cia, greeting. [24] Since we have heard that some persons from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, [25] it has seemed good to us in assembly to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, [26] men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. [27] We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. [28] For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: [29] that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

(Acts 15:22-29)

Here much of the Mosaic law is swept aside for the Gentiles. This is a rather stunning move, when you think about it, because for over a thousand years Judaism had become more and more strict (with the Pharisees being the perfect example of this) with various rules and regulation. The leaders of the Church have realized that what matters is not the letter of the law, but the spirit- holiness. We are called by God to be holy, and thus what we do, and don’t do, should be motivated by that calling, not by a strict series of regulations.

Also important, in my view, is this language:

> “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”

The apostles clearly believed that they had the authority to determine rules and conduct for Christians. They had been empowered by Christ to administer and lead the faithful, and could and should exercise spiritual authority. Also, some involved in this decision were not apostles, but elders (presbyters) who had been chosen by the apostles. And there was no question that they too could exercise this authority. Which means that not only did the apostles have authority over the faithful, they could bestow that authority in turn onto others. The letters to Timothy and Titus bear this out and take it a step further, by indicating that both men could also appoint church leaders who could exercise authority. Spiritual authority was not meant to be a one shot deal with the apostles.

Defining The Problem

September 9, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

The purpose of this post is provide a single space where I define the terms that I use across my blog in ways that might be different in meaning from the common understanding. It is meant to serve as a reference in later posts, and as a place to direct inquiries made via comments or e-mail. I will be updating it over time to add more terms and to clarify and flesh out older terms. This will not be a static post. One thing I should make clear is that these are the terms/words as **I** used them. My commenters and other blogs might use them differently.

I've been meaning to write a post like this for a long time now, but never got around to it. A number of my posts, including my recent post "What qualities should a man look for in a wife?" have involved confusion and misunderstanding because readers and commenters didn't understand what I meant by certain terms. Having a frame of reference would have helped there. Also, Deep Strength's recent post, "Attraction, desire, chemistry, arousal and marriage" was another major catalyst in finally getting around to it. Keep in mind that he and I agree on a lot when it comes to definitions, but don't agree on everything.

II.

So, without further ado, here are the terms I would like to define:

Attractive: When I use this word it generally is in reference to sexual attractiveness. An attractive woman is a woman who is sexually attractive to men, and an attractive man is a man who is sexually attractive to women. It does *not* refer to traits which might be valuable in men or women, but do not affect their sexual attractiveness in any way.

Attractive/Attraction Traits: An attractive trait on someone is a feature that is sexually attractive- it generates sexual attraction in men or women. It is not something that might be desirable because it has positive ramifications, but doesn't affect how sexually attractive he or she is. An example of an attraction trait is a man or woman's facial structure- this is something that will affect how sexually attractive a man or woman is.

Attraction: When someone wants someone because he or she is sexually attractive to that person.

Desirable: When I use this word it is generally in reference to reasons to be drawn to a person for non-sexual reasons. It applies to those things someone might want in a man or woman, but do not impact their overall sexual attractiveness. Generally come into play only in long-term relationships. A desirable woman is a woman who has many traits that do not make her sexually attractive but otherwise raise her value as a potential long-term partner. A desirable man is a man who has many traits that do not make him sexually attractive but otherwise raise his value as a potential long-term partner.

Desirable/Desirability traits: Those traits which men or women want in the opposite

sex that don't affect sexual attraction but are otherwise valuable to have. Loyalty is an example of a desirable trait- it doesn't affect sexual attractiveness but is valuable in a potential long-term partner.

Desire: Refers to when someone wants someone else because he or she finds the other person sexually attractive *and* because that person has a number of positive traits which them them a good long-term partner. Example- If I desire a woman it means that I find her attractive and she has those traits which I value in a potential wife, so I want to make her mine.

AWALT: All Women Are Like That. Often used in conjunction with a broad statement about female nature. Generally means that nearly all women meet whatever standard or possess whatever behavior is being asserted, so it can be treated as though all women are like that.

NAWALT: Not All Women Are Like That. Often used to reject a statement that claims AWALT or implicates as much. Asserts that there are always outliers and exceptions to general female behaviors and actions.

FI: Refers to the Feminine Imperative.

Feminine Imperative: A concept (to the best of my knowledge) first advanced by blogger Rollo Tomassi at The Rational Male. A somewhat difficult concept to explain, I use it to refer to hardwired human biological conditioning which generally favors abstract female interests over abstract male interests in the social group. The general idea is that the FI manifests itself in those policies and rules which favor women over men, even when those rules/policies are illogical or run counter to other policies or beliefs (such as equality under the law). Unless consciously accounted and compensated for, any system over time will be overtaken by the FI and morph into one that favors women at the expense of men.

EAP: Stands for Entitled American Princess most of the time. Occasionally used to refer to an Evangelical American Princess. Both however are essentially the same thing as I used them, with the latter merely being more specific.

Entitled American Princess: Refers to an American woman (usually unmarried) with a massive entitlement complex who earnestly believes that all men should treat her as a real, live princess. That is, defer to her interests at all times. Such women see the overwhelming majority of men as mere tools to be used.

SMV: Stands for Sexual Market Value

Sexual Market Value: Refers to how sexually attractive someone is in the overall environment that they find themselves in. For women, this tends to be objective- a woman is not more or less attractive depending on how attractive the women near her are. Female SMV is usually rated on a 1-10 scale. Male attractiveness is partially subjective- how attractive a man is can be impacted by how attractive the other men in the environment ("market") are.

SMP: Stands for Sexual Marketplace.

Sexual Marketplace: Refers to the overall “dating” scene between men and women in which both sexes compete with their own sex for the attentions/affections of the opposite sex. Recognizes that attractiveness is the primary driving force in the overall “value” someone has in this system. The primary purposes of this environment, this “market” is sex and sexual gratification, and not long-term relationships or marriage.

MMV: Stands for Marriage Market Value.

Marriage Market Value: Refers to the overall “value” someone has when looking for a potential spouse in the overall environment that they find themselves in. Tends to be correlated with, but not necessarily match, SMV. MMV is a mix of objective factors, such as loyalty, and subjective factors, such as overall place in the job market. Both attraction and desirability traits determine MMV.

MMP: Stands for Marriage Marketplace.

Marriage Marketplace: Refers to overall collection of people seeking marriage in the present environment. At the moment the Sexual Marketplace is dominant, and thus the Marriage Marketplace is forced to operate within it. This creates a great many problems. Based on the understanding that some men and women make (or would make) better husbands or wives, and that men and women therefore compete with one another to get the best possible spouse.

Hypergamy: Refers to the female reproductive impulse which drives female behavior more than anything else. As used here, hypergamy is the female inclination to seek out the highest value (that is the most attractive) man available and to attempt to secure that male as a mate. Essentially, women are driven to have the best when it comes to men. If a better man comes along, they will want him instead. If a woman feels that she can do better than her present man, it will greatly reduce her attraction to him and her relationship with him may die. Hypergamy doesn’t care- it doesn’t care what a man has done in the past for a woman, it doesn’t care what promises she might have made or what oaths she might have sworn and it doesn’t care who might be hurt so long as it gets its way. However, women are not robots- they can overcame their hypergamous instincts and not be ruled by them… *if* they chose to.

Churchianity: Refers to a perverted, corrupted form of Christianity which is no longer consistent with basic Christian teaching and doctrine. Does not refer to sectarian splits, or arguments between faith traditions (i.e., Catholic v. Orthodox v. Protestant). Churchianity is heavily infected by modernism/liberalism, and would be unrecognizable to early Christians as representing the Christian faith. In many respects Churchianity is what happens when people attempt to reconcile their worldly views with Christianity. Rather than conforming to God, they conform to the world, and “adjust” their religious beliefs so that their faith is compatible with their worldly beliefs.

Churchian: Someone who practices Churchianity. A churchian is of the world, and not of God. Someone who does not accept that their faith requires rejecting the world and embracing the persecution which results from it.

Reality Versus Reason

September 11, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*This released sooner than I intended. I hadn't quite finished editing, so it might still have typos that need fixing, and I might change a few things around yet.*]

I.

One of the topics that comes up not infrequently in these parts is how messed up most people's expectations of marriage are. This seems to be the case whether it is a man or a woman being talked about, although the nature of how the expectation is in error might differ between them. What I want to do with this post is explore how those expectations might be "off", or whether they are really "off" to begin with. Hopefully this post will serve to bring a little clarity to the matter.

II.

To begin with, I want to quote from a comment that Elspeth left at my blog a few days back:

> Most people (men and women) have unrealistic expectations, about themselves, about what they are worth, about what they should be able to have. And those who know they can't have what they want will go without. Especially men. I've heard a couple of young men actually say that.

What I want to focus on with this comment is not its substance, at least, not yet. Rather, I want to focus on two words.

The first word I want to discuss: *unrealistic*. Elspeth is not the only one to have used this word when describing marriage expectations. Many commenters and bloggers, male and female alike, have used that word. The problem is that I think it isn't always used the same way by everyone. I believe that in many instance when people talk about unrealistic expectations, they are adding another word in by implication: *unreasonable.* What I think is really being claimed is that people have unrealistic *and* unreasonable expectations. Not all, perhaps, but I suspect it is the case with most. However, I believe it is a mistake to conflate unreasonable and unrealistic together in this manner. They are close in meaning, but not quite the same. To understand why, lets examine what each word means in this context.

Unrealistic would mean that it doesn't match up to what is likely or possible in the circumstances. Unrealistic expectations, for example, are those expectations which are not founded in reality and will not match up with what comes to pass.

Unreasonable, on the other hand, means that it isn't appropriate in the circumstances. Unreasonable expectations, for example are expectations which a reasonable person wouldn't have in those circumstances- he or she would understand that they are simply not appropriate. The *why* of the appropriateness is another inquiry.

Now, on the face of it, both are pretty similar, and in most circumstances will be

effectively indistinguishable. But with a little more digging the problem surfaces.

Let us now move to the second word: *expectations*. I think in most instances it is used in accord with the dictionary definition. This is how I believe Elspeth uses it. But sometimes people, in the context of marriage and potential spouses, use it when another word, such as *requirement*, would be more appropriate. In the marriage context, it could be expressed as "I *expect* any potential spouse of mine to have [criteria X]," which is just another way of of saying "I *require* that any potential spouse of mine to meet [criteria X]." When people refer to expectations in this sense and mean requirements, things can start to get muddy. The reason why is because while unrealistic expectations and unreasonable expectations are fairly similar most of the time, if not the same, the same cannot be said of unrealistic requirements and unreasonable requirements. This is because unrealistic requirements are not necessarily unreasonable requirements when it comes to a potential spouse.

In the present environment, many reasonable requirements which someone can have for a potential spouse might be simply unrealistic. Whether it be on matters of chastity, adherence to biblical roles or something else, your requirement might be quite reasonable to have… but there might not be any candidates available who meet that criteria.

It should also be noted that what is reasonable is context specific. It will vary, somewhat, from one person to the next. One's station in life will matter. But it should be possible for those evaluating someone in that station to agree upon what is reasonable or not, and whether he or she is setting up requirements which match this.

III.

There are a few points I want to make with what I've explained so far.

The first is that it behooves us to be as clear and precise as possible when using some of these terms. The substance of our arguments or any points we make can shift dramatically depending on whether we are using a word one way or the other. I started a post containing definitions of words and phrases that I use outside the norm because I want to avoid confusing people. As someone who is rather slapdash with his words, I realize that I am in no position to preach to anyone here, but I do think that it valuable to the overall discussion if we are careful in our word choice.

Second, I want to defend those with reasonable but perhaps unrealistic requirements. I think that everyone, man and woman alike, has the right to set a certain baseline level of what they should be able to require (or expect) from a potential spouse. This is especially the case among Christians, and that context will guide the rest of this. In fact, I would go so far as to say there is a *duty* to have a certain baseline standard in a spouse, if only for the sake of any children of the marriage. After all, they deserve the best possible mother/father.

Here are some, in my view, reasonable requirements that Christians can have about a potential spouse. It is reasonable for a chaste Christian man to require any potential wife to be chaste (and always have been). It is reasonable for him to require that any potential

wife conform to Traditional/Scriptural Christian teaching on the role of husband and wife. A Christian woman with a clean record can reasonably require that any potential husband not have a criminal record. It is reasonable to require that he be a hard worker and willing to provide for his family. And so on and so forth.

Now, in some circumstances it might not be realistic for a man to require chastity of a potential spouse, because most of the candidates simply won't be able to meet that requirement. The same might apply to a woman. But that doesn't change the reasonableness of that requirement. It is the nature of the thing required, and your life history and present station in life, which determines what is reasonable to require of a potential spouse. Keep in mind also that what is reasonable for women might not be reasonable for men, and vice versa.

Of course, the corollary to all of this is that I don't, and won't, defend those with unreasonable expectations/requirements. The different posts that I have written which have taken apart various "lists" have been attacks on unreasonable requirements in a future spouse. It is when people have unreasonable and unrealistic requirements that real problems develop.

Much of the reason why I want to defend reasonable requirements, whether or not they are realistic, is because for a long time many Christians, especially men, had unreasonable requirements. Yet at the same time those requirements were also realistic. Lest you think me crazy or contradicting myself, let me explain. They were unreasonable because they were *too accommodating*– they accepted spouses whom they should have rejected. There are two potential "fields" of unreasonableness- holding too high a standard, which for the circumstances is folly, and holding too *low* a standard, which is *also* folly. And for a long time here in the West too low of a standard was accepted, especially by men. Without any need to meet reasonable requirements, many Christians had no incentive to act reasonably. So they ended up acting unreasonably, and wouldn't have met the standards of anyone with reasonable requirements/expectations. The end result has been a slow and steady decline in the Church.

Alas, I'm not sure that if Christians start to have reasonable requirements it will turn things around. Incentives do matter, but things have gone so far astray that such steps might not be enough any longer. When many "Christians" act like this, you can get a real feel for the depth of the rot. But it would be nice if it could make a difference. Although the cost will be high, because reasonable standards and requirements will also be unrealistic requirements for many. It would mean that a large number of Christians will not be able to marry in the current environment. That is a lot to ask of many, I know. But ultimately I think it is for everyone's benefit. Especially since many an observer has remarked that no marriage is far better than a bad marriage. And it isn't like I'm asking (or suggesting) anyone to do something I wouldn't- because I've made that choice for myself, for better and for worse.

IV.

In summary, there is a difference between unreasonable and unrealistic requirements.

The latter is, in my view, defensible if paired with reasonable requirements, but the former is not.

Random Musings And Links- #5

September 13, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post will be mostly links. Minor musings at the end and with the links. As always, inclusion does not indicate support.

I want to begin with A Northern Observer's post Hypergamy's End Game. It tells of a town in Brazil populated and run by women. Read the post, read the article. There's a gold mine of ideas to extract there. Also, this quote of the day post is worth the read. [Update: ANO also suggests reading this piece on the Marxist roots of radical feminism.]

Next, Feminine But Not Feminist has a post up talking about how she believes Why Chaste Men Are Attractive. Personally I think she is confusing confidence in chastity, which is or can be attractive, with the chastity itself, which is desirable. Setting that aside, the comments in that post are still extremely lively and worth a long look.

Elspeth has had a slew of good posts lately. I would start with When the rubber meets the road, girls aren't being fooled. Follow with Marrying Wisely. Then move to Fixing What You Can Fix. Finish up with What's Cooking and Other Thoughts on Housewifery (is that a word E?).

Hearthie follows up on some thought's raised in Elspeth's posts in her own exploration of how He works all things together for good.

Maeve is ~~experiencing an existential crisis~~ waffling about getting a waffle iron. Although fate might have intervened. [Posts included herein due to my love of all things waffle.]

Deep Strength has several posts worth reading. Worth mentioning here is Being Christian can be offensive and the second part of his Dominion series.

Vox Day explores the Ghosts of the Alpha Widow. I know that the subject of Alpha Widows is one that generates a lot of controversy and objection from some quarters. But I think that of all the myriad things discussed and argued about in the 'sphere, it is amongst those with the strongest evidence to back up its existence. The real question or debate about Alpha Widowhood, in my view, is whether it is permanent or if it can be reduced, suppressed or even removed somehow.

Dalrock has had a couple of good posts lately. First is She's done it all wrong. Why hasn't God delivered the husband she is praying for? The comments are both interesting and atrocious at times, so I can't suggest you read through them all. But the main post is worth it. As is this little gem- Slutting made her a better Christian. People like that are among those the prophet Isaiah warned about.

Ballista at Society of Phineas talks about how The MSM Discovers the Personal Jesus. Frankly, it is rather shocking to me now how many of my "Christian" friends are now open Churchians. Many of them were, on the surface at least, far more devout than I in high school and college. But now I can see that they were the seeds sown on rocky soil- they sprouted quickly but withered just as quickly.

Mrs. C. has written an excellent post analyzing the problem of "superiority" when men

and women are concerned. You can find it at Which is Better? The Masculine or The Feminine?

Allamagoosa has a recipe for Homemade Fries which makes me wish I wasn't eating low-carb at the moment.

Rollo Tomassi at The Rational Male has been blogging for three years now. While he and I often don't see eye-to-eye, his blog was one of the ones which is most responsible for me both finding and sticking around the 'sphere.

Stingray wonders about Changes in the Wind? I think that there is definitely a shift going on. I've heard some female colleagues (younger ones) talking in ways that I didn't hear even 5 years ago about men and how they are affected by the law. But I'm not sure yet what exactly is going on, or where it is heading. She also talks about Choice and feminists.

Leane at Finer Femininity is taking a break. In the meantime, read this piece on dealing with the suffering of those close to us.

Mrs. ktc warns about the perils of trying to "make" healthier husbands.

Free Northerner talks about Preventing the killing fields. Setting aside any agreement or disagreement with his points, I do think that violence is a likely outcome from those without a sense of hope or purpose. It is something that must be kept in mind whenever discussing broad-scale social issues.

Lastly, over at Girls Being Girls Stingray tries to answer a reader's question of How do I prove I'd make a good wife?

As for even more random musings…

I'm planning on writing a post about the Sin of Sloth. I think it is the hidden sin of our times- it is both extremely prevalent, and yet completely invisible to most observers. A lot of problems can be laid at its feet. Consequently I think it deserves more attention from Christians.

A post idea I've had for a long time, but never gotten around to, is a collection of all the ways that AWALT. Basically, to try and get a comprehensive list. Of course, the amount of contention such a post would generate would be astronomical. So I may save it for when I want to drum up traffic….

Something that I want to address as well is the Looks/Athleticism versus Personality debate that seems to show up all the time in the comment section at The Rationale Male. A lot of folks there place too much stock in Looks, as compared to the other LAMPS/PSALM attributes. My suspicion is that the reason why is because Looks and Athleticism are obvious to everyone, whereas Personality/Power can be much more difficult to pick up. Not sure when I will get to writing it, but would love to finish it sometime this month.

Saturday Saints- #33

September 14, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We move yet again to the letter F. So that means that today's saint is one of the most famous in the Western Church, Francis of Assisi:

> **Saint Francis of Assisi** (Italian: *San Francesco d'Assisi*; born **Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone**, but nicknamed **Francesco** ("the Frenchman") by his father; 1181/1182 – October 3, 1226) was an Italian Catholic friar and preacher. He founded the men's Order of Friars Minor, the women's Order of St. Clare, and the Third Order of Saint Francis for men and women not able to live the lives of itinerant preachers, followed by the early members of the Order of Friars Minor, or the monastic lives of the Poor Clares. Though he was never ordained to the Catholic priesthood, Francis is one of the most venerated religious figures in history.
>
> Francis' father was Pietro di Bernardone, a prosperous silk merchant. Francis lived the high-spirited life typical of a wealthy young man, even fighting as a soldier for Assisi. While going off to war in 1204, Francis had a vision that directed him back to Assisi, where he lost his taste for his worldly life. On a pilgrimage to Rome, he joined the poor in begging at St. Peter's Basilica. The experience moved him to live in poverty. Francis returned home, began preaching on the streets, and soon amassed a following. His Order was authorized by Pope Innocent III in 1210. He then founded the Order of Poor Clares, which became an enclosed religious order for women, as well as the Order of Brothers and Sisters of Penance (commonly called the Third Order).
>
> In 1219, he went to Egypt in an attempt to convert the Sultan to put an end to the conflict of the Crusades. By this point, the Franciscan Order had grown to such an extent that its primitive organizational structure was no longer sufficient. He returned to Italy to organize the Order. Once his community was authorized by the Pope, he withdrew increasingly from external affairs. In 1223, Francis arranged for the first Christmas nativity scene. In 1224, he received the stigmata, making him the first recorded person to bear the wounds of Christ's Passion. He died during the evening hours of October 3, 1226, while listening to a reading he had requested of Psalm 142(141).
>
> On July 16, 1228, he was proclaimed a saint by Pope Gregory IX. He is known as the patron saint of animals and the environment, and is one of the two patron saints of Italy (with Catherine of Siena). It is customary for Catholic and Anglican churches to hold ceremonies blessing animals on his feast day of October 4. He is also known for his love of the Eucharist, his sorrow during the Stations of the Cross, and for the creation of the Christmas crèche or Nativity Scene.

Far, far more can be read and learned about St. Francis at his wiki, found here.



St. Francis of Assisi

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #41

September 14, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is heavily inspired by the discussion and debate that developed in Reality Versus Reason. At issue is the following passage from the Gospel of John:

> Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. [2] And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, [3] Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, [4] rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. [5] Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. [6] He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" [7] Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." [8] **Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet."** Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." [9] Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

(John 13:1-9)

The part in bold is the main focus of the inquiry today. You see, I asserted that Jesus, when He washed His disciple's feet, was trying to teach them a lesson. And a major part of that lesson was submission. My [poorly worded and organized] specific argument was that Jesus was showing the apostles that they should trust Him to always do what was right, and so should always submit to His wishes. Peter, by telling Jesus "You shall never wash my feet," was actively rebelling against God. In other words, he was refusing to submit- motivated, in my view, by a lack of trust in Jesus. The general argument that I was trying to make was this: "Even when, and perhaps *especially* when we do something out of love for another, the one we love can and will still rebel against it." [You can find the start of the debate here.]

Mrs. C. disagreed with my assessment. She offered her thoughts:

> Peter's statement was one of shock, not rebellion, at the thought of letting his God wash his feet. It was an acknowledgement of his humility towards Christ but Christ wanted to teach him that to lead is to serve, which is why when Christ explained if you don't do this, you can't be a part of me, then Peter eagerly replied "also my hands and my head."

I replied that shock or surprise doesn't change the substance of Peter's response:

> The cause of the rebellion, whether shock or disbelief, is irrelevant. Peter

> shouldn't have needed to have had Jesus explain to him why He did what He did. Peter should have accepted and obeyed. This gets to the heart of submission- we are to submit, whether or not we understand. A general doesn't have to explain everything to a subordinate, and a parent doesn't have to explain everything to a child. Understanding may be nice, but it isn't required for us to submit.

There was some more back and forth on the matter, and eventually I decided that it was time to look to some authority on the matter. I looked to see what the early fathers of the Church had to say about this passage. Here is what St. John Chrysostom, Doctor of the Church, had to say on this passage from John 13 (and in particular, that part):

> When therefore He came to Peter, he saith unto Him, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?"
>
> Ver. 7. "He saith unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know here after."
>
> That is "thou shalt know how great is the gain from this, the profit of the lesson, and how it is able to guide us into all humblemindedness." What then doth Peter? He still hinders Him, and saith,
>
> Ver. 8. "Thou shalt never wash my feet." "What doest thou, Peter? Rememberest thou not those former words? Saidst thou not, 'Be merciful to Thyself,'[1981] and heardest thou not in return, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan'? (Matt. xvi. 22.) Art thou not even so sobered, but art thou yet vehement?" "Yea," he saith, "for what is being done is a great matter, and full of amazement." Since then he did this from exceeding love, Christ in turn subdueth him by the same; and as there He effected this by sharply rebuking him, and saying, "Thou art an offense unto Me," so here also by saying,
>
> "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." What then saith that hot and burning one?
>
> Ver. 9. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."
>
> Vehement in deprecation, he becometh yet more vehement in acquiescence; but both from love. For why said He not wherefore He did this, instead of adding a threat? Because Peter would not have been persuaded. For had He said, "Suffer it, for by this I persuade you to be humbleminded," Peter would have promised it ten thousand times, in order that his Master might not do this thing. But now what saith He? He speaketh of that which Peter most feared and dreaded, the being separated from Him; for it is he who continually asks, "Whither goest Thou?" (Ver. 36.) Wherefore also he said, "I will give[1982] even my life for Thee." (Ver. 37.) And if, after hearing, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," he still persisted, much more would he have done so had he learnt (the meaning of the action). Therefore said He, "but thou shalt know hereafter," as being aware, that should he learn it immediately he would still resist. And Peter said not, "Tell me, that I may suffer Thee," but (which was much

> more vehement) he did not even endure to learn, but withstands Him,[1983]257 saying, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” But as soon as He threatened, he straightway relaxed his tone.

(source)

St. Ambrose, Doctor of the Church, in his letter on the Mysteries of the Church, said this:

> For our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel washed the feet of His disciples. When He came to Simon Peter, Peter said: *You shall never wash my feet.* John 13:8 He did not perceive the mystery, and therefore he refused the service, for he thought that the humility of the servant would be injured, if he patiently allowed the Lord to minister to him. And the Lord answered him: *If I wash not your feet, you will have no part with Me.* Peter, hearing this, replies: *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* The Lord answered: *He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet but is clean every whit.* John 13:9-10

(source)

Here is what St. Augustine, Doctor of the Church, had to say:

> When the Lord was washing the disciples’ feet, *He comes to Simon Peter; and Peter says unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?* For who would not be filled with fear at having his feet washed by the Son of God? Although, therefore, it was a piece of the greatest audacity for the servant to contradict his Lord, the creature his God; yet Peter preferred doing this to the suffering of his feet to be washed by his Lord and God. Nor ought we to think that Peter was one among others who so expressed their fear and refusal, seeing that others before him had suffered it to be done to themselves with cheerfulness and equanimity. For it is easier so to understand the words of the Gospel, because that, after saying, *He began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded,* it is then added, *Then comes He to Simon Peter,* as if He had already washed the feet of some, and after them had now come to the first of them all. For who can fail to know that the most blessed Peter was the first of the apostles? But we are not so to understand it, that it was after some others that He came to him; but that He began with him. When, therefore, He began to wash the disciples’ feet, He came to him with whom He began, namely, to Peter; and then Peter took fright at what any one of them might have been frightened, and said, *Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?* What is implied in this *Thou*? And what in *my*? These are subjects for thought rather than for speech; lest perchance any adequate conception the soul may have formed of such words may fail of explanation in the utterance.
>
> 2. But *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do you know not now, but you shall know hereafter.* And not even yet, terrified as he was by the sublimity of the Lord’s action, does he allow it to be done, while ignorant of its purpose; but is unwilling to see, unable to endure, that Christ should thus humble Himself to his

> very feet. *You shall never,* he says, *wash my feet.* What is this *never* [*in æternum*]? I will never endure, never suffer, never permit it: that is, a thing is not done *in æternum* which is never done. Then the Saviour, to terrify His reluctant patient with the danger of his own salvation, says, *If I wash you not, you shall have no part with me.* He speaks in this way, *If I wash you not,* when He was referring only to his feet; just as it is customary to say, You are trampling on me, when it is only the foot that is trampled on. And now the other, in a perturbation of love and fear, and more frightened at the thought that Christ should be withheld from him, than even to see Him humbled at his feet, exclaims, *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* Since this, indeed, is Your threat, that my bodily members must be washed by You, not only do I no longer withhold the lowest, but I lay the foremost also at Your disposal. Deny me not having a part with You, and I deny You not any part of my body to be washed.

(source)

I stopped at those three sources, owing to my limited time and because I was having trouble easily finding more.

As for whom was more in the right, on first blush it seems to me that we both were sort of right and sort of wrong. All acknowledge that Peter was in the wrong, although generally agree that his reasons were noble, if misplaced. But rather than service and leaders as service being the message, baptism and the remission of sins seems to be their central concern. At the same time, none of them mention submission or learning to submit to God’s will either. So I’ll leave it to my readers to properly judge which of us was more in accord, and to offer their own thoughts on the matter.

Appearances

September 18, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[To begin with, apologies for the low level of activity here at this blog, and elsewhere. I am still catching up with comments here. Hopefully I will have time to respond to them today. The next few weeks will be very busy for me, and posting and commenting will be erratic, at best. So don't be surprised if my weekend, religious themed posts are the only ones I make. Not sure how long this will continue, but into October at the very least.]

Short post today, following up with something I said in my most recent musings post. Therein I said the following:

> Something that I want to address as well is the Looks/Athleticism versus Personality debate that seems to show up all the time in the comment section at The Rationale Male. A lot of folks there place too much stock in Looks, as compared to the other LAMPS/PSALM attributes. My suspicion is that the reason why is because Looks and Athleticism are obvious to everyone, whereas Personality/Power can be much more difficult to pick up. Not sure when I will get to writing it, but would love to finish it sometime this month.

To clarify, when I say Looks in that quote I meant the more general category of Appearance, which is used in the simpler alternative to my LAMPS/PSALM formula, APE, to encompass both Looks and Athleticism. I don't think most of Rollo's commenters distinguish between the two, so for the remainder of this post I will use Appearance, or A, in lieu of Looks and/or Athleticism.

To quickly summarize what many argue over at Rollo's blog: Appearance matters more than anything. Good looking men get all the good looking women. Personality and "Game" only gets a man so far. If you aren't born good-looking, you are just out of luck.

There's more, but I think I got the heart of it. As for my response, well, I think that argument is bunk. Which should surprise no one, really, since I've argued for over a year that the most important part of male sexual attractiveness is a man's masculinity and personality, which are both tied together. I think there are two reasons why many of the men there have come to that erroneous conclusion.

The first reason is that handsome, good-looking men are also more likely to be confidence and assertive, and those score stronger on their Personality/Power attribute. This comes about because Appearance is the easiest attribute to evaluate. You just need to look at a man to get a fairly accurate reading on where he falls on the scale of Appearance. Since women notice it so easily, they will often direct a lot of attention early on at handsome men, in order to evaluate them more fully (although they may not consciously realize this). Such attention will often, at least initially, be positive. Good-looking men who receive this kind of positive attention are likely to build their confidence more easily, as well as to hone their communication skills with women. This in turn will, over time, improve their Power/Personality scores as well.

So it isn't simply that handsome men just have their looks going for them, they often will also have their confidence and interpersonal skills going for them as well. But those talents/skills aren't as visible as a man's looks. So those who observe the success of handsome men with women don't realize that a lot more is going on beneath the surface than just looks. This is supported by reports from many in the 'sphere of conventionally handsome men who were able to get initial attention from women but quickly lose it due to personality defects. Whether that is shyness or feminization leading to an emasculated personality, those men find themselves victims of the fact that Power/Personality is more important than Appearance to female sexual attraction.

The second reason for this disconnect is that women want it all. Women want a man who scores well on *all* the LAMPS/PSALM factors. If given the choice between a good-looking man "with Game" and an average-looking man "with Game", women will choose the former (at least, in so far as attraction is concerned). Since good-looking men tend to be confident, they "have Game", more often than not, it stands to reason that a good-looking man will simply be more attractive all around than a man who isn't good-looking. Surmounting that hurdle is possible though. Strong External factors, such as social Status or Money, can give an average-looking man an edge. But relatively few men can have that kind of Status or Money. So in the present SMP good-looking men have a significant advantage over men who are only average (or below) in looks. This is only heightened by the fact that women can often achieve decent Status and Money values for themselves, thus raising the bar for men. Personality can compensate for a deficiency in Appearance, but it is very, very difficult to have Power/Personality score that is high enough to beat out a man with a high Appearance score *and* a high Power/Personality score.

Taken together, those two factors- good-looking men also have a high Power/Personality score, and women wanting it all, explain the phenomenon that the commenters at Rollo's blog have observed and described. Of course, my readers are free to disagree and voice that disagreement in the comments.

I should note that I also have another post on attraction which I want to work on, although I have no idea when I'll have the time for it. I want to explore some alternate theories of attraction, including that which Rollo seems to advocate.

Saturday Saints- #34

September 20, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We move once again to the letter G, and this brings us to today's saint, Genevieve of Paris:

> **Saint Genevieve** (Sainte Geneviève) (Nanterre, c. 419/422 – Paris 502/512), in Latin **Sancta Genovefa**, from Germanic *keno* (kin) and *wefa* (wife), is the patron saint of Paris in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox tradition. Her feast is kept on 3 January.
>
> She was born in Nanterre and moved to Paris after encountering Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes and dedicated herself to a Christian life. In 451 she led a "prayer marathon" that was said to have saved Paris by diverting Attila's Huns away from the city. When Childeric I besieged the city in 464 and conquered it, she acted as an intermediary between the city and its conqueror, collecting food and convincing Childeric to release his prisoners.

You can find out more about St. Genevieve at her wiki article, here.



St. Genevieve

An Eye On The Faith

September 21, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Small post today. Just a few observations related to church and Christianity in general.

- I passed by a church a few days back and noticed that there was a single spot near the front that wasn't handicapped parking, yet had some sort of writing on the asphalt. Curious, I went over to see what it said. The message? "Reserved for Pastor's Wife." Ah, those little status symbols, can't forget them, can we? Hypergamy, like greed, never sleeps.
- I attend both Latin and non-Latin Masses in several different Catholic churches, depending on what my schedule permits. The most striking difference is age- the median age at the Latin Mass Parish that I attend is probably a third that of the Novus Ordo parish I usually attend.
- On a similar vein, that same church proves the importance of having lots of kids. When I attended Mass there last, I was one of the youngest people there (second or third youngest, and I'm no spring chicken). Looking around, I realized that any church which doesn't encourage large families is a church that is doomed to die. The standard 2-3 kids of most Catholic families these days just doesn't cut it. Given the low retention rate these days, plus general population stability numbers, that kind of family size means a church will die out over time. And that is exactly what I see when I attend that church- at least, at the non-Spanish masses. Those are very different, at least for the moment. But of course it should be mentioned that their family size is much higher.
- I've attended good services and bad services at Latin and NO Masses. The whole gamut? I've seen that. And however bad a Latin Mass turns out, it isn't nearly so bad as an awful NO Mass. Worst case scenario for a Latin Mass is the priest stumbles over the words at points. But for an NO mass, the worst is unbearable: a butchering of Amazing Grace by the choir, off-key and tone-deaf parishioners trying to sing along, a long-winded homily that not only repeats itself but also is devoid of substance, and a dress code that wouldn't be acceptable at a Mad Max audition.
- Very few Catholic churches make real efforts to be inviting to newcomers. Over my lifetime I've attended Mass at many, many parishes. And only a few have ever been truly inviting. I've heard the same from others as well. Most churches don't seem to care, whether we are talking about the clergy or the laity. Part of this is the utter lack of community at most of these churches. Some were better, but even those with a sense of community never seemed all that inviting to newcomers. Or at least newcomers who were single men.

That's enough for now. If anyone has any observations of their own, feel free to contribute.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #42

September 22, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage today comes from the Prophet Isaiah:

> [16] The Lord said:
> Because the daughters of Zion are haughty
> and walk with outstretched necks,
> glancing wantonly with their eyes,
> mincing along as they go,
> tinkling with their feet;
> [17] the Lord will smite with a scab
> the heads of the daughters of Zion,
> and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts.

> [18] In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; [19] the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarfs; [20] the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; [21] the signet rings and nose rings; [22] the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; [23] the garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

> [24] Instead of perfume there will be rottenness;
> and instead of a girdle, a rope;
> and instead of well-set hair, baldness;
> and instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;
> instead of beauty, shame.
> [25] Your men shall fall by the sword
> and your mighty men in battle.
> [26] And her gates shall lament and mourn;
> ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground.

(Isaiah 3:16-26)

As I was reading through Isaiah again this passage stood out to me. It wasn't so much the justice that God was going to mete, but the reasons for it. Haughtiness, pride, those are the things that provoke God to punish the women of Zion. And why not? They were proud in their prosperity, their wealth, their security. No longer did they hold fast to the Lord. In fact, they didn't even think that they needed God anymore. And so the Lord decides to disabuse them of their misplaced sense of security of self.

Given the prosperity and wealth and security of the modern age here in the West, I think that most Christian women would do well to dwell upon reading these words, and tremble when thinking of what came after.

The second passage comes from 2 Peter:

> [14] Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him
> without spot or blemish, and at peace. [15] And count the forbearance of our Lord
> as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the
> wisdom given him, [16] speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some
> things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their
> own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. [17] You therefore, beloved,
> knowing this beforehand, beware lest you be carried away with the error of
> lawless men and lose your own stability. [18] But grow in the grace and knowledge
> of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day
> of eternity. Amen.

(2 Peter 3:14-18)

This passage, like a number of other passages in the New Testament, reveals that even early in the Church's history there were those trying to twist scripture to fit their own purposes. Given that the apostles themselves had to combat heresy, why should it surprise us to see it so prevalent in general Christian culture today? Our Lord told us that the Truth would set us Free. The Adversary knows this, and so always endeavors to encourage deceit in men and women to keep the Truth buried beneath lies. Just like the apostles, we too need to confront and root out these lies whenever they show themselves. Otherwise they will take further hold in the hearts of the faithful and lead them astray. As for those who are not of the faith, they will never know it unless we bring these lies to light.

Need Versus Want

September 24, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Reader and commenter DJ recently left the following comment in my Questions and Suggestions page:

> I've been reading and interacting for a while on your blog and one thing I realized isn't clear in your posts. It often seems like you and others on this page would rather have a wife because they need you ~~your~~ [as] a meal ticket as opposed to they want to be with you. Bear with me on this[,] often there is talk about the good old days when women had limited options, at the same time there is complaining about a lack of sexual enthusiasm in women [with] "duty sex" and how that is hurtful. So I would like your take on this seeming inconsistency.

I have a small amount of free time with which to respond to his inquiry, so here is my hastily written reply. As always, I begin with by noting that I can only speak for myself. Other men around these parts will likely have different opinions on the matter.

From what I can tell, the main question that DJ is asking me is this:

Would you prefer your wife to feel like she needs you, out of material necessity, or would you prefer a wife who wants to be with you, out of sexual desire?

Now, if I had to chose between the two, and could only choose one of the two, then I would definitely choose the latter. If I was to marry, I would want my wife to *want* me- that is, to be sexually attracted to me. As a number of bloggers have explained for years, especially Rollo, the female "attraction" (not my use of the term) for a man's resources is no guarantee that a woman will want him sexually. Marrying a woman who fits the former category is risky- there is no guarantee that she won't freeze me out, and then what? In the present environment I would have no recourse for a frigid wife. In fact, since she would be a net resource drain on me, I would be worse for marrying her.

Ideally, if I had to choose one thing that I was certain would bind a wife to me, it would be Christian marriage vows and all they encompass. If I could be assured of that, then I (and I suspect many other men) would feel far more secure. Sexual desire, after all, can be a fleeting thing. And as I just mentioned, material necessity is no guarantee of sexual desire.

[*Ok, so I sort of lied before. I will claim to speak for others besides myself.*]

When men around these parts talk about limiting female options, it is important to understand that we are not talking about some alternative system or method of getting women to desire us. It doesn't work that way, and we know it. Rather, what we are discussing are possible methods to keep wives bound to their husbands. It is all about ties, really. And no, not the kind you wear.

If a woman feels like she needs a man's material resources (meal ticket), then that need ties her to that man. If a woman feels sexually drawn to a man, and wants to sleep with

him, that ties her to that man. If a woman is married to a man, and the law says she cannot simply leave him for another, that ties her to that man.

What we are advocating is a system where as many different social conventions, laws and other means tie wives to their husbands, as is possible. The more that binds a woman to her husband, the more secure the marriage is likely to be. This won't necessarily affect her sexual desire for her husband, but it will protect him from divorce or abandonment. All things considered, this is better than nothing. Coupled with a restoration of "standing consent" to the legal system, and men will be much more secure in their marriages. Of course that means more "duty sex", but from what I hear from many husbands duty sex is better than none at all. And many times what starts as duty sex will morph into enjoyment on her part.

So again, its not like we want one of these things over the others. We want both, and more besides. Women are moral agents, but they, like men, respond to incentives. And the more that is in place which encourages them to stay with their husbands, and to act as proper wives, the better. Of course, the same logic would apply to husbands as well. The overall goal is to incentive marriage, and incentive staying in marriage and upholding your vows, and to discourage the opposite.

Update: A few points of clarification.

1) I wouldn't want a woman to be my wife only because she needs me to survive. I would want her to want to be with me. I suspect that neither of us would enjoy a marriage based only on material need. Nor would I even deserve a wife if I could only have one by forcing her to choose that path to survival

2) I am not looking for a wife simply to have an outlet for my sex drive. I want a great deal more, and am looking for a great deal more, in any woman I consider as a potential wife. Ideally, I would like someone I could have deep conversations with. Someone that I could relate to. Someone whose company I enjoy throughout the day, not simply when we are alone in the bedroom.

3) Lastly, I wanted to address this comment left by DJ:

> It was more because I got the sense that the general feeling is if they don't need me they will leave.

This sentiment is sparked by the fear that many men have that they will be abandoned by their wives. That they will be divorced, have their assets seized, their children taken from them and their lives ruined. Given the hideously high divorce rate right now, as well as the fact that women initiate most divorces, this is not an unfounded fear. It shouldn't come as a surprise, then, that they would grasp for any means available to protect themselves from that fate. Since things like "wanting to be with someone" are ephemeral- you can always change your opinion about someone, after all- it only makes sense for them to support means that would work irrespective of what a woman might feel at one particular point in time.

Can’t Win For Playing The Game

September 26, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

If this article is to be believed, at the University of Michigan a man can be a perpetrator of sexual violence whether he sleeps with a woman, or not:

> Examples of abuse listed on the University of Michigan’s domestic violence awareness website say “sexual violence” includes “withholding sex and affection” and “discounting the partner’s feelings regarding sex” – definitions that have come under fire by some men’s rights activists.
>
> The terms, found under the heading “definitions,” also suggest verbal or psychological abuse include: “insulting the partner; ignoring the partner’s feelings; withholding approval as a form of punishment; yelling at the partner; labeling the partner with terms like crazy [and] stupid.”

Oh wait, there is no need to believe them, they link to the University’s website directly in that article (and in the first sentence, no less).

This madness keeps on getting worse and worse. And there seems to be no end in sight. Of course, rules like this make for *excellent* Black Knight fodder.

Just think about it. The word partner isn’t defined in that document, meaning that it is open to interpretation. So there is all kinds of room for abuse present. So what is to stop a man from claiming to be a partner with a woman, and then accusing her of sexual violence if she refuses to sleep with him? Or even show affection, such as with hugs or kisses. The possibilities to twist this system against itself are endless. At least, they would be if they were ever intended to be fairly applied. But I think that most of us know that that was never the intention. Despite the inclusive language, women are supposed to be the survivors, and men the abusers. Still, I’m sure an enterprising, would-be Black Knight could find plentiful ways to amuse himself at this absurd system’s expense. In fact, this would be the perfect opportunity for a Beta-Orbiter to achieve some measure of revenge. And he might have the close contact with a woman to pull off the “partner” bit too.

Saturday Saints- #35

September 27, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We come once again to the letter H, and today's saint, Saint Hormisdas:

> **Pope Hormisdas** (450 – 6 August 523) was Pope from 20 July 514 to his death in 523. His papacy was dominated by the Acacian schism, started in 484 by Acacius of Constantinople's efforts to placate the Monophysites. His efforts to resolve this schism were successful, and on 28 March 519, the reunion between Constantinople and Rome was ratified in the cathedral of Constantinople before a large crowd.

A few facts about Saint Hormisdas from his wiki:

- Prior to becoming a deacon he married, and had at least one son, who later became Pope Silverius. At this time the Western Church ordained married men so long as they married before first taking holy orders. Also, unlike the present day Eastern Church, there was no bar to married clergy rising above the office of Presbyter as long as they met the requirements of 1 Timothy 3.
- Much of the effort of his papacy was devoted to ending the schism between Rome and Constantinople.
- He was a staunch defender of orthodoxy, and despite his desire to end the existing schism, wouldn't tolerate heresy.
- When the Eastern emperor Anastasius proposed a discussion on the schism, Hormisdas responded with a list of demands. Anastasius tried to encourage political leaders in Rome to oppose Hormisdas, but they refused. Ultimately Anastasius died and his successor Justin acceded to nearly all the demands.

One of the fascinating things I've learned from studying the early history of the church is how there were a number of breaks between the Eastern and Western churches well before the final schism between them. Fortunately, men like Hormisdas were able to heal those breaks, at least for a time. While we cannot know for certain, it is possible that without him the split between East and West might have been in full force five centuries earlier than when it finally occurred.



St. Hormisdas

Q & A

September 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Tonight's post is dedicated to answering a few of the questions that I've been been asked since this blog started. They have been left as comments, or sent to me via e-mail. Some I've answered before, and I will try and include a link to those answers. Others might have been addressed only obliquely, or not at all.

————————

Question: Is this a Game blog?

Answer: No. This is not, nor has it ever been, a "Game" blog. While I accepted its legitimacy for a while, I've come to realize that Game, if it can even be defined, is not something which can be supported.

————————

Question: Hey, I thought this was a Christian blog, so why are you talking about sexual attraction and the kind of stuff Pick-Up Artists talk about?

Answer: Because sexual attraction matters to everyone looking to get married, Christian or not. In an age where people largely choose their own mates, a person's sexual attractiveness plays a huge role in determining whether they can get married or not. By ignoring this for so long, the Church has only made the marriage situation worse in the west.

————————

Question: Wait, I thought this was a Red Pill bog… so what is all this Christian stuff doing here?

Answer: While I cover topics that generally fall under the umbrella of "The Red Pill", I am also a Catholic Christian. That belief system is not something that I simply set aside when I cover topics which aren't normally addressed by Christians. As far as I'm concerned many "Red Pill" topics are of great concerns to Christians, and so I approach them from a Christian perspective.

————————

Question: Why do you hate women?

Answer: Contrary to popular opinion, I don't hate women. In fact, I happen to like actual feminine women quite a lot. In fact, I find their presence (both virtual and real) to be quite enjoyable. Truth be told, I'm not very good at hating anyone (trust me on this, I've tried).

————————

Question: Well then how come you want to subjugate women in marriage then?

Answer: I don't want to subjugate women in marriage. I am a Christian, and as a Christian I recognize that wives are called to subject themselves to the authority of their husbands. That is a far cry from subjugation, given that their husbands at the same time

are required to love them as Christ loved the Church. If anything women are getting the better end of the deal. Plus that requirement is for their own benefit, as it will help make their husbands more attractive in their eyes.

———————–

Question: But why do you talk so negatively about women?

Answer: It is important to keep in mind that this blog is aimed primarily towards men. Women are welcome, of course, but my principal audience is men. And men talk and interact in a very different manner from women. If that makes women uncomfortable, so be it. I've explained this in a more complete fashion in several different posts. Here is one of them.

———————

Question: What is with your name?

Answer: I explained the rationale behind my name in this post.

———————–

Question: You keep using weird terms and words like SMV and FI and Hypergamy- what do they mean?

Answer: I wrote a post defining some of the terms that I use here.

———————–

Question: What do you have against feminism and feminists?

Answer: Feminism is one of the greatest frauds perpetrated upon mankind. It has no foundation in religion, science or reality, and has wrecked countless lives in its long existence. Feminists, at best, are useful fools and at worse callous monsters who don't care whom they hurt so long as they get the society they want. Never mind the fact that they can never actually have what they want, and the process of bringing it about will bring civilization down around us.

———————–

Question: Why is it that someone as smart as you is a Christian- surely you know it's superstitious nonsense?

Answer: That superstitious nonsense has done a far better job of predicting our present social devolution that science has. Its explanations of human nature have been proven correct time and time again. Likewise, the moral code and social order that Christianity supports is demonstrably the best means of checking the excesses of human behavior and providing the stability necessary for orderly and non-stagnant civilization.

———————–

Question: How can you call yourself a Christian when you refuse to forgive women who have sinned (sexually) in the past? Don't you know that God has forgive them?

Answer: To begin with, to forgive someone I would need to be sinned against. If a woman has fornicated with someone else, then besides a general sin against the church community, she really hasn't sinned against me. So there is nothing to forgive, really.

And yes, God has forgiven her for her trespasses. But just because the spiritual consequences of her sin may be gone, the physical/temporal consequences are not necessarily wiped away. The worldly effects of some sins last well beyond the point of repentance. For sexual sins, a woman's ability to pair bond can be damaged, or she could even be an Alpha Widow.

———————–

Question: How come all of the men here are cold, insensitive and uncaring jerks?

Answer: For the most part, none of the men in this part of the internet wanted to be that way. They were forced to become cold and uncaring, often out of necessity. Some were unjustly divorced by their wives, their marriages and families torn apart by women who cared more about their own enjoyment and "feelings" than their marriage vows. Others have undergone years or even decades of sexual denial at the hands of their wives. Many have hearts of ice as a result of years, decades for some, of rejection by women, who ignored them to chase after bad boys instead. Yet more have become cold as a result of despair arising from an inability to find worthy women to be their wives. The truth is that most men are romantics at heart, including the men around here, but the women in their lives crushed that right out of them.

———————–

Question: If you are a Christian, how come you see marriage as just an exchange of goods and services?

Answer: The short answer is that I don't. As for a longer answer…. It is important for women to understand that men are able to compartmentalize things in their head in a way that women either don't or can't match. We can talk about marriage in transactional terms one minute, and then examine it from a sacramental perspective in another, and then debate its relation to Christ and the Church in a third. I would very much advise my female readers to be wary of projecting female thought processes onto myself, and the men around these parts. Men and women are very different- we think differently, we perceive the world differently, and we react to stimuli differently. So don't assume that when we say something that it means the same thing it would if a woman said it.

———————–

Question: How come, if this is a Christian blog, you let pick-up artists and their like comment here? Why the hypocrisy?

Answer: My allowing someone to comment here is by no means an indication that I approve their lifestyle or share their beliefs. Sometimes a different perspective can be a valuable thing, if only to illustrate a point I am making. As a general rule, I let most people comment here, so long as they are civil and respectful to other commenters.

———————–

Question: Well then, how come I can't comment here? Why did you ban me?

Answer: I have banned *very* few people on my blog. If you cannot comment for some reason, it might be that you are included in my spam filter. Its possible that you ended up

there by accident. If you want to comment but cannot, feel free to e-mail me and I will look into it. You can reach me at d0nalgraem3 -at- gmail.com (no spaces or hyphens, just use the @ symbol. Also, that is a zero in the name).

——————–

That is what I have for now. I’m sure I think of more soon, and add them to this post. In the meantime, if my readers have any more questions (preferably ones that can be answer in a paragraph or two), feel free to mention them in this comments of this post.

Selected Sunday Scriptures #43

September 29, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's first passage is from the First Letter to the Corinthians:

> It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind
> that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife.
> [2] And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has
> done this would have been removed from among you?
>
> [3] For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have
> already pronounced judgment [4] in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who
> has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with
> the power of our Lord Jesus, [5] you are to hand this man over to Satan for the
> destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

(1 Cor 5:1-5)

This passage both angered, and saddened, me when I re-read it this week. You know that the Church is in a sad state indeed when it would be considered radical for a church community to actually excommunicate someone like this. And yet that is exactly what St. Paul commanded the church in Corinth to do. But it doesn't happen at all, save perhaps in the most conservative of Protestant churches. I cannot say I've ever heard of the Catholic Church doing this in recent years. Or even the Orthodox Church (my Orthodox readers can correct me if I'm wrong about this). This disobedience on the part of the Church (and disobedience is exactly what it is) bears a large role in the present degeneration of the Bride of Christ. It is also only one of three reasons why I chose this passage today.

The second reason is the fact that it is an illicit union, an unlawful marriage, that drives St. Paul to command excommunication. It seems pretty clear to me, and my readers are well aware that I'm no biblical scholar, that unlawful marriages are cause enough to justify excommunication of a "believer." Yet this never happens, despite the fact that there is no shortage of "believers" who presently belong to illicit unions in the church. Unlawful marriage is immoral, it is a serious, serious sin, and the Church does nothing (and for my Catholic readers, they should be aware that some Church leaders want to essentially say it is no big deal at all).

The third reason this passage grabbed by interest is because St. Paul commanded excommunication as an act of mercy. How else can you explain "hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord?" By thrusting this person out of the Church, he would be outside of the protection of God's grace. As a result, he would feel the full measure of Satan's power. Yet this is not simply a punishment, but a means to help the transgressor find his way back to Christ. It seems to me that St. Paul is explaining that for grave sins like *porneia*, it is only when you experience the full measure of your guilt, when the weight of your sins crushes you, both in body (temporal consequences) and spirit (spiritual consequences), that you are able to

truly repentant and find your way back to Christ.

That brings me to the second passage for today comes from Isaiah:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go
> for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” [9] And he said, “Go and say to this
> people:
>
> ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend;
> keep looking, but do not understand.’
> [10] Make the mind of this people dull,
> and stop their ears,
> and shut their eyes,
> so that they may not look with their eyes,
> and listen with their ears,
> and comprehend with their minds,
> and turn and be healed.”
> [11] Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said:
> “Until cities lie waste
> without inhabitant,
> and houses without people,
> and the land is utterly desolate;
> [12] until the Lord sends everyone far away,
> and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land.
> [13] Even if a tenth part remain in it,
> it will be burned again,
> like a terebinth or an oak
> whose stump remains standing
> when it is felled.”
> The holy seed is its stump.

(Isaiah 6:8-13)

Something that I think few Christians, or at least, those who claim to be Christians, grasp is just how much warning the people of Israel had of what would befall them. Time and time again they were warned by prophets, such as Isaiah, of the doom that awaited them. Yet only a handful ever listened. And that doom came and swept them all away. But despite this history, despite the warnings, the people of Israel continued to make the same errors over and over and over again.

Looking around me, I see that nothing has changed. The “faithful” of the Lord are seemingly oblivious to what is going on around them. And it is not like they don’t have any warning. We’ve been warned, time and time again, about what was happening and what is to come. Yet we don’t listen. We know and understand nothing, and shall reap the whirlwind before the end.

Shutting Their Eyes

September 30, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Modern society shuts its eyes easily and willingly. We don't want to see evil, or trouble ahead. And even for those that do, it must always be in measured amounts. They will squint, so that only some of the light comes through, leaving them with an incomplete picture.

Mrs. ktc clued me in to an example of this, found in this article by Camille Paglia- The Modern Campus Cannot Comprehend Evil. A few choice excerpts:

> Wildly overblown claims about an epidemic of sexual assaults on American campuses are obscuring the true danger to young women, too often distracted by cellphones or iPods in public places: the ancient sex crime of abduction and murder. Despite hysterical propaganda about our "rape culture," the majority of campus incidents being carelessly described as sexual assault are not felonious rape (involving force or drugs) but oafish hookup melodramas, arising from mixed signals and imprudence on both sides.
>
> …
>
> There is a ritualistic symbolism at work in sex crime that most women do not grasp and therefore cannot arm themselves against. It is well-established that the visual faculties play a bigger role in male sexuality, which accounts for the greater male interest in pornography. The sexual stalker, who is often an alienated loser consumed with his own failures, is motivated by an atavistic hunting reflex. He is called a predator precisely because he turns his victims into prey.
>
> …
>
> Misled by the naive optimism and "You go, girl!" boosterism of their upbringing, young women do not see the animal eyes glowing at them in the dark. They assume that bared flesh and sexy clothes are just a fashion statement containing no messages that might be misread and twisted by a psychotic. They do not understand the fragility of civilization and the constant nearness of savage nature.

Ms. Paglia is able to notice the animal eyes which glow in the dark. She can see the male predators out there. What she fails to see **[or at least, acknowledge]**, however, are the predators in her midst.

You see, those women whom Ms. Paglia describes as naive are, in their own respect, just as feral as the men that she warns about. As a society we are quick to decry feral men, the male predators lurking in the dark. But we ignore the female predators who walk among us. We are quick to point out the evil in men, but balk at doing the same in women.

Someone like Ms. Paglia sees “bared flesh and sexy clothes” and worries about “messages that might be misread and twisted by a psychotic.” Her time, and society, would be better served by thinking **[and talking]** about what messages are *intentionally* sent with “bared flesh and sexy clothes” and how they are *correctly* read.

It is no accident that young women dress that way. Naivete has nothing to do with it. Women know, instinctively, the power their bodies have over men, and they use that power to get what they want: male attention and validation. Young women who dress that way are tempting men, they are provoking a sexual response in the deepest recess of the male psyche. Do men want this? For the most part, yes. Men like viewing attractive female flesh as much as attractive females like showing it. But that doesn’t change the nature of what these women are doing- they are tempting men, setting stumbling blocks before them. And even worse, they deny all the while that they are doing any of that. They claim empowerment as their rationale- as obvious a lie as any ever told.

Much is said by a few around these parts about how men push young women for sex in relationships (or push for sex *instead* of relationships). Yet in the present environment women push for it too (only they will deny it later if confronted). Don’t believe me? Go ask Ballista, he will have a story or two for you. I’m sure that Chad and Martel have similar tales to tell of women who pushed for sex right away. If you have been paying attention to the news lately (especially about female teachers sleeping with their students), you will know that women can be sexual predators too. Yet all together we as a society will ignore or downplay the dark side of female sexuality. We refuse to acknowledge that evil inherent in unrestrained female sexuality.

~~Message to Camille Paglia:~~

It isn’t just the modern campus that cannot comprehend evil- it is the whole of society. You see only that evil which you want to see, and nothing more.

Update: In case it wasn’t clear, the main thrust of this post was that we only recognize certain kinds of evil these days. Overt violence being the prime example. But other, subtler evils are not recognized or called out. I wanted to point out that Ms. Paglia was making much the same error that she was accusing college campuses of making.

Update 2: Sir Nemesis has questioned my criticism of Paglia. He argues that just because she hasn’t called out other evils, doesn’t means she doesn’t recognize them. Theoretically this might be true. However, I’m not familiar with her ever having done so. But focusing on what she specifically, has said or believes would be a mistake. This post is about more than just her. I’ve corrected the above post (with some additions and a strike-through), to try and make that more clear. The overall point, once again, was how some evils are recognized and acknowledged, and others aren’t. And there is a pattern to this which should be noticeable to those of us who give it careful thought.

Saturday Saints- #36

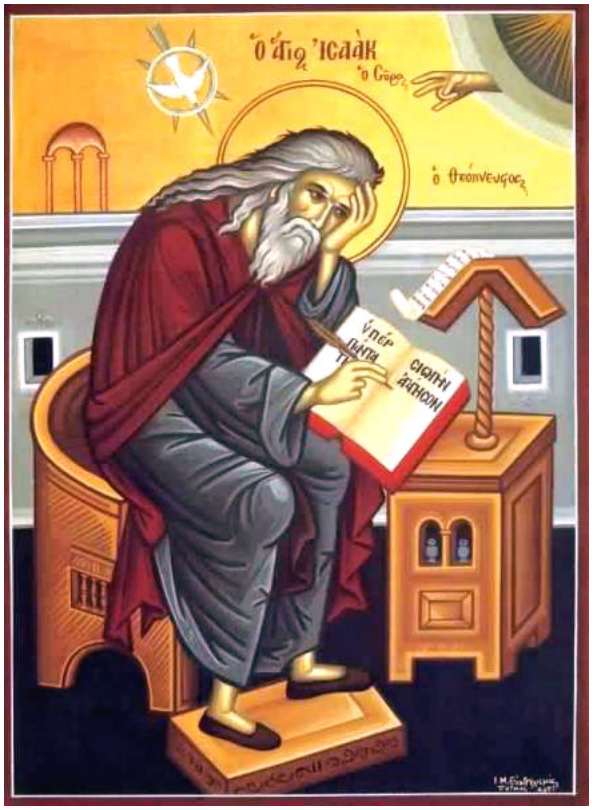
October 4, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is Isaac of Nineveh:

> **Isaac of Nineveh** (Arabic: إسحاق النينوي *Ishak an-Naynuwī*; Greek: Ἰσαὰκ Σύρος; c. 613 – c. 700) also remembered as **Isaac the Assyrian**, **Abba Isaac**, **Isaac Syrus** and **Isaac of Qatar**[4] was a 7th-century Assyrian bishop and theologian best remembered for his written work. He is also regarded as a saint in the Church of the East, the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and among the Oriental Orthodox Churches, making him the last saint chronologically to be recognised by every apostolic Church. His feast day falls on January 28.

I recommend reading the wiki about him, as it contains some of his writings, many of which I think my readers will find edifying and illuminating. You can find it here. One example:

> "To select a good deed depends on the initiator; to realize the intention — that is God's deed. Consequently, let us adhere to the rule, so that every good intention that comes to us is followed by frequent prayers, appealing to God to not only grant us help, but also if it is pleasing or not to Him. Because not every good intention comes from God, but only those that are beneficial.
>
> Sometimes, a person wishes something good, but God doesn't help him — maybe because the intention came from the devil and is not for our benefit; or maybe because it is beyond our strength as we have not attained the necessary spiritual level; or maybe because it doesn't correspond to our calling; or maybe because the time is not right to initiate it; or maybe because we don't have the necessary knowledge or strength to accomplish it; or maybe because circumstances will not contribute to its success. Besides this, the devil contrives in every way to paint it as something good so that having inclined us toward it, he could upset our spiritual tranquility or inflict harm on us. That's why it is necessary for us to diligently examine all our good desires. Better still, do everything after seeking counsel."



St. Isaac

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #44

October 5, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will be long on quotes and short on commentary. The first passage is from the Prophet Jeremiah:

> [10] But as for you, have no fear, my servant Jacob, says the Lord,
> and do not be dismayed, O Israel;
> for I am going to save you from far away,
> and your offspring from the land of their captivity.
> Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease,
> and no one shall make him afraid.
> [11] For I am with you, says the Lord, to save you;
> I will make an end of all the nations
> among which I scattered you,
> but of you I will not make an end.
> I will chastise you in just measure,
> and I will by no means leave you unpunished.

> [12] For thus says the Lord:
> Your hurt is incurable,
> your wound is grievous.
> [13] There is no one to uphold your cause,
> no medicine for your wound,
> no healing for you.
> [14] All your lovers have forgotten you;
> they care nothing for you;
> for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy,
> the punishment of a merciless foe,
> because your guilt is great,
> because your sins are so numerous.
> [15] Why do you cry out over your hurt?
> Your pain is incurable.
> Because your guilt is great,
> because your sins are so numerous,
> I have done these things to you.
> [16] Therefore all who devour you shall be devoured,
> and all your foes, every one of them, shall go into captivity;
> those who plunder you shall be plundered,
> and all who prey on you I will make a prey.
> [17] For I will restore health to you,
> and your wounds I will heal,

> says the Lord,
> because they have called you an outcast:
> “It is Zion; no one cares for her!”

(Jeremiah 30:10-17)

Next we have the prophet Hosea:

> The Lord said to me again, “Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.” [2] So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer of barley and a measure of wine. [3] And I said to her, “You must remain as mine for many days; you shall not play the whore, you shall not have intercourse with a man, nor I with you.” [4] For the Israelites shall remain many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. [5] Afterward the Israelites shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; they shall come in awe to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.

(Hosea 3:1-5)

Then we turn to the Prophet Isaiah:

> Thus says the Lord:
> Where is your mother’s bill of divorce
> with which I put her away?
> Or which of my creditors is it
> to whom I have sold you?
> No, because of your sins you were sold,
> and for your transgressions your mother was put away.

(Isaiah 50:1)

> Sing, O barren one who did not bear;
> burst into song and shout,
> you who have not been in labor!
> For the children of the desolate woman will be more
> than the children of her that is married, says the Lord.
> [2] Enlarge the site of your tent,
> and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;
> do not hold back; lengthen your cords
> and strengthen your stakes.
> [3] For you will spread out to the right and to the left,
> and your descendants will possess the nations
> and will settle the desolate towns.

> [4] Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
> do not be discouraged, for you will not suffer disgrace;

> for you will forget the shame of your youth,
> and the disgrace of your widowhood you will remember no more.
> [5] For your Maker is your husband,
> the Lord of hosts is his name;
> the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,
> the God of the whole earth he is called.
> [6] For the Lord has called you
> like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
> like the wife of a man's youth when she is cast off,
> says your God.
> [7] For a brief moment I abandoned you,
> but with great compassion I will gather you.
> [8] In overflowing wrath for a moment
> I hid my face from you,
> but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,
> says the Lord, your Redeemer.

> [9] This is like the days of Noah to me:
> Just as I swore that the waters of Noah
> would never again go over the earth,
> so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you
> and will not rebuke you.
> [10] For the mountains may depart
> and the hills be removed,
> but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
> and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
> says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

(Isaiah 54:1-10)

This brings us to St. Paul:

> I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! [2] I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

(2 Corinthians 11:1-2)

Finally we have the Apocalypse of St. John (Book of Revelation):

> [7] Let us rejoice and exult
> and give him the glory,
> for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
> and his bride has made herself ready;
> [8] to her it has been granted to be clothed
> with fine linen, bright and pure"—

> for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

(Revelations 19:7-8)

Reading through these passages, I was struck by how the Bride of the Lord would need to be “purified” first. God will not take us as we are, in our sinful ways. We need to be cleansed of our wickedness first. If anything, it seems like this process is an ongoing one. The faithful, the espoused of the Lord, are cleansed continuously. Yet every so often there is a more stringent purification, a purging, if you well, that strikes once things get especially bad, as it has throughout history. And this process is not a gentle one. My suspicion, based on what is going on within the Church now, is that we are due for this process once again.

Quote Of The Day- October 7th, 2014

October 7, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's QOTD comes from Novaseeker, from this thread at Dalrock's:

> There is no way society will tolerate men having sex on the regular with a woman and then being able to get away without paying. No way.

Source here.

Driving The Delay

October 9, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Dalrock, who has always been very good about using charts and data sources to support some of his arguments, has a couple of new posts that track marriage data. Both are worth reading. You can find them here:

Fewer Men are working, and marriage is dying

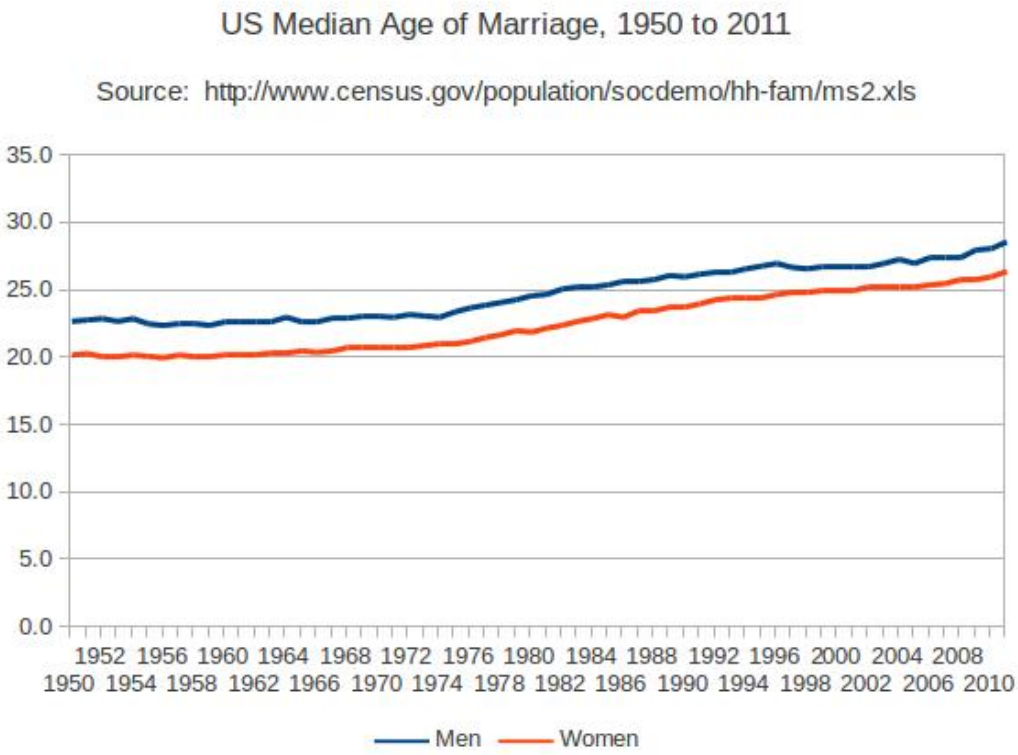
and

More remarriage rate charts

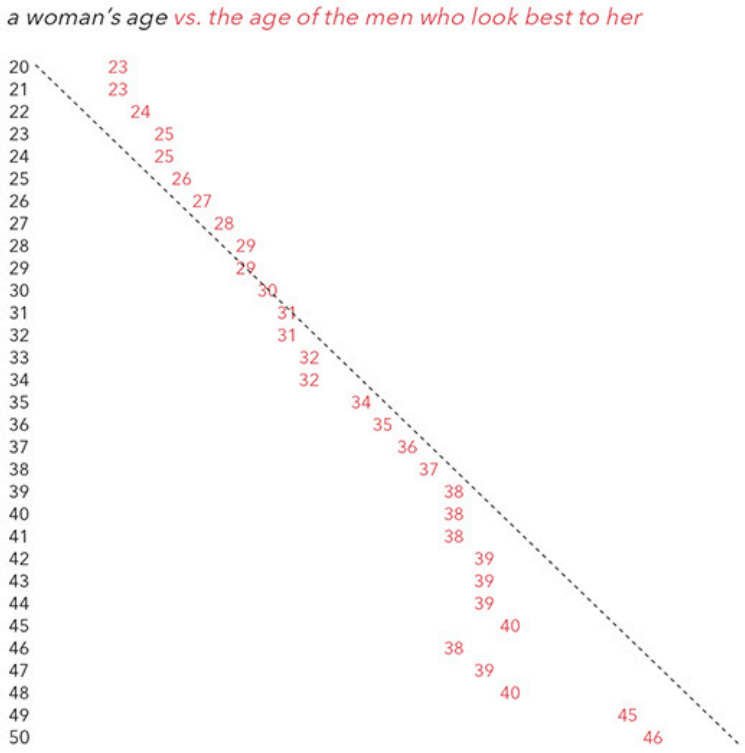
The charts that Dalrock uses in those posts point out a couple of things. The one that I'm going to talk about with this post is that women are delaying marriage, even if men aren't (and I don't think that they really are). Cail Corishev talks about that subject in his post Who's Dragging Those Heels? I largely agree with his reasoning, and encourage everyone to read the whole post. But a key part is this:

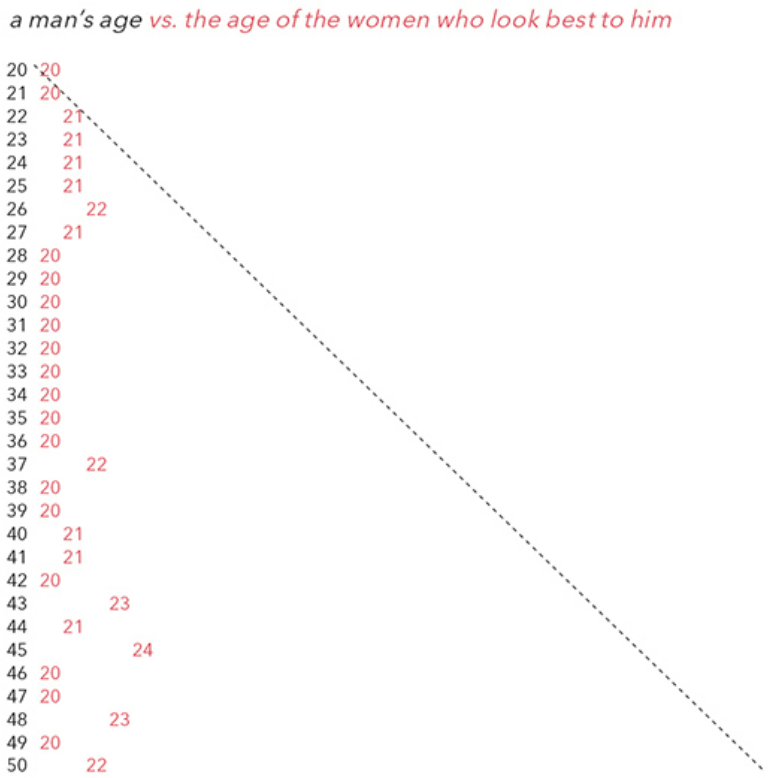
> The truth is, men have *always* delayed marriage. In other words, men have never particularly *wanted* to marry; they've been *willing* to marry when that was the way to get what men really want: exclusive sex and procreation with a woman of their choice. That's why the trope is of a woman dragging her man to the altar, and not the other way around. So while men may be delaying ("avoiding" would be a better word) marriage, men have always avoided marriage, so that doesn't account for the changes we're seeing.
>
> The change is in women, in two closely related areas: how long women delay marriage, and how women have detached sex from marriage.

This brings me to how women are delaying marriage. There are a couple of important graphs that I'm going to steal from Dalrock, as well as commenter davidvs, who has been pondering similar paths as I. The first graph is the median age of marriage in the US over time:



Note the separation between male and female ages of first marriage and how relatively even they are. Now observe two charts which detail preferred ages for a partner in men and women:





These graphs point out a couple of things.

The first is that men are relatively fixed about their preferences in terms of age and attractiveness- it is about 21 or so. Women, however, are not so fixed. They prefer older at first and then eventually younger men.

This moves to the second point, namely that Rollo's SMV chart really is pretty darn accurate. If anything he might have female peak SMV be a little too older, but it is still very close. Men prefer early 20s women, and women prefer men around 38-39 or so.

The third thing that this graph points out is that women are driving the delay in marriage. Or at the very least, for themselves. We know from the charts above what men want- young women. That doesn't change no matter how old a man gets. Yet we can see that the median age of marriage for both men and women has increased over the last 50 years or so. Now, we might surmise from the data that men are delaying marriage- they are having fun in their 20's and only later decide to settle down. But that doesn't affect women. They can still choose to marry young. Its not like men will turn them down when they are younger.

Even if men want to marry when they are older, they will still want younger wives. So if women don't want to delay marriage, they don't have to. Men will be there to marry them. But that isn't what is happening. Instead both men and women are marrying later. And the spread between them has remained fairly constant. And fascinatingly enough, that spread is awfully similar to the preferred age spread for women in their twenties. What is going on here is that women are delaying marriage. And they are delaying it deliberately. I see a few possible reasons for this.

The first, what the manosphere generally talks about, is that women are delaying marriage for as long as possible so they can do everything else in the interim. Whether

that is travel the world, acquire degrees, work on a career, or rack up a frightening N-count, women are giving marriage a very low priority in their lives. And keep in mind that men, even if they want to marry, are trapped by this. Marrying older women who want to marry is not a wise or a realistic option for them. No, men are forced to go along with women, no matter what they wish.

Another possibility relies on men delaying marriage. The idea is that women want to marry when they are young, but the men their age don't want to. If they want to find a large enough pool of men who will marry, they need to look to older men. However, those older men are outside their preferred age ranges in men. So rather than marry them, and despite that being an option, women wait. And they wait. And they wait. Until eventually, women are now old enough that their age filters have changed, and the men who want to marry are now in that preferred age range. And boom, they start marrying.

My readers are of course free to offer their own thoughts on the subject. But I think that at this point that there can be no doubt that women clearly have a hand on the wheel when it comes to delaying marriage.

Update: Another possibility is tied to the second scenario I raised. This one relies on women delaying marriage because the men their age aren't seen, in their eyes, as worthy mates. Since women have fairly set age preferences, they will not "date up" to the men who are more likely to be attractive. It is only when the men become more attractive as a whole that women start getting serious about marriage.

A Helpful Opposite

October 10, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Hearthie, commenting over at Elspeth's blog, left a link to a post titled The Opposite of the Proverbs 31 Woman. I think my Christian readers would find it illuminating and worth the read. So go check it out.

Saturday Saints- #37

October 12, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's post we look to the Holy Land to find our saint, who is John Climacus:

> **Saint John Climacus** (Greek: Ἰωάννης τῆς Κλίμακος), also known as **John of the Ladder**, **John Scholasticus** and **John Sinaites**, was a 7th-century Christian monk at the monastery on Mount Sinai. He is revered as a saint by the Roman Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches.

A few quick pieces of info about him:

- Next to nothing is known about his origins or life before he arrived at a monastery at Mount Sinai.
- He practiced extra asceticism for years before becoming an abbot. During this time he studied the lives of earlier saints extensively.
- Only two works of are known to us: *Ladder of Divine Ascent* and *To the Pastor*. The first is the most famous, and is well respected in the Orthodox and Byzantine Traditions to this day.
- His renown was such that Pope Gregory sought his prayers, and sent aid for a hospital in Sinai used by pilgrims.

More about him can be found at his wiki, located here.



St. John Climacus

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #45

October 13, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's first passage is from the Gospel of Matthew:

> And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, [2] "The kingdom of heaven
> may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, [3] and sent his
> servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not
> come. [4] Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold,
> I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and
> everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' [5] But they made light of it and
> went off, one to his farm, another to his business, [6] while the rest seized his
> servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. [7] The king was angry, and he
> sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. [8] Then he
> said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy.
> [9] Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as
> you find.' [10] And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom
> they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.
>
> [11] "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had
> no wedding garment; [12] and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here
> without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. [13] Then the king said to the
> attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there
> men will weep and gnash their teeth.' [14] For many are called, but few are
> chosen."
>
> (Matthew 22:1-14)

For those of my readers who are Catholic and who attended a Novus Ordo Mass this weekend, you will recognize this Gospel passage. I chose it because the homily that I heard earlier today was, shall we say, *lacking.* I don't think it will surprise many of my readers to hear that the priest somehow failed to mention the last few verses about the man without the wedding garment. It was disappointing to me, but not surprising. After all, it adds a somber reminder to what is otherwise a nice component of the "Happy, Cheerful-Time Gospel" that so many like to preach today. I should mention that the fate of the original guests got only cursory mention, not that that is a shock or anything.

The priest talked about how we should invite everyone and how the church should get out on the street. How we shouldn't worry about getting out shoes muddy in the world. But the truth is that accepting the summons is only the beginning of the process, not the end. It isn't enough that we show up at the feast, we also need to prepare for it. We need to wear our wedding garments- that is, to cleanse ourselves and purify ourselves. It is incumbent upon us to repent of our sins and confess them to the Lord. To acknowledge our faults, and to seek out His pardon and mercy. Otherwise, we shall end up as Ananias

and Sapphira:

> But a man named Anani′as with his wife Sapphi′ra sold a piece of property, [2] and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. [3] But Peter said, "Anani′as, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? [4] While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." [5] When Anani′as heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. [6] The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.
>
> [7] After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. [8] And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." [9] But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Hark, the feet of those that have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." [10] Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. [11] And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.
>
> (Acts 5:1-11)

Both Ananias and Sapphira showed up for the banquet. But their clothes were soiled, and thus not appropriate for a feast. So they were bound up and cast out into the darkness. And I think it is safe to assume that on the Last Day they will be among those who find themselves in the Pit, where there will be wailing and the gnashing their teeth.

The priest today did everyone a disservice by not addressing the final part of that Gospel passage. There are none who have fallen so far that God is not willing to forgive them and call them home, so long as they repent. Yet the first part of that message is worse than useless without the second. Repentance is at the core of our faith. To overlook it, to fail to mention it, is inexcusable. With it, anyone can be saved. Without it, none of us.

David was considered a man after God's own heart. Yet he was a sinner, like all of us. Furthermore, his sins were grave- adultery and murder. But despite this, he was forgiven by the Lord… because he had a repentant heart. Let us then seek to follow David, and repent and confess our sins to God, lest we share the fate of Aninias and Sapphira.

> Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love;
> according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
> [2] Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
> and cleanse me from my sin!

> [3] For I know my transgressions,
> and my sin is ever before me.

[4] Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
and done that which is evil in thy sight,
so that thou art justified in thy sentence
and blameless in thy judgment.
[5] Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
[6] Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
[7] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
[8] Fill me with joy and gladness;
let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice.
[9] Hide thy face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
[10] Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
[11] Cast me not away from thy presence,
and take not thy holy Spirit from me.
[12] Restore to me the joy of thy salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
[13] Then I will teach transgressors thy ways,
and sinners will return to thee.
[14] Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
thou God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance.

[15] O Lord, open thou my lips,
and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.
[16] For thou hast no delight in sacrifice;
were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased.
[17] The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

(Psalm 51:1-17)

Where Does Ephesians 5:21 Belong?

October 16, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

In my latest Selected Sunday Scriptures post, commenter A Vistor said this:

> If I ever get married, the wife and I are going to have our Gospel reading starting at Ephesians 5:21.

I asked him if he meant Ephesians 5:22 instead, which prompted Mrs. C to ask:

> Why would Eph 5:21 not be included in the Gospel reading of husband and wife?

She then linked to this article, containing material written by Pope John Paul II.

Mrs. C's question is a good one, and covers a subject I've been meaning to address for a while. Time limitations will necessarily keep this post shorter than I should look, but I will try and answer her first question, as well as a second about what "mutual subjection" looks like for the Church as a whole.

II.

The short answer to Mrs. C's question is this: Ephesians 5:21 doesn't belong with the epistle reading of husband and wife because for most of the Church's history they were considered two separate subjects (pun intended). By that I mean they were not considered to fit together as part of the same message by St. Paul. **[Update:** I wasn't clear here. Sorry about that. I was trying to say that while both are related, they are not tied together as, say, verses 25 and 26. 5:21 is distinct from 5:22 in terms of what St. Paul was teaching overall. They relate, yes, but 5:22-33 encapsulates a specific point that St. Paul was trying to teach. Further edits will be in brackets but without the bold update notice.]

Now, most modern translations will include Eph 5:21 along with 5:22 and the rest of Chapter 5 of Ephesians. However, this is a recent phenomenon. As far as my research has yielded, including 5:21 and 5:22 together is less than a century old. Older translations did not do so. [**Update**: I was wrong about this. KMan in the comments below indicates that translations linking them go back at least 150 years.] For example, the Douay-Rheims edition of the New Testament (1899) included 5:21 in this section:

> [15] See therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise,
>
> [16] But as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
>
> [17] Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God.
>
> [18] And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury; but be ye filled with the holy Spirit,
>
> [19] Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord;

> [20] Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father:
>
> [21] Being subject one to another, in the fear of Christ.
>
> (Eph 5:18-21, DR 1899)

Verse 21 is included as part of the previous passage, concerning the church as a whole. It is the closing admonition of St. Paul's "children of light" message, a reminder to always serve one another.

Looking further back, the Daily Missal of the Catholic Church pre-1962 had proscribed passages for different events, including matrimonial ceremonies. Guess what the epistle passage was? That's right, Ephesians 5:22-33. Ephesians 5:21 was not included with the verses following it. That was the Missal in use for centuries, perhaps all the way back to the Council of Trent (if someone knows otherwise please clarify that for me).

The recognition that Ephesians 5:21 and 5:22 were separate thoughts goes even further back, however. In fact, it not only predates the split between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, but extends all the way to the early Fathers of the Church. Saint John Chrysostom, who became Archbishop of Constantinople in 397 AD and is recognized as a Doctor of the Church, wrote extensive homilies on various books from the Bible. Many of them were preserved and are accessible today. His homilies on the Letter to the Ephesians are among those preserved. These homilies are sequential and touch upon different passages within Ephesians, including Chapter 5.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that St. John Chrysostom addressed 5:21 in a separate homily, which covered Ephesians 5:15-21. Reading through his homily, it seems fairly clear that the Saint regarded Ephesians 5:21 as connected to the verses above it, not to the verses which came after. This is also apparent in the next homily, which covers Ephesians 5:22-33, which he saw as a single message. The saint likes to reference previous applicable passages, but he doesn't in that homily; Ephesians 5:21 never shows up at all. To St. John Chrysostom, Ephesians 5:21 and 5:22 did not belong together; otherwise said, Ephesians 5:21, while an important teaching, was not one that should be included in St. Paul's teaching on matrimony.

For those interested, you can find those two homilies here:

Homily 19 on Ephesians (5;21)

Homily 20 on Ephesians (5:22)

They are not easy homilies to read, but well worth it in my opinion. I might showcase some of Homily 20 in future posts, it is that good.

So, taken together, the evidence is clear that Ephesians 5:21 was, for the longest time, recognized as being in a separate passage in Chapter 5 of Ephesians from verse 22. It is only recently that verse 21 has been stuck with verse 22. Now, I don't know for sure why this was done. But my suspicion is that it wasn't accidental. If anything, I suspect that the purpose was to weaken 5:22. Maybe not explicitly, but the modern translations which render 5:21 as a separate sentence can only serve to confuse the lay reader about the

rest of that chapter.

III.

This brings me to the second question asked by Mrs. C:

> I would like to ask you to define what it means in a practical way for the church body as a whole to “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

I promised to answer that, and will in this section. Although the truth is that I won’t be the one with the answer. Rather, it will be the aforementioned Doctor of the Church who I will draw from. He addresses 5;21 at the end of his 19th Homily on Ephesians, which I will quote below. Be warned: it is a long, dense paragraph. But if you can get through it you will see how he understood Eph 5:21. Here it is:

> *Subjecting yourselves one to another,* he says, *in the fear of Christ.* For if you submit yourself for a ruler’s sake, or for money’s sake, or from respectfulness, much more from the fear of Christ. Let there be an interchange of service and submission. For then will there be no such thing as slavish service. Let not one sit down in the rank of a freeman, and the other in the rank of a slave; rather it were better that both masters and slaves be servants to one another—far better to be a slave in this way than free in any other; as will be evident from hence. Suppose the case of a man who should have an hundred slaves, and he should in no way serve them; and suppose again a different case, of an hundred friends, all waiting upon one another. Which will lead the happier life? Which with the greater pleasure, with the more enjoyment? In the one case there is no anger, no provocation, no wrath, nor anything else of the kind whatever; in the other all is fear and apprehension. In the one case too the whole is forced, in the other is of free choice. In the one case they serve one another because they are forced to do so, in the other with mutual gratification. Thus does God will it to be; for this He washed His disciples’ feet. Nay more, if you have a mind to examine the matter nicely, there is indeed on the part of masters a return of service. For what if pride suffer not that return of service to appear? Yet if the slave on the one hand render his bodily service, and thou maintain that body, and supply it with food and clothing and shoes, this is an exchange of service: because unless thou render your service as well, neither will he render his, but will be free, and no law will compel him to do it if he is not supported. If this then is the case with servants, where is the absurdity, if it should also become the case with free men. *Subjecting yourselves in the fear,* says he, *of Christ.* How great then the obligation, when we shall also have a reward. But he does not choose to submit himself to you? However do thou submit yourself; not simply yield, but submit yourself. Entertain this feeling towards all, as if all were your masters. For thus shall you soon have all as your slaves, enslaved to you with the most abject slavery. For you will then more surely make them yours, when without receiving anything of theirs, thou of yourself renderest them of your own. This is *subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ,* in order that we may subdue all

> the passions, be servants of God, and preserve the love we owe to one another. And then shall we be able also to be counted worthy of the lovingkindness which comes of God, through the grace and mercies of His only-begotten Son, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and forever and ever. Amen.

As I said, lengthy. The Saint's interpretation of St. Paul is that we are charged to the service, given freely, of fellow believers whenever and however possible. It is a reminder that we are all co-heirs of eternal life with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

IV.

So, in summary, [in an epistle reading] Ephesians 5:21 belongs with the verses above it, as they address how the members of the church are to relate to one another in general. It does not fit deal specifically with marriage, which is the case for Ephesians 5:22-33. In addition, the context for understanding 5:21 is not [fully] present later in the chapter, but rather earlier. Ephesians 5:21 advises us to live out lives of continuous service to one another, always subjecting/subordinating our needs and desires to those of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is universally applicable to all Christians, man and woman alike, married and unmarried. What Ephesians 5:22-33 articulates is how marriage is a step beyond this requirement, with special obligations and duties of both spouses that go beyond the "mere" subjection/subordination of our interests to our fellow Christians.[Hence, a marriage epistle reading should begin with 5:22, not 5:21. If you want to include 5:21 in the reading you should begin with 5:15 or even earlier.]

At best inclusion of Ephesians 5:21 in the epistle on marriage will only serve to distract or confuse the Scriptural message about marriage. At worst it will serve to undermine the message.

Update: Mrs. C has created her own post in response to this one, which you can find here. Be sure and give it a read.

Saturday Saints- #38

October 19, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Once again we find ourselves at the letter K. Today's saint is Kevin of Glendough:

> Saint **Cóemgen** (modern Irish: Caoimhín), popularly anglicized to **Kevin** (498 – 3 June 618) is an Irish saint who was known as the founder and first abbot of Glendalough in County Wicklow, Ireland. His feast day in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches is 3 June.

A few quick facts:

- He apparently lived to be well over a hundred years old before his death
- Saint Kevin was reportedly born to a noble family, and a number of his relatives were also clergy
- During his life he was a devoted ascetic, and spent much time in a cave that later became known as St. Kevin's bed

You can find out more about Saint Kevin at his wiki, located here.



Saint Kevin

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #46

October 20, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Since my last major post was focused on few verses within the Letter to the Ephesians, I think it appropriate that today's post also focus there. Here is a long admonition by Saint Paul:

> [17] Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; [18] they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; [19] they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. [20] You did not so learn Christ!— [21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus. [22] Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, [23] and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
>
> [25] Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need. [29] Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, [32] and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
>
> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. [2] And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
>
> [3] But immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. [4] Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. [5] Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. [6] Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. [7] Therefore do not associate with them, [8] for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light [9] (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), [10] and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
>
> (Ephesians 517-6:10)

Our lives as Christians should be easily distinguishable from those lived by the non-believers around us. If the only difference between us and them is that we spend a bit of time on Sunday at church, we are doing something terribly wrong. Ours is a world of darkness and sin. Those who are of this world demonstrate this every day. If there is no difference between us, if we act nearly alike, then we too are of this world.

As Christians, if we are walking the narrow path we are going to stand out like a sore thumb. Given the plentiful opportunities this world provides for sin, there will be no lack of occasions for us to reject it. And even if we want to hide our resistance to temptation, we won't always be able to. People *will* notice. And they will *not* like it. Our lives, if devoted to holiness, will be a testament to their darkness.

So where am I going with this? Simple. If you are living as a Christian ~~should~~ *must*, you should constantly experience friction with the world around you. Sometimes this will manifest as terribly outright persecution, and other times it will be as lowly as side-long glances and looks of disapproval. However it comes about, we should rejoice in it; for it is a sign that we are putting off "our old nature" and building up a new, holy one.

Meager Options

October 21, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As I am somewhat busy at the moment, I'm afraid original posts will have to wait for the time being. In the interim I am going to do what I often do when pressed for time: rip off of major bloggers, in this case Dalrock. In the comments of his post The more meager a woman's choices, the more attractive she must be, someone by the name of trugingstar left this comment:

> I'm going to play the devil's advocate to the commenters, and say that more older men are cheating and that the dating market is bad for women who want to get married. I'm a 20-something woman. I *ahem* am the first to tell if a marriage is on the rocks, and I've made it into kind of a game to guess how I end up a mistress candidate in the fantasies of married fellows (cold? mean? miscarriage? former alpha? just a really guy young?). This happens to my friends often, as well. We have a running joke that the only men interested in us are already married.
>
> I also have only a little bit of time left in the *secular* dating scene to meet a *Christian*, because the Christian dating scene is pure idealism. By secular, I mean not sleeping around, but going on hundreds of first dates that fail the "how often do you go to church?" test.
>
> If you date at a church, you end up with the left-overs, most of the time. Someone my age has a shot with someone in his 30s. The kind of pew-warmer who's unmarried, unsexed, and in his thirties is often alone for a reason. It's usually a serious issue. It's not the same as me going out and sleeping around and meeting a thirty-something that's sleeping around.
>
> So, why all the cheating? Why all the poor selection? Duh: everyone knows this – uncommitted (by this, I mean "unmarried," not necessarily ONS) sex outside of the church, marriage (especially male) discouragement within the church, creates no reason for most men to marry. It also creates a surplus of women who are available for extramarital sex.
>
> I'm just going to literally go with the title here; yes, "the more meager a woman's choices, the more attractive she must be." I can't get my equal in attractiveness, virtue, whatever, because the choice selection is meager. BUT. I can get married men. Can't WAIT for marriage.

There is a lot to dissect and respond to in this comment, and this post will be devoted to just that.

The first thing that I found interesting about this post is it can be interpreted two different ways. One possible interpretation is that as a woman's choices (in men) become more meager, the more attractive that she has to be to get a man (or at least attract one worth having). Technically this is true. In a limited market, you need to have more assets on

hand to pull off a successful transaction. This applies to both commercial markets and the marriage market. And it is the same for both men and women- In a “buyers” market we need to have more and more to make the sale.

However, what I understand Dalrock to actually say is that the woman he was quoting from was convinced that because she was so attractive there were few good options for men available to her. In essence, because she was so high-value she was “priced out of the market.” This seems to be the very same attitude expressed by the commenter, who apparently started a blog a few days ago. She was convinced that because she was not likely to find “my equal in attractiveness, virtue, whatever”, which I take to mean she felt she couldn’t successfully carry out assortive mating.

Now, the obvious counter to this, which Dalrock hints at, is that women who hold this view are probably greatly over-estimating their actual worth (or SMV/MMV). If they really were as high-value as they thought they were, their choices wouldn’t be so meager. Or maybe they aren’t that meager, but they just don’t see the decent men around them for what they are. Of course the situation is often more complicated than that, but still, it has to be the case for some-most especially the woman Dalrock quotes.

Now I’m going to parse individual thoughts from her comment, starting with this:

> more older men are cheating and that the dating market is bad for women who want to get married.

Most of the studies I’ve seen indicate that men are more likely to commit adultery (I despise the word “cheat” in this context) than women, although not necessarily by a huge discrepancy. Now, some men around these parts dispute these numbers, but I don’t. While I think that women often would have an easier time cheating if they wanted to, most don’t want to. They don’t have the same sex drive as men, and many of the men around them wouldn’t be seen as worth breaking their vows with. Also, I suspect that women are more likely to seek a divorce and then sleep with whoever they want, whereas men are less keen on seeking divorce as a means to break their vows.

And yes, the “dating” marking is bad for women who want to get married. That’s only natural, as the dating market was created to push dating instead of marriage. Men and women who are serious about marriage, chaste Christians especially, face a brutal marriage market at the moment.

> I’m a 20-something woman. I *ahem* am the first to tell if a marriage is on the rocks, and I’ve made it into kind of a game to guess how I end up a mistress candidate in the fantasies of married fellows (cold? mean? miscarriage? former alpha? just a really guy young?). This happens to my friends often, as well. We have a running joke that the only men interested in us are already married.

Sadly, I can’t really scoff at this, which is something I suspect more than a few manospherians have done. I have gotten more than a few hints or propositions from married women over the years. Some subtle, others not so much (some of the invitations to pull off a “relationship coup” were especially sickening). From my perspective, for a

long time, it seemed like the *only* attention I got from women was from those who were married (with the only exceptions being those who were unacceptable for some other significant reason). It was rather disturbing to me, actually, to think that a number of women I worked with or met somehow saw me as their "rebound" guy.

> If you date at a church, you end up with the left-overs, most of the time. Someone my age has a shot with someone in his 30s. The kind of pew-warmer who's unmarried, unsexed, and in his thirties is often alone for a reason. It's usually a serious issue.

Can't you just feel the love folks? The condescension here is sadly typical. I'm sure that more than a few of my male readers can relate their own stories about similar experiences. Understand, ladies, it is attitudes like this which cause a lot of men to drop out of the game entirely.

> It's not the same as me going out and sleeping around and meeting a thirty-something that's sleeping around.

Assuming I'm reading this right, she is saying that she thinks things, and by things I mean men, are far worse inside the church than out in the SMP. Do some of my female readers understand why this and other statements have many Christian men in the west swearing off marriage, or at least western women?

> Why all the poor selection? Duh: everyone knows this – uncommitted (by this, I mean "unmarried," not necessarily ONS) sex outside of the church, marriage (especially male) discouragement within the church, creates no reason for most men to marry. It also creates a surplus of women who are available for extramarital sex.

All great in theory, and with some factual basis. Certainly the part about marriage discouragement is correct. But it also misses the fact that women aren't signalling to men that they want to get married (at least until they are older) like they used to. And without that signalling, men aren't quite so apt to get ready for marriage themselves, either mentally or otherwise. In addition, that "surplus of women who are available for extramarital sex" aren't an asset to the majority of men who have trouble competing in the present SMP.

And that's enough for now. Not sure I'll be able to post again until the end of the week. In the meantime, feel free to add your own thoughts.

Saturday Saints- #39

October 25, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint hails from France, Saint Leodegar:

> **Leodegar of Poitiers** (also known as **Leodegarius**, **Leger** or **Léger**) (c. 615 – October 2, 679) was a martyred Burgundian Bishop of Autun who became Saint Leodegarius. He was the son of Saint Sigrada and the brother of Saint Warinus.
>
> Leodegar was an opponent of Ebroin, the Frankish Mayor of the Palace of Neustria and the leader of the faction of Austrasian nobles in the struggle for hegemony over the waning Merovingian dynasty. His torture and death made him a martyr and saint.

St. Leodegar's life showcases a lot of the politics that marked France during the Dark Ages. It shows both the wisdom, and the folly, of involvement of Church leaders in secular politics.

You can find out more about him at his wiki, located here.

Do We Need To Set Aside The Word Marriage?

October 26, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I believe that someone in the 'sphere has linked to this before, but I don't think I've feature it on my blog so its about time. Monseigneur Charles Pope from the Archdiocese of Washington asks if we should stop using the word "marriage" when referring to sacramental unions. A few snippets:

> It is a simple fact that word "marriage" as we have traditionally known it is being redefined in our times. To many in the secular world the word no longer means what it once did and when the Church uses the word marriage we clearly do not mean what the increasing number of states mean.
>
> …
>
> So the bottom line is that what the secular world means by the word "marriage" is not even close to what the Church means. The secular world excluded *every* aspect of what the Church means by marriage. Is it time for us to accept this and start using a different word? Perhaps it is, and I would like to propose what I did back in March of 2010, that we return to an older term and hear what you think.
>
> **I propose that we should exclusively refer to marriage in the Church as "Holy Matrimony."**
>
> According to this proposal the word marriage would be set aside and replaced by Holy Matrimony. It should be noticed that the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to this Sacrament formally as "The Sacrament of Matrimony."

You can read the rest here.

I think that there is some strong merit to his proposal. Distinguishing ourselves from the secular individuals around us is important right now. Restoring the full meaning of the Sacrament and what it encompasses should be a vital task of the Church at the moment.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #47

October 27, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I am reading through the major Prophets in the Old Testament again, and am at the Book of Jeremiah at the moment. The following passage stood out to me when I came across it:

> [21] Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. [22] For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. [23] But this command I gave them, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ [24] But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. [25] From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day; [26] yet they did not listen to me, or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.
>
> [27] “So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. [28] And you shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

(Jeremiah 7:21-28)

It really is amazing how much effort the Lord expended on behalf of His people. They took every opportunity to turn their backs on Him, and yet He never gave up on them. No matter how horrific their crimes (and they truly were horrendous), He was always willing to save them. It got me to thinking about why God chose the Israelites in the first place. Why them, and not the Gentiles? This reminded me in turn of something that Jesus said during His Ministry:

> [21] “Woe to you, Chora′zin! woe to you, Beth-sa′ida! for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. [22] But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. [23] And you, Caper′na-um, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. [24] But I tell you that it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

(Matthew 11:21-24)

Perhaps God chose the Israelites because of their stiff neckedness. Maybe the fact that they wouldn’t listen, and wouldn’t obey was part of His plan all along. I am curious if they were chosen as paradigm example of the fallen nature of mankind. Of how we can be

guided and taught how to act righteously, and then throw that instruction away at the soonest opportunity. Part of me wonders if His plan all along was to demonstrate His infinite mercy and compassion- to showcase to all of us that no matter how much and how often we fail, no matter the depths that we sink to, He will always be there to carry us back to the fold, so long that in the end we desire to be found. If God has chosen some other people, they would have mended their ways. But He chose those who wouldn't, so that the full extent of His Grace and mercy could be seen by all.

On a different note, Leane over at Finer Femininity passed on A Beautiful Prayer that I wanted to share with everyone:

> "Holy Spirit, soul of my soul, I adore Thee.
> Enlighten me, guide me,
> strengthen and comfort me.
> Tell me what I ought to do and order me to do it.
> I promise to submit to anything that Thou requirest from me,
> and to accept everything that Thou allowest to happen to me.
> Just show me what Thy will is."

Reading this prayer called to mind this passage by Saint Paul:

> [12] "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. [13] "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14] And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. [15] Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! [16] Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one." [17] But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. [18] Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. [19] **Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own;** [20] you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

(1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

It is all too easy for us to forget that as Christians we carry a spark of the Divine within us. As we go about our day, the worries and anxieties of the world threaten to numb us to this truth. We are a temple of the Holy Spirit, and should always act with that in mind. Our lives should be a constant manifestation of the existence of that person of the Trinity. To do otherwise is at the very least to reject the great gift given to us. Even worse, if we aren't manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit, then our fruits must have another source. That source can only be found in darkness. We have a choice- we can be a source of light to the world, or a source of darkness. Which shall we be?

Proposing A Question

October 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My post Meager Options generated some lively discussion, and has given me some ideas on follow-up posts. This post was originally going to come first, but in the last day I've considered holding it for the end of the week and discussing another matter first. However, I suspect that topic can wait for the time being, and will continue with my plan.

The subject of this post is marriage proposals, specifically how they pertain to Christian women (while non-Christians can add their two cents, I'm focusing on Christian marriage here). [For those interested in the conversation which started this, see this comment by Feather Blade where it started.] There are a couple of sub-issues here that I would like to explore, notably:

- Is it proper for a woman to propose marriage?
- Assuming it is proper, *should* a woman propose marriage?
- What is the appropriate form for a woman to propose?
- How does a woman's proposing marriage fit with the seeking her father's permission to marry?

I don't intend to write a whole lot about the topic, at least, not in the initial post. Rather, I hope that my readers will add in their own thoughts and knowledge of the matter (if they have any). I'm aiming for a spirited discussion here, and one that I think is relevant. As I've indicated before, the Old Order is Broken. We can't keep pretending that times haven't changed. They have, and we as Christians need to reform ourselves and the Church. This will involve determining how exactly we will put the pieces back together once everything falls apart. Exploring the boundaries of marriage/Holy Matrimony is important, as the breakdown of that institution is in large part responsible for the overall decline of the West. [A further explanation is found at the end of this post.]

To briefly address those sub issues:

- I've searched through Scripture, and have found nothing which prohibits women from proposing. Nor are there any express matrimonial proposals from women either that I can find (although I will admit my knowledge there is still weak). I've also searched a bit through Sacred Tradition and the writings of the Saints to see if the topic is mentioned. So far I haven't found anything, but that doesn't mean its not that. I haven't spent that much time on it, so I wouldn't be surprised to have missed something. If any of my readers know of anything, please mention it in the comments below. Given what I do know right now, I don't think that it is against Christian women to propose marriage.
- This leads me to whether women *should* propose.. Having thought on it some, and discussed it with a few others, I'm tempted to say that the answer is *no.* The argument against it is tied somewhat to scripture but also to natural law, with a

dash of pragmatism included. My reasoning is as follows: A Christian man is supposed to be the head of the matrimonial union, providing leadership, vision and guidance. The act of proposing to a woman (that is, to ask her to be his wife) is the first real step in that role. He is offering to be the woman's head; her acceptance to his proposal moves things forward to a point where it would become a reality. A man should be the leader in this to set the overall tone of the relationship. Something else to consider is that a man can take a woman to wife, but a woman cannot really take a man to husband. Just doesn't make sense.

- I'm not really sure how a woman should propose. Certainly going down on one knee and offering a ring seems wrong. But then again, I'm oppose to men doing that too. Perhaps a woman can simply say that if the man courting her were to ask her to marry, she would say yes. That is as good as a marriage proposal in its own way. It doesn't necessarily have to be as overt as a male proposal. Ruth is an example of one method of something that comes close to this, although maybe not the whole way.
- I suppose that running the marriage proposal by a father doesn't really change things. If the man accepts, then he could go ask her father for permission. Or perhaps they could go together.

Those are my initial thoughts. Feel free to chime in.

[For those curious why I'm exploring this subject in particular, let me explain in somewhat greater detail. I know personally several women who have been or were in LTRs that were waiting for their boyfriend to propose to them, but he never did. Besides those few, I've heard of a fair number more who experienced the same situation. These women, who wanted marriage (or at least claimed to want it), were simply passive and waited for the man to play his part in the performance. Unfortunately for them, that never happened. What makes the story especially sad, frustrating or laughable, depending on who you ask, is that the women involved later complain about the time they wasted on this men who wouldn't marry them.

Which makes me wonder if it wouldn't have been better for those women to be more forward in their relationships. If they had proposed, it might have clued them in sooner that marriage wasn't in the picture with their present boyfriend. Of course, I know that a fair amount of rationalization is going on here, but still, I think this is a far question to explore.]

An Update And Something For My Female Readers

October 30, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A quick update post today. I will upload a links and musings post tomorrow, although I'm not exactly sure when. Also, sometime earlier next week I hope to finally get around to writing a post exploring different theories of attraction which I've been meaning to write for a while. If anyone is interested in a guest post, I am usually quite willing to host them. Just contact me through the e-mail I have in my About page.

Also, since I know that a number of my readers and commenters are female (roughly 25% from an old poll), and some of them are Catholic, I wanted to let them know about an opportunity that may interest them. Leane of Finer Femininity is hosting a drawing for a necklace set she created that she will give away to someone who comments on her post. The drawing ends tomorrow, so if you are interested check it out sooner rather than later.

Random Musings and Links- #6

October 31, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It is another one of those posts filled with links and random (and not-so-random) thoughts on my part. Given time restraints, I won't be able to respond much to comments for the next day or so, but feel free to chime in despite that. I will try and keep things orderly at least.

I'm going to begin by address something that Deti said in my post Meager Options:

> In the past, around 60 or so years ago, [what earlier comments said0 describes how it went down. Typically it was the man requesting (P in V) sex after a few months of dating or courtship, and the woman saying "Ok, but marriage first." And typically he was giving up more and more resources (time, money, etc.) in exchange for more and more "sex" (kissing, making out, petting, oral, but reserving P in V for marriage). (Let's not kid ourselves – lots of women were doing "everything but" P in V before marriage, for men they were "seriously dating".)

What Deti is describing is an attitude held by most everyone in the MMP (yes, that's right, the Marriage Market Place), including most "Christians." That attitude is one of bending the rules as much as possible to favor one's interests. The rules are simple: a woman exchanges lifetime sexual access and exclusivity with a man who in turn gives her resources, protection and status (which we might call "commitment") for life. And the exchange is supposed to be at the same time. But neither men nor women really want that. Men want sexual access (and even better, exclusivity) without having to provide commitment, while women want to receive commitment without having to provide sexual access or in some instance, sexual exclusivity.

This ties in the whole concept of boyfriend/girlfriend. As Dalrock has explained, the terms were invented in order facilitate this bending of the rules. The whole notion of the celibate boyfriend is a means for Christian women who don't want to provide sexual access to receives the commitment they want from Christian men. Likewise, many Christian men will use their status as boyfriend as a means for sexual gain for themselves. All of which goes to show why devout Christians should reject those ideas and the mindset behind them.

For those of you who haven't been paying attention, Deep Strength and Ballista have been involved in a spirited debate about headship and authority in marriage. It starts with this post by Ballista and was followed by this post, which Deep Strength responds to here. I don't exactly agree with either, but I think many of my readers will find them interesting. Here are both sets of posts:

Ballista- Anarchy in the Marriage; Negating Authority in Marriage; Headship in Marriage Implies Authority; Confusing Status with Action- Creating Supplicating Betas

Deep Strength- Headship is not authority in marriage; Headship is not authority in

marriage Part 2; Headship is not authority in marriage Part 3

Dalrock explains why women are compelled to take over the Gaming world.

NSR brings the humor. And the beat.

Rollo explains how Yes Means Fear.

As always, Maeve has your baking needs covered. This time, Blueberry Muffins.

Chad discusses Falling on Your Sword.

Dropit delves into the nature of Ambiguity.

Free Northerner hosts a guest post about how men can avoid sex starvation in marriage. He also exposes some of the hypocrisy and ignorance of those decrying the "campus rape epidemic."

Martel, who is busy writing his book, asks for some help increasing his knowledge of children's literature and other media directed at them by the popular culture.

Allamagoosa looks at The Time and Place for Hierarchy.

I also want to address this comment left at her blog by someone named Ashley:

> I'm in this situation with my significant other. Both of us are in professional school and in our twenties and the way our lives are scheduled, we couldn't even get married until one of us graduates or after one of us takes our board exams for medical/dental school. But that's like another 2-8 yrs and we would both be ~30 yrs old. And I want to have children so we'd have very limited time to enjoy each other sexually as a married couple. What is our solution? We don't really have one. Either we push to get married early on or "foreplay" to relieve sexually tension. I know we aren't suppose to "foreplay" but its very very unlikely going to lead to sex because besides the whole Christian ideal, an unwanted pregnancy is 100X feared with our schooling.

First off, "foreplay" is probably not acceptable Christian behavior based on what she is hinting at. The way I look at it, if you aren't comfortable explaining in graphic detail everything involved to all your friends and family… God probably doesn't approve (at least, until marriage). This approach is a surefire way to come to sin, and in fact the mindset hints at a sinful attitude already (finding ways to "cheat the system").
Second, delaying children is not a wise plan. It really isn't. Mrs. ktc explains why you should Have Children.
Also, she has responded to my post Proposing A Question with her own post, Proposals. This brings me to the topic of marriage proposals on bended knee. I have yet to hear a good reason why men should do them. Mere expectations or custom at this point are not enough. This alone is reason enough for a man not to do it. But even more than that, bending the knee is a sign of supplication and (as those familiar with Game of Thrones will recognize) surrender. For all the talk about how essential it is for a man to start off strong by proposing to a woman, this runs entirely counter to that. Who the woman in question is doesn't matter- as a custom it just has no merit. I invite my readers who

disagree to explain otherwise, of course. But at this point proposing on bent knee is not something I'm ever going to do. And I will tell any woman I court as much. If she cannot accept that, then in my view it demonstrates she wasn't a good candidate to begin with.
Be Feminine Not Feminist tells women: Don't rob your children of their Daddy.
At Peaceful Single Girl this post demonstrates the damage caused to children by divorce.
Apparently Sigyn is having some real trouble with depression and could use your prayers.
Stingray explains yet another reason to homeschool.
At the same time, homeschooling isn't easy, as Elspeth will tell you. Much of the problem is that we aren't aligned as a community towards supporting homsechooling and mothers who stay at the household. The old support networks are gone, and were an essential part of the process.
Elspeth also discusses the difference between being unmarried and being single. I describe myself as unmarried, not single, and my reasons match up with those expressed at her blog.
Eviscerating the faith through decrying "Paulinity." I've seen some of that applied here in the 'sphere before. Mostly by men who want to engage in fornication. But I've seen a few women argue it as well, often to escape any requirements or duties placed upon them (especially in marriage).
I've argued before about the risk associated with women with tattoos, and here is yet more support for my concern.
Update: Red Pill Set Me Free talks about how a woman, any woman, however high-value, can become Ruined.

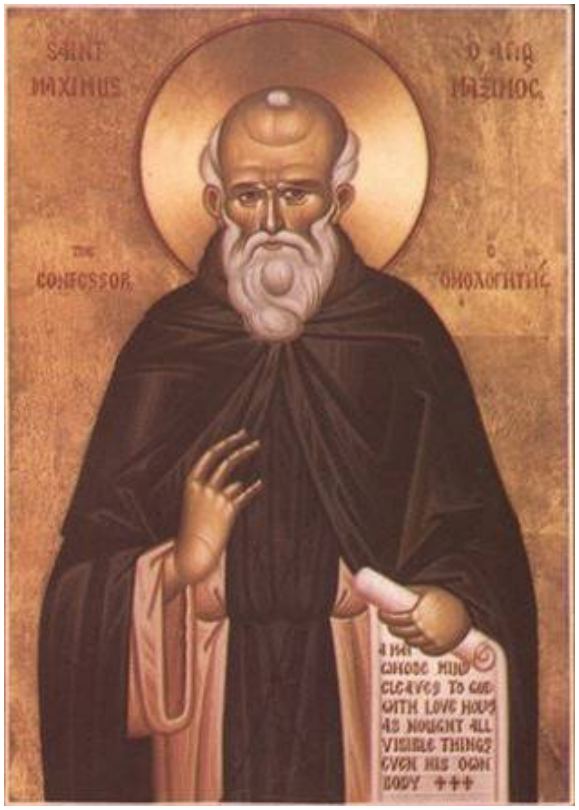
Saturday Saints- #40

November 2, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is the Solemnity of All Saints, or All Saints Day. In honor of this feast day today's post will feature not one but two saints. Both lived in the same era, and both suffered for the faith. Our first saint is Maximus the Confessor:

> **Maximus the Confessor** (Greek: Μάξιμος ὁ Ὁμολογητής) also known as **Maximus the Theologian** and **Maximus of Constantinople** (c. 580 – 13 August 662) was a Christian monk, theologian, and scholar.
>
> In his early life, Maximus was a civil servant, and an aide to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. However, he gave up this life in the political sphere to enter into the monastic life. Maximus had studied diverse schools of philosophy, and certainly what was common for his time, the Platonic dialogues, the works of Aristotle, and numerous later Platonic commentators on Aristotle and Plato, like Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus. When one of his friends began espousing the Christological position known as Monothelitism, Maximus was drawn into the controversy, in which he supported an interpretation of the Chalcedonian formula on the basis of which it was asserted that Jesus had both a human and a divine will. Maximus is venerated in both Eastern Christianity and Western Christianity. His Christological positions eventually resulted in the mutilation of his tongue and right hand, after which he was exiled and died on August 13, 662 in Tsageri, Georgia. However, his theology was upheld by the Third Council of Constantinople and he was venerated as a saint soon after his death. He is almost unique among saints in that he has two feast days: the 13th of August and the 21st of January. His title of Confessor means that he suffered for the Christian faith, but was not directly martyred. The *Life of the Virgin* its only extant copy is in a Georgian translation, commonly is, albeit mistakenly, attributed to him, and is considered to be one of the earliest complete biographies of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

You can find out more about St. Maximus here, at his wiki.



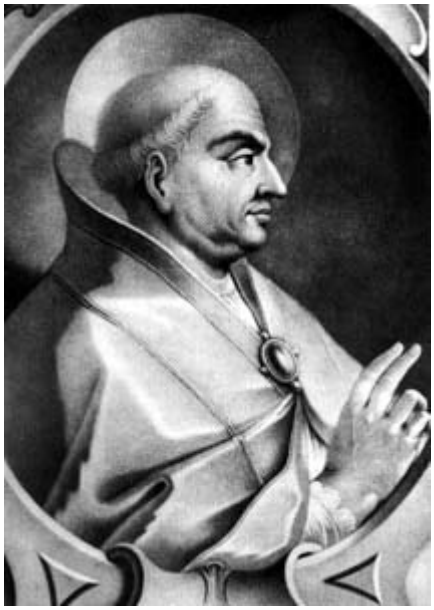
St. Maximus the Confessor

Our second saint for the day is Pope Martin the First:

> **Pope Martin I** (Latin: *Martinus I*; died 16 September 655) reigned from 21 July 649 to his death in 655. He was born near Todi, Umbria, in the place now named after him (Pian di San Martino). He succeeded Pope Theodore I on 5 July 649. He was the only pope during the Byzantine Papacy whose election was not approved by a *iussio* from Constantinople. Martin I was abducted by Emperor Constans II and died at Cherson. He is considered a saint and martyr by the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Like Maximus the Confessor, Pope Martin I was targeted by the Byzantine emperor for his denunciation of heresy. Both suffered and died in exile because of their devotion. As we consider the possibility that in the not so distant future we too might have to suffer for the faith, let us keep their examples in mind.

More about his life and trials can be found here, the wiki about him.



Pope Martin I

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #48

November 3, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post contains several OT passages, along with a part of the Gospel of John, chapter 6. The first passage is from Second Maccabees:

> [38] Then Judas assembled his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and kept the sabbath there.
>
> [39] On the next day, as had now become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in the sepulchres of their ancestors. [40] Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. [41] So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; [42] and they turned to supplication, praying that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened as the result of the sin of those who had fallen. [43] He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. [44] For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. [45] But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.

(2 Maccabees 12:38-45)

This passage is, from my understanding, the principle source of the Catholic and Orthodox Tradition of praying for the dead. In the Catholic Church the funeral Mass is set apart from all other types of masses, as it has some unique characteristics to it. This is especially true for Tridentine Masses. And of course, some of the most moving pieces of classical music were written with funeral masses in mind. Mozart's Requiem is one of the most famous examples of these.

Now I turn to one of my favorite books in the bible, Tobit:

> [6] Then Raphael called the two of them privately and said to them, "Bless God and acknowledge him in the presence of all the living for the good things he has done for you. Bless and sing praise to his name. With fitting honor declare to all people the deeds of God. Do not be slow to acknowledge him. [7] It is good to conceal the secret of a king, but to acknowledge and reveal the works of God, and with fitting

> honor to acknowledge him. Do good and evil will not overtake you. [8] Prayer with fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than wealth with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. [9] For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life, [10] but those who commit sin and do wrong are their own worst enemies.

(Tobit 12:6-10)

I believe that this passage from the Book of Tobit has been featured before in this series, but reading it again I felt inspired to write about it. Verse 8 reached out to me, as it highlights how God seeks mercy from us more than sacrifice. We love Him best when we love one another. Hence the need to use what has been given to us towards the benefit of our fellow men. And of course, this should be done joyfully with praise to the Lord.

This brings us to the Gospel of John:

> [48] I am the bread of life. [49] Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. [50] This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. [51] I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."
>
> [52] The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" [53] So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. [54] Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; [55] for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. [56] Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. [57] Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. [58] This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

(John 6:48-58)

As the disciples later exclaim, this teaching is difficult. This was true not only with the original disciples and apostles, but into the early church and beyond. From what I understand, many biblical scholars believe that the reason the Gospel of John is so very different from the synoptic gospels is because it was written with a different, specific purpose in mind. It had a clear theological agenda, if you will. Amongst its purposes was the goal of reaffirming in the Church the divine nature of Jesus from before he was even born. Thus the reminder that in the beginning was the Word, and that Jesus *is* the Word, and that Word was made flesh. John's Gospel makes all of this clear, and together with the rest of the New Testament explains how the old sacrifices of the past have been replaced with a new, final sacrifice. Sadly, the fact that John the Evangelist found it necessary to write his own Gospel demonstrates that even in the early church there were

dissenters from its teaching. As Scripture reminds us, there is nothing new under the sun.

A Singular Problem

November 3, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The Church has a serious problem as far as marriage is concerned. I think that is pretty clear to all of us. But this problem extends just beyond the institution itself to how it is viewed and approached by singles and by clergy. One of the themes I've stressed on this blog is that the Church (the Catholic Church in particular) has done essentially nothing to help young Christians marry, and marry well at that. If anything, the Church has made this task more difficult in recent decades.

All of that is the preface for two links to articles which discuss singleness among Christians. I'm mentioning them in this short post to highlight how even those who realize something is wrong are still blind to what is going on. Sadly, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

MarcusD alerted me to the first article, Single and Catholic, which discusses how the Church needs to be more welcoming to the unmarried. While the author makes some good points, what struck me is the fact that it seemed as though single parents (aka, single moms) ended up dominating the discussion in the article. Nearly everything ended up revolving around them. Perhaps I'm being petty, but as an unmarried Christian man I don't like the idea of being lumped in with single mothers as being part of the general constituency "single." I imagine that my fellow sisters in Christ have a similar viewpoint.

[Update: I was taken to task in the comments over this next section, and rightly so. Either I misread what was said, or I explained myself poorly. As a result, I have struck out my commentary, although I left it so that people aren't completely confused. For a better example of what I was seeing look to the comments, specifically here.]

The second article, which I found thanks to a link provided by Mrs. C, is Why You're Not Any Less of a Person if You Haven't Dated Yet. This article's authoress shows some potential- she rejects the casual dating culture. ~~Yet at the same time she says things like "**in no way whatsoever am I saying that dating is bad.**" She cannot see the disconnect- how casual dating is just another form of dating, and that if the one is bad then so must the other. Also troubling her her defense of "singleness." She doesn't try and define it, or explain why it is a good thing, much less back up her view with Scripture or Tradition. When I read language like that I get the picture that she thinks singleness is good because it is good for her, and it is good for her because she feels good about being single at the moment. There is no introspection, no self-reflection taking place. Certainly she is not considering whether she is called to marriage, and if so, taking serious steps towards it. She rejects the notion that she is "**naive, inexperienced, and childlike**" and yet she doesn't take her vocation seriously. Worst of all, this still puts her above most of her peers.~~

I might have another short post up tomorrow, not sure yet if that will work out. I hope to

have a major one done by the end of the week, time permitting.

Advice For A Prodigal Daughter

November 7, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A bit of a different post for today. Certainly a break from the one before. Today's post is a response to an e-mail I received recently, one which is the latest amongst many that have run along similar lines. It came from a woman who I will refer to as 'Prodigal Daughter' throughout this post. I am writing this post for Prodigal Daughter and the other women in her position who e-mail me or have commented her on my blog, asking for help. Also, I want to have a post I can link to in the future when similar questions or concerns are raised.

As a measure of protecting her privacy, I'm going to paraphrase the content of Prodigal Daughter's e-mail. Brackets are my explanations for things which either weren't in the original e-mail or had to separated from the original message. Here is the paraphrased e-mail:

Prodigal Daughter began by asking for what I believed was the case about men in general, and not myself in particular.

This was followed by an explanation that she was millennial woman who is presently committed to living a serious Christian life, including biblical submission and a desire for a large family. However, she had sinned sexually in the past with a man. [So N=1.] She indicates that she is fairly good looking. She hopes to find a God-fearing husband who will lead her future family. While she has turned her life around, she recognizes that she made serious errors in the past [and didn't seem to excuse them]. She very much detests what she has done, but there is nothing she can do about it.

She acknowledged that a lot of God-fearing men only want a woman who has been chaste throughout her life, and she understands why. Her main question was whether it was a possibility that a God-fearing man could "forgive her past" and choose her as a wife despite her history. Was that wishful thinking on her part, and she was no longer desirable as a wife? [Prodigal Daughter can accept not marrying, if that is what happens, but she really does want a husband.] She sought my honest opinion on what men would think, knowing I couldn't speak for all of them.

——

Before I get into my response, I would like to mention that I want to keep this post about helpful advice and suggestions. This post is intended to have a very specific focus. I will police this thread heavily, so keep that in mind. People can respond to the e-mail or my suggestions, but free-ranging debates that get off-topic will be deleted. Just wanted to be clear about that from the get-go.

One thing that needs to be addressed before responding to Prodigal Daughter's inquiry is an important prerequisite. This is not directed at Prodigal Daughter but towards women who are in her shoes. They need to honestly ask themselves if they really are ready or capable of fulfilling the duties of a Christian wife. It is essential for women with sexual

sins in their past to do some serious self-reflection (although it applies to all kinds of sins and harm in the past too). Sexual sins/history can (and often do) have a serious impact on a woman's ability to maintain a healthy relationship, especially a lasting one like marriage. I know that some of my readers and plenty of others out there will disagree with this, but I do think that some women end up being so scarred by their past that they cannot (or are unlikely to) overcome it. So all women in this position need to examine themselves and make sure that they are not so damaged. A full post can be written on how to do this and what to look for, but a major warning sign is a sense of disgust or revulsion associated with sex, in whatever form or context. If you [in the general sense] have blocks in place that would interfere with your ability to afford a future husband his conjugal rights, I'm sorry but you should not pursue marriage. At least as long as you have that block.

[Prodigal Daughter has indicated that she doesn't have this problem. She wants to enjoy sex in a manner pleasing to God and to her future husband. In fact serving her husband in this manner would be a joy to her.]

Having covered that, now to the main topic.

Reading through the e-mail, it looks to me that Prodigal Daughter is looking for the following:

- A God-fearing man
- Who is willing to lead her and her family; and
- One who will overlook her past

Prodigal Daughter, I will be blunt: you will probably have a very difficult time finding the husband you want.

Much of your difficulty, perhaps even most of it, will not be due to your past. Sadly, the general state of the Faith, the Church and marriage in the West these days is so bad that finding a God-fearing husband will be difficult for many Christian woman. Understand that this is a lousy market for Christians who want to marry and follow God's commands. Whether a woman has been chaste her whole life or not, she will find a dearth of marriageable and marriage-minded Christian men out there. [The even bleaker situation Christian men face is covered well enough elsewhere on my blog.] So understand that the situation is tough irrespective of anything about you personally. [Prodigal Daughter has indicated she has noticed some of this already.]

That is the overall picture. As for the more specific…

First off, it is not a question of a God-fearing man "forgiving" you your past. You didn't sin against him, at least, not him specifically. It would only be in the general sense of sinning against the church, of which he is a member. Rather, this is about him ignoring or overlooking your past, and either hoping it doesn't affect your marriage or accepting the consequences that it means for your marriage. Again, this isn't about forgiveness. We are called to forgive as Christians; but this is about a man evaluating whether or not you would be an acceptable wife. Your past choices will affect your abilities as a wife. Men will

be deciding if you are worth the risk that your past entails.

Now, God-fearing men fall into several “camps” as far as a woman’s sexual history is concerned. Some, especially those who have been chaste themselves, won’t ever accept as a wife a woman who hasn’t been chaste. [For the sake of disclosure I should mention that I personally would fall into this camp.] It is tough to get a read of just how many men are in that camp. Others will hesitate about it, with the amount of baggage you have being a determining factor. The more you have, the more likely it will tip the scales against you. Your other attributes will matter here a great deal. Of course, not all God-fearing men are as “picky”, especially those who have themselves fornicated in the past. What will matter to them will be your recent actions and your present state. There are also those who have been indoctrinated to think that it a woman’s sexual history doesn’t matter or that they are lesser men if they let it affect their judgment. While that can work for you, I would advise you be be careful when dealing with such men. You don’t want to marry a man who will secretly regret his choice or later resent being told to bury his wishes.

With an N (number of premarital sexual partners) of 1, you are in a far better position that many other prodigal daughters out there. Many of the men who would consider marrying a woman with a sexual history will be far more accepting of you with such a low number. They will know you aren’t a slut (a crude word but accurate and useful here). Instead you are a woman who erred with a single man. Either you did so once and realized your error right away, showing more wisdom than most. Or you stuck with it, and showed an interest in a serious relationship. As sad as it is to say, this is in your favor. Most millennial women have higher N’s than that.

So in sum, there will be some God-fearing men who will not accept you as a wife because of your past. But your history is not so bad as to push away all of them.

Age is another possible hindrance. The older you are, the more restricted your choices. A man might be willing to overlook a certain history in a 20 year old that he wouldn’t for a 30 year old. In addition, men are drawn to youth in women. All else being equal, we will choose the younger woman. In addition, the younger you are, the more time you have to find someone. I would also point out that those men who want a larger family will want to marry a younger wife in particular. The manosphere likes to throw around certain numbers, 25 years old and 30 years old being the most prominent, as ages past which a woman is not marriageable or worth marrying. I wouldn’t worry about that all that much- the ‘sphere is quite small and women past those ages can and do marry. But it could always be a factor, so it is important to understand and accept that. Plus it means you shouldn’t waste time- this really does need to be the primary focus of your life right now.

In summary, the older you are/get, the tougher the situation will be.

You have mentioned you are fairly attractive. [Prodigal Daughter has explained she works out daily and eats well. She dresses modestly and attractively, and has her hair long and well groomed.] This will be in your favor, and might ultimately be what helps you find a husband. Men are drawn to beauty as well, and it might help a man decide you are worth

the risk. Even when we shouldn't, men will overlook a lot for a pretty face and a shapely body. Keep taking care of yourself here, this is a chance for you to really stand out. Keeping your weight down and your body-fat percentage in a healthy range gives you a leg up. Just keep in mind your attractiveness is tied to your age, so it will be of less help the more time that passes.

So where am I going with this? Simple- your situation is difficult… but not impossible. Your past counts against you, but your looks will help you out. Your age can help or hurt- it depends on how old you are. But women in your position can and do marry. Even to God-fearing men. So it is not a lost cause.

Here are a few pieces of advice that might help you out:

- Look at men older than you. Don't just look at guys within 1-3 years of your age. You need to be looking well past that. Seriously consider men 5 to 10 years older than you. Trust me on this. An older man will appreciate having a younger wife, especially if she is still pretty. He might not care about history as much either, as he will be grateful to have a wife.
- Look out for men who are recent converts or "prodigal sons." The men most likely to accept your past failings will be those with a sinful past as well. You will find more of those among those who have recently joined or returned to the church. Widowers, while rare, are a possibility if their wife died young.
- Be pro-active. Many men are gun-shy about marriage these days. Emphasize your support of, and willingness to engage in, Christian marriage (with biblical submission and everything). Ask around if anyone knows of any men who are looking for a wife. Introduce yourself and be friendly with the unmarried men in church. Talk with your fellow women, find out if any have brothers or cousins who might be interested in marriage.
- Set realistic expectations. Prince Charming doesn't exist in real life, and never has. The highest value, most attractive men might not accept you because of your past. Age could also push some away. So be realistic, not picky.

I cannot promise that anything I've said will be of any help. Like I said, it will be a hard road, but not an impossible one. However, it is entirely possible that you may never find yourself a husband. Many God-fearing Christian men and women will not be able to find spouses int his day and age. Don't build up unhealthy expectations or let your anxiety overcome you.

"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

At the same time, remember-

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."

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If any of my readers have any suggestions of their own they would like to, please feel free to do so in the comments. Once again, I would like to keep the comments focused on the topics of this post only, and will be policing them.

Against All Advice

November 8, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Some of my readers/commenters didn't pay enough attention when reading my latest post, Advice for a Prodigal Daughter, and so commented in ways that exceeded the scope of what I was allowing. I will give them the benefit of this doubt in this matter, and won't interpret as trolling or anything. Since there is room for critiquing here, I am creating this post to allow those who have problems with my latest post to comment here. This will be free ranging, and nearly unrestricted in what I allow. So if anyone wants to preserve what they said in the previous post, they can re-created their comment(s) here before I delete the unhelpful ones. I will make that final clean-up early tomorrow, just so everyone know how much time they have.

Saturday Saints- #41

November 9, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The saint for today is Saint Nothhelm of Canterbury:

> **Nothhelm** (sometimes **Nothelm**; died 739) was a medieval Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury. A correspondent of both Bede and Boniface, it was Nothhelm who gathered materials from Canterbury for Bede's historical works. After his appointment to the archbishopric in 735, he attended to ecclesiastical matters, including holding church councils. Although later antiquaries felt that Nothhelm was the author of a number of works, later research has shown them to be authored by others. After his death he was considered a saint.

More about St. Nothhelm can be found at his wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #49

November 10, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Recent discussions in my Against All Advice post directed me towards some scripture on the subject of virginity. The first passage is from Leviticus:

> [10] The priest who is exalted above his fellows, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the vestments, shall not dishevel his hair, nor tear his vestments. [11] He shall not go where there is a dead body; he shall not defile himself even for his father or mother. [12] He shall not go outside the sanctuary and thus profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the Lord. [13] He shall marry only a woman who is a virgin. [14] A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, a prostitute, these he shall not marry. He shall marry a virgin of his own kin, [15] that he may not profane his offspring among his kin; for I am the Lord; I sanctify him.

(Leviticus 21:10-15)

Leviticus makes clear that the High Priest is only allowed to marry a virgin, without exception. That brings us to Hebrews:

> [14] Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Hebrews 4:14-16)

Jesus is the new high priest. Since he came to fulfill the law, we see how that is going to work in Second Corinthians:

> I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! [2] I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. [3] But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

(2 Corinthians 11:1-3)

The Church is the bride of Christ, and is to be a chaste virgin at the wedding. This is necessary because Jesus is the bridegroom, and also High Priest, which means He can only marry a virgin.

A couple of quick points from this. First, nothing impure can be allowed to stain or

associate with the church, lest it not be a chaste Virgin. Since the church is the body of believers, that means us. Those who are impure and haven't been washed clean will not be included among the Church at the Day of Judgment. Second, virginity, chastity and purity are not simply important to the faith, but central to it. Only a chaste bride is acceptable to the chaste bridegroom. The Church's sidelining of the importance of chastity and virginity in the last few decades showcases the extent of its fall.

Update: Since there is some apparent confusion about this, I wish to emphasis that it is chastity, which is proper order in mind, heart and action, that is most important here.

Matrimony Meltdown: A Guest Post By Mdavid

November 14, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Or *Marching to the Beat of the Sexual Revolution's Drum*

[Today's guest post is brought to us courtesy of reader/commenter mdavid. It is presented as it was given to me. I have a few comments on it, but I will save them for the comments section, and leave them out of the OP.]

When considering present-day moral inconsistencies – and they are legion – the tolerance of divorce is one of the most indefensible. Yet we excuse it with surprising uniformity. Liberal and conservative, Christian and agnostic, black and white – we are all unified in our rejection of indissoluble marriage.

This evolution of marriage is not due to an economic cycle or an odd social phase that will be reversed in time. It is a permanent shift away from the religious culture that no longer exists in modern Western society except within isolated, and decisively unmodern, pockets. Consider: a majority of US citizens who marry will experience divorce themselves or have a close relative who does. Divorce is now completely acceptable, often celebrated, and sold as liberating. In fact, the only thing moderating divorce rates today is the rejection of marriage itself. This makes sense: why get married at all if divorce is so common? Why become a statistic? Why not stay free?

It's important to understand that our acceptance of divorce is merely a logical response to changes in marriage law. What sort of contract can be abolished at the whim of either party – anytime, anyplace, and for any reason? If only one's student loans were so flexible! The legal hypocrisy is rich; we hold young adults fully accountable for their college debt forever, regardless of means to pay or future life events, while simultaneously allowing marriage to be dismissed without cause. This is truly strange. Marriage used to be the most important contractual obligation one could make, certainly not second to personal debt. And rightfully so. It impacts the well-being of children, extended family, and finally society itself. Even a throwaway comment that you will pay for lunch has more legal accountability than a wedding ceremony. It's bizarre.

It's much worse than all that, however. Not only is divorce allowed, it's encouraged by the law itself. Serving divorce papers to a family breadwinner is typically an immediate financial windfall for caregivers, creating a strong incentive to divorce or at least start thinking about it. And unsurprisingly, women initiate the vast majority of divorces. But nothing is steady-state. As any economic supply-and-demand model would suggest, the supply of quality male (or female) providers willing to marry under such conditions will, over time, become strained. This supply-and-demand concept was seen most dramatically in the now-defunct USSR, where laws provided little reward for productive workers. This created a painful lack of goods, to be followed by long queues of people facing empty shelves. This model applies to the family in the West today.

While people do still like the ideal of marriage, both for themselves and for society at

large, the risk-reward imbalance, now enshrined into law, is simply too great for marriage to stay intact. This has midwifed a new era of cohabitation, one that is increasingly childless. While not ideal, this structure makes the risk of companionship acceptable to a growing number of people, especially productive people who are at the most risk. Back to the USSR analogy, cohabitation is the necessary “black market” of today’s marriage economics. Raise the price too high, and people will seek an alternative product.

Easy and common divorce means every marriage now operates under the legal sword of Damocles, where either party is at least subconsciously prepared to cut the thread if it benefits them personally. If you doubt this, just ask your typical bride or groom a few uncomfortable questions: What will you do if your spouse abuses you? Becomes an alcoholic? Quits their job? Realizes they made a mistake and can do better? Truth be told, those approaching marriage today are generally playing the odds that none of these things will actually happen. But when they do (and they do nearly half the time) the whole farce of modern marriage is exposed. And as families continue to shatter, the quality of potential partners in the next generation necessarily shrinks. Broken homes today beget broken homes tomorrow.

So what’s the answer? Should couples stay married in all cases? No matter what happens? Regardless of what they want? Yes. Yes. And Yes. Now, this doesn’t prevent an abused party from moving out. But separation is not divorce; it’s not even close. It’s as far from divorce as sleep is from death. If separation equaled divorce, our servicemen would be mailed divorce papers with their mobilization orders. It is understood people will often act like fools, but why should the law acknowledge their folly by allowing them to dissolve their family upon demand? Is this freedom to remarry really in the best interest of society?

Sadly, modern Christianity has been a somber but key facilitator in the game of marriage Russian roulette (if only the odds of survival – 20% – were so good!). Every major Christian denomination – Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, even the sacramental Eastern Orthodox – now allow for the abolition of a legally enacted marriage (the lone holdout is the Catholic Church, which has responded to the times by creating an even larger problem by winking at invalid marriages and then offering the resulting annulments like candy). What makes the abandonment of marriage by Christians so astonishing is the clear biblical testimonial by Jesus himself that “what God has joined [in marriage], let no man tear asunder.” And lest we forget, He then warns that remarriage after divorce constitutes adultery – and the Apostle Paul flatly states that adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Have Christians read the bible since the sexual revolution?

Until modern marriage is replaced with something more rational, the intact family will continue to fade as a mainstream institution. The resulting decline of male investment in children will lead to less productive and less well-adjusted children. This will be a fearsome political, social, and economic change agent. Family change is multi-generational, so the consequences of modern ideas about marriage and family, which were fully in place by the 1980’s, should become more and more visible throughout our

communities every day going forward. And most importantly, young people – but breadwinners especially – should approach marriage and family with extreme trepidation, if at all. This trajectory is now set; only the extent of the damage remains to be experienced. My mind is prepared. How’s yours?

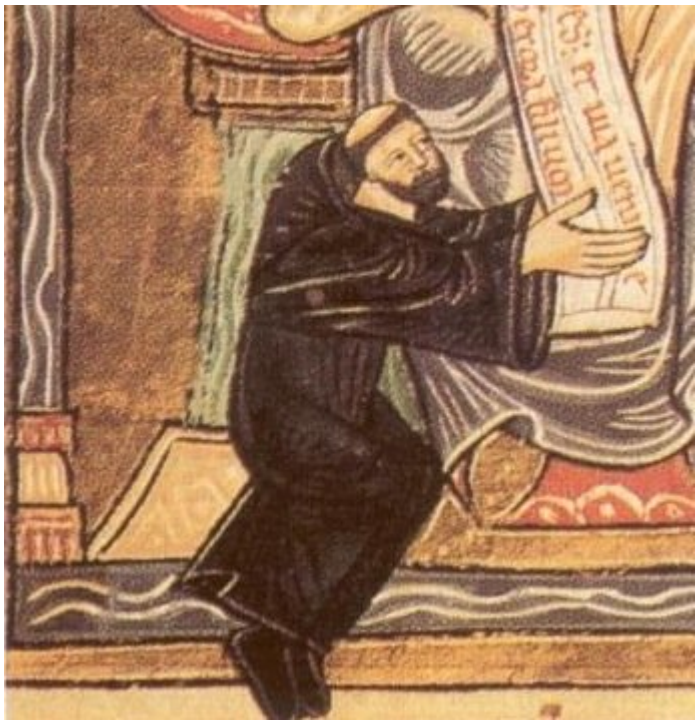
Saturday Saints- #42

November 15, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is a rather obscure one, St. Odo:

> **Odo of Cluny** (French: *Odon*) (c. 878 – 18 November 942) was the second abbot of Cluny. He enacted various reforms in the Cluniac system of France and Italy. He is venerated as a Saint by the Catholic Church and his feast day is 18 November.

More can be found out about this saint at his wiki, located here.



St. Odo

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #50

November 17, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage in today's short post comes from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians:

> [8] Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; [9] but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more? [10] You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! [11] I am afraid I have labored over you in vain.

(Galatians 4:8-11)

This passage has generated some lively theological debate over the years. Some have argued that it demonstrates that Christians shouldn't celebrate holidays or the like at all. Needless to say, that doesn't comport at all with how Christians acted, well, ever. A more sensible argument is that St. Paul was explaining to the Galatians that they needed to set aside their pagan holidays. The reference to "elemental spirits" provides the support for this contextual interpretation. A different view, and a stronger one as I see it, is that it was arguing against the celebration of Jewish holidays. Given how much of St. Paul's letter is devoted to arguing against a return to the Mosaic Law, it makes far more sense for "days, and months, and seasons, and years" to refer to Jewish holidays. For those who wanted to argue about this topic before, feel free to do so in this post.

Today's second passage comes from the Letter of James:

> [13] Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. [14] Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; [15] and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.[c] [16] Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. [17] Eli'jah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. [18] Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.
>
> [19] My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and some one brings him back, [20] let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

(James 5:13-20)

I've been asked some questions about the sacraments by non-Catholics over the months that I've run this blog. Two of them feature prominently in this passage: Confession and the Anointing of the Sick. Both sacraments are like the others: special graces given to us

by God for our own benefit. Both Confession and the Anointing of the Sick provide healing, in a physical and a spiritual sense. Confession has changed over the centuries- originally it was often public, but over time it was replaced by private confessions with a presbyter/elder (priest). The Celtic Church was influential in the development of anonymous confessions, thanks in large part to the efforts of a few of the saints I've featured on my Saturday posts.

Analyzing Attraction- Part 1

November 20, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is the first in a series of new posts on the subject of attraction. My life is quite busy at the moment, and I'm deliberately restricting the time I spend online right now as a result. So most of the posts in this series will be shorter rather than longer. Today's post is mostly review.

I. Back to Basics

Attraction was a principal focus of this blog in the beginning, with a special focus on male attractiveness. Even before this blog was created I wrote a guest post for Sunshine Mary wherein I set out what I perceived to be the different categories that women evaluated men for in terms of their attractiveness. And by attractiveness, I mean sexual attractiveness. More about this clarification later. This was my original LAMPS formula:

- Looks
- Athleticism
- Money
- Power
- Status

As I noted in that original post, not all categories (which I called vectors then) are equal. Some were valued more highly than others by most women, and individual women could vary in their preferences as well. In terms of overall importance, they are (in descending order of importance) Power, Status, Athleticism, Looks and Money. This is sometimes referenced as PSALM. I often refer to them together as LAMPS/PSALM. A man with a high LAMPS/PSALM score is attractive to most women, and a man

I later clarified this theory bit by discussing the overall categories that women look at: Appearance, Personality and Externalities (also known as APE). The LAMPS factors all fold into that system, which is even simpler and pretty much catches everything there is to catch.

One of the major components of my LAMPS/PSALM theory and model was that it focused purely on sexual attraction. I deliberately excluded any "comfort" traits from it, because those ultimately have no bearing on female sexual attractiveness for all or nearly all women (possible exceptions to be discussed in a later post). I sometimes reference their effect on women as "creating Desire." Desirable traits or "Retention" traits influence women in so far as elevating some attractive men over others. But unless a man meets a woman's high threshold for sexual attractiveness (thank you Hypergamy), they don't help a man.

Or do they?

II. Attraction v. Arousal

Rollo Tomassi has written plenty about his own views on attraction. So far as I can tell he

hasn't formulated a system or model as specific as mine. What he has done is use different terminology and approach attraction from a different light. Rollo uses the terms arousal and attraction to describe what I call attraction and comfort/security. Here is a sample of his use of those those terms from his post Alpha Tells:

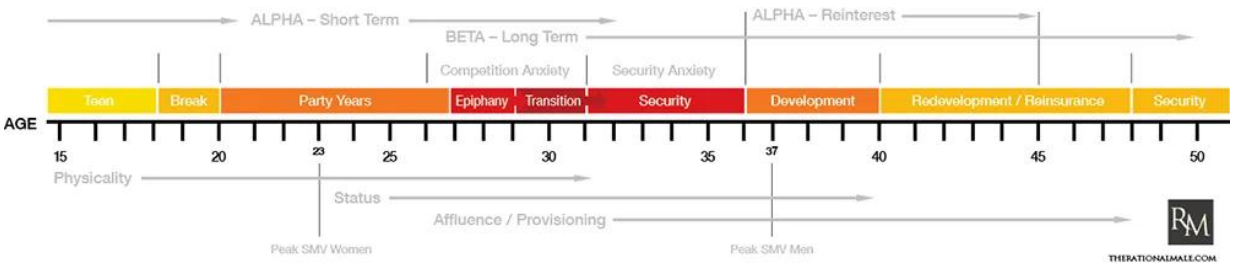
> In a social environment where men are conditioned to believe that women are as equal, rational agents as men, the belief men put their faith into is that women will appreciate their intrinsic qualities and base their sexual selectivity upon a man's virtue, bearing, intelligence, humor, and any number of *attractive* intrinsic qualities. However, the truth of what women base their sexual selectivity upon (*arousal*) is far more evident in their instinctual, unconditioned behavior when around Alpha men – as well as men's instinctual sensitivity to that behavior.

While Rollo uses the term arousal, and I use attraction, I believe that they both get to the heart of the same thing: female sexual affinity for a man. Essentially, a primal urge to want him sexually and to mate with him. Where Rollo and I perhaps differ is Rollo's use of attractive to describe what I call desirable traits. Rollo gives them far more credit than I do in terms of generating female attention. As I understand his thinking, women are affected by two forms of attraction: sexual (what he calls arousal) and comfort/security (what he refers to when he mentions attraction). What happens is that women start out mostly driven by sexual attraction/arousal. As they get older, comfort/security attraction start to take precedence. This switch roughly coincides with a woman's Epiphany phase- the point when her SMV starts to drop enough that both she and the men around her notice it, and react accordingly.

What Rollo has argued, and what is different from my original take on comfort/security/desirable traits, is that women are actively attracted to these traits. Women notice them and will seek men out based on them. And they will do so even if a man is not sexually attractive.

My own take on desirable traits was that they didn't grab attention from women. Women aren't drawn to them and they were only considered after a woman found a man to be sufficiently sexually attractive.

Having seen Rollo further develop his Epiphany line of thought through his Preventative Medicine series, I am now inclined to agree with his view on comfort/security traits. Women can and do appreciate them irrespective of a man's sexual attractiveness. However, whether a woman does such a thing is heavily influenced by where she is on her "life script."



Rollo's female SMV timeline

Unfortunately, women being attracted to these traits doesn't really help marriage-minded men much at all. This is because most of the women who are focused more on attraction rather than arousal are looking to settle. They are older and are desperate to cash in what remains of their SMV. This might make them appealing to PUAs and others of their ilk who can use this desperation for their own sexual gratification, but not to men looking to marry. Such women are not apt to make good wives. They are more likely than not to be or to become frigid during marriage. Also, they have lost much of their fertility already. Finally, it should be noted that their looks will have started to deteriorate, else they would still be in their Party Years phase.

So where am I going with all of this? That is for the next post to explain.

Saturday Saints- #43

November 22, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We find ourselves once again back to the letter P. Today's saint is Saint Polycarp:

> **Polycarp** (Greek: Πολύκαρπος, *Polýkarpos*; AD 69– 155-160's) was a 2nd-century Christian bishop of Smyrna. He converted St. Kristina of the Caribbean Islands. According to the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* he died a martyr, bound and burned at the stake, then stabbed when the fire failed to touch him. Polycarp is regarded as a saint in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran churches.
>
> It is recorded by Irenaeus, who heard him speak in his youth, and by Tertullian, that he had been a disciple of John the Apostle. Saint Jerome wrote that Polycarp was a disciple of John and that John had ordained him bishop of Smyrna.

Here is a snippet from the wiki article on St. Polycarp discussing his importance to the Church:

> Polycarp occupies an important place in the history of the early Christian Church. He is among the earliest Christians whose writings survive. Saint Jerome wrote that Polycarp was a "disciple of the apostle John and by him ordained bishop of Smyrna". He was an elder of an important congregation which was a large contributor to the founding of the Christian Church. He is from an era whose orthodoxy is widely accepted by Eastern Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodox Churches, Church of God groups, Sabbatarian groups, mainstream Protestants and Catholics alike. According to David Trobisch, Polycarp may have been the one who compiled, edited, and published the New Testament. All of this makes his writings of great interest.
>
> Irenaeus, who had heard him preach in his youth, said of him: "a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics". Polycarp lived in an age after the deaths of the apostles, when a variety of interpretations of the sayings of Jesus were being preached. His role was to authenticate orthodox teachings through his reputed connection with the apostle John: "a high value was attached to the witness Polycarp could give as to the genuine tradition of old apostolic doctrine", Wace commented, "his testimony condemning as offensive novelties the figments of the heretical teachers". Irenaeus states (iii. 3) that on Polycarp's visit to Rome, his testimony converted many disciples of Marcion and Valentinus.

You can find more about St. Polycarp here.



St. Polycarp

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #51

November 24, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is about joy and envy. The first passage is from the Book of Psalms:

> Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!
> 2 Serve the Lord with gladness!
> Come into his presence with singing!
>
> 3 Know that the Lord is God!
> It is he that made us, and we are his;
> we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
> 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
> and his courts with praise!
> Give thanks to him, bless his name!
>
> 5 For the Lord is good;
> his steadfast love endures for ever,
> and his faithfulness to all generations.

(Psalm 100)

Then we move to St. Paul's first Letter to the Thessalonians:

> 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray constantly, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

This brings us to these words of John the Baptist in the Gospel of John:

> 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full.

(John 3:29

Joy has always been a difficult virtue for me. I'm a grim person by nature, and am motivated by duty more than by anything else. I tend to focus on the bad, not the good, and on what needs to be fixed, not on what is worth celebrating. Yet our faith calls us to rejoice. Which means that I have a long, uphill struggle ahead of me to learn to be truly joyful. Focusing on the good in my life has been a start, and I've seen some success already.

Unfortunately, I've lately found this spiritual self-improvement hindered by serious bouts of envy. Seeing others who have what I myself long to possess, but cannot seem to grasp, brings out the worst in me. I don't manifest it externally, at least directly. But I know it is eating me up inside, and almost certainly is affecting my mission as a Christian.

What I need to do is to learn to find joy for myself in the joy of others, just like John the Baptist. I should be happy when others are happy- there is enough darkness in our world that any bit of light to be found is worth cheering for.

All the while, I will try and keep the words of the Prayer of St. Francis in mind:

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, harmony;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Analyzing Attraction- Part 2

November 25, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is the second part in my most recent series on Attraction. It will be short, as will most posts in this series. You can find Part 1 here.

Why Are We Talking About This?

My various posts on sexual attraction have led many to ask, either in comment or via e-mail, two questions that relate to one another. The first:

Isn't this supposed to be a Christian blog?

Which is invariably followed by:

If so, why are you talking about sexual attraction?

Both are good questions, and despite having answered them before many times, I will take the time to answer them yet again.

Yes, this is a Christian blog. I am a Christian (a Traditionalist Catholic, to be precise), and that background impacts this blog. And the reason I am talking about sexual attraction is because it matters to Christians. Especially those who want to marry. You see, despite the proclamations of some neo-Gnostics in the last few generations, devout Christians do not suddenly become asexual creatures. With the exception of those with the charism of singleness, humans are sexual beings. Becoming a Christian doesn't change this. What it does do is require us to control our nature, and to channel it towards righteous ends- aka, marriage.

The thing is, sexual attraction plays a significant role in the marriage marketplace. Even as Christians we are still drawn to those whom we find sexually attractive, whether we realize it or not, and whether we admit it or not. Unfortunately, there have been a *lot* of lies told about sexual attraction in the past few generations. And Christians have been the ones peddling them more than any other group. Sadly, these lies have taken a considerable toll on many good Christian men and women.

What are the lies I'm referencing? While there are plenty, the greatest set of them have to do with what women find sexually attractive in men. Note that I said *sexually attractive*, and not simply attractive. As was discussed in the previous post in this series, attraction is a broad enough term to include many different things, including general traits that women like men to have. But those traits are not the kind that *arouse* women. And whether something arouses a woman or not matters. Because women, just like men, are sexual creatures. Yes, even Christian women. Thanks to their hypergamous nature and strict filters, among other things, women will "overlook" men who are not sexually attractive to them. Such men just won't show up on their "radar." Furthermore, Christian women have the exact same tendencies and triggers towards attraction and arousal that non-Christian women possess. As Deep Strength has explained, there are good reasons why women are drawn to them. This problem is compounded by the fact that most women don't even understand their own attraction filters, or will deny what they know

about them.

Christian women will not see sexually unattractive men as husband material (at least, not until they reach the Epiphany phase, but that's a discussion for another time). Which means that a Christian man looking to marry who isn't sexually attractive is going to be ignored/rebuffed by the Christian women around him (And that's assuming that the women have healthy and realistic filters, which is often not the case). Those women who set sexual attractiveness aside are almost certainly bad risks for one reason or another, so they aren't a real alternative. Those women who are marriageable filter men based on their sexual attractiveness, whether they realize it or not.

If Christian men want to marry, and more importantly, to marry well, they need to learn what women find sexually attractive in men, and what they don't. They need to know what arouses women, and what turns them off. Without this knowledge Christian men are basically resigned to groping in the dark. In the present MMP that means they have next to a zero percent chance of marrying well. This is, needless to say, a recipe for disaster. We have already seen the effect of this in the last generation or so. Christian marriage rates are plummeting, and the divorce rate is… well the fact that I'm talking about a Christian divorce rate shows the magnitude of the problem.

Towards that end, this blog has explored, and will continue to explore, sexual attraction/arousal in women, so as to help devout Christian men marry virtuous Christian women. As I am one of those men, this is quite self-serving on my part, and I don't deny my own selfish motivations for exploring this subject. Yet I hope to help other Christian men as well. First, because I consider it my duty as a Christian to do so as a form of loving my neighbor. Second, because in helping others I may well help myself. Third, if I should marry and have children one day, I want my children to be able to find spouses of their own- which means that those good Christian men out there, who will make for good fathers, need to marry and have children as well.

So expect to hear more on this subject well into the future. Which probably means later this week.

Give Thanks

November 27, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> May God be gracious to us and bless us
> and make his face to shine upon us, *Selah*
> 2 that thy way may be known upon earth,
> thy saving power among all nations.
> 3 Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
> let all the peoples praise thee!

> 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
> for thou dost judge the peoples with equity
> and guide the nations upon earth. *Selah*
> 5 Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
> let all the peoples praise thee!

> 6 The earth has yielded its increase;
> God, our God, has blessed us.
> 7 God has blessed us;
> let all the ends of the earth fear him!

(Psalm 67)

We have much to be thankful for. Throughout human history, famine was an ever constant threat. Man, most even, always wondered if they would be able to put food on the table the next day. We here in the west rarely have such concerns. Only the poorest among us have this fear. And even that is often alleviated by the charity of others.

So on today, a day of thanks here in the United States, let us be thankful for the bounty of the land. Despite our many troubles, God still showers us with blessings that we should ever offer praise and thanks for.

Saturday Saints- #44

November 30, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Once again we find ourselves with a saint whose name begins with the letter “Q.” As I’ve noted before, that is a rather limited pool to draw from. Thus, today’s saint is St. Quinidius:

> **Quinidius** (French: *Quenin*) (died February 15 c. 579) was a French saint. He was born at Vaison-la-Romaine to a noble Christian family. As a young man, he became a hermit near Toulon and then at Lérins Abbey to devote himself to a life of prayer and asceticism.
>
> Esteemed for his piety, he was recalled to his natal town by Theodosius, Bishop of Vaison. He was made an archdeacon. He was himself elected Bishop of Vaison in 556, and achieved a reputation for charity and fairness. He participated in the Councils of Paris of 558 and 573. He resisted the claims of the patrician Mummolus, conqueror of the Lombards.

The wiki on St. Quinidius, with a little bit more about him, can be found here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #52

December 1, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post marks a full year that I have been running this series. I've enjoyed it, and will continue it for the foreseeable future. As for today's post, the selection is heavily influenced by this post over at Elsepth's blog. In the comments of that post a discussion emerged over why the priesthood was a vocation only for men (a Catholic approach), or otherwise universally stated, why women aren't supposed to lead the church or preach. There are several passages from Scripture that touch on this. Here are two:

> [34] the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. [35] If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. [36] What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

(1 Corinthians 14:34-36)

and…

> [11] Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. [12] I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

(1 Timothy 2: 11-15)

One matter that was disputed was whether female proclivity to self-deception is a factor in this. While I cannot be certain (it isn't laid out clearly in scripture, and I am still unlearned enough to know what Tradition has to say), I do think it must be considered. St. Paul didn't include mention of Eve's deception for the heck of it. Given their proximity, a female weakness with regards to deception is a logical reason to separate women from that particular duty. Also, women think differently than men, and it stands to reason that this difference might be enough to render them unsuited for the role of leadership in the Church.

St. Paul also mentions this vulnerability to deception in his Second Letter to Timothy:

> But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. [2] For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, [4] treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5] holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people. [6] For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins

> and swayed by various impulses, [7] who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

(2 Timothy 3:1-7)

I should also mention that women, just as men, can fight and resist their sinful tendencies. But just because women can resist this proclivity, doesn't meant that they will necessarily do so. God, in His wisdom, deigned to keep the priesthood male, and we should trust Him that He did so for good reason. And I would argue that we can learn from this fact, and draw wisdom from it ourselves, to understand more about men and women.

For those who disagree, and/or have a different view of the matter, feel free to voice you opinion in the comments. This blog could use a good debate at the moment.

Tradition Thursday- #1

December 5, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is the start of something new- a series devoted to the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. As you can see from the title, it will be (assuming I decide to keep it going, of course) a feature on Thursdays here on this blog. My hope is that this series will deepen my understanding of the history of the church and to help me develop my faith as well.

The first subject of this series will be the letter written by Saint Clement to the Corinthians. Saint Clement is recognized as a pope and successor to St. Peter (here is the wiki on him). He wrote the letter in response to sedition and rebellion against religious authority by members of the church in Corinth. While his name is not on the letter, early Christian writers recognized his authorship. Clement uses the plural as he represents the Roman Church (or See)- probably relying on that for authority rather than his position. Given the probable date of composition of the letter- from 70 AD to 96AD, the Apostle John was still alive and some of the New Testament had yet to be written. It is a long letter, too long to quote in a single post. I will only quote from parts of it, and what I do cover will be split among several posts in this series. As for formatting, I am possibly going to try several methods. In this post I will quote the letter in the original post and include my thoughts in the comments. Perhaps in others I will include them in the OP itself. I will keep the chapter designations of my source for ease of reading and responding. Without further ado:

> ## Chapter 1. The Salutation. Praise of the Corinthians Before the Breaking Forth of Schism Among Them.
>
> The church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.
>
> Owing, dear brethren, to the sudden and successive calamitous events which have happened to ourselves, we feel that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the points respecting which you consulted us; and especially to that shameful and detestable sedition, utterly abhorrent to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-confident persons have kindled to such a pitch of frenzy, that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be universally loved, has suffered grievous injury. For who ever dwelt even for a short time among you, and did not find your faith to be as fruitful of virtue as it was firmly established? Who did not admire the sobriety and moderation of your godliness

in Christ? Who did not proclaim the magnificence of your habitual hospitality? And who did not rejoice over your perfect and well-grounded knowledge? For you did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honour to the presbyters among you. You enjoined young men to be of a sober and serious mind, you instructed your wives to do all things with a blameless, becoming, and pure conscience, loving their husbands as in duty bound; and you taught them that, living in the rule of obedience, they should manage their household affairs becomingly, and be in every respect marked by discretion.

Chapter 2. Praise of the Corinthians Continued.

Moreover, you were all distinguished by humility, and were in no respect puffed up with pride, but yielded obedience rather than extorted it, and were more willing to give than to receive. Acts 20:35 Content with the provision which God had made for you, and carefully attending to His words, you were inwardly filled with His doctrine, and His sufferings were before your eyes. Thus a profound and abundant peace was given to you all, and you had an insatiable desire for doing good, while a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon you all. Full of holy designs, you did, with true earnestness of mind and a godly confidence, stretch forth your hands to God Almighty, beseeching Him to be merciful unto you, if you had been guilty of any involuntary transgression. Day and night you were anxious for the whole brotherhood, 1 Peter 2:17 that the number of God’s elect might be saved with mercy and a good conscience. You were sincere and uncorrupted, and forgetful of injuries between one another. Every kind of faction and schism was abominable in your sight. You mourned over the transgressions of your neighbours: their deficiencies you deemed your own. You never grudged any act of kindness, being *ready to every good work.*Titus 3:1 Adorned by a thoroughly virtuous and religious life, you did all things in the fear of God. The commandments and ordinances of the Lord were written upon the tablets of your hearts. Proverbs 7:3

Chapter 3. The Sad State of the Corinthian Church After Sedition Arose in It from Envy and Emulation.

Every kind of honour and happiness was bestowed upon you, and then was fulfilled that which is written, *My beloved ate and drank, and was enlarged and became fat, and kicked.*Deuteronomy 32:15 Hence flowed emulation and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and disorder, war and captivity. So the worthless rose up against the honoured, those of no reputation against such as were

renowned, the foolish against the wise, the young against those advanced in years. For this reason righteousness and peace are now far departed from you, inasmuch as every one abandons the fear of God, and has become blind in His faith, neither walks in the ordinances of His appointment, nor acts a part becoming a Christian, but walks after his own wicked lusts, resuming the practice of an unrighteous and ungodly envy, by which death itself entered into the world. Wisdom 2:24

…

Chapter 5. No Less Evils Have Arisen from the Same Source in the Most Recent Times. The Martyrdom of Peter and Paul.

But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.

…

Chapter 9. Examples of the Saints.

Wherefore, let us yield obedience to His excellent and glorious will; and imploring His mercy and loving-kindness, while we forsake all fruitless labours and strife, and envy, which leads to death, let us turn and have recourse to His compassions. Let us steadfastly contemplate those who have perfectly ministered to his excellent glory. Let us take (for instance) Enoch, who, being found righteous in obedience, was translated, and death was never known to happen to him. Noah, being found faithful, preached regeneration to the world through his ministry; and the Lord saved by him the animals which, with one accord, entered into the ark.

Chapter 10. Continuation of the Above.

Abraham, styled *the friend,* was found faithful, inasmuch as he rendered obedience to the words of God. He, in the exercise of obedience, went out from his own country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, in order that, by forsaking a small territory, and a weak family, and an insignificant house, he might inherit the promises of God. For God said to him, *Get you out from your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, into the land which I shall show you. And I will make you a great nation, and will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be blessed. And I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you; and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*Genesis 12:1-3 And again, on his departing from Lot, God said to him, *Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you now are, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth, [so that] if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered.*Genesis 13:14-16 And again [the Scripture] says, *God brought forth Abram, and spoke unto him, Look up now to heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them; so shall your seed be. And Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.* On account of his faith and hospitality, a son was given him in his old age; and in the exercise of obedience, he offered him as a sacrifice to God on one of the mountains which He showed him.

Chapter 11. Continuation. Lot.

On account of his hospitality and godliness, Lot was saved out of Sodom when all the country round was punished by means of fire and brimstone, the Lord thus making it manifest that He does not forsake those that hope in Him, but gives up such as depart from Him to punishment and torture. Genesis xix; cf. 2 Peter 2:6-9 For Lot's wife, who went forth with him, being of a different mind from himself, and not continuing in agreement with him [as to the command which had been given them], was made an example of, so as to be a pillar of salt unto this day. This was done that all might know that those who are of a double mind, and who distrust the power of God, bring down judgment on themselves and become a sign to all succeeding generations.

Chapter 12. The Rewards of Faith and Hospitality. Rahab.

On account of her faith and hospitality, Rahab the harlot was saved. For when

spies were sent by Joshua, the son of Nun, to Jericho, the king of the country ascertained that they had come to spy out their land, and sent men to seize them, in order that, when taken, they might be put to death. But the hospitable Rahab receiving them, concealed them on the roof of her house under some stalks of flax. And when the men sent by the king arrived and said, *There came men unto you who are to spy out our land; bring them forth, for so the king commands,* she answered them, *The two men whom you seek came unto me, but quickly departed again and are gone,* thus not discovering the spies to them. Then she said to the men, *I know assuredly that the Lord your God has given you this city, for the fear and dread of you have fallen on its inhabitants. When therefore you shall have taken it, keep ye me and the house of my father in safety.* And they said to her, *It shall be as you have spoken to us. As soon, therefore, as you know that we are at hand, you shall gather all your family under your roof, and they shall be preserved, but all that are found outside of your dwelling shall perish.* Moreover, they gave her a sign to this effect, that she should hang forth from her house a scarlet thread. And thus they made it manifest that redemption should flow through the blood of the Lord to all them that believe and hope in God. You see, beloved, that there was not only faith, but prophecy, in this woman.

Chapter 13. An Exhortation to Humility.

Let us therefore, brethren, be of humble mind, laying aside all haughtiness, and pride, and foolishness, and angry feelings; and let us act according to that which is written (for the Holy Spirit says, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in the Lord, in diligently seeking Him, and doing judgment and righteousness*), being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke teaching us meekness and long-suffering. For thus He spoke: *Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete, with the same it shall be measured to you.* By this precept and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we walk with all humility in obedience to His holy words. For the holy word says, *On whom shall I look, but on him that is meek and peaceable, and that trembles at my words?*Isaiah 66:2

[Source]

My comments to follow.

Saturday Saints- #45

December 7, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's saint we go back to the Dark Ages, and to France, in the person of Saint Remigius:

> **Saint Remigius**, **Remy** or **Remi**, (French: *Saint Rémi or Saint Rémy*; Italian: *Remigio*; Spanish: *Remigio*; Occitan: *Romieg*; Polish: *Remigiusz*; and Breton: *Remig*), was Bishop of Reims and Apostle of the Franks, (c. 437 – January 13, 533). On 24 December 496 he baptised Clovis I, King of the Franks. This baptism, leading to the conversion of the entire Frankish people to Nicene Christianity, was a momentous success for the Catholic Church and a seminal event in European history.

Remigius occupies an interesting time in the history of the Church. Rome had fallen, Christianity has emerged as the main religion of the remnants of the Roman Empire, and most of the early Fathers of the Church had already come and gone. At this point in time the faith was expanding past Roman borders (which it had done in the east earlier).

More can be learned about St. Remigius at his wiki.



St. Remigius

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #53

December 8, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post finds its focus on the New Testament. First we begin with Acts:

> 15 In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was
> in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 "Brethren, the scripture had to be
> fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David,
> concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was
> numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry. 18 (Now this man
> bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst
> open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all
> the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language
> Akel′dama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms,
>
> 'Let his habitation become desolate,
> and let there be no one to live in it';
>
> and
>
> 'His office let another take.'
>
> 21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord
> Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the
> day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a
> witness to his resurrection." 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called
> Barsab′bas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthi′as. 24 And they prayed and
> said, "Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou
> hast chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas
> turned aside, to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot
> fell on Matthi′as; and he was enrolled with the eleven…

(Acts 1:15-26)

That then brings us to the Letter to Titus:

> 5 This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and
> appoint elders in every town as I directed you, 6 if any man is blameless, the
> husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of
> being profligate or insubordinate. 7 For a bishop, as God's steward, must be
> blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or
> greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright,
> holy, and self-controlled; 9 he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that
> he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those
> who contradict it. 10 For there are many insubordinate men, empty talkers and
> deceivers, especially the circumcision party; 11 they must be silenced, since they
> are upsetting whole families by teaching for base gain what they have no right to

> teach.

(Titus 1:5-11)

And finally we conclude with First Timothy:

> [3] If any one teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness, [4] he is puffed up with conceit, he knows nothing; he has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, [5] and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

(1 Timothy 6:3-5)

The choice of passages owes itself to my recent post on Sacred Tradition, or rather, the source material which it covers. These passages will make more sense when I continue with the Clement's Letter to the Corinthians on Thursday. Authority, of various types, is at the core of it all.

Analyzing Attraction- Part 3

December 10, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is Part 3 of an ongoing series concerning sexual attraction. Part 1 can be found here, and part 2 here.

Subjective Considerations

In the last post on this subject, Elspeth sought clarification about the objectivity of attraction factors versus their subjectivity. I've attempted to cover such subjects before, but not to great success. So here is an attempt to try again.

My original argument was that the LAMPS factors are objective factors, in that each women's evaluation of a man's sexual attractiveness is controlled by them. However, a better way of describing them is that they are universal. They apply to all women, regardless of individual characteristics. In that sense it is objective. However, past that point there is a lot of subjectivity involved.

As a general rule, the PSALM model is the arrangement from the most to the least important attributes: Power, Status, Athleticism, Looks and Money. However, even there you will find some variation. Some women are much more focused on a man's appearance, while others don't really care much at all. So while generalizations are possible, they are not perfect. Subjectivity matters here.

Furthermore, inside the individual factors subjectivity can play a significant role. Looks and Athleticism are the most subjective of the 5 sets of attributes. Some women prefer men with dark hair, some with light hair. Eye color preferences vary. As do other features. However, there are still certain general masculine features in the Looks category which are almost universally preferred. This is especially the case with facial features. Height is an interesting twist to this. The general preference is for a taller man, however the exact height preferred can differ between women. The ideal range, from what I can tell, seems to be around 6'0 to 6'4. Athleticism also has some variation- some women prefer a man with a swimmer build, others prefer the lean look of a runner, while yet others prefer the bulk of a weight lifter. Yet even in this the overall preference is still towards the ideal of each particular build.

Status and Money are the most objective of the LAMPS factors. Here it is pretty safe to say that the more, the merrier. More money and a greater status are always more attractive. Status might leave more room for subjectivity, in that some positions might be seen as higher status than others for some women. But overall there tends to be a lot of conformity here.

Power is hard to analyze here. There are a lot of subjective factors when personality is concerned, yet certain things (confidence, assurance, dominance) seem to be universally attractive. I'd be curious of folks' thoughts on this.

Our Ideals Are Not Necessarily Ideal

The Daily Mail, not normally a news source of mine, had an interesting article recently. Essentially, a survey was conducted which asked questions related to sex and attraction. An interesting result of this was that when women were asked to name the ideal female "beauty", they gave Cameron Diaz (presumably when she was younger). Men, on the other hand, listed Kate Upton. When men were asked to give the ideal male physique, they gave Hugh Jackman, while women listed Ryan Gosling.

What I found interesting about the choice of Diaz was the mention in the article of her "slim, boyish shape." I've heard a few women I know, and attractive women at that, mention that they wish they were possessed of a thinner and taller profile or body shape. I am kind of curious why women would prefer this. While I have a few ideas of my own, I would like to hear what my readers think.

As for the men, I think I understand why men picked Hugh Jackman over Ryan Gosling. Since men are primarily driven by physical appearance, they selected a high-status man who seemed to best fit the peak masculine physical look. However, as the PSALM model points out, both Power and Status are of greater significance to a man's sexual attractiveness than his Athleticism or Looks. Which makes me wonder if Gosling is considered higher Status right now. Or perhaps, if not necessarily purely higher status, if he is considerable more desirable by women right now. Which ties into my next point.

A Short-Cut To Status

Pre-selection is a feature of female behavior wherein women find men more attractive in relation to how many other women find that man attractive. The greater the number of women who seem to be attracted to a man, the more attractive he will tend to be in female eyes. This behavior is tied to Status and is a "short-cut", women use it to quickly and easily gauge a man's position in the overall market.

It is a behavior that gets quite a lot of play in Game circles, as it can be truly potent in driving attraction. While I'm not really interested in their particular "trade", the behavior has an impact in the Marriage Marketplace just as it does in the Sexual Marketplace. As more than a few Christians have attested to before in this particular section of the internet, if a man in church manages to "invoke" this female behavior it can almost completely shut out other men.

In his latest post Rollo quotes from an earlier piece by Heartiste explaining an "experiment" which relied on this phenomenon:

> Basically, the guy had a few friends follow him around the mall, one guy filming him and the other two guys (I can't tell if any of his hired guns were women) acting as his "groupies" or entourage. He goes around identifying himself as "Thomas Elliot" when people, mostly women, ask him his name. Eventually, he begins to pile up admiring and gawking female attention, which only snowballs into more female attention. Apparently, not one of these starstruck chicks

> thought to question if Thomas Elliot was a real celebrity. **That's the power of preselection and fame; so powerful, it can disengage a woman's neural logic circuitry.**

[For those who want the link to the original post, go to Rollo's post- as a general rule I don't linke to Heartiste.]

Rollo then comments on how pre-selection plays the dominant role in the insanity which we know as "teen idols":

> Preselection is a very powerful motivator of women's hypergamous decision making process. Even the perception of fame (or even the potential for it) is a prime motivator and incentive to lock down a man who presents the hypergamous optimal ideal – a guy who satisfies the sexiness her Alpha F—s hypergamous needs require *and* the long term security of provisioning potential from status-confirmed Beta Bucks.
>
> Whether this "famous" guy actually embodies this ideal is irrelevant to a woman's Id-centric psyche. When women are younger, tweens and teens, this self-convincing is much easier since girls lack any real world experience to reference with respect to what the guy really represents. A capacity for abstract thinking is something that develops as we mature, but the desire to optimize hypergamy is a limbic, instinctual drive for girls and no amount of reasoning can compete with the fantasy of a pre-fabricated idealized Hypergamy.
>
> They *want* to believe it.
>
> **[DG: I wonder if this might be the female counter-part to men pedestalizing women. Thoughts?]**
>
> Thus we have hordes of girls and young women willing to go to behavioral lengths they would never consider with the *mundane* men they're familiar with in order to just brush with the possibility of that hypergamous ideal. They will literally climb over one another to realize this.

The thing is, many older women can experience this behavior as well. They tend not to be as extreme about it, but I've seen it expressed before. SO it definitely seems to be an innate female behavior. Perhaps experience tempers it, as Rollo implies. Or maybe a woman's drop in SMV, and her knowledge of his, makes her realize that she doesn't have a real chance of pulling off this kind of "coup."

Naturally, many Game practitioners and PUAs try to find ways to capitalize on pre-selection. I've heard of some hiring escorts to provide the appearance of female attention. Others will use female family members or co-workers for this purpose. It can be a huge card to play, and frankly any man looking to attract women should keep it in mind. If not for his own use, but to be wary of other men using it.

What I am curious about is how, or if, this could be ethically used by Christians within the confines of a church. Assuming that you cannot, or should not use it, what steps might be

taken to counter-act its effects? Or is that even really possible? From what I've seen, the only thing that can surmount a man with pre-selection is another man with an even greater perception of pre-selection. I invite my readers to chime in with their thoughts on this subject, and all the others broached in this post.

Tradition Thursday- #2

December 11, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's post we continue to go through Saint Clement's Letter to the Corinthians. I'll begin where I left off last time. Once again, I'm only quoting from selections. The whole letter itself is too long to trek through in a reasonable way. Continuing on:

> ## Chapter 14. We Should Obey God Rather Than the Authors of Sedition.
>
> It is right and holy therefore, men and brethren, rather to obey God than to follow those who, through pride and sedition, have become the leaders of a detestable emulation. For we shall incur no slight injury, but rather great danger, if we rashly yield ourselves to the inclinations of men who aim at exciting strife and tumults, so as to draw us away from what is good. Let us be kind one to another after the pattern of the tender mercy and benignity of our Creator. For it is written, *The kind-hearted shall inhabit the land, and the guiltless shall be left upon it, but transgressors shall be destroyed from off the face of it.* Proverbs 2:21-22 And again [the Scripture] says, *I saw the ungodly highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon: I passed by, and, behold, he was not; and I diligently sought his place, and could not find it. Preserve innocence, and look on equity: for there shall be a remnant to the peaceable man.*
>
> ## Chapter 15. We Must Adhere to Those Who Cultivate Peace, Not to Those Who Merely Pretend to Do So.
>
> Let us cleave, therefore, to those who cultivate peace with godliness, and not to those who hypocritically profess to desire it. For [the Scripture] says in a certain place, *This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* And again: *They bless with their mouth, but curse with their heart.* And again it says, *They loved Him with their month, and lied to Him with their tongue; but their heart was not right with Him, neither were they faithful in His covenant.* Let the deceitful lips become silent, [and *let the Lord destroy all the lying lips,] and the boastful tongue of those who have said, Let us magnify our tongue: our lips are our own; who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, will I now arise, says the Lord: I will place him in safety; I will deal confidently with him.*
>
> …

Chapter 21. Let Us Obey God, and Not the Authors of Sedition.

Take heed, beloved, lest His many kindnesses lead to the condemnation of us all. [For thus it must be] unless we walk worthy of Him, and with one mind do those things which are good and well-pleasing in His sight. For [the Scripture] says in a certain place, *The Spirit of the Lord is a candle searching the secret parts of the belly.* Proverbs 20:27 Let us reflect how near He is, and that none of the thoughts or reasonings in which we engage are hid from Him. It is right, therefore, that we should not leave the post which His will has assigned us. Let us rather offend those men who are foolish, and inconsiderate, and lifted up, and who glory in the pride of their speech, than [offend] God. Let us reverence the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us; let us esteem those who have the rule over us; let us honour the aged among us; let us train up the young men in the fear of God; let us direct our wives to that which is good. Let them exhibit the lovely habit of purity [in all their conduct]; let them show forth the sincere disposition of meekness; let them make manifest the command which they have of their tongue, by their manner of speaking; let them display their love, not by preferring one to another, but by showing equal affection to all that piously fear God. Let your children be partakers of true Christian training; let them learn of how great avail humility is with God— how much the spirit of pure affection can prevail with Him— how excellent and great His fear is, and how it saves all those who walk in it with a pure mind. For He is a Searcher of the thoughts and desires [of the heart]: His breath is in us; and when He pleases, He will take it away.

Chapter 22. These Exhortations are Confirmed by the Christian Faith, Which Proclaims the Misery of Sinful Conduct.

Now the faith which is in Christ confirms all these [admonitions]. For He Himself by the Holy Ghost thus addresses us: *Come, you children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desires life, and loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are [open] unto their prayers. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles. Many are the stripes [appointed for] the wicked; but mercy shall compass those about who hope in the Lord.*

Chapter 23. Be Humble, and Believe that Christ Will Come Again.

The all-merciful and beneficent Father has bowels [of compassion] towards those that fear Him, and kindly and lovingly bestows His favours upon those who come to Him with a simple mind. Wherefore let us not be double-minded; neither let our soul be lifted up on account of His exceedingly great and glorious gifts. Far from us be that which is written, *Wretched are they who are of a double mind, and of a doubting heart; who say, These things we have heard even in the times of our fathers; but, behold, we have grown old, and none of them has happened unto us;* You foolish ones! compare yourselves to a tree; take [for instance] the vine. First of all, it sheds its leaves, then it buds, next it puts forth leaves, and then it flowers; after that comes the sour grape, and then follows the ripened fruit. You perceive how in a little time the fruit of a tree comes to maturity. Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, *Speedily will He come, and will not tarry;* and, *The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Holy One, for whom you look.* Malachi 3:1

Chapter 24. God Continually Shows Us in Nature that There Will Be a Resurrection.

Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead. Let us contemplate, beloved, the resurrection which is at all times taking place. Day and night declare to us a resurrection. The night sinks to sleep, and the day arises; the day [again] departs, and the night comes on. Let us behold the fruits [of the earth], how the sowing of grain takes place. The sower Luke 8:5 goes forth, and casts it into the ground, and the seed being thus scattered, though dry and naked when it fell upon the earth, is gradually dissolved. Then out of its dissolution the mighty power of the providence of the Lord raises it up again, and from one seed many arise and bring forth fruit.

…

Chapter 28. God Sees All Things: Therefore Let Us Avoid Transgression.

Since then all things are seen and heard [by God], let us fear Him, and forsake those wicked works which proceed from evil desires; so that, through His mercy,

we may be protected from the judgments to come. For whither can any of us flee from His mighty hand? Or what world will receive any of those who run away from Him? For the Scripture says in a certain place, *Whither shall I go, and where shall I be hid from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I go away even to the uttermost parts of the earth, there is Your right hand; if I make my bed in the abyss, there is Your Spirit.* Whither, then, shall anyone go, or where shall he escape from Him who comprehends all things?

…

Chapter 32. We are Justified Not by Our Own Works, But by Faith.

Whosoever will candidly consider each particular, will recognise the greatness of the gifts which were given by him. For from him have sprung the priests and all the Levites who minister at the altar of God. From him also [was descended] our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh. Romans 9:5 From him [arose] kings, princes, and rulers of the race of Judah. Nor are his other tribes in small glory, inasmuch as God had promised, *Your seed shall be as the stars of heaven.* All these, therefore, were highly honoured, and made great, not for their own sake, or for their own works, or for the righteousness which they wrought, but through the operation of His will. And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 33. But Let Us Not Give Up the Practice of Good Works and Love. God Himself is an Example to Us of Good Works.

What shall we do, then, brethren? Shall we become slothful in well-doing, and cease from the practice of love? God forbid that any such course should be followed by us! But rather let us hasten with all energy and readiness of mind to perform every good work. For the Creator and Lord of all Himself rejoices in His works. For by His infinitely great power He established the heavens, and by His incomprehensible wisdom He adorned them. He also divided the earth from the water which surrounds it, and fixed it upon the immovable foundation of His own will. The animals also which are upon it He commanded by His own word into existence. So likewise, when He had formed the sea, and the living creatures which are in it, He enclosed them [within their proper bounds] by His own power.

> Above all, with His holy and undefiled hands He formed man, the most excellent [of His creatures], and truly great through the understanding given him— the express likeness of His own image. For thus says God: *Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness. So God made man; male and female He created them.* Genesis 1:26-27 Having thus finished all these things, He approved them, and blessed them, and said, *Increase and multiply.* Genesis 1:28 We see, then, how all righteous men have been adorned with good works, and how the Lord Himself, adorning Himself with His works, rejoiced. Having therefore such an example, let us without delay accede to His will, and let us work the work of righteousness with our whole strength.

Chapter 34. Great is the Reward of Good Works with God. Joined Together in Harmony, Let Us Implore that Reward from Him.

> The good servant receives the bread of his labour with confidence; the lazy and slothful cannot look his employer in the face. It is requisite, therefore, that we be prompt in the practice of well-doing; for of Him are all things. And thus He forewarns us: *Behold, the Lord [comes], and His reward is before His face, to render to every man according to his work.* He exhorts us, therefore, with our whole heart to attend to this, that we be not lazy or slothful in any good work. Let our boasting and our confidence be in Him. Let us submit ourselves to His will. Let us consider the whole multitude of His angels, how they stand ever ready to minister to His will. For the Scripture says, *Ten thousand times ten thousand stood around Him, and thousands of thousands ministered unto Him, Daniel 7:10 and cried, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the Lord of Sabaoth; the whole creation is full of His glory.* Isaiah 6:3 And let us therefore, conscientiously gathering together in harmony, cry to Him earnestly, as with one mouth, that we may be made partakers of His great and glorious promises. For [the Scripture] says, *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which He has prepared for them that wait for Him.* 1 Corinthians 2:9

Next week we will really get into the heart of the letter, what has been discussed thus far has been building towards it.

Saturday Saints- #46

December 13, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We have come around at long last to the letter “S” again, which brings us to today’s saint, St. Scholastica:

> **Scholastica** (c. 480 – 10 February 542) is a saint of the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Born in Italy, according to a ninth century tradition, she was the twin sister of Benedict of Nursia. Her feast day is 10 February.

Here is a legend about her from her wiki:

> The most commonly told story about her is that she would, once a year, go and visit her brother at a place near his abbey, and they would spend the day worshiping together and discussing sacred texts and issues.
>
> One day they had supper and continued their conversation. When Benedict indicated it was time for him to leave, perhaps sensing the time of her death was drawing near, she asked him to stay with her for the evening so they could continue their discussions. Not wishing to break his own Rule, Benedict refused, insisting that he needed to return to his cell. At that point, Scholastica closed her hands in prayer, and after a moment, a wild storm started outside of the guest house in which they were housed. Benedict asked, “What have you done?”, to which she replied, “I asked you and you would not listen; so I asked my God and he did listen. So now go off, if you can, leave me and return to your monastery.” Benedict was unable to return to his monastery, and they spent the night in discussion.



St. Scholastica

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #54

December 15, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Short post today. The first passages is from St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians:

> [24] Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. [25] Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. [26] Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; [27] but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

(1 Cor 9:24-27)

St. Paul reminds us here to keep our eyes on the prize. The prize is eternal life, and is worth the cost in training, and the wait. I find that I not infrequently need a reminder that this world is merely transitory, what matters is what comes next.

As a man, there are special implications to this. St. Peter sets one of them out his First Letter:

> [7] Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.

(1 Peter 3: 7)

Whatever authority or power we might have over others in this life, it is just a product of this life. The one to come is ordered differently. While men and women are different in the world, they are at the same time equal owners in the inheritance of eternal life. Consequently, those with power or authority, husbands in this instance, should keep in mind that their higher station is a temporary thing. They must use it well, or risk the consequences. And they need to keep in mind that whoever wishes to be great among others must be their servant.

Tradition Thursday- #3

December 19, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is the third post examining St. Clement's letter to the Corinthians. Just to warn you, this is a long post indeed. It focuses on the heart of St. Clement's message, but a few parts are included for other reasons as well. To conclude:

> ## Chapter 37. Christ is Our Leader, and We His Soldiers.
>
> Let us then, men and brethren, with all energy act the part of soldiers, in accordance with His holy commandments. Let us consider those who serve under our generals, with what order, obedience, and submissiveness they perform the things which are commanded them. All are not prefects, nor commanders of a thousand, nor of a hundred, nor of fifty, nor the like, but each one in his own rank performs the things commanded by the king and the generals. The great cannot subsist without the small, nor the small without the great. There is a kind of mixture in all things, and thence arises mutual advantage. Let us take our body for an example. The head is nothing without the feet, and the feet are nothing without the head; yea, the very smallest members of our body are necessary and useful to the whole body. But all work harmoniously together, and are under one common rule for the preservation of the whole body.
>
> ## Chapter 38. Let the Members of the Church Submit Themselves, and No One Exalt Himself Above Another.
>
> Let our whole body, then, be preserved in Christ Jesus; and let every one be subject to his neighbour, according to the special gift bestowed upon him. Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show respect unto the strong. Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because He has given him one by whom his need may be supplied. Let the wise man display his wisdom, not by [mere] words, but through good deeds. Let the humble not bear testimony to himself, but leave witness to be borne to him by another. Proverbs 27:2 Let him that is pure in the flesh not grow proud of it, and boast, knowing that it was another who bestowed on him the gift of continence. Let us consider, then, brethren, of what matter we were made—who and what manner of beings we came into the world, as it were out of a sepulchre, and from utter darkness. He who made us and fashioned us, having prepared His bountiful

gifts for us before we were born, introduced us into His world. Since, therefore, we receive all these things from Him, we ought for everything to give Him thanks; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. …

Chapter 40. Let Us Preserve in the Church the Order Appointed by God.

These things therefore being manifest to us, and since we look into the depths of the divine knowledge, it behooves us to do all things in [their proper] order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at stated times. He has enjoined offerings [to be presented] and service to be performed [to Him], and that not thoughtlessly or irregularly, but at the appointed times and hours. Where and by whom He desires these things to be done, He Himself has fixed by His own supreme will, in order that all things, being piously done according to His good pleasure, may be acceptable unto Him. Those, therefore, who present their offerings at the appointed times, are accepted and blessed; for inasmuch as they follow the laws of the Lord, they sin not. For his own peculiar services are assigned to the high priest, and their own proper place is prescribed to the priests, and their own special ministrations devolve on the Levites. The layman is bound by the laws that pertain to laymen.

Chapter 41. Continuation of the Same Subject.

Let every one of you, brethren, give thanks to God in his own order, living in all good conscience, with becoming gravity, and not going beyond the rule of the ministry prescribed to him. Not in every place, brethren, are the daily sacrifices offered, or the peace-offerings, or the sin-offerings and the trespass-offerings, but in Jerusalem only. And even there they are not offered in any place, but only at the altar before the temple, that which is offered being first carefully examined by the high priest and the ministers already mentioned. Those, therefore, who do anything beyond that which is agreeable to His will, are punished with death. You see, brethren, that the greater the knowledge that has been vouchsafed to us, the greater also is the danger to which we are exposed.

Chapter 42. The Order of Ministers in the Church.

The apostles have preached the gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being

fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus says the Scripture in a certain place, *I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.*

Chapter 43. Moses of Old Stilled the Contention Which Arose Concerning the Priestly Dignity.

And what wonder is it if those in Christ who were entrusted with such a duty by God, appointed those [ministers] before mentioned, when the blessed Moses also, *a faithful servant in all his house,* noted down in the sacred books all the injunctions which were given him, and when the other prophets also followed him, bearing witness with one consent to the ordinances which he had appointed? For, when rivalry arose concerning the priesthood, and the tribes were contending among themselves as to which of them should be adorned with that glorious title, he commanded the twelve princes of the tribes to bring him their rods, each one being inscribed with the name of the tribe. And he took them and bound them [together], and sealed them with the rings of the princes of the tribes, and laid them up in the tabernacle of witness on the table of God. And having shut the doors of the tabernacle, he sealed the keys, as he had done the rods, and said to them, Men and brethren, the tribe whose rod shall blossom has God chosen to fulfil the office of the priesthood, and to minister unto Him. And when the morning had come, he assembled all Israel, six hundred thousand men, and showed the seals to the princes of the tribes, and opened the tabernacle of witness, and brought forth the rods. And the rod of Aaron was found not only to have blossomed, but to bear fruit upon it. What think ye, beloved? Did not Moses know beforehand that this would happen? Undoubtedly he knew; but he acted thus, that there might be no sedition in Israel, and that the name of the true and only God might be glorified; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 44. The Ordinances of the Apostles, that There Might Be No Contention Respecting the Priestly Office.

Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch

as they had obtained a perfect fore-knowledge of this, they appointed those [ministers] already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ, in a humble, peaceable, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry. For our sin will not be small, if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily fulfilled its duties. Blessed are those presbyters who, having finished their course before now, have obtained a fruitful and perfect departure [from this world]; for they have no fear lest any one deprive them of the place now appointed them. But we see that you have removed some men of excellent behaviour from the ministry, which they fulfilled blamelessly and with honour. …

Chapter 46. Let Us Cleave to the Righteous: Your Strife is Pernicious.

Such examples, therefore, brethren, it is right that we should follow; since it is written, *Cleave to the holy, for those that cleave to them shall [themselves] be made holy.* And again, in another place, [the Scripture] says, *With a harmless man you shall prove yourself harmless, and with an elect man you shall be elect, and with a perverse man you shall show yourself perverse.* Let us cleave, therefore, to the innocent and righteous, since these are the elect of God. Why are there strifes, and tumults, and divisions, and schisms, and wars among you? Have we not [all] one God and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of grace poured out upon us? And have we not one calling in Christ? Ephesians 4:4-6 Why do we divide and tear in pieces the members of Christ, and raise up strife against our own body, and have reached such a height of madness as to forget that *we are members one of another?* Romans 12:5 Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, *Woe to that man [by whom offenses come]! It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my elect. Yea, it were better for him that a millstone should be hung about [his neck], and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my little ones.* Your schism has subverted [the faith of] many, has discouraged many, has given rise to doubt in many, and has caused grief to us all. And still your sedition continues.

Chapter 47. Your Recent Discord is Worse Than

the Former Which Took Place in the Times of Paul.

Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you. But that inclination for one above another entailed less guilt upon you, inasmuch as your partialities were then shown towards apostles, already of high reputation, and towards a man whom they had approved. But now reflect who those are that have perverted you, and lessened the renown of your far-famed brotherly love. It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of as that the most steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters. And this rumour has reached not only us, but those also who are unconnected with us; so that, through your infatuation, the name of the Lord is blasphemed, while danger is also brought upon yourselves. …

Chapter 51. Let the Partakers in Strife Acknowledge Their Sins.

Let us therefore implore forgiveness for all those transgressions which through any [suggestion] of the adversary we have committed. And these who have been the leaders of sedition and disagreement ought to have respect to the common hope. For such as live in fear and love would rather that they themselves than their neighbours should be involved in suffering. And they prefer to bear blame themselves, rather than that the concord which has been well and piously handed down to us should suffer. For it is better that a man should acknowledge his transgressions than that he should harden his heart, as the hearts of those were hardened who stirred up sedition against Moses the servant of God, and whose condemnation was made manifest [unto all]. For they went down alive into Hades, and death swallowed them up. Pharaoh with his army and all the princes of Egypt, and the chariots with their riders, were sunk in the depths of the Red Sea, and perished, Exodus xiv for no other reason than that their foolish hearts were hardened, after so many signs and wonders had been wrought in the land of Egypt by Moses the servant of God. …

Chapter 54. He Who is Full of Love Will Incur

Every Loss, that Peace May Be Restored to the Church.

Who then among you is noble-minded? Who compassionate? Who full of love? Let him declare, *If on my account sedition and disagreement and schisms have arisen, I will depart, I will go away wherever ye desire, and I will do whatever the majority commands; only let the flock of Christ live on terms of peace with the presbyters set over it.* He that acts thus shall procure to himself great glory in the Lord; and every place will welcome him. For *the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.* These things they who live a godly life that is never to be repented of, both have done and always will do.

Chapter 55. Examples of Such Love.

To bring forward some examples from among the heathen: Many kings and princes, in times of pestilence, when they had been instructed by an oracle, have given themselves up to death, in order that by their own blood they might deliver their fellow citizens [from destruction]. Many have gone forth from their own cities, that so sedition might be brought to an end within them. We know many among ourselves who have given themselves up to bonds, in order that they might ransom others. Many, too, have surrendered themselves to slavery, that with the price which they received for themselves, they might provide food for others. Many women also, being strengthened by the grace of God, have performed numerous manly exploits. The blessed Judith, when her city was besieged, asked of the elders permission to go forth into the camp of the strangers; and, exposing herself to danger, she went out for the love which she bare to her country and people then besieged; and the Lord delivered Holofernes into the hands of a woman. Judith 8:30 Esther also, being perfect in faith, exposed herself to no less danger, in order to deliver the twelve tribes of Israel from impending destruction. For with fasting and humiliation she entreated the everlasting God, who sees all things; and He, perceiving the humility of her spirit, delivered the people for whose sake she had encountered peril.

Chapter 56. Let Us Admonish and Correct One Another.

Let us then also pray for those who have fallen into any sin, that meekness and humility may be given to them, so that they may submit, not unto us, but to the will of God. For in this way they shall secure a fruitful and perfect remembrance from us, with sympathy for them, both in our prayers to God, and our mention of them to the saints. Let us receive correction, beloved, on account of which no

one should feel displeased. Those exhortations by which we admonish one another are both good [in themselves], and highly profitable, for they tend to unite us to the will of God. For thus says the holy Word: *The Lord has severely chastened me, yet has not given me over to death. For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. The righteous,* says it, *shall chasten me in mercy, and reprove me; but let not the oil of sinners make fat my head.* And again he says, *Blessed is the man whom the Lord reproves, and reject not the warning of the Almighty. For He causes sorrow, and again restores [to gladness]; He wounds, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver you in six troubles, yea, in the seventh no evil shall touch you. In famine He shall rescue you from death, and in war He shall free you from the power of the sword. From the scourge of the tongue will He hide you, and you shall not fear when evil comes. You shall laugh at the unrighteous and the wicked, and shall not be afraid of the beasts of the field. For the wild beasts shall be at peace with you: then shall you know that your house shall be in peace, and the habitation of your tabernacle shall not fail. You shall know also that your seed shall be great, and your children like the grass of the field. And you shall come to the grave like ripened grain which is reaped in its season, or like a heap of the threshing-floor which is gathered together at the proper time.* Job 5:17-26 You see, beloved, that *protection is afforded to those that are chastened of the Lord; for since God is good, He corrects us, that we may be admonished* by His holy chastisement.

Chapter 57. Let the Authors of Sedition Submit Themselves.

You therefore, who laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction so as to repent, bending the knees of your hearts. Learn to be subject, laying aside the proud and arrogant self-confidence of your tongue. For it is better for you that you should occupy a humble but honourable place in the flock of Christ, than that, being highly exalted, you should be cast out from the hope of His people. For thus speaks all-virtuous Wisdom: *Behold, I will bring forth to you the words of my Spirit, and I will teach you my speech. Since I called, and you did not hear; I held forth my words, and you regarded not, but set at naught my counsels, and yielded not at my reproofs; therefore I too will laugh at your destruction; yea, I will rejoice when ruin comes upon you, and when sudden confusion overtakes you, when overturning presents itself like a tempest, or when tribulation and oppression fall upon you. For it shall come to pass, that when you call upon me, I will not hear you; the wicked shall seek me, and they shall not find me. For they hated wisdom, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; nor would they listen to my counsels, but despised my reproofs. Wherefore they shall eat the fruits of their own way, and they shall be filled with their own ungodliness. Proverbs 1:22-33 …For, in punishment for the*

wrongs which they practised upon babes, shall they be slain, and inquiry will be death to the ungodly; but he that hears me shall rest in hope and be undisturbed by the fear of any evil.

Chapter 58. Submission the Precursor of Salvation.

Let us, therefore, flee from the warning threats pronounced by Wisdom on the disobedient, and yield submission to His all-holy and glorious name, that we may stay our trust upon the most hallowed name of His majesty. Receive our counsel, and you shall be without repentance. For, as God lives, and as the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost live—both the faith and hope of the elect, he who in lowliness of mind, with instant gentleness, and without repentance has observed the ordinances and appointments given by God— the same shall obtain a place and name in the number of those who are being saved through Jesus Christ, through whom is glory to Him for ever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 59. Warning Against Disobedience. Prayer.

If, however, any shall disobey the words spoken by Him through us, let them know that they will involve themselves in transgression and serious danger; but we shall be innocent of this sin, and, instant in prayer and supplication, shall desire that the Creator of all preserve unbroken the computed number of His elect in the whole world through His beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom He called us from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge of the glory of His name, our hope resting on Your name which is primal cause of every creature—having opened the eyes of our heart to the knowledge of You, who alone *rests highest among the highest, holy among the holy,* Isaiah 57:15 who *layest low the insolence of the haughty,* Isaiah 13:11 who *destroyest the calculations of the heathen,* who *settest the low on high and bringest low the exalted;* who *makest rich and makest poor,* 1 Samuel 2:7 who *killest and makest to live,* Deuteronomy 32:39 only Benefactor of spirits and God of all flesh, who beholdest the depths, the eye-witness of human works, the help of those in danger, the Saviour of those in despair, the Creator and Guardian of every spirit, who multipliest nations upon earth, and from all made choice of those who love You through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, through whom You instructed, sanctify, honour us. We would have You, Lord, to prove our help and succour. Those of us in affliction save, on the lowly take pity; the fallen raise; upon those in need arise; the sick heal; the wandering ones of Your people turn; fill the hungry; redeem those of us in bonds; raise up those that are weak; comfort the

faint-hearted; let all the nations know that You are God alone and Jesus Christ Your Son, and we are Your people and the sheep of Your pasture. …

Chapter 61. Prayer Continued— For Rulers and Governors. Conclusion.

To our rulers and governors on the earth— to them You, Lord, gavest the power of the kingdom by Your glorious and ineffable might, to the end that we may know the glory and honour given to them by You and be subject to them, in nought resisting Your will; to them, Lord, give health, peace, concord, stability, that they may exercise the authority given to them without offense. For You, O heavenly Lord and King eternal, givest to the sons of men glory and honour and power over the things that are on the earth; do Thou, Lord, direct their counsel according to that which is good and well-pleasing in Your sight, that, devoutly in peace and meekness exercising the power given them by You, they may find You propitious. O Thou, who only has power to do these things and more abundant good with us, we praise You through the High Priest and Guardian of our souls Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and majesty to You both now and from generation to generation and for evermore. Amen. …

Chapter 63. Hortatory, Letter Sent by Special Messengers.

Right is it, therefore, to approach examples so good and so many, and submit the neck and fulfil the part of obedience, in order that, undisturbed by vain sedition, we may attain unto the goal set before us in truth wholly free from blame. Joy and gladness will you afford us, if you become obedient to the words written by us and through the Holy Spirit root out the lawless wrath of your jealousy according to the intercession which we have made for peace and unity in this letter. We have sent men faithful and discreet, whose conversation from youth to old age has been blameless among us—the same shall be witnesses between you and us. This we have done, that you may know that our whole concern has been and is that you may be speedily at peace.

My comments will follow shortly.

Saturday Saints- #47

December 20, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We are closing out on the Alphabet again, and will soon need to start over. Yet we aren't quite there yet, and have a few letters yet to go. This brings us to today's saint,Saint Teresa of Avila:

> **Teresa of Ávila**, also called **Saint Teresa of Jesus**, baptized as **Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada** (28 March 1515 – 4 October 1582), was a prominent Spanish mystic, Roman Catholic saint, Carmelite nun, an author of the Counter Reformation and theologian of contemplative life through mental prayer. She was a reformer of the Carmelite Order and is considered to be a founder of the Discalced Carmelites along with John of the Cross.
>
> In 1622, forty years after her death, she was canonized by Pope Gregory XV and on 27 September 1970, was named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI. Her books, which include her autobiography (*The Life of Teresa of Jesus*) and her seminal work *El Castillo Interior* (trans.: *The Interior Castle*) are an integral part of Spanish Renaissance literature as well as Christian mysticism and Christian meditation practices as she entails in her other important work, *Camino de Perfección* (trans.: *The Way of Perfection*).

Far, far more can be read about her at her wiki, located here.



St. Teresa of Avila

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #55

December 21, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The conversation in my latest Tradition Thursday Post has drifted to the subject of the resurrection, along with righteousness and depravity. This inspired my choice of scripture for today's post. We begin with St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians:

> 35 But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do
> they come?" 36 You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it
> dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel,
> perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has
> chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is alike, but
> there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for
> fish. 40 There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of
> the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory
> of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star
> differs from star in glory.
>
> 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is
> raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in
> weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual
> body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written,
> "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving
> spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the
> spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is
> from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as
> is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne
> the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.
> 50 I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor
> does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
>
> 51 Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in
> a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will
> sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For
> this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must
> put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the
> mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:
>
> "Death is swallowed up in victory."
> 55 "O death, where is thy victory?
> O death, where is thy sting?"
>
> 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to
> God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in

> the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

(1 Cor 15:35-58)

Another part from the same letter:

> [3] For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment [4] in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, [5] you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

(1 Cor 5:3-5)

Here we can see, along with other parts of scripture, that suffering is necessary to purge us from our sins. Which gives us all the more reason to avoid sinning, for it means less purging will be necessary.

The Gift Of Advice

December 23, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Long time readers might be familiar with the book *A Christian Man's Guide to Love and Marriage in the 21st Century*, which I plugged last year. The author of the book, Don Riefstahl, has edited and updated his book and just released a second edition. Even better, he is offering a free PDF copy to anyone interested. If you want to check it out, or would like to send a quick and easy gift to a man in need, you can download it here. The book is published under a creative commons license and can be freely shared and copied.
The book itself is short (about a hundred pages) and provides a very brief encapsulation of much of what is discussed here and on other Christian monsopherian blogs. Don has cleaned up a lot since his first edition, and the book reads better and gets the point across much more smoothly. One thing that Don deserves a lot of credit for is sourcing – he has lots of footnotes providing all the sources for his quotes and statistics. They definitely raise the credibility of the book significantly.
The book is aimed at the dating crowd, however, even if a Christian man isn't interested in marriage (or is too young), this book still has a lot of value. Don explores a great deal of male and female nature which every man should know. Truthfully, there is a lot in there for pretty much any Christian man to find something educational and edifying.
As Don explained it to me:

> I have yet to find a book this size (or any other size for that matter) that shows how gender relations work in the framework of a contract between the sexes, and how that contract was built upon how God designed men and women. This book also tackles the wage gap myth, MGTOW, and "manning up" – all key topics that men today need to be aware of, whether they are looking to get married or not.The church today largely doesn't understand these issues, so they are blaming men (and single men especially) for the breakdown in the system. We need to get this message to the men of the church so that change can come from informed believers within.

While this book is not an exhaustive treatise on everything a Christian man should do or know, it does serve as an effective primer and "wake-up call" for the average Christian man. It provides a good, basic explanation of socio-sexual behavior that will be helpful to nearly anyone. So I strongly recommend it to those who are new to this part of the web or who haven't ever heard this kind of message before.
For those interested in a paper copy as a gift, it is sold via Amazon.

Tradition Thursday- #4

December 26, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Christmas, a celebration of the Nativity of the Lord. Both the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew contain a history of the ancestry of Jesus. His lineage contains many names from biblical history, including some which are quite illustrious, and others which are… less so. Here is an explanation from St. John Chrysostom's 3rd Homily on the Gospel of Matthew about why the bloodline of Jesus contains some deeply flawed individuals:

> 3. *And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar.* Matthew 1:3 *What doest thou, O man, putting us in remembrance of a history that contains an unlawful intercourse?* But why is this said? Since, if we were recounting the race of a mere man, one might naturally have been silent touching these things; but if of God Incarnate, so far from being silent, one ought to make a glory of them, showing forth His tender care, and His power. Yea, it was for this cause He came, not to escape our disgraces, but to bear them away. Therefore as He is the more admired, in that He not only died, but was even crucified (though the thing be opprobrious, yet the more opprobrious the more does it show Him full of love to man), so likewise may we speak touching His birth; it is not only because He took flesh upon Him, and became man, that we justly stand amazed at Him, but because He vouchsafed to have also such kinsfolk, being in no respect ashamed of our evils. And this He was proclaiming from the very beginnings of His birth, that He is ashamed of none of those things that belong to us; while He teaches us also hereby, never to hide our face at our forefathers' wickedness, but to seek after one thing alone, even virtue. For such a man, though he have an alien for his ancestor, though he have a mother who is a prostitute, or what you will, can take no hurt thereby. For if the whoremonger himself, being changed, is nothing disgraced by his former life, much more will the wickedness of his ancestry have no power to bring to shame him that is sprung of an harlot or an adulteress, if he be virtuous.
>
> But he did these things not only to instruct us, but also to bring down the haughtiness of the Jews. For since they, negligent about virtue in their own souls, were parading the name of Abraham, thinking they had for a plea their forefathers' virtue; he shows from the very beginning that it is not in these things men ought to glory, but in their own good deeds.
>
> Besides this, he is establishing another point also, to show that all are under sin, even their forefathers themselves. At least their patriarch and namesake is shown to have committed no small sin, for Thamar stands against him, to accuse his whoredom. And David too had Solomon by the wife whom he corrupted. But if by the great ones the law was not fulfilled, much more by the less. And if it was not fulfilled, all have sinned, and Christ's coming has become necessary.

For this cause he made mention also of the twelve patriarchs, by this again bringing down their pride at the noble birth of their fathers. Because many of these also were born of women that were slaves; but nevertheless the difference of the parents did not make a difference in the children. For all were equally both patriarchs and heads of tribes. For this is the precedence of the Church, this the prerogative of the nobility that is among us, taking its type from the beginning. So that whether thou be bond or free, you have from thence nothing more nor less; but the question is all about one thing only, namely, the mind, and the disposition of the soul.

4. But besides what we have said, there is another cause also, wherefore he has mentioned even this history; for to be sure, Zara's name was not cast at random on that of Phares. (For indeed it was irrelevant, and superfluous, when he had mentioned Phares, from whom he was to trace Christ's genealogy, to mention Zara also.) Wherefore then did he mention him? When Thamar was on the point of giving birth to them, the pangs having come upon her, Zara put forth his hand first. Genesis 38:27 Then the midwife, when she saw this, in order that the first should be known, bound his hand with scarlet; but the child, when he was bound, drew in his hand, and when he had drawn it in, Phares came forth first, and then Zara. The midwife when she saw this said, *Why was the hedge broken up for you?*

Do you see the dark expression of mysteries? For it was not without purpose that these things were recorded for us: since neither was it worth our study to learn, what it might be that the midwife said; nor worth a narrative to know, that he who came out second, put forth his hand first. What then is the mysterious lesson? First, from the name of the child we learn what is inquired, for Phares is *a division,* and *a breach.* And moreover from the thing itself, which took place; for it was not in the order of nature that, having thrust out his hand, he should draw it in again when bound; these thing neither belonged to a movement directed by reason, nor did they take place in the way of natural consequence. For after the hand had found its way out, that another child should come forth before was perhaps not unnatural; but that he should draw it back, and give a passage for another, was no longer after the manner of children at the birth, but the grace of God was present with the children, ordering these things, and sketching out for us by them a sort of image of the things that were to come.

What then? Some of those who have examined these things accurately say, that these children are a type of the two nations. And so in order that you might learn that the polity of the latter people shone forth previously to the origin of the former, the child that has the hand stretched forth does not show itself entire, but draws even it in again; and after his brother had glided forth whole, then he too appears entire. And this took place also with regard to the two nations. I mean, that after the polity of the Church had been manifested in the times of Abraham, and then had been withdrawn in the midst of its course, the Jewish

people came, and the legal polity, and then the new people appeared entire with their own laws. Wherefore also the midwife says, *Why was the hedge broken up for you?* because the law coming in had broken in upon the freedom of the polity. For indeed the Scripture is ever wont to call the law a hedge; as the prophet says: *You have broken down her hedge, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck off her grapes:* and, *I have set a hedge about it:* and Paul, *Having broken down the middle wall of the hedge.* But others say, that the saying, *Why was the hedge broken up for you?* was spoken touching the new people: for this at its coming put down the law.

5. Do you see that it was not for few nor small causes that he brought to our remembrance the whole history concerning Judah? For this end he has mentioned Ruth also and Rahab, the one an alien, the other an harlot, that you may learn that He came to do away with all our ills. For He has come as a Physician, not as a Judge. Therefore in like manner as those of old took harlots for wives, even so God too espoused unto Himself the nature which had played the harlot: and this also prophets from the beginning declare to have taken place with respect to the Synagogue. But that spouse was ungrateful towards Him who had been an husband to her, whereas, the Church, when once delivered from the evils received from our fathers, continued to embrace the Bridegroom.

See, for instance, what befell Ruth, how like it is to the things which belong to us. For she was both of a strange race, and reduced to the utmost poverty, yet Boaz when he saw her neither despised her poverty nor abhorred her mean birth, as Christ having received the Church, being both an alien and in much poverty, took her to be partaker of the great blessings. But even as Ruth, if she had not before left her father, and renounced household and race, country and kindred, would not have attained unto this alliance; so the Church too, having forsaken the customs which men had received from their fathers, then, and not before, became lovely to the Bridegroom. Of this therefore the prophet discourses unto her, and says, *Forget your people, and your father's house, so shall the king have pleasure in your beauty.* This Ruth did too, and because of this she became a mother of kings, even as the Church did likewise. For of her David himself sprung. So then to shame them by all these things, and to prevail on them not to be high-minded, he has both composed the genealogy, and brought forward these women. Yes, for this last, through those who intervened, was parent to the great king, and of these David is not ashamed. For it cannot, nay, it cannot be that a man should be good or bad, obscure or glorious, either by the virtue or by the vice of his forefathers; but if one must say somewhat even paradoxical, he shines forth the more, who not being of worthy ancestors, has yet become excellent.

Saturday Saints- #48

December 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is Saint Ubald:

> **Ubald of Gubbio** (Italian: *Ubaldo*; Latin: *Ubaldus*; French: *Ubalde*; ca. 1084–1160) was a medieval bishop of Gubbio, in Umbria, today venerated as a saint by the Catholic Church. Saint Ubaldo Day is still celebrated at the Basilica of Sant'Ubaldo in Gubbio in his honor, as well as at Jessup, Pennsylvania.

A few quick facts:

- He was apparently born to some wealth, but gave it all away.
- Ubald rejected several offers to become a bishop before finally accepting the role of bishop of his home city.
- He apparently played a role in keeping Frederick Barbarossa from sacking his home city of Gubbio.

More can be found out about St. Ubald at his wiki.



St. Ubald

End Of The Year Off-Topic Post

December 28, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Since folks seem rather intent on going off-topic, I figured a post devoted to that purpose seems appropriate. Please continue any discussions from the old threads that weren't relevant to those topics here. This will be a lightly moderated but I would ask folks to show at least some restraint.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #56

December 29, 2014 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage for today comes from the Book of Proverbs:

> [18] Three things are too wonderful for me;
> four I do not understand:
> [19] the way of an eagle in the sky,
> the way of a serpent on a rock,
> the way of a ship on the high seas,
> and the way of a man with a maiden.

(Proverbs 30:18-29)

This passage appealed to me today in large part because I believe that we can understand all of these. Science can help us explain how a bird can fly. Or a snake's movement works. Science helps ships navigate on the seas, and explains how sails actually work. And of course this blog exist in part to try and explain that fourth mystery, which one might call socio-sexual interactions between men and women. Worth noting is that this part of the Book of Proverbs is *not* attributed to Solomon.

Something that I have always found interesting is the constant call in both Proverbs and Sirach for the disciplining of children. A few examples:

> Do you have children? Discipline them,
> and make them obedient from their youth.

(Sirach 7:23)

> He who spares the rod hates his son,
> but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

(Proverbs 13:24)

Many more examples exist, especially in Proverbs. What I find interesting is that some commentators see these verses and conclude that those who lived in biblical times were terribly cruel to their children. Myself, I come to the opposite conclusion. I think that many parents were far, far too lax. After all, how many good kings of Judah ended up having bad sons? More than a few. My own suspicion is that the wisdom writers were so vehement about the importance of discipline because parents were pretty bad at it. The constant moral troubles of Israel and Judah would seem to back this up.

And when we look at the world around us, the importance of discipline, even and especially harsh discipline, becomes apparent. Of all my peers that I still communicate with or know about, few if any that were poorly disciplined in their youths have turned out well. Most have fared poorly, and I know of several that have spent time in prison (and who weren't necessarily the type you would expect to end up there). Whatever else I can say about my parents, I am grateful to them for their strict discipline when I was growing

up. I cannot imagine what a wreck my life would be without that.

Since we are on the topic of discipline, this passage from the Letter to the Hebrews seems appropriate:

> [3] Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that
> you may not grow weary or fainthearted. [4] In your struggle against sin you have
> not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. [5] And have you forgotten the
> exhortation which addresses you as sons?—
>
> “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
> nor lose courage when you are punished by him.
> [6] For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves,
> and chastises every son whom he receives.”
>
> [7] It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what
> son is there whom his father does not discipline? [8] If you are left without
> discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and
> not sons. [9] Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we
> respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and
> live? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines
> us for our good, that we may share his holiness. [11] For the moment all discipline
> seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of
> righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

(Hebrews 12:3-11)

We reap what we sow. Both in ourselves, and in our children.

Tradition Thursday- #5

January 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My original plan for this post was to cover some of the early Church Father's writings on divorce. However, I've set that aside for the moment. Instead, I am going to cover selections from St. Ignatius' Letter to the Ephesians. The full letter, which isn't that long, can be found here. As a disciple of St. John the Apostle, he likely played a significant role in preparing, editing and distributing the blessed Apostle's works, including his Gospel, Apocalypse and letters. Ignatius therefor represents a key link between the Apostles and the leaders of the Church who followed after them. Ignatius' letters give us a powerful glimpse into the life of the early Church as it left the era of the Apostles behind. Which brings me to the letter itself:

> ## Chapter 3. Exhortations to unity
>
> I do not issue orders to you, as if I were some great person. For though I am bound for the name [of Christ], I am not yet perfect in Jesus Christ. For now I begin to be a disciple, and I speak to you as fellow-disciples with me. For it was needful for me to have been stirred up by you in faith, exhortation, patience, and long-suffering. But inasmuch as love suffers me not to be silent in regard to you, I have therefore taken upon me first to exhort you that you would all run together in accordance with the will of God. For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the [manifested] will of the Father; as also bishops, settled everywhere to the utmost bounds [of the earth], are so by the will of Jesus Christ.
>
> ## Chapter 4. The same continued
>
> Wherefore it is fitting that you should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also you do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore in your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung. And man by man, become a choir, that being harmonious in love, and taking up the song of God in unison, you may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear you, and perceive by your works that you are indeed the members of His Son. It is profitable, therefore, that you should live in an unblameable unity, that thus you may always enjoy communion with God.
>
> ## Chapter 5. The praise of unity
>
> For if I in this brief space of time, have enjoyed such fellowship with your bishop

— I mean not of a mere human, but of a spiritual nature— how much more do I reckon you happy who are so joined to him as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father, that so all things may agree in unity! Let no man deceive himself: if any one be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two possesses Matthew 18:19 such power, how much more that of the bishop and the whole Church! He, therefore, that does not assemble with the Church, has even by this manifested his pride, and condemned himself. For it is written, *God resists the proud.* Let us be careful, then, not to set ourselves in opposition to the bishop, in order that we may be subject to God.

Chapter 6. Have respect to the bishop as to Christ Himself

Now the more any one sees the bishop keeping silence, the more ought he to revere him. For we ought to receive every one whom the Master of the house sends to be over His household, Matthew 24:25 as we would do Him that sent him. It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself. And indeed Onesimus himself greatly commends your good order in God, that you all live according to the truth, and that no sect has any dwelling-place among you. Nor, indeed, do you hearken to any one rather than to Jesus Christ speaking in truth.

Chapter 7. Beware of false teachers

For some are in the habit of carrying about the name [of Jesus Christ] in wicked guile, while yet they practise things unworthy of God, whom you must flee as you would wild beasts. For they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly, against whom you must be on your guard, inasmuch as they are men who can scarcely be cured. There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible and then impassible— even Jesus Christ our Lord.

…

Chapter 10. Exhortations to prayer, humility, etc

And pray without ceasing in behalf of other men. For there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God. See, then, that they be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be meek in response to their wrath, humble in

opposition to their boasting: to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error, be stedfast Colossians 1:23 in the faith; and for their cruelty, manifest your gentleness. While we take care not to imitate their conduct, let us be found their brethren in all true kindness; and let us seek to be followers of the Lord (who ever more unjustly treated, more destitute, more condemned?), that so no plant of the devil may be found in you, but you may remain in all holiness and sobriety in Jesus Christ, both with respect to the flesh and spirit.

Chapter 11. An exhortation to fear God, etc

The last times have come upon us. Let us therefore be of a reverent spirit, and fear the long-suffering of God, that it tend not to our condemnation. For let us either stand in awe of the wrath to come, or show regard for the grace which is at present displayed— one of two things. Only [in one way or another] let us be found in Christ Jesus unto the true life. Apart from Him, let nothing attract you, for whom I bear about these bonds, these spiritual jewels, by which may I arise through your prayers, of which I entreat I may always be a partaker, that I may be found in the lot of the Christians of Ephesus, who have always been of the same mind with the apostles through the power of Jesus Christ.

…

Chapter 13. Meet together frequently for the worship of God

Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when you assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith. Nothing is more precious than peace, by which all war, both in heaven and earth, is brought to an end.

Chapter 14. Exhortations to faith and love

None of these things is hid from you, if you perfectly possess that faith and love towards Christ Jesus 1 Timothy 1:14 which are the beginning and the end of life. For the beginning is faith, and the end is love. 1 Timothy 1:5 Now these two, being inseparably connected together, are of God, while all other things which are requisite for a holy life follow after them. No man [truly] making a profession of faith sins; 1 John 3:7 nor does he that possesses love hate any one. The tree is made manifest by its fruit; Matthew 12:33 so those that profess themselves to be Christians shall be recognised by their conduct. For there is not now a demand

for mere profession, but that a man be found continuing in the power of faith to the end.

Chapter 15. Exhortation to confess Christ by silence as well as speech

It is better for a man to be silent and be [a Christian], than to talk and not to be one. It is good to teach, if he who speaks also acts. There is then one Teacher, who spoke and it was done; while even those things which He did in silence are worthy of the Father. He who possesses the word of Jesus, is truly able to hear even His very silence, that he may be perfect, and may both act as he speaks, and be recognised by his silence. There is nothing which is hid from God, but our very secrets are near to Him. Let us therefore do all things as those who have Him dwelling in us, that we may be His temples, 1 Corinthians 6:19 and He may be in us as our God, which indeed He is, and will manifest Himself before our faces. Wherefore we justly love Him.

…

Chapter 18. The glory of the cross

Let my spirit be counted as nothing for the sake of the cross, which is a stumbling-block 1 Corinthians 1:18 to those that do not believe, but to us salvation and life eternal. *Where is the wise man? Where the disputer?* 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the boasting of those who are styled prudent? For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water.

Chapter 19. Three celebrated mysteries

Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown, which were wrought in silence by God. How, then, was He manifested to the world? A star shone forth in heaven above all the other stars, the light of which was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment. And all the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star, and its light was exceedingly great above them all. And there was agitation felt as to whence this new spectacle came, so unlike to everything else [in the heavens]. Hence every kind of magic was destroyed, and every bond of wickedness disappeared; ignorance was removed, and the old kingdom abolished, God Himself being manifested in human form for the renewal of eternal life. And now that took a

beginning which had been prepared by God. Henceforth all things were in a state of tumult, because He meditated the abolition of death.

Chapter 20. Promise of another letter

If Jesus Christ shall graciously permit me through your prayers, and if it be His will, I shall, in a second little work which I will write to you, make further manifest to you [the nature of] the dispensation of which I have begun [to treat], with respect to the new man, Jesus Christ, in His faith and in His love, in His suffering and in His resurrection. Especially [will I do this] if the Lord make known to me that you come together man by man in common through grace, individually, in one faith, and in Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, being both the Son of man and the Son of God, so that you obey the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but [which causes] that we should live for ever in Jesus Christ.

[Further comments may follow]

Saturday Saints- #49

January 3, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Once again we find ourselves at that intriguing letter of “V.” Today’s saint meets the alphabetical requirements, as well as a request or two for a more “controversial” saint. The saint for today is St. Vladimir the Great:

> **Vladimir Sviatoslavich the Great** (Old East Slavic: *Володимѣръ Сѫтославичь Volodimærù Svętoslavičì*, Old Norse as *Valdamarr Sveinaldsson*, Russian: Влади́мир, *Vladimir*, Ukrainian: Володимир, *Volodymyr*, Belarusian: Уладзімір, *Uladzimir*; c. 958 – 15 July 1015, Berestove) was a prince of Novgorod, grand prince of Kiev, and ruler of Kievan Rus’ from 980 to 1015.
>
> Vladimir’s father was prince Sviatoslav of the Rurik dynasty. After the death of his father in 972, Vladimir, who was then prince of Novgorod, was forced to flee to Scandinavia in 976 after his brother Yaropolk had murdered his other brother Oleg and conquered Rus’. In Sweden, with the help from his relative Ladejarl Håkon Sigurdsson, ruler of Norway, he assembled a Varangian army and reconquered Novgorod from Yaropolk. By 980 Vladimir had consolidated the Kievan realm from modern-day Ukraine to the Baltic Sea and had solidified the frontiers against incursions of Bulgarian, Baltic, and Eastern nomads. Originally a follower of Slavic paganism, Vladimir converted to Christianity in 988 and Christianized the Kievan Rus’.

More, and by more I mean a lot more, can be learned about St. Vladimir at his wiki.



St. Vladimir the Great

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #57

January 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A bit of a grab-bag today. I start with the Book of Sirach:

> Much labor was created for every man,
> and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam,
> from the day they come forth from their mother's womb
> till the day they return to the mother of all.
> [2] Their perplexities and fear of heart—
> their anxious thought is the day of death,
> [3] from the man who sits on a splendid throne
> to the one who is humbled in dust and ashes,
> [4] from the man who wears purple and a crown
> to the one who is clothed in burlap;
> [5] there is anger and envy and trouble and unrest,
> and fear of death, and fury and strife.
> And when one rests upon his bed,
> his sleep at night confuses his mind.
> [6] He gets little or no rest,
> and afterward in his sleep, as though he were on watch,
> he is troubled by the visions of his mind
> like one who has escaped from the battle-front;
> [7] at the moment of his rescue he wakes up,
> and wonders that his fear came to nothing

All of us, whether great or small, have our troubles. They might seem petty to others, but for us they are of terrible concern. None of us, no matter how exalted our rank, can escape what it is is to be mortal, and all that goes along with it.

Now I move to the Book of Judges. Here is a section from the story of Gideon:

> [28] When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Ba′al was broken down, and the Ashe′rah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered upon the altar which had been built. [29] And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And after they had made search and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Jo′ash has done this thing." [30] Then the men of the town said to Jo′ash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Ba′al and cut down the Ashe′rah beside it." [31] But Jo′ash said to all who were arrayed against him, "Will you contend for Ba′al? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down." [32] Therefore on that day he was called Jerubba′al, that is to say, "Let Ba′al

> contend against him," because he pulled down his altar.

One constant theme found in the Old Testament is the powerlessness of other "gods." The prophet Isaiah even takes to mock them and their idols on a number of occasions. This is a potent strategy, as mockery is hard to defend against. Back it up with truth, and there is no defense. I think there is some inspiration to be found here. We should mock those false "gods" around us. Invite them to show their power. And then laugh when they inevitably fail to deliver.

For the final section I have included part of the Acts of the Apostles:

> [6] And they went through the region of Phry′gia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. [7] And when they had come opposite My′sia, they attempted to go into Bithyn′ia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; [8] so, passing by My′sia, they went down to Tro′as. [9] And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedo′nia was standing beseeching him and saying, "Come over to Macedo′nia and help us." [10] And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedo′nia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.
>
> [11] Setting sail therefore from Tro′as, we made a direct voyage to Sam′othrace, and the following day to Ne-ap′olis, [12] and from there to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Macedo′nia, and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days; [13] and on the sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. [14] One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyati′ra, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. [15] And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

A couple of interesting things are found in this selection. First, there is the use of the plural "we", which is found in only certain parts of the Acts. This has long been interpreted to mean that Luke was present during these incidents. I found this interesting because it shows how Acts is part history and also essentially part autobiography. For some strange reason I found it kind of neat.

Also, I found the conversion story of Lydia to be fascinating. There is no mention of a husband, so she likely wasn't married at the time. Not impossible, just unlikely, as usually husband and wife are mentioned together like that in Acts. At the same time, there is no mention that she was a widow. No direct reference is made to her having any children either, so it is possible her household meant just her and her servants. This suggests some measure of wealth on her part, which would match with her being a merchant of purple cloth. Also, given where this took place, she would have been the first European Christian convert.

Tradition Thursday- #6

January 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I am going to continue from the last past in this series by providing excepts from St. Ignatius' letters to the early church. The first was to the Ephesians, and this second one is to the Magnesians. They were written sometime after 100 A.D., not long after the passing of St. John the Apostle. His letter to the Magnesians:

> ## Chapter 3. Honour your youthful bishop
>
> Now it becomes you also not to treat your bishop too familiarly on account of his youth, but to yield him all reverence, having respect to the power of God the Father, as I have known even holypresbyters do, not judging rashly, from the manifest youthful appearance [of their bishop], but as being themselves prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all. It is therefore fitting that you should, after no hypocritical fashion, obey [your bishop], in honour of Him who has willed us [so to do], since he that does not so deceives not [by such conduct] the bishop that is visible, but seeks to mock Him that is invisible. And all such conduct has reference not to man, but to God, who knows all secrets.
>
> ## Chapter 4. Some wickedly act independently of the bishop
>
> It is fitting, then, not only to be called Christians, but to be so in reality: as some indeed give one the title of bishop, but do all things without him. Now such persons seem to me to be not possessed of a good conscience, seeing they are not stedfastly gathered together according to the commandment.
>
> ## Chapter 5. Death is the fate of all such
>
> Seeing, then, all things have an end, these two things are simultaneously set before us— death and life; and every one shall go unto his own place. For as there are two kinds of coins, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of these has its special character stamped upon it, [so is it also here.] The unbelieving are of this world; but the believing have, in love, the character of God the Father by Jesus Christ, by whom, if we are not in readiness to die into His passion, His life is not in us.

Chapter 6. Preserve harmony

Since therefore I have, in the persons before mentioned, beheld the whole multitude of you in faith and love, I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the beginning of time, and in the end was revealed. Do all then, imitating the same divine conduct, pay respect to one another, and let no one look upon his neighbour after the flesh, but continually love each other in Jesus Christ. Let nothing exist among you that may divide you; but be united with your bishop, and those that preside over you, as a type and evidence of your immortality.

Chapter 7. Do nothing without the bishop and presbyters

As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, neither by Himself nor by the apostles, so neither do anything without the bishop and presbyters. Neither endeavour that anything appear reasonable and proper to yourselves apart; but being come together into the same place, let there be one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and in joy undefiled. There is one Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is more excellent. Therefore run together as into one temple of God, as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father, and is with and has gone to one.

Chapter 8. Caution against false doctrines

Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. For the divinest prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. On this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence, and who in all things pleased Him that sent Him.

Chapter 9. Let us live with Christ

If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by

> Him and by His death— whom some deny, by which mystery we have obtained faith, and therefore endure, that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master— how shall we be able to live apart from Him, whose disciples the prophets themselves in the Spirit did wait for Him as their Teacher? And therefore He whom they rightly waited for, having come, raised them from the dead. Matthew 27:52

Chapter 10. Beware of Judaizing

> Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His kindness. For were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. Therefore, having become His disciples, let us learn to live according to the principles of Christianity. For whosoever is called by any other name besides this, is not of God. Lay aside, therefore, the evil, the old, the sour leaven, and be changed into the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ. Be salted in Him, lest any one among you should be corrupted, since by your savour you shall be convicted. It is absurd to profess Christ Jesus, and to Judaize. For Christianity did not embrace Judaism, but JudaismChristianity, that so every tongue which believes might be gathered together to God.
>
> …

Chapter 13. Be established in faith and unity

> Study, therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles, that so all things, whatsoever you do, may prosper both in the flesh and spirit; in faith and love; in the Son, and in the Father, and in the Spirit; in the beginning and in the end; with your most admirable bishop, and the well-compacted spiritual crown of your presbytery, and the deacons who are according to God. Be subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh, and the apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit; that so there may be a union both fleshly and spiritual.

A few observations and comments:

1) The lure of Pharasaic legalism was just as strong in Ignatius' time as it was in the time of St. Paul. The destruction of the Temple might have had some responsibility for that. This would be because a number of Jews would have fled the Roman province of Palestine, and perhaps settled in areas which had pre-existing Christian communities. Given the similarities of the two at the time, syncretism would have been a factor.

2) The leaders of the Church were quite active in demonstrating the separate identity of Jews and Christians at this point. There was already a permanent break here.

3) The early church evidently had a lot of trouble with Christians deciding to go off and do

their own thing, outside of the authority of the clergy. Disunity and schism are nothing new to the Church. Further, it seems clear that there was a full structure to the clergy at this point, and it was in charge of maintaining the faith. It was not some later Roman invention.

[Further Comments may follow later]

Saturday Saints- #50

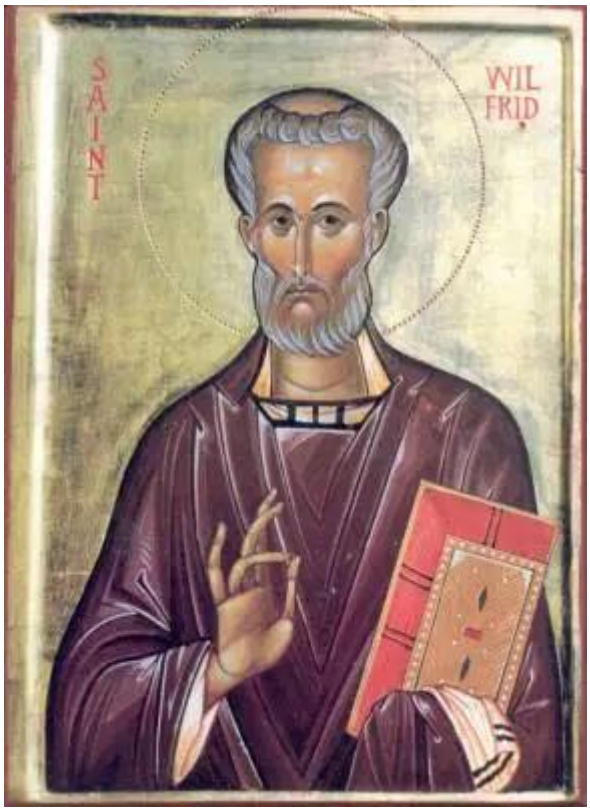
January 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's post we return at last to the letter "W." Our saint for today hails from the English isles, and is Saint Wilfrid:

> **Wilfrid** (originally spelled **Wilfrith**; *c*. 633 – *c*. 709) was an English bishop and saint. Born a Northumbrian noble, he entered religious life as a teenager and studied at Lindisfarne, at Canterbury, in Gaul, and at Rome; he returned to Northumbria in about 660, and became the abbot of a newly founded monastery at Ripon. In 664 Wilfrid acted as spokesman for the Roman position at the Synod of Whitby, and became famous for his speech advocating that the Roman method for calculating the date of Easter should be adopted. His success prompted the king's son, Alhfrith, to appoint him Bishop of Northumbria. Wilfrid chose to be consecrated in Gaul because of the lack of what he considered to be validly consecrated bishops in England at that time. During Wilfrid's absence Alhfrith seems to have led an unsuccessful revolt against his father, Oswiu, leaving a question mark over Wilfrid's appointment as bishop. Before Wilfrid's return Oswiu had appointed Ceadda in his place, resulting in Wilfrid's retirement to Ripon for a few years following his arrival back in Northumbria.
>
> After becoming Archbishop of Canterbury in 668, Theodore of Tarsus resolved the situation by deposing Ceadda and restoring Wilfrid as the Bishop of Northumbria. For the next nine years Wilfrid discharged his episcopal duties, founded monasteries, built churches, and improved the liturgy. However his diocese was very large, and Theodore wished to reform the English Church, a process which included breaking up some of the larger dioceses into smaller ones. When Wilfrid quarrelled with Ecgfrith, the Northumbrian king, Theodore took the opportunity to implement his reforms despite Wilfrid's objections. After Ecgfrith expelled him from York, Wilfrid travelled to Rome to appeal to the papacy. Pope Agatho ruled in Wilfrid's favour, but Ecgfrith refused to honour the papal decree and instead imprisoned Wilfrid on his return to Northumbria before exiling him.
>
> Wilfrid spent the next few years in Selsey, where he founded an episcopal see and converted the pagan inhabitants of the Kingdom of Sussex to Christianity. Theodore and Wilfrid settled their differences, and Theodore urged the new Northumbrian king, Aldfrith, to allow Wilfrid's return. Aldfrith agreed to do so, but in 691 he expelled Wilfrid again. Wilfrid went to Mercia, where he helped missionaries and acted as bishop for the Mercian king. Wilfrid appealed to the papacy about his expulsion in 700, and the pope ordered that an English council should be held to decide the issue. This council, held at Austerfield in 702, attempted to confiscate all of Wilfrid's possessions, and so Wilfrid travelled to Rome to appeal against the decision. His opponents in Northumbria excommunicated him, but the papacy upheld Wilfrid's side, and he regained

> possession of Ripon and Hexham, his Northumbrian monasteries. Wilfrid died in 709 or 710. After his death, he was venerated as a saint.
>
> Historians then and now have been divided over Wilfrid. His followers commissioned Stephen of Ripon to write a *Vita Sancti Wilfrithi* (or *Life of Wilfrid*) shortly after his death, and the medieval historian Bede also wrote extensively about him. Wilfrid lived ostentatiously, and travelled with a large retinue. He ruled a large number of monasteries, and claimed to be the first Englishman to introduce the *Rule of Saint Benedict* into English monasteries. Some modern historians see him mainly as a champion of Roman customs against the customs of the British and Irish churches, others as an advocate for monasticism.

You can find out much, much more (really, you can- you wouldn't believe how much info there is on this saint) from his wiki, located here.



St. Wilfrid

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #58

January 12, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage in today's post is from the Gospel of Matthew:

> [15] "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. [18] Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. [19] Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. [20] For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

I chose this passages for two reasons.

The first is that my paper copy of the Bible has "against you" in brackets because it isn't present in some of the oldest existing bibles. This has a rather profound effect on the nature of the passage, it it shifts it from how to approach being sinned against to how to rebuke/correct a fellow believer who grievously errs.

The second has to do with correction being behind the scenes at first. This is an important concept, especially within a family. One thing that I can look back upon now and realize is that my parents were very good about keeping any disagreements between them out of earshot of the children. Only once did I ever really hear them vehemently disagree, and that ended quickly. I remember being very disturbed by that one instance. And that was a relatively short and mundane back-and-forth between my parents compared to what I've seen between other married couples. I can only imagine the negative effect it would have on children to see repeated instances of parents arguing, especially vehemently.

Since I'm on the topic of family another passage comes to mind from the Book of Sirach:

> [10] Do not glorify yourself by dishonoring your father,
> for your father's dishonor is no glory to you.
> [11] For a man's glory comes from honoring his father,
> and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mother.
> [12] O son, help your father in his old age,
> and do not grieve him as long as he lives;
> [13] even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance;
> in all your strength do not despise him.
> [14] For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,
> and against your sins it will be credited to you;
> [15] in the day of your affliction it will be remembered in your favor;

> as frost in fair weather, your sins will melt away.

This passage came to mind because of a recent event in my life. I visited a great-aunt whom I hadn't seen for some time, and while a good visit it was difficult. Her memory and mind is failing, badly. It was very discomforting for me to see her in such a state, and I imagine it is even worse for those closer to me. This reminded me of several of my past co-workers who had to care for their parents who had been suffering from Alzheimer's. All of us, if we are blessed enough to live that long, will suffer the indignities of age. It is important for us to honor our elders who suffer so, especially our parents. They gave us life, and demonstrated patience and understanding when we were young and couldn't really take care of ourselves. We owe them a great debt, and can at the least show similar patience and understanding when they can no longer take care of themselves.

The last few verses, which I believe I've mentioned before in this series, come from the Letter of James:

> [12] Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him. [13] Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; [14] but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. [15] Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death.
>
> [16] Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. [17] Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. [18] Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Something I've heard from (mostly female) Churchians before is that the failure of their marriage (or one of them, anyways) was meant by God as a means of growth for them. The passage above makes clear the lies they utter. God does not want us to sin. He does not tempt us. When sin happens, it is because of our own faults and failings, and not for any other reason.

Cardinal Burke Is Getting There….

January 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As many of you may have seen through links on other blogs, Cardinal Raymond Burke gave an interview recently in which he addressed the Church's "Man Crisis." You can find the full interview here. Reading the interview made me tentatively hopeful. There were definitely some good things said by the Cardinal, and a few that could seemingly be drawn from some Catholic "Red Pill" blogs around these parts. A few of his statements, however, showed that he still has some ways to go in understanding the present crisis. I cannot help but feel, however, that he is on the right track, and hopefully this is a harbinger of further understanding by him and the Magisterium in what is truly going on.

I'm going to use this post to very casually dissect his post, by highlighting what he gets right and where he could use further enlightening.

What Cardinal Burke got right:

- First, he understands that there is a serious problem right now with men in the Catholic church. A crisis even. Further, he doesn't indicate a belief that the problem is temporary or in the process of being solved.
- He correctly identifies that radical feminism has caused a huge number of problems for men in the Church and throughout the general culture
- The Cardinal recognizes that the Church has been "feminized" in the last 50 years and this feminization of the Church has significantly impacted men in a negative way.
- He seems to recognize that Catholic men are not as "manly" as in the past, and that manliness is no longer taught or encouraged.
- The awful state of catechesis in the church is recognized and declared to be the severe problem that it is. I've seen first hand, and many of my commenters can attest to, the terrible teaching that many Catholics or Catholic converts receive.
- As part of the above, present Catholic teaching about marriage, outside Traditionalist circles, is terrible.
- He understands the essential and irreplaceable role of a father in the development of children.
- Cardinal Burke's mention of how men in the 70's were afraid of marrying the women around them was extremely potent.
- The home life for many Catholics now is lacking. He doesn't say it directly, but I gather he recognizes that most Catholic parents don't really ensure that children live their faith.
- His language concerning the Novus Ordo Mass makes me think that he recognizes that it is not very appealing to men. It can be satisfactory, as he notes, with good music and proper reverence. But this is often lacking.
- On the other hand, the Traditional Latin Mass is usually more appealing, as it lacks

the bad music and is extremely orderly and reverential.
- He recognizes that there is a rampant denial of sin in the present environment.
- While he doesn't go outright and say it, its clear that he views Vatican II as having caused some serious negative side-effects.
- His words about encouraging priests to be more manly were quite good.

Here is where I think improvement needs to be made:

- Cardinal Burke denounces radical feminism, but apparently fails to see that "soft" or "traditional" feminism can be just as damaging to men, and has been. Frankly, any "ism" can be dangerous, and the toleration of "good" feminism is ultimately more dangerous than radical feminism will ever be.
- He does not really talk about divorce and divorce laws and how they helped influence and set up the present "man crisis." I suspect he does not fully understand the present divorce environment.
- Some of his language about men and service to the family is troubling. It very much seems to fit the "married man as a mule" approach that has been a core part of Churchianity for quite some time. In particular his mention of chivalry concerns me. I have every reason to believe that he doesn't understand what it really is.
- Connected to the above, he doesn't discuss or mention how fathers have lost authority and respect in the family- key incentives in encouraging this vocation among men.
- While he acknowledges how important fatherhood is, he doesn't address how it is mothers who often sabotage it in the present environment.
- He talks about various things that push away men, yet commits one of them throughout the interview: he constantly reaffirms that he hasn't forgotten women or their issues or their feelings. He even throws in some flowery compliments. This is something that almost never happens in the reverse, and is a powerful message to men that they don't matter as much as women.
- When it comes to pornography the Cardinal gets is nearly all wrong. Yes, its a sin and a major problem. But pornography is a symptom of a greater problem, and reflects the distorted view of sexuality in the present environment; it doesn't create it.
- One of the most important things that he doesn't touch on, which is essential to understanding the state of men in the Church, is the role of women in shaping them. Men and women shape each other all the time. You cannot understand the "man crisis", or fix it, without understanding the role women play in influencing men.

While I know I didn't touch on everything, the above two lists are, I believe, fairly comprehensive. I invite my readers to offer their own thoughts on Cardinal Burke's interview. Did I miss something in my post? Did I get something wrong? Have a different take? Feel free to voice your thoughts. As always, I ask folks to be respectful and civil to other commenters.

As an addendum, here is an additional article that is old and probably familiar to most of my readers, but worth re-reading- Young men giving up on marriage. It sort of ties in to the OP, and I may explain why in the comments later if time permits. Hat tip Mrs. ktc.

Tradition Thursday- #7

January 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We continue with the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch. This time I am including selections from his Letter to the Trallians. You can find the full letter here. This brings me to the letter itself:

> ## Chapter 2. Be subject to the bishop, etc
>
> For, since you are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, you appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, in order, by believing in His death, you may escape from death. It is therefore necessary that, as you indeed do, so without the bishop you should do nothing, but should also be subject to the presbytery, as to the apostle of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, in whom, if we live, we shall [at last] be found. It is fitting also that the deacons, as being [the ministers] of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should in every respect be pleasing to all. For they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God. They are bound, therefore, to avoid all grounds of accusation [against them], as they would do fire.
>
> ## Chapter 3. Honour the deacons, etc
>
> In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church. Concerning all this, I am persuaded that you are of the same opinion. For I have received the manifestation of your love, and still have it with me, in your bishop, whose very appearance is highly instructive, and his meekness of itself a power; whom I imagine even the ungodly must reverence, seeing they are also pleased that I do not spare myself. But shall I, when permitted to write on this point, reach such a height of self-esteem, that though being a condemned man, I should issue commands to you as if I were an apostle?
>
> ## Chapter 4. I have need of humility
>
> I have great knowledge in God, but I restrain myself, lest, I should perish through boasting. For now it is needful for me to be the more fearful; and not give heed to those that puff me up. For they that speak to me [in the way of commendation] scourge me. For I do indeed desire to suffer, but I know not if I be worthy to do

so. For this longing, though it is not manifest to many, all the more vehemently assails me. I therefore have need of meekness, by which the prince of this world is brought to nought.

…

Chapter 6. Abstain from the poison of heretics

I therefore, yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, entreat you that you use Christian nourishment only, and abstain from herbage of a different kind; I mean heresy. For those [that are given to this] mix up Jesus Christ with their own poison, speaking things which are unworthy of credit, like those who administer a deadly drug in sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of does greedily take, with a fatal pleasure leading to his own death.

Chapter 7. The same continued

Be on your guard, therefore, against such persons. And this will be the case with you if you are not puffed up, and continue in intimate union with Jesus Christ our God, and the bishop, and the enactments of the apostles. He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure; that is, he who does anything apart from the bishop, and presbytery, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience.

Chapter 8. Be on your guard against the snares of the devil

Not that I know there is anything of this kind among you; but I put you on your guard, inasmuch as I love you greatly, and foresee the snares of the devil. Wherefore, clothing yourselves with meekness, be renewed in faith, that is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no one of you cherish any grudge against his neighbour. Give no occasion to the Gentiles, lest by means of a few foolish men the whole multitude [of those that believe] in God be evil spoken of. For, *Woe to him by whose vanity my name is blasphemed among any.*Isaiah 52:5

Chapter 9. Reference to the history of Christ

Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and ate and drank. He was trulypersecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and [truly] died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth,

and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life.

Chapter 10. The reality of Christ’s passion

But if, as some that are without God, that is, the unbelieving, say, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), then why am I in bonds? Why do I long to be exposed to the wild beasts? Do I therefore die in vain? Am I not then guilty of falsehood against [the cross of] the Lord?

…

Chapter 12. Continue in unity and love

I salute you from Smyrna, together with the Churches of God which are with me, who have refreshed me in all things, both in the flesh and in the spirit. My bonds, which I carry about with me for the sake of Jesus Christ (praying that I may attain to God), exhort you. Continue in harmony among yourselves, and in prayer with one another; for it becomes every one of you, and especially the presbyters, to refresh the bishop, to the honour of the Father, of Jesus Christ, and of the apostles. I entreat you in love to hear me, that I may not, by having written, be a testimony against you. And also pray for me, who have need of your love, along with the mercy of God, that I may be worthy of the lot for which I am destined, and that I may not be found reprobate.

Chapter 13. Conclusion

The love of the Smyrnæans and Ephesians salutes you. Remember in your prayers the Church which is in Syria, from which also I am not worthy to receive my appellation, being the last of them. Fare well in Jesus Christ, while you continue subject to the bishop, as to the command [of God], and in like manner to the presbytery. And, every man, love one another with an undivided heart. Let my spirit be sanctified by yours, not only now, but also when I shall attain to God. For I am as yet exposed to danger. But the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ to fulfil both mine and your petitions: in whom may you be found unblameable.

[As always, my thoughts might follow in the comments]

Saturday Saints- #51

January 17, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint, whose name begins with an X (of which there are precious few), is Saint Xenia the Righteous of Rome:

> **Saint Xenia the Righteous of Rome** was a saint of 5th century, honored by some Christian Churches, including Orthodox. Born with the name Eusebia to wealthy parents in Rome, she is said to have left Rome at the age of 17 to escape an unwelcome arranged marriage. She traveled to the island of Kos in the Aegean Sea, where she was given the name "Xenia" (stranger) and eventually became a deaconess revered for having the power to heal.
>
> Of her is written that she "helped everyone: for the destitute, she was a benefactress; for the grief-stricken, a comforter; for sinners, a guide to repentance. She possessed a deep humility, accounting herself the worst and most sinful of all."
>
> The Feast of St. Xenia is celebrated in the Orthodox church on January 24, the day on which she died. She is said to have foreseen her own death.

(Source)

[image]
St. Xenia the Righteous of Rome

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #59

January 18, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is going to focus on the New Testament. First, a passage from the Gospel of Matthew:

> 15 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, [2] "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." [3] He answered them, "And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? [4] For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.' [5] But you say, 'If any one tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God, he need not honor his father.' [6] So, for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God. [7] You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

> [8] 'This people honors me with their lips,
> but their heart is far from me;
> [9] in vain do they worship me,
> teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'"

(Mathew 15:1-9)

This is an interesting passage in light of some of St. Paul's letters. Here is the Second Letter to the Thessalonians:

> [13] But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. [14] To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [15] So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-15)

Here are a few selections from Second Timothy:

> [13] Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; [14] guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

(2 Timothy 1:13-14)

and

> You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, [2] and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be

> able to teach others also.

(2 Timothy 2:1-2)

Jesus tells his followers to be wary of tradition, and effectively dismisses the tradition of the elders. Yet if tradition is to be disregarded, why does St. Paul then command the Thessalonians to hold onto the traditions he gave them? Why does he also tell Timothy to guard it? Or even more than that, why does he tell Timothy to pass it along to others?

Unbelievers would point to this as a contradiction. Believers would naturally disagree. But if there is no contradiction, why is that so? It can only mean that something changed between those two points in time. So what changed? The Holy Spirit is the natural answer. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles after Jesus returned to heaven changed everything. The elders, from whom the tradition of Israel came, did not have the Paraclete to aid them. The Church did. The Holy Spirit directed and guided the Church, and thus changed the nature of tradition. It was no longer merely human tradition from the elders, but Sacred Tradition from God.

Annual Disclaimer- #1

January 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*I've said in earlier posts much the same that I will say in this post. However, I think it is a good idea to refresh the warnings contained herein from time to time. Doing so every year seems sensible to me, and so, assuming I keep this blog running, I intend to do just that.*]

Everyone who reads this blog should be on notice that I have covered, and intend to cover, divisive and unsettling topics. If you cannot handle sensitive topics, if you cannot stomach reading things that are at odds with your worldview, this blog is most certainly not for you. Such topics will occupy much of this blog's attention.

One theme, or subject, that I have chosen to focus on is the "true" nature of men and women, as compared to what general society teaches about the subject. Besides fascinating me, it is also a subject that I think is worth explaining and exploring in the present day. Much hardship, on the part of both men and women, has resulted from the ignorance which is now the norm.

A great deal has been forgotten over the years, and it has been eye-opening to realize the full extent of that loss. Bringing attention to what was lost or forgotten will be a significant part of my efforts here. Many of the writers of antiquity were especially mindful of human nature, and not inclined to whitewash it or cover it up with PC jargon. However, that doesn't mean there aren't new things out there, waiting to be discovered, which were either never recorded or unavailable to those who came before. In many respects today's society and culture is unique and unlike any that has gone before (this is not a good thing, by the way). It stands to reason, then, that we might be able to learn in ways that those before us couldn't.

With all of that in mind, I want to emphasize that this journey will be a dark one. Many aspects of human nature are quite ugly. So, in the spirit of the times, consider this a "trigger warning." Jesting aside, I don't really believe in pulling punches or sugar coating things. So don't be surprised if you find things on this blog that make you uncomfortable. And yes, this applies to both women and men. While most of the negative responses on this subject have been from women, more than a few men have retreated from it as well. They, after being exposed to the truth, found their ignorance far more comforting. No one should expect to find much comfort here.

As a Christian, this blog will have a strong Christian influence throughout. And since I'm Catholic, that particular Christian influence will also be present. At the same time, do not be surprised to see me criticizing much of what stands for Christianity and the Church these days. Nor should readers be surprised if I stand up for the Faith as God intended, and reject progressive notions of what it means to be a Christian. In fact, expect to find rejections and arguments against most of the trappings of the modern age. If you cannot abide any of that, then this blog is not for you.

Also, for the record, the presence of a blog in my blog-roll does not indicate I support all, or even most, of what is said or found there. Its presence means that I find some measure of worth in occasionally reading it. Sometimes the links that blogs provide are valuable in and of themselves. Also, just as Iron sharpens Iron, I find it helpful to read blogs with similar observations but different conclusions. Your mileage may very, naturally.

This blog will engage in dark delving in the days ahead. Expect to be uncomfortable. You have all been warned.

Tradition Thursday- #8

January 23, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is going to break from the pattern, and will not cover one of St. Ignatius' letters. Instead, I am going to quote a large section of St. John Chrysostom's 9th Homily on St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy. This is in part a response to a comment exchange between myself and a woman who goes by the moniker "Spacetraveller" over at Dalrock's blog. His homily will be used in a future post, which I hope to have done Friday or Saturday, concerning moral agency in men and women. The reason for this choice should become clear then. Here is the end of his homily, which started by examining 1 Timothy 2:11-15, and shifts somewhat to focus on the role of Christian parents:

> *Moral*. Hear this, you fathers and mothers, that your bringing up of children shall not lose its reward. This also he says, as he proceeds, *Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children.* 1 Timothy 5:10 Among other commendations he reckons this one, for it is no light praise to devote to God those children which are given them of God. For if the basis, the foundation which they lay be good, great will be their reward; as great, if they neglect it, will be their punishment. It was on account of his children that Eli perished. For he ought to have admonished them, and indeed he did admonish them, but not as he ought; but from his unwillingness to give them pain he destroyed both himself and them. Hear this, you fathers, bring your children up with great care *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Ephesians 6:4 Youth is wild, and requires many governors, teachers, directors, attendants, and tutors; and after all these, it is a happiness if it be restrained. For as a horse not broken in, or a wild beast untamed, such is youth. But if from the beginning, from the earliest age, we fix it in good rules, much pains will not be required afterwards; for good habits formed will be to them as a law. Let us not suffer them to do anything which is agreeable, but injurious; nor let us indulge them, as forsooth but children. Especially let us train them in chastity, for there is the very bane of youth. For this many struggles, much attention will be necessary. Let us take wives for them early, so that their brides may receive their bodies pure and unpolluted, so their loves will be more ardent. He that is chaste before marriage, much more will he be chaste after it; and he that practiced fornication before, will practice it after marriage. *All bread,* it is said, *is sweet to the fornicator.* Sirach 23:17 Garlands are wont to be worn on the heads of bridegrooms, as a symbol of victory, betokening that they approach the marriage bed unconquered by pleasure. But if captivated by pleasure he has given himself up to harlots, why does he wear the garland, since he has been subdued?
>
> Let us admonish them of these things. Let us employ sometimes advice, sometimes warnings, sometimes threatening. In children we have a great charge committed to us. Let us bestow great care upon them, and do everything that the

> Evil One may not rob us of them. But now our practice is the very reverse of this. We take all care indeed to have our farm in good order, and to commit it to a faithful manager, we look out for it an ass-driver, and muleteer, and bailiff, and a clever accomptant. But we do not look out for what is much more important, for a person to whom we may commit our son as the guardian of his morals, though this is a possession much more valuable than all others. It is for him indeed that we take such care of our estate. We take care of our possessions for our children, but of the children themselves we take no care at all. What an absurdity is this! Form the soul of your son aright, and all the rest will be added hereafter. If that is not good, he will derive no advantage from his wealth, and if it is formed to goodness he will suffer no harm from poverty. Would you leave him rich? Teach him to be good: for so he will be able to acquire wealth, or if not, he will not fare worse than they who possess it. But if he be wicked, though you leave him boundless wealth, you leave him no one to take care of it, and you render him worse than those who are reduced to extreme poverty. For poverty is better than riches for those children who are not well-disposed. For it retains them in some degree of virtue even against their will. Whereas money does not suffer those who would be sober to continue so, it leads them away, ruins them, and plunges them into infinite dangers.
>
> Mothers, be specially careful to regulate your daughters well; for the management of them is easy. Be watchful over them, that they may be keepers at home. Above all, instruct them to be pious, modest, despisers of wealth, indifferent to ornament. In this way dispose of them in marriage. For if you form them in this way, you will save not only them, but the husband who is destined to marry them, and not the husband only, but the children, not the children only, but the grandchildren. For the root being made good, good branches will shoot forth, and still become better, and for all these you will receive a reward. Let us do all things therefore, as benefiting not only one soul, but many through that one. For they ought to go from their father’s house to marriage, as combatants from the school of exercise, furnished with all necessary knowledge, and to be as leaven able to transform the whole lump to its own virtue. And let your sons be so modest, as to be distinguished for their steadiness and sobriety, that they may receive great praise both from God and men. Let them learn to govern their appetites, to avoid extravagance, to be good economists, affectionate, and submissive to rule. For so they will be able to secure a good reward to their parents, so all things will be done to the glory of God, and to our salvation, through Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom, etc.

(source here)

Miscommunication And Further Thoughts On Moral Agency

January 25, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

One thing about the internet is that it exposes, for all to see, the vastly different communication styles that men and women possess. It is especially troublesome over the internet, where mistakes and the limitations of text can amply those differences. This post owes its origin and impetus to an incident that I suspect came about because of the divide in male and female thought and communication processes. I am writing this in response to a comment that was written by a woman who goes by the moniker Spacetraveller over at Dalrock's blog. Since it touches on Moral Agency, and because I haven't written on it for a while, I thought a full post was a proper response.

It started with my comment in response to a few things Spacetraveller said in an earlier comment. You can find my original comment here.I will note at this point that my comment got chopped; several sentences were missing after "The answer would seem to be yes." The missing sentences, which clarified some of what I was saying, may have tempered Spacetraveller's response some if they hadn't gone missing. Or perhaps not. Either way, what is said is said. Before continuing, I would encourage everyone to read my comment fully. Once done, you can read Spacetraveller's response. The full comment is here, but as she addresses others as well I am quoting the relevant part of her comment below so as to save time:

> Donalgraeme,
>
> I am not sure what you are getting at. Is your argument one or the more of the following? Or are these strawman arguments of mine (that I have picked out from nowhere) that in no way reflect your thoughts?
>
> 1. I am a chaste man, but that's only because no woman is chasing me. I do not expect a woman (who has many men chasing her at any given point) to be similarly chaste. It is just impossible.
>
> 2. Women have a natural desire to submit. So pre-marital sex is just another form of submission. So there…
>
> 3. Premarital chastity does NOT translate into post-marital faithfulness. All that rigorous moral training that young women used to have pre-marriage is unnecessary. All the data which shows that high pre-marital N-count is a risk factor for a woman commiting adultery because she is unable to stay faithful to one man …doesn't count.
>
> 4. Asking a woman to suppress her sex drive before marriage leads to frigidity within marriage. All that self-control pre-marriage will just ensure that she

continues to ‘control’ herself in her marital bed. (This one is my personal favourite).

5. ‘Keep your chastity’ is just as non-effective as ‘just say no to drugs’. It doesn’t work, so don’t even attempt it.

Donalgraeme, thank you for showing me the enormity of the problem we face in trying to correct the wrongs of the current SMP.
If a righteous man like yourself cannot fathom the idea that it is even remotely feasible for a young girl or woman to exercise some self-restraint before marriage, we are truly and totally lost as a generation.

You, like many well-meaning men are being hampered by the ‘women have no moral agency’ bug.
Whilst it is alright to note that many women are not doing the right thing with all the promiscuity that is going on, you seem to be resisting me for suggesting that we try to stop this. Because you see it as a ‘mission impossible’.
You make too many excuses for women. I am one, and I can tell you that we really do not need quite so many excuses, especially when it comes to sex. We are the sex that have the God-given ability to stave off sexual temptation more successfully than men (OK, I grant you, this becomes infinitely more difficult at ‘fertile time’, or ‘ovulation time’ when sexual drive in women approaches that of men…did someone say Bathsheba was in her fertile time when she decided to bathe in full view of King David? Um…if she had been in her non-fertile time, I am sure she would have bathed in a different place, away from prying eyes :)).

I am now convinced more than ever, that until this meme of ‘women have no moral agency’ is let go, things will remain as (rotten as) they are.
Which is another depressing thought.

I have just one more question: how does it benefit you to hold the views you do, Donalgraeme? Is it a self-preservation thing (‘it is impossible for women to be morally upright, so I accept that I can therefore never marry one’). Or is it a comfort to you to feel certain that you as a chaste man are morally superior to all women??

If either is the case, hey, that’s fine. I am however intrigued as to how this helps, in real life.
This level of ‘white-knighting’ is neither desired nor warranted though.
Because it gives you and other men more of the same as what you are getting – undesirable women.
I wish for you and others, that you get a better quality woman. I don’t have a younger sister (I am a ‘last born’). So the best I can do is make sure my daughter is a good one. And for that matter my son too. That is how I can contribute to the betterment of the SMP.

But it seems I shan’t be getting any help from you.
Shame, that is…

> But no matter, I plough on regardless, with like-minded people.
> If you change your mind in the future, please feel free to join us…

The rest of this post will try and answer her comment, and to expand/explain some of the themes connected to it. From Spacetraveller's response it is clear that she didn't understand what I was trying to say, much less my actual views. In the spirit of charity I assumed that she had merely misunderstood, in a dramatic fashion, and that prompted her response. Naturally I was concerned that my response was completely obtuse, and asked for second opinions to see if it was really that bad. Novaseeker helpfully chimed in and said that he disagreed with her conclusion about what I said, which has reassured me somewhat. Of course, that doesn't mean I made sense, only that he came to a different conclusion. Hopefully this post will clear up previous misunderstandings and make my views on the matter a little easier to understand.

I will first begin by addressing each of the numbered points she brings up. Then I will cover some of her other points. Finally I will add a few thoughts of my own.

II.

Beginning with her numbered points:

> 1. I am a chaste man, but that's only because no woman is chasing me. I do not expect a woman (who has many men chasing her at any given point) to be similarly chaste. It is just impossible.

In the past I am sure that the lack of women chasing me (or rather, the lack of desirable women chasing me) helped me in maintaining chastity. When I was in college in particular I think it was an aid. However, at present I think I am past that particular hurdle. By that I mean that I have built up my self-discipline to a point where I feel reasonably certain that I could resist any woman chasing me (at least, so long as I was of sound mind, i.e., sober). As for women, I believe that they can be similarly chaste. However, just as it can be difficult for a man to be chaste when he is "chased", so too can it be for a woman. Being "chased", especially by someone attractive and desirable, makes it much harder to resist temptation. At a young age this is especially true, when self-discipline has not been fully developed.

> 2. Women have a natural desire to submit. So pre-marital sex is just another form of submission. So there…

My word choice here was poor. So the misunderstanding here was entirely on me. I should have used the word *yield*, not submit. You see, its a pet theory of mine that women subconsciously *want* to yield (sexually) to a man. But just not any man- the *right* man. Even as they resist the advances of men they feel beneath them, they secretly long for the man who isn't so lowly- the man who they can "let through the gate", if you will.

> 3. Premarital chastity does NOT translate into post-marital faithfulness. All that rigorous moral training that young women used to have pre-marriage is

> unnecessary. All the data which shows that high pre-marital N-count is a risk factor for a woman commiting adultery because she is unable to stay faithful to one man …doesn't count.

There is definitely a link between pre-marital chastity and post-marital faithfulness. Statistics bear that out. However, there is no guarantee. A certain gentleman around these parts count vouch for that. Think of it this way- premarital sex makes the ability to bond and stay faithful weaker, but the opposite is not true. The bonding ability can only be damaged, it cannot be "improved."

What I was trying to explain is that lumping not having sex before marriage and being faithful in marriage together ignores some significant situational differences. In the first situation, a woman (or a man for that matter) is entirely suppressing their sex drive. She has no outlet for it. In the second situation she has such an outlet, and should be using it whenever possible. A desire to "wander" on her part indicates that something more than just a desire to sate that drive is at play. A woman who has a high sex drive might have trouble being chaste before marriage. But if she marries the man she sins with, and stays with him, then there is only a slightly greater chance she will stray than if she had been chaste. Her problem was not a desire to sleep with lots of men, and be promiscuous, it was not sleeping with the particular man she wanted.

All of which is a way of saying this: I can see no advantage to requiring a woman to wait in order to demonstrate chastity, assuming she hasn't strayed so far. That delay does not translate into something greater. And I am not the only person who believes this. In my latest Tradition post, St. John Chrysostom advised the very same thing I advise: marry children off when they are young. Help them find someone they burn for who will be a good match, get them married and give them that healthy and proper outlet for their sex drive.

> 4. Asking a woman to suppress her sex drive before marriage leads to frigidity within marriage. All that self-control pre-marriage will just ensure that she continues to 'control' herself in her marital bed. (This one is my personal favourite).

Does it always lead to frigidity within marriage? No. But it can and does. I believe that at least one of my readers and occasional commenters can vouch for the harm that the "purity" movement has caused with its antics. If you read around, you will find and hear stories that say just that. I didn't come to this conclusion for the heck of it. It is the product of reading stories like that. Of hearing from men who married older virgins who found that they were frigid.

[DG: I am reconsidering this section, and may change my views after reflection. Understand that it may change if I come to a different conclusion**]**

[Here is the thing: it is not natural for human beings with a healthy sex drive to suppress that drive for long periods of time. It just isn't. It may be required, for whatever reason, but that doesn't mean that the consequences don't exist. There are studies floating

around which link men's health to the frequency of sex they have. I'm not sure if similar studies are out there for women. But the point holds: everything has consequences. And requiring someone, woman or man, to suppress their sex drive for a long period of time *will* have consequences, whether they be physical, mental or emotional. Honestly, I've wondered about how I've been affected by my own chastity. I know that some damage has resulted, but I don't know the extent. It is something that gives me considerable pause when marriage is concerned.**]**

> 5. 'Keep your chastity' is just as non-effective as 'just say no to drugs'. It doesn't work, so don't even attempt it.

If all that is done is "say no to premarital sex", then the truth is that it will be just as ineffective as "just say no to drugs" has proven. Emphasis on "all that is done." My point being that you cannot simply say "be chaste" and leave it to that. As my original comment made clear, you cannot simply tell women to be chaste. You need to provide them the support they need to back this up, and to help them avoid situations where they will face grave temptations. Virtuous conduct is a community affair for everyone. Youth, especially, need people around them who will provide (real) moral support and look out for them. As I indicated earlier in my original comment, sending young women off by themselves, either to college or to get a job, was not something widely practiced until very recently. At least, among those who could avoid it. When necessity compelled women to leave their homes and go elsewhere, it often did result in them being chaste.

III.

Having concluded the previous section, I will briefly try and address some of her other points.

> If a righteous man like yourself cannot fathom the idea that it is even remotely feasible for a young girl or woman to exercise some self-restraint before marriage, we are truly and totally lost as a generation.
>
> You, like many well-meaning men are being hampered by the 'women have no moral agency' bug.

Anyone who has read my blog knows that I do not hold such a view. Quite the contrary. I will give you the benefit of the doubt and assume that you haven't read my blog and are mixing up some of my comments and arguments with those of other commenters at Dalrock's blog.

> You make too many excuses for women. I am one, and I can tell you that we really do not need quite so many excuses, especially when it comes to sex.

Let me assure you, I am not one to make excuses for women. If anything, I have been accused of going too far the other way.

> We are the sex that have the God-given ability to stave off sexual temptation

> more successfully than men…

I will address that in the last section of this post.

> I have just one more question: how does it benefit you to hold the views you do, Donalgraeme? Is it a self-preservation thing (‘it is impossible for women to be morally upright, so I accept that I can therefore never marry one’). Or is it a comfort to you to feel certain that you as a chaste man are morally superior to all women??

That is a good question, or a series of them, as the case may be… *if* I actually held those views.

> This level of ‘white-knighting’ is neither desired nor warranted though.

I am not white-knighting here, trust me. I expect women to pull their own weight, just like men. However, I am also a realist. And that means that simply trusting people, without taking further steps, is not part of my approach to how to fix the problems we face.

IV.

I am going to conclude with two final points.

A.

First, I wanted to address this comment in further depth:

> We are the sex that have the God-given ability to stave off sexual temptation more successfully than men…

Perhaps I am wrong here, but I find no Scriptural justification for this utterance. In fact, the Bible seems to take the view that neither men nor women are very apt to be successful here. Some of the early Church fathers do seem to have this view as well, but it is important to note the environment they adopt it in. Back then women did not act or live like modern, “liberated” women do. I will try and explain my thoughts on the matter as best as I can. Bear with me, this is difficult for me to get down to words.

I believe that in a relatively isolated situation without a lot of active temptations that women *do* have a greater ability to stave off sexual temptation. The primary reason for this is that the male sex drive is far more… predatory… than the female sex drive. Men are inclined to seek out sources of sexual gratification to a far, far greater degree than women. If left to our own devices, we will feel that impulse which will drive us to seek out a means of sating it. And that impulse is very, very powerful. And pretty much always active, with the exception of when we are very tired, or sick or famished. Think of the male sex drive as very pro-active. Whereas the female sex drive is more reactive. Women don’t have that same impulse to seek out sexual gratification. Nor is it as strong or constant. As St. John Chrysostom noted, “the management of them is easy.” But this only applies in an environment like what existed in his time- an environment in which young women didn’t wander the world like they do now.

When women aren't isolated, their reactive sexual proclivities are less of a benefit to them when it comes to maintaining chastity. For one, they will be presented with more sources of temptation which could get them to react. Secondly, a woman's sexual arousal state can vary far more than a man's.

In most instance a man is always "on." He is always at maximum. This means that a man who learns to control himself pretty much always learns to control himself when his sex drive is at maximum. Naturally, this is by no means an easy thing for a man to achieve. However, when a man does achieve it he is relatively immune- it becomes very hard to shake him when he is of sound mind [alcohol and certain situations might change this].Women, however, are not always at maximum. Their natural cycles affect how powerful their sex drive is. This makes is much more difficult for women to develop the discipline to control themselves when they are at their maximum. What this means is that women might have an easier time learning to control themselves during times when their sex drive is at low or medium. But they will find it more difficult to build the discipline to control themselves at times when their sex drive is a maximum because they will have less experience at it. And of course, their real maximum is not simply when they are at their cycle peak, but also when they are being aroused by an attractive man. Without experiencing both at the same time sufficiently, they won't be ready for dealing with temptation when they are most vulnerable.

The end result of this is that in situations like today, I don't think that women are any more suited to resisting temptation than men are. In fact, they might have a more difficult time for the reason just given- learning to control themselves at their "maximum" point is more difficult. Less opportunity means less chance to build that discipline.

B.

Also, I wanted to briefly touch on miscommunication. My suspicion is that Spacetraveller assumed that my comment was part of the larger discussion about moral agency in women that she was taking part in on the blog. It wasn't- I was merely addressing a few points she raised in one of her comment's, isolated from the rest of the overall discussion. What I think happened was an example of how men and women think differently. Men tend to compartmentalize ideas and discussions, while women take a holistic approach. In my mind I could see how my comment was merely a targeted addressing of a few select, discrete points of hers. She, on the other hand, naturally folded it into the overall context of the situation.

This highlights the importance of careful communication between men and women. When we talk with one another, we need to keep in mind that what is obvious to us may not be obvious to the opposite sex. While I think this particular explanation of our differences is a bit over the top, they truly are significant. The internet, because it is mostly limited to text, makes these communication problems even worse. Despite the fact that I should know better, I often forget that these differences exist. All of which means that when talking with women, I need to be especially careful in what I say and how I say it. Otherwise gross misunderstandings, such as the one in this post, will inevitably occur.

V.

That brings this post to an end. It could probably use some clean-up, but I want to get it uploaded sooner rather than later. So if anything needs fixing, I will get to it later. If anyone has any thoughts on anything I've discussed, feel free to express them in the comments below.

I do have one additional bit though- one of my readers, who doesn't comment, was curious about a book called The Real Story. Are any of my readers familiar with it? And if so, what are your opinions on the book?

Saturday Saints- #52

January 25, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint hails from a different tradition than any I've covered so far. It is an old one, long isolated from the traditional Eastern and Western churches. Our Saint for today is St. Yared:

> **Saint Yared** (Ge'ez: **ቅዱስ ያሬድ**) (April 25, 505 – May 20, 571) was a semi-legendary Ethiopian musician credited with inventing the sacred music tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Ethiopia's system of musical notation. He is responsible for creating the *Zema* or the chant tradition of Ethiopia, particularly the chants of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, which are still performed today. He is regarded as a saint of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church with a feast day of 11 Genbot (May 19).

More can be found out about this Ethiopian Saint at his wiki, found here.



St. Yared

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #60

January 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage in today's post comes from the Second Book of Maccabees:

> [18] Elea′zar, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. [19] But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the the rack of his own accord, spitting out the flesh, [20] as men ought to go who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life.
>
> [21] Those who were in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside, because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring meat of his own providing, proper for him to use, and pretend that he was eating the flesh of the sacrificial meal which had been commanded by the king, [22] so that by doing this he might be saved from death, and be treated kindly on account of his old friendship with them. [23] But making a high resolve, worthy of his years and the dignity of his old age and the gray hairs which he had reached with distinction and his excellent life even from childhood, and moreover according to the holy God-given law, he declared himself quickly, telling them to send him to Hades.
>
> [24] "Such pretense is not worthy of our time of life," he said, "lest many of the young should suppose that Elea′zar in his ninetieth year has gone over to an alien religion, [25] and through my pretense, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they should be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age. [26] For even if for the present I should avoid the punishment of men, yet whether I live or die I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty. [27] Therefore, by manfully giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age [28] and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws."

(2 Maccabees 6:18-28)

The central message there neatly ties into a message that St. Paul conveys in his Letter to the Romans:

> [14] I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean. [15] If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. [16] So do not let what is good to you be spoken of as evil. [17] For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; [18] he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. [19] Let us then pursue what makes for

> peace and for mutual upbuilding. [20] Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; [21] it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble. [22] The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. [23] But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

(Romans 14:14-23)

It is not enough that we consider our own faith, but we must also keep in mind the faith of our brethren as well. This is sometimes easy for us to overlook. Not everyone might be as capable of resisting sin and temptation. Others might lack the discipline or confidence in faith that we ourselves enjoy. Hence, it is imperative that by our faith we not only do no wrong, but also do right. And we do right by building one another up in faith and love and charity.

Finally, I close today's post with the Gospel of John:

> On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; [2] Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. [3] When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." [4] And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." [5] His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

(John 2:1-5)

Most of the time when this particular passage is discussed people tend to focus on debating whether Mary was in the wrong or not. Unfortunately, an important message gets lost in that debate. Namely, the command that Mary gives to the servants, i.e., *us*- "Do whatever he tells you." This, I think, is the ultimate message of that particular passage. We are all commanded to do whatever Jesus tells us to do. Mary was chosen to give this message (in more ways than one) in large part because she was the first of those who witnessed Him and knew Him better than anyone else. She knew, without understanding, that Jesus should be obeyed. In time she did understand, and so do we all now. We all know to do whatever He tells us, even though we may not fully understand why at any given time. Understanding will come, eventually, whether it be in our lifetimes or at the final unveiling of God's plan. In the meantime we obey.

On The Same Page

January 29, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few weeks back I noted how Cardinal Burke is Getting There, in that he is picking up on some of the serious problems within the Church right now. Some of what he said matched up quite well with observations and critiques which have been made in the "Christian Manosphere." Well, it seems like he is still on the same page with this part of the web. On January 23rd he gave a homily on the marriage between St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary. Thanks to Catholicism Pure & Simple, I was alerted to the homily and spotted something quite interesting. Here is one selection from that homily:

> Contemplating the Marriage of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Saint Joseph, we see how, at the very beginning of the work of salvation, God the Father took care that the conception of His only-begotten Son in our human flesh be virginal, as it indeed must be, but, at the same time, completely legitimate, so that it manifest fully the truth, beauty and goodness of God. God the Son is virginally conceived in the womb of Mary, Wife of Saint Joseph. The Gospel according to Saint Matthew is marked, in particular, by attention to the juridical nature of our faith and its practice, presenting Christ as the New Moses, the New Lawgiver, most eminently in the Sermon on the Mount. It is inconceivable that God the Son, at His Incarnation, would not respect fully, indeed would not bring to perfection, both the virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the sanctity of her marriage to Saint Joseph.
>
> The accurate understanding of the marital status of Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary is important for our fuller knowledge and love of the Mystery of Faith, but it is also important for the avoidance of a confusion and an error which are common today. Reference is made to the serious situation in the revised edition of The Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Basic Catholic Catechism Course. It will be helpful to quote a part of his treatment of the subject:

> The fact that Jesus was virginally conceived and born after the marriage of Mary and Joseph means that Jesus was conceived and born within wedlock. This is contrary to what so many, even priests, are saying at the present time, namely, that Jesus was born out of wedlock, like the children of so many unmarried women today, and that this is not an "abnormal" situation. A pregnant, un-wed mother is said to be, according to these people, in the same condition as Mary, who they claim was also un-wed at the time she conceived Jesus. This is false; it is indeed a very serious falsehood, for it undermines the sanctity of marriage and the reason for that sanctity. It is said by defenders of this position that Jesus was conceived after Mary and Joseph were engaged, but not yet married. (*The Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Basic Catholic Catechism Course, Manual, Revised Edition*, ed. Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke.),

> The erroneous position described above is held not only by those who knowingly dissent from the constant teaching of the Church but also by many individuals who are simply poorly catechized and therefore fall prey to such false teaching.

I found Cardinal Burke's message here interesting in light of a recent post by Dalrock, Don't Overlook Single Mothers. In that post Dalrock quotes from the infamous Mark Driscoll. Here is the quote:

> I'll say one more thing, and that is for those of you men who are single, don't overlook single moms. Don't overlook single moms. Paul talks about this at the end of Timothy, where he talks about there are some godly single moms, **he calls them widows**, who should not be overlooked. **But some men are looking for sort of a particular script they have written out. They want a woman just to show up, who meets the criteria and can read the lines.** That's not what God might have for you. Don't overlook the single moms, and don't overlook the opportunity to do what Joseph did for Jesus and that is to adopt a child that is not your biological child, and to raise them lovingly as Joseph did for the Lord Jesus. And so, **this is a huge part of our theology** as well and I would exhort the men not to overlook the single moms.

Sadly, this isn't nearly so bad as another comment by Driscoll, in which he explicitly called the Theotokos a "single mom." I don't think it necessary to explain to my readers everything wrong with this statement. Rather, I mention it because I find it fascinating that Cardinal Burke would address it when he did. I am hopeful that he really is on the same page as Dalrock and some of us around these parts. God willing, the Cardinal is starting to get just how insidious and pervasive the rot of Churchianity has become.

Addendum: I am curious if this is just happenstance, or a sign of things to come. So I'm asking my readers to pass along to me any other indications of major leaders within the Church who seem to be "getting there" or are "on the same page." If there are any out there, they deserve credit and recognition. And it would be comforting to know that they exist.

Tradition Thursday- #9

January 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We continue with the Letters of St. Ignatius. Today's letter, a shorter one, is his letter to St. Polycarp. I'm going to include the full letter, as its length permits this. Here it is:

> Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to Polycarp, Bishop of the Church of the Smyrnæans, or rather, who has, as his own bishop, God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: [wishes] abundance of happiness.
>
> Having obtained good proof that your mind is fixed in God as upon an immoveable rock, I loudly glorify [His name] that I have been thought worthy [to behold] your blameless face, which may I ever enjoy in God! I entreat you, by the grace with which you are clothed, to press forward in your course, and to exhort all that they may be saved. Maintain your position with all care, both in the flesh and spirit. Have a regard to preserve unity, than which nothing is better. Bear with all, even as the Lord does with you. Support all in love, as also you do. Give yourself to prayer without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Implore additional understanding to what you already have. Be watchful, possessing a sleepless spirit. Speak to every man separately, as God enables you. Bear the infirmities of all, as being a perfect athlete [in the Christian life]: where the labour is great, the gain is all the more.
>
> If you love the good disciples, no thanks are due to you on that account; but rather seek by meekness to subdue the more troublesome. Every kind of wound is not healed with the same plaster. Mitigate violent attacks [of disease] by gentle applications. Be in all things *wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.*Matthew 10:16 For this purpose you are composed of both flesh and spirit, that you may deal tenderly with those [evils] that present themselves visibly before you. And as respects those that are not seen, pray that [God] would reveal them unto you, in order that you may be wanting in nothing, but may abound in every gift. The times call for you, as pilots do for the winds, and as one tossed with tempest seeks for the haven, so that both you [and those under your care] may attain to God. Be sober as an athlete of God: the prize set before you is immortality and eternal life, of which you are also persuaded. In all things may my soul be for yours, and my bonds also, which you have loved.
>
> Let not those who seem worthy of credit, but teach strange doctrines, 1 Timothy 1:3, 1 Timothy 6:3 fill you with apprehension. Stand firm, as does an anvil which is beaten. It is the part of a noble athlete to be wounded, and yet to conquer. And especially, we ought to bear all things for the sake of God, that He also may bear with us. Be ever becoming more zealous than what you are. Weigh carefully the times. Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes; impalpable and impassible, yet who became

passible on our account; and who in every kind of way suffered for our sakes.

Let not widows be neglected. Be, after the Lord, their protector and friend. Let nothing be done without your consent; neither do anything without the approval of God, which indeed you do not, inasmuch as you are steadfast. Let your assembling together be of frequent occurrence: seek after all by name. Do not despise either male or female slaves, yet neither let them be puffed up with conceit, but rather let them submit themselves the more, for the glory of God, that they may obtain from God a better liberty. Let them not long to be set free [from slavery] at the public expense, that they be not found slaves to their own desires.

Flee evil arts; but all the more discourse in public regarding them. Speak to my sisters, that they love the Lord, and be satisfied with their husbands both in the flesh and spirit. In like manner also, exhort my brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, that they love their wives, even as the Lord the Church. Ephesians 5:25 If any one can continue in a state of purity, to the honour of Him who is Lord of the flesh, let him so remain without boasting. If he begins to boast, he is undone; and if he reckon himself greater than the bishop, he is ruined. But it becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own lust. Let all things be done to the honour of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Give heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. My soul be for theirs that are submissive to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons, and may my portion be along with them in God! Labour together with one another; strive in company together; run together; suffer together; sleep together; and awake together, as the stewards, and associates, and servants of God. Please Him under whom you fight, and from whom you receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism endure as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as a complete panoply. Let your works be the charge assigned to you, that you may receive a worthy recompense. Be long-suffering, therefore, with one another, in meekness, as God is towards you. May I have joy of you for ever!

Seeing that the Church which is at Antioch in Syria is, as report has informed me, at peace, through your prayers, I also am the more encouraged, resting without anxiety in God, if indeed by means of suffering I may attain to God, so that, through your prayers, I may be found a disciple [of Christ]. It is fitting, O Polycarp, most blessed in God, to assemble a very solemn council, and to elect one whom you greatly love, and know to be a man of activity, who may be designated the messenger of God; and to bestow on him this honour that he may go into Syria, and glorify your ever active love to the praise of Christ. A Christian has not power over himself, but must always be ready for the service of God. Now, this work is both God’s and yours, when you shall have completed it to His glory. For I trust that, through grace, you are prepared for every good work

> pertaining to God. Knowing, therefore, your energetic love of the truth, I have exhorted you by this brief Epistle.
>
> Inasmuch as I have not been able to write to all the Churches, because I must suddenly sail from Troas to Neapolis, as the will [of the emperor] enjoins, [I beg that] you, as being acquainted with the purpose of God, will write to the adjacent Churches, that they also may act in like manner, such as are able to do so sending messengers, and the others transmitting letters through those persons who are sent by you, that you may be glorified by a work which shall be remembered for ever, as indeed you are worthy to be. I salute all by name, and in particular the wife of Epitropus, with all her house and children. I salute Attalus, my beloved. I salute him who shall be deemed worthy to go [from you] into Syria. Grace shall be with him for ever, and with Polycarp that sends him. I pray for your happiness for ever in our God, Jesus Christ, by whom continue in the unity and under the protection of God, I salute Alce, my dearly beloved. Fare well in the Lord.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #53

January 31, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The end of the alphabet has come once again. that means series is now over a year old. I intend to keep running it, although it is going to be increasingly difficult to find saints for some of the more obscure letters. Fortunately, Z still has a few left. This brings us to today's saint, Saint Zeno:

> **Zeno of Verona** (Italian: *Zenone da Verona*; about 300 – 371 or 380) was either an early Christian Bishop of Verona or a martyr. He is a saint in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Not a huge amount is known of Saint Zeno. While the existence of some of the earliest saints is sometimes doubted, St. Zeno was spoken of by some of his contemporaries. Unfortunately, exact details are lacking. Here are a few facts or speculations about St. Zeno:

- He was probably born or raised in Africa, and then later as an adult came to Verona
- During his childhood he received a classical education
- When he arrived in Verona he became a monk at first, until he was elected to become Bishop
- He is often depicted with fishing equipment of some sort, and is the patron saint of fisherman.

More can be found out about St. Zeno at his wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #61

February 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The passages and verses for today's post will be without further explanation or comment. This is because they will connect with a post coming up later in this week. Careful and thoughtful readers might be able to guess at a common theme. However, what I am actually going for is more subtle than might first seem to be the case. The first passage is from the Book of Genesis:

> Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potʹi-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishʹmaelites who had brought him down there. [2] The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, [3] and his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. [4] So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. [5] From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, in house and field. [6] So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food which he ate.
>
> Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. [7] And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." [8] But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand; [9] he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" [10] And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her. [11] But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, [12] she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house.

(Genesis 39:1-12)

Then we move to Second Samuel:

> [2] It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. [3] And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheʹba, the daughter of Eliʹam, the wife of Uriʹah the Hittite?" [4] So David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. [5] And the woman conceived; and she sent and

> told David, “I am with child.”
>
> …
>
> [26] When the wife of Uri′ah heard that Uri′ah her husband was dead, she made
> lamentation for her husband. [27] And when the mourning was over, David sent and
> brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the
> thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

(2 Samuel 12:2-5, 26-27)

Finally, we close with Song of Solomon:

> [10] My beloved is all radiant and ruddy,
> distinguished among ten thousand.
> [11] His head is the finest gold;
> his locks are wavy,
> black as a raven.
> [12] His eyes are like doves
> beside springs of water,
> bathed in milk,
> fitly set.
> [13] His cheeks are like beds of spices,
> yielding fragrance.
> His lips are lilies,
> distilling liquid myrrh.
> [14] His arms are rounded gold,
> set with jewels.
> His body is ivory work,
> encrusted with sapphires.
> [15] His legs are alabaster columns,
> set upon bases of gold.
> His appearance is like Lebanon,
> choice as the cedars.
> [16] His speech is most sweet,
> and he is altogether desirable.
> This is my beloved and this is my friend,
> O daughters of Jerusalem.

(Song 5:10-16)

Analyzing Attraction- Part 4

February 3, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a continuation of my series on attraction. The most recent post in the series can be found here, and the first can be found here. Today's post is going to focus on a specific feature of female attraction, commonly referred to as "Hypergamy." This post is by no means meant to be exhaustive- there is a lot to cover and I won't attempt to do so in this single post.

An Inaccurate Name for an Accurate Observation

Merriam-Webster defines Hypergamy as "marriage into an equal or higher caste or social group." For anyone familiar with how hypergamy is used in the 'sphere, you will realize that this definition is not what most people mean when they use that particular word. In fact, it is hardly ever used in conjunction with castes or social groups. Unsurprisingly, this trips more than a few people up. Those individuals who come across this part of the 'net, and who upon seeing the word "Hypergamy" look it up, will quickly become confused. This often leads some people (mostly but not always women) to reject any "Red Pill" concepts which are connected with hypergamy.

Here is an example of a post where a woman "rejects" hypergamy. A quick review of her post will reveal that she has a better understanding of the subject than most who come to that conclusion. She knows that it is about more than just "marrying up" to a higher social group. However, her understanding is still imperfect (more might be said about her post but I'm keeping this narrowly focused here). To help her out, and to help out anyone else whose knowledge of this area is lacking, I will (try to) explain what "Hypergamy," as used in the 'sphere, actually means.

The thing to understand is that hypergamy is not about "marrying up." And by that I mean its not about marrying, and not necessarily about "up" in a social status sense. No, hypergamy is about *maximization.*

Hypergamy means the female drive to maximize a woman's access to a man, or men, who can meet her demand for the best genetics, provision and protection possible.

This "drive" breaks down into two specific drives, both of which can be (and often are) independent of one another. As Rollo has explained in the past (and I'm sure he can include a post or two in the comments below as examples), women want "Good Genes" and "Good Dads." In other words, they have a drive to mate with a man with the best *perceived* genes, which will be passed on to their children. And they have a drive to secure or "lock down" or get "commitment" from a man who they *perceive* will be the best possible "dad." Such a man will protect and provide for a woman and her children. *Arousal* (or sexual attraction) is tied to "good genes", and (non-sexual) *attraction* is tied to being a "good dad." Often, attraction and a man's skills or ability as a provider/protector are tied to his social status, but not always.

The female ideal is to get both “needs” met in the same package. Essentially, a man with (perceived) good genetics who will also stick around and care for the woman and her children. However, it is not common (at least in this day and age) to find a man with both sets of qualities. And its even rarer to find that kind of man who is free and is interested in settling down. This is where things get more complicated.

You see, women are more than willing and able to seek out different men to meet each individual “need.” In fact, I would argue that women who cannot get both in the same man will naturally employ this strategy unless they are reared not to. This strategy entails sleeping with men with (perceived) good genes, and then trying to get men who are perceived as good providers/protectors to take care of them. It is called by some “AF/BB”, or “Alpha F—s, Beta Bucks.” Potiphar’s wife, whom I mentioned in my latest Sunday Scriptures post, was likely trying to employ this strategy. Bathsheba, on the other hand, was (assuming she was trying to get David’s attention) trying to get David to carry out a “relationship coup”- that is, to remove Uriah from the picture so that she could marry David. David, after all, was an upgrade from Uriah as far as both drives were concerned.

My suspicion, which seems borne out by evidence all around us, is that women primarily focus on “good genes” when they are younger, and as they get older and have children, “good dads” take preeminence (Rollo refers to this as the Epiphany phase). This, along with some things I will explain in the next few paragraphs, will explain why a stable-hand might draw the attention that a banker doesn’t.

Now, I’ve used “perceived” at several points in the last few paragraphs because it isn’t always clear which men have “good genes” and which men would be “good dads.” Usually the latter is easier to figure out than the former. Women use various shortcuts to try and determine how well a man rates on both. The primary tool that women use to determine “Good Genes” (aka, arousal) is a man’s LAMPS/PSALM score. The higher a man ranks in LAMPS value, the more sexually attractive he is to women and the more he will arouse them. The stable-boy, who is somewhat mocked in the post linked above, is an example of a man whose LAMPS score is high, at least compared to the banker. The banker’s decent Status value helps him, but if he has a lower Power value then it doesn’t matter, ultimately. Likewise, the reference to rogues and pirates all showcase men with high LAMPS scores, primarily focused on the Power attribute. These are all men who can arouse women, and since young women are primarily looking for arousal (rather than non-sexual attraction), that is why they garner such attention.

Something else tied to all of this is the behavior of “trading up.” This is a natural outgrowth of the drive to maximize access to “good genes” and “good dad” in a man. If a better man is found, then women will subconsciously want to “trade up.” That they don’t all the time is because of a number of factions: socializing, a sense of morality, a lack of opportunity and social penalties. Investing in a man over time can also reduce this likelihood. Remove these and women will often leap at a chance to trade up. Only, their idea of trading up may vary, depending on what particular drive they are trying to maximize at the time. Also, their perceptions of what constitutes “higher value” may not

always be crystal clear.

One additional note: hypergamy is one drive among many that women possess. Albeit a powerful drive. But for women who are raised properly, its nastier effects can be limited, or even controlled. Unfortunately this is no longer the case for most modern women.

Hopefully this provided at least a half-way understandable explanation of hypergamy, as it is used by people in the 'sphere. It is an inaccurate use of a word, that much I will grant. A better term needs to be invented, I think, to really encompass everything that falls under this umbrella. But until then hypergamy remains an inaccurate name for an accurate observation of female behavior.

Good Enough v. The Best

As mentioned above, hypergamy is about maximization and a desire for the best. Its *arousal* component means that a woman will be drawn, sexually, to the men around her who she perceives as meeting her drive's demand for "good genes." More specifically, she will be drawn to the best among them- those men with the highest LAMPS values. However, this isn't the only behavior in play.

Women also have what is called an "Attraction floor," which is a point below which they won't consider a man as a viable sexual partner. This means that in a population where none of the men are above this point, women won't be able to satisfy their "good genes" hypergasmic impulse (that one never gets old). If they do pick a man, it won't be based on *arousal.* Rather, it will be based on his being perceived as a "good dad" candidate, aka, (non-sexual) *attraction*. There is no guarantee that they will pick such men; some women would rather do without (just as some men will choose to do without if they can't find any candidates they consider acceptable/worthy).

What this means for a man is that he needs to make sure that he isn't simply the best. He also needs to be sure that he is above a woman's attraction floor. The problem is that there is no clear indication where this floor is. The fluid nature of the LAMPS model makes it difficult to pinpoint values. Furthermore, each women values each attribute somewhat differently, and also has her own floor for that matter. All of which makes it next to impossible to know where this floor is. It is much easier, on the other hand, to know where it isn't. If a man arouses a woman, he is above the floor. If he doesn't, then he is likely below it. Consequently, a man should always endeavor to build his LAMPS values as high as possible, to ensure that he is not only the best, but that he is good enough as well.

Toxic Hypergamy

One subject that comes up from time to time around these parts is Toxic Hypergamy. This refers to the notion that some women's hypergamy "filter" has become so warped that they can no longer (realistically) meet it their hypergamic requirements. In other words, what they find acceptable or worthy in a man is at such a high level so as to be unattainable by all but a few men (or in extreme cases no man alive could ever be acceptable). Naturally enough, there aren't enough of these men to go around. And often such men won't have anything to do with women exhibiting this behavior. Further, the

women who have this often aren't high enough value themselves to justify having such standards. In many (most?) instances they are often quite bad at estimating their own SMV.

Toxic Hypergamy seems to be especially prevalent in Christian circles. More than a few posters and commenters around these parts can attest to personal stories of Western Christian women who demonstrated this particular condition. EAPs, or Entitled American Princesses, often have Toxic Hypergamy, and can turn down countless men while they wait for a "worthy" man to show up. This has only exacerbated the problems inherent in the American Church.

What I find interesting about this phenomenon is that it serves as further demonstration that a woman's hypergamy can be influenced by her surroundings and by how she was raised. In the present age this is a cause of sorrow. But at the same time there is some hope for the future. Parents who raise their daughters right, either now or in the future, can account for this and hopefully take steps to help their daughters rein in their hypergamic instincts.

A Debased Currency

Rollo's post Loyalty & Hypergamy is an article that I think some of my male readers would find illuminating (I guess women might find it interesting, but it is less likely to be illuminating for them, and would be a difficult read). It delves a bit into the concept of loyalty and how that intersects a bit with hypergamy.

Tradition Thursday- #10

February 6, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We continue once again with St. Ignatius' letters to various Christian communities. Today's post features his letter to the Philadelphians:

> Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia, in Asia, which has obtained mercy, and is established in the harmony of God, and rejoices unceasingly in the passion of our Lord, and is filled with all mercy through his resurrection; which I salute in the blood of Jesus Christ, who is our eternal and enduring joy, especially if [men] are in unity with the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons, who have been appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ, whom He has established in security, after His own will, and by His Holy Spirit.
>
> Which bishop, I know, obtained the ministry which pertains to the common [good], not of himself, neither by men, [Galatians 1:1] nor through vainglory, but by the love of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; at whose meekness I am struck with admiration, and who by his silence is able to accomplish more than those who vainly talk. For he is in harmony with the commandments [of God], even as the harp is with its strings. Wherefore my soul declares his mind towards God a happy one, knowing it to be virtuous and perfect, and that his stability as well as freedom from all anger is after the example of the infinite meekness of the living God.
>
> Wherefore, as children of light and truth, flee from division and wicked doctrines; but where the shepherd is, there follow as sheep. For there are many wolves that appear worthy of credit, who, by means of a pernicious pleasure, carry captive [2 Timothy 3:6] those that are running towards God; but in your unity they shall have no place.
>
> Keep yourselves from those evil plants which Jesus Christ does not tend, because they are not the planting of the Father. Not that I have found any division among you, but exceeding purity. For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop. And as many as shall, in the exercise of repentance, return into the unity of the Church, these, too, shall belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Do not err, my brethren. If any man follows him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If any one walks according to a strange opinion, he agrees not with the passion [of Christ.].
>
> Take heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever you do, you may do it according to [the will of] God.
>
> But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to

hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked devices and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time being conquered by his artifices, grow weak in your love. But be all joined together with an undivided heart. And I thank my God that I have a good conscience in respect to you, and that no one has it in his power to boast, either privately or publicly, that I have burdened any one either in much or in little. And I wish for all among whom I have spoken, that they may not possess that for a testimony against them.

For though some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the Spirit, as being from God, is not deceived. For it knows both whence it comes and whither it goes, John 3:8 and detects the secrets [of the heart]. For, when I was among you, I cried, I spoke with a loud voice: Give heed to the bishop, and to the presbytery and deacons. Now, some suspected me of having spoken thus, as knowing beforehand the division caused by some among you. But He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I got no intelligence from any man. But the Spirit proclaimed these words: Do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God; love unity; avoid divisions; be the followers of Jesus Christ, even as He is of His Father.

I therefore did what belonged to me, as a man devoted to unity. For where there is division and wrath, God does not dwell. To all them that repent, the Lord grants forgiveness, if they turn in penitence to the unity of God, and to communion with the bishop. I trust [as to you] in the grace of Jesus Christ, who shall free you from every bond. And I exhort you to do nothing out of strife, but according to the doctrine of Christ. When I heard some saying, If I do not find it in the ancient Scriptures, I will not believe the Gospel; on my saying to them, It is written, they answered me, That remains to be proved. But to me Jesus Christ is in the place of all that is ancient: His cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by Him, are undefiled monuments of antiquity; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.

The priests indeed are good, but the High Priest is better; to whom the holy of holies has been committed, and who alone has been trusted with the secrets of God. He is the door of the Father, by which enter in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the Church. All these have for their object the attaining to the unity of God. But the Gospel possesses something transcendent [above the former dispensation], viz., the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, His passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets announced Him, but the Gospel is the perfection of immortality. All these things are good together, if you believe in love.

(source)

As always, comments may follow.

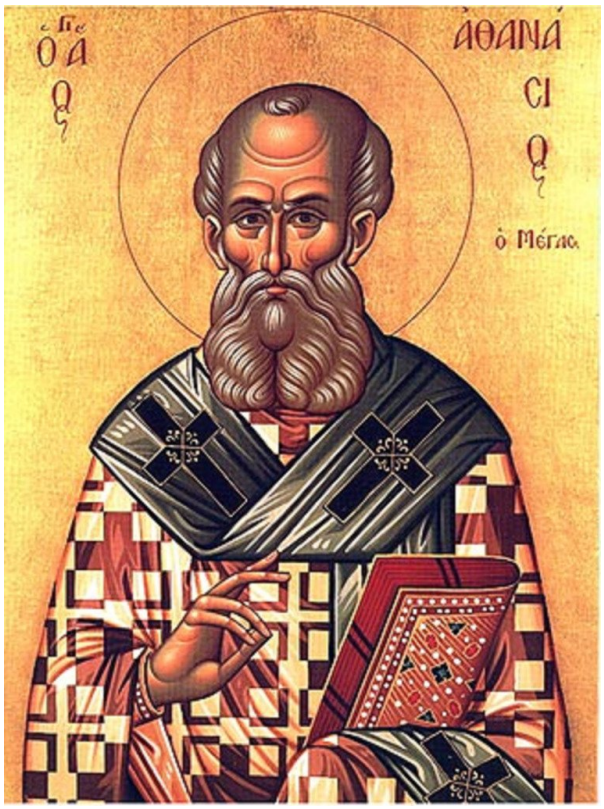
Saturday Saints- #54

February 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Many months have passed, but once again we are back to the letter A when it comes to saints. Today's saint is an early one who is well regarded by the Western and Eastern Churches, and for good reason. The saint for today is Saint Athanasius, one of the most important saints in the history of the Faith:

> Saint **Athanasius of Alexandria** (/ˌæθəˈneɪʃəs/; Greek: Ἀθανάσιος Ἀλεξανδρείας, *Athanásios Alexandrías*; *c*. 296–298 – 2 May 373), also called **Athanasius the Great**, **Athanasius the Confessor** or, primarily in the Coptic Orthodox Church, **Athanasius the Apostolic**, was the twentieth bishop of Alexandria (as **Athanasius I**). His episcopate (because of the importance of the see, considered an archbishopric by Rome, the Coptic papacy, or an Orthodox patriarchate) lasted 45 years (c. 8 June 328 – 2 May 373), of which over 17 were spent in five exiles ordered by four different Roman emperors. Athanasius is a renowned Christian theologian, a Church Father, the chief defender of Trinitarianism against Arianism, and a noted Egyptian leader of the fourth century.
>
> Conflict with Arius and Arianism as well as successive Roman emperors shaped Athanasius' career. In 325, at the age of 27, Athanasius began his leading role against the Arians as his bishop's assistant during the First Council of Nicaea. Roman emperor Constantine the Great had convened the council in May–August 325 to address the Arian position that the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, is of a distinct substance from the Father. Three years after that council, Athanasius succeeded his mentor as archbishop of Alexandria. In addition to the conflict with the Arians (including powerful and influential Arian churchmen led by Eusebius of Nicomedia), he struggled against the Emperors Constantine, Constantius II, Julian the Apostate and Valens. He was known as ***"Athanasius Contra Mundum"***.
>
> Nonetheless, within a few years of his departure, St. Gregory of Nazianzus called him the *"Pillar of the Church"*. His writings were well regarded by all Church fathers who followed, in both the West and the East, who noted their rich devotion the Word-become-man, great pastoral concern, and profound interest in monasticism. Athanasius is counted as one of the four great Eastern Doctors of the Church in the Roman Catholic Church. In Eastern Orthodoxy, he is labeled the "Father of Orthodoxy". Some Protestants label him "Father of The Canon". Athanasius is venerated as a Christian saint, whose feast day is 2 May in Western Christianity, 15 May in the Coptic Orthodox Church, and 18 January in the other Eastern Orthodox Churches. He is venerated by the Roman Catholic Church, Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches, the Lutherans, and the Anglican Communion.

Much, much more can be found about this pivotal saint in his wiki, located here.



St. Athanasius

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #62

February 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's short post is a small preview of a post I hope to write this week. There is a common point between both passages; I invite my readers to see if they can figure out what it is. The first few verses today come from the Letter to the Hebrews:

> Let brotherly love continue. [2] Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. [3] Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body. [4] Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous. [5] Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you." [6] Hence we can confidently say,
>
> "The Lord is my helper,
> I will not be afraid;
> what can man do to me?"
>
> [7] Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. [8] Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.

(Hebrews 13:1-8)

This brings us to the Gospel of Matthew:

> [31] "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. [32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, [33] and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. [34] Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; [35] for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, [36] I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' [37] Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? [38] And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? [39] And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' [40] And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' [41] Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; [42] for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, [43] I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit

> me.’ [44] Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty
> or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’ [45] Then
> he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of
> these, you did it not to me.’ [46] And they will go away into eternal punishment, but
> the righteous into eternal life.”

(Matthew 25:31-46)

Eastern Hospitality

February 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Sadly, no one took me up on my offer in my latest Sunday Scriptures post to try and guess what the common theme is. As the title to the post suggests, the common point between them was hospitality. As I've related before, this is something that I think the Church has been failing at for a long time. Some recent experiences of mine have shed further light on this particular problem.

Over the course of the last month I've visited several Eastern Rite Catholic churches in my area. My interest was primarily curiosity, as I wondered what their liturgies would be like. However, I quickly found something else there that was quite different from the Roman Catholic churches that I've visited over the years. And that was a sense of community and hospitality. I was made to feel welcome at both parishes. Never mind that I was a stranger that no one there had ever seen before. I was greeted, welcomed and encouraged to stay. In fact they encouraged me to attend again. And I have to admit, they were tempting offers.

I wonder what it is that made those parishes and their members so much more hospitable than than the Roman Rite churches I've attended. It isn't size. While both were small (in membership and the size of the buildings), I've been to small RC parishes as well. No, its something else. My suspicion is that the sense of community in these churches is encouraged by the fact that they are set apart. Their differences from other faith traditions encourage them to look within, and to support one another. In addition, these churches have a sense of tradition and history that binds their membership together. They feel part of something different, something special. That is no longer present in most RC parishes (save perhaps Latin Mass ones). Whatever the reason, I found it all terribly fascinating. There are some important lessons to be learned from these churches. Only I don't expect anyone to care to learn them, much less pass them on.

Some Recommended Reading

February 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Here are a few posts or articles that I would encourage the patrons of my blog to read.

Beefy Levinson demonstrates how there is much wisdom to be found in the past when he dissects the Germanic saga The Nibelungenlied.

My Catholic readers will want to read this post, which contains an open letter to the Church by Archbishop Jan Lenga. It is a sobering read, and then some.

Cane Caldo has been batting a 1.000 lately with a series of posts he's written in the last week or so. The first one is here. The second is here. Third is here. The fourth can be found here. Finally, the most recent (and last?) post can be found here.

I really liked this post on Performance and Desire by Deep Strength.

In case anyone is still asking, the answer is yes, the inmates *have*, in fact, taken over the asylum.

Elspeth clued me in to this post by Lori Alexander asking Are All Men Buffoons? I mention it because I used to read the Berenstain Bear books when I was young. Until now I had never really considered their message. Now I wonder just how much poison I sucked up as a kid from "children's books" without even realizing it. Makes me want to go back over them and find out.

Speaking of going back over old works, Cail Corishev has started to analyze some "older" movies through a Red Pill lens. He started with Godzilla (1998), and recently went over Independence Day. I cannot wait for others.

That is all I have for now. I might add more links later.

Tradition Thursday- #11

February 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will feature another letter from St. Ignatius, and is the last to be featured. After this I'm not sure which of the early Church Fathers I will cover next. In the meantime, here is most of his letter to the Smyrnaeans:

> I Glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom. For I have observed that you are perfected in an immoveable faith, as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit, and are established in love through the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded with respect to our Lord, that He was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, Romans 1:3 and the Son of God according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John, in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled Matthew 3:15 by Him; and was truly, under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, nailed [to the cross] for us in His flesh. Of this fruit we are by His divinely-blessed passion, that He might set up a standard Isaiah 5:26, Isaiah 49:22 for all ages, through His resurrection, to all His holy and faithful [followers], whether among Jews or Gentiles, in the one body of His Church.
>
> For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, *Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.* And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors. And after his resurrection He ate and drank with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father.
>
> I give you these instructions, beloved, assured that you also hold the same opinions [as I do]. But I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of [effecting] this. But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ. I undergo all these things that I may suffer together with Him, Romans 8:17 He who became a perfect man inwardly strengthening me. Philippians 4:13
>
> Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the

prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us. For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are unbelievers. Yea, far be it from me to make any mention of them, until they repent and return to [a true belief in] Christ's passion, which is our resurrection.

Let no man deceive himself. Both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers, both visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, shall, in consequence, incur condemnation. *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*Matthew 19:12 Let not [high] place puff any one up: for that which is worth all is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty.

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes. But it were better for them to treat it with respect, that they also might rise again. It is fitting, therefore, that you should keep aloof from such persons, and not to speak of them either in private or in public, but to give heed to the prophets, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been fully proved. But avoid all divisions, as the beginning of evils.

See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid.

Moreover, it is in accordance with reason that we should return to soberness [of conduct], and, while yet we have opportunity, exercise repentance towards God. It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil. Let all things, then, abound to you

> through grace, for you are worthy. You have refreshed me in all things, and Jesus Christ [shall refresh] you. You have loved me when absent as well as when present. May God recompense you, for whose sake, while you endure all things, you shall attain unto Him.
>
> …
>
> I salute the families of my brethren, with their wives and children, and the virgins who are called widows. Be strong, I pray, in the power of the Holy Ghost. Philo, who is with me, greets you. I salute the house of Tavias, and pray that it may be confirmed in faith and love, both corporeal and spiritual. I salute Alce, my well-beloved, and the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutecnus, and all by name. Fare well in the grace of God.

(Source here)

Comments, as always, may follow later.

Saturday Saints- #55

February 14, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The Letter “B” brings us today’s saint, Saint Benedict of Nursia:

> **Benedict of Nursia** (Italian: *San Benedetto da Norcia*) (c. 480 – 543 or 547) is a Christian saint, honoured by the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church as the patron saint of Europe and students.
>
> Benedict founded twelve communities for monks at Subiaco, Italy (about 40 miles (64 km) to the east of Rome), before moving to Monte Cassino in the mountains of southern Italy. The Catholic Order of St Benedict and the Anglican Order of St Benedict are of later origin and, moreover, not an “order” as commonly understood but merely a confederation of autonomous congregations.
>
> Benedict’s main achievement is his “Rule of Saint Benedict”, containing precepts for his monks. It is heavily influenced by the writings of John Cassian, and shows strong affinity with the Rule of the Master. But it also has a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness (ἐπιείκεια, *epieikeia*), and this persuaded most religious communities founded throughout the Middle Ages to adopt it. As a result, his Rule became one of the most influential religious rules in Western Christendom. For this reason, Benedict is often called the founder of western monasticism.

More can be found out about this saint at his wiki, found here.



St. Benedict

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #53

February 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The selected passages and verses from today owe themselves to a comment left at this post by Scott over at the Courtship Pledge. The full comment, left by someone going by "Dave," can be found here. This will be a more pointed post than is normal, because I take some exception to the comment. If you read the comment, you will have seen that the gist of Dave's comment is twofold: 1) men should have faith that they will marry, and 2) there are plenty of marriageable women there. I'm going to address both points, and in that order.

Dave cites the Book of Proverbs to make the point that a good wife is a gift from the Lord. I don't dispute this. However, I do disagree with his assertion that men cannot be cynical and have faith at the same time. Speaking only for myself here, I am highly cynical when it comes to human beings but still have a strong faith in God. I don't believe this view is is in any way contrary to Christian teaching and doctrine. I mean, how can it be when you have Scripture like this:

> The fool says in his heart,
> "There is no God."
> They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity;
> there is none that does good.

> [2] God looks down from heaven
> upon the sons of men
> to see if there are any that are wise,
> that seek after God.
> [3] They have all fallen away;
> they are all alike depraved;
> there is none that does good,
> no, not one.

> [4] Have those who work evil no understanding,
> who eat up my people as they eat bread,
> and do not call upon God?

(Psalm 53:1-4)

That is a pretty dark and dismal view of mankind. Yet David (that great and flawed man that he was) also said this:

> [5] There they are, in great terror,
> in terror such as has not been!
> For God will scatter the bones of the ungodly;
> they will be put to shame, for God has rejected them.

> [6] O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion!
> When God restores the fortunes of his people,
> Jacob will rejoice and Israel be glad.

(Psalm 53:5-6)

It seems pretty clear to me that David still had faith in the Lord. He still believed that God could and would fulfill his promises. But that didn't prevent him from having a healthy dose of cynicism.

This brings me to this part of his comment:

> You see, when we walk with God, our faith/expectations/beliefs dictate our experiences. If we believe that nothing good is in store for us, nothing good will be in store for us. If we believe that there are no more good women that we can marry, there will be no good women available for us, though that does not mean there are no good women left, but only that none of them will be for us.

He cites a Psalm in support, and let me offer another one:

> Praise the Lord!
> Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
> who greatly delights in his commandments!
> [2] His descendants will be mighty in the land;
> the generation of the upright will be blessed.
> [3] Wealth and riches are in his house;
> and his righteousness endures for ever.

(Psalm 112:1-3)

There is just one problem with all of this: as Christians we understand that the good we receive for God might not come in this world.

> [28] Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29] And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. [30] But many that are first will be last, and the last first.

(Matthew 19:28-30)

The danger with Dave's approach is he is leading men towards an expectation that good will come to them in this life. This can easily morph into a sense of entitlement, with all the danger that goes with it. But even with that aside, that expectation may not be fulfilled. There is no guarantee of it. As others have pointed out, God always answers our prayers, and sometimes the answer is "NO." Unfortunately, a man who goes through life expecting to find a worthy woman, and who doesn't will find his faith severely tested. More than a few men in the 'sphere can attest to this, and a fair few have lost their faith

as a result.

A better approach for a man, in my opinion, is to go through life expecting not to marry. Expect to suffer and go without, and not simply when it comes to marriage. We are called to deny ourselves and take up our cross. That may well entail suffering, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. “For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God’s will, than for doing wrong.” (1 Peter 3:17) If something good does happen, don’t treat it like you expected it all along. Treat it as the gift that it rightfully is. Something undeserved that merits appreciation and thanks directed to God.

Finally, there is his blanket claim here (which he states in different ways elsewhere):

> I wish the men remembered this, that even as we speak, there are HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of women in the US who are chaste, who are beautiful, and who long to establish God-honoring families with God-fearing men. To find them, you have to look for them. If you believe that there is none left, then you won’t find any, because you do not seek it “in faith” (Romans 9:32).

Of course, there is no evidence provided to back up this assertion. Furthermore, his argument that you won’t find any if you don’t believe they exist because you lack (or don’t seek in) faith is based on a twist interpretation of Romans that would impress a Pretzel maker. Let me offer a competing, and far more on point, bit of Scripture:

> [25] I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness which is madness. [26] And I found more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters; he who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her. [27] Behold, this is what I found, says the Preacher, adding one thing to another to find the sum, [28] which my mind has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. [29] Behold, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices.

(Ecclesiastes 7:25-29)

Now, does that mean there are no righteous women out there? Of course not. But it surely does a better job of refuting Dave’s point than any of the Scripture he has cited has done to support it.

Here is the thing- I don’t think there are hundreds of thousands of women out there who fit the bill that Dave provides. Nor do I think they are necessarily hundreds of thousands of men who possess the opposite set of valuable traits. The truth is that things are really, really bad right now. And it isn’t an act of Hope to pretend that they aren’t as bad as they are- it is a delusion. Our faith doesn’t require that we set aside reason or realism. [16] “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” (Matthew 10:16) Being wise as a serpent is enough to warn us that these are dark times, and that suitable mates are few and far between.

So, my counter-advice to men that Dave was addressing is this:

Be as wise as a serpent, and don't *expect* to find a worthy woman to be your wife. Yet at the same time don't give up; keep on knocking and searching. God will give us what is good, only He does it on His timeline.

Thou Art Dust

February 19, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Ash Wednesday. In the 40 days until Easter, we are called to rend our hearts, not our garments, as we repent of our sins. At Mass today the priest didn't mince any words. He began by reminding us that we all are going to die one day. There is no escaping this. One day we will face judgment for what we have done, and what we have failed to do. Therefore we must mend our ways, lest we find ourselves among the goats, and not the Lord's flock, on the day of judgment.

The last time this season came around I ran a series of more personal posts. I don't think that I will follow that pattern this year. I'm not sure at this point if I'll do anything special, or if I will take a break, or simply continue business as usual.

Tradition Thursday #12

February 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's Tradition post we cover another important early Father of the Church, St. Polycarp. Polycarp was a disciple of John during his youth, and later became a bishop. Here is his letter to the Philippians:

…

> These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because you have invited me to do so. For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom 2 Peter 3:15 of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. And when absent from you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you, and which, being followed by hope, and preceded by love towards God, and Christ, and our neighbour, *is the mother of us all.* Galatians 4:26 For if any one be inwardly possessed of these graces, he has fulfilled the command of righteousness, since he that has love is far from all sin.
>
> *But the love of money is the root of all evils.* 1 Timothy 6:10 Knowing, therefore, that *as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out,* 1 Timothy 6:7 let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness; Ephesians 6:11 and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord. Next, [teach] your wives [to walk] in the faith given to them, and in love and purity tenderly loving their own husbands in all truth, and loving all [others] equally in all chastity; and to train up their children in the knowledge and fear of God. Teach the widows to be discreet as respects the faith of the Lord, praying continually 1 Thessalonians 5:17 for all, being far from all slandering, evil-speaking, false-witnessing, love of money, and every kind of evil; knowing that they are the altar of God, that He clearly perceives all things, and that nothing is hid from Him, neither reasonings, nor reflections, nor any one of the secret things of the heart.
>
> Knowing, then, that *God is not mocked,* Galatians 6:7 we ought to walk worthy of His commandment and glory. In like manner should the deacons be blameless before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of God and Christ, and not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, 1 Timothy 3:8 or lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant Matthew 20:28 of all. If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of Him, *we shall also reign together with Him,* 2 Timothy 2:12 provided only we believe. In like manner, let the young men also

be blameless in all things, being especially careful to preserve purity, and keeping themselves in, as with a bridle, from every kind of evil. For it is well that they should be cut off from the lusts that are in the world, since *every lust wars against the spirit;* 1 Peter 2:11 and *neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God,* 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 nor those who do things inconsistent and unbecoming. Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ. The virgins also must walk in a blameless and pure conscience.

And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always *providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man;* Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:31 abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from all covetousness, not quickly crediting [an evil report] against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin. If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; Matthew 6:12-14 for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and *we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself.* Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10 Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord [have alike taught us]. Let us be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good, keeping ourselves from causes of offense, from false brethren, and from those who in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into error.

…

Stand fast, therefore, in these things, and follow the example of the Lord, being firm and unchangeable in the faith, loving the brotherhood, 1 Peter 2:17 and being attached to one another, joined together in the truth, exhibiting the meekness of the Lord in your intercourse with one another, and despising no one. When you can do good, defer it not, because *alms delivers from death.* Tobit 4:10, Tobit 12:9 Be all of you subject one to another 1 Peter 5:5 *having your conduct blameless among the Gentiles,* 1 Peter 2:12 that you may both receive praise for your good works, and the Lord may not be blasphemed through you. But woe to him by whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed! Isaiah 52:5 Teach, therefore, sobriety to all, and manifest it also in your own conduct.

I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a presbyter among you, because he so little understands the place that was given him [in the Church]. I exhort you, therefore, that you abstain from covetousness, and that you be chaste and truthful. *Abstain from every form of evil.* 1 Thessalonians 5:22 For if a man cannot govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry,

> and shall be judged as one of the heathen. But who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? *Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world?* 1 Corinthians 6:2 as Paul teaches. But I have neither seen nor heard of any such thing among you, in the midst of whom the blessed Paul laboured, and who are commended in the beginning of his Epistle. For he boasts of you in all those Churches which alone then knew the Lord; but we [of Smyrna] had not yet known Him. I am deeply grieved, therefore, brethren, for him (Valens) and his wife; to whom may the Lord grant true repentance! And be then moderate in regard to this matter, and *do not count such as enemies,* 2 Thessalonians 3:15 but call them back as suffering and straying members, that you may save your whole body. For by so acting you shall edify yourselves. 1 Corinthians 12:26
>
> For I trust that you are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you; but to me this privilege is not yet granted. It is declared then in these Scriptures, *Be angry, and sin not,* and, *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Ephesians 4:26 Happy is he who remembers this, which I believe to be the case with you. But may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, forbearance, and purity; and may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who *raised Him from the dead.* Galatians 1:1 Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, 1 Timothy 2:2 and potentates, and princes, and for those that persecute and hate you, Matthew 5:44 and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and that you may be perfect in Him.
>
> …
>
> These things I have written to you by Crescens, whom up to the present time I have recommended unto you, and do now recommend. For he has acted blamelessly among us, and I believe also among you. Moreover, you will hold his sister in esteem when she comes to you. Be safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you all. Amen.

(Source)

Bringing Men Back to the Church

February 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Reader mdavid alerted me to the following article concerning evangelization and men in the church: Bringing Men Back to the Church. The first sentence:

Here's a simple formula, tried and true, for getting families into church: If the fathers come, the wives and children will come, too.

The article is short and worth a read in its entirety. Here are the stats which lie at the heart of its argument:

> - If a child is the first in the family to become a Christian, there's a 3.7 percent probability that the rest of the family will become Christians.
> - If mom is the first in the family to become a Christian, there's a 17 percent probability that the rest of the family will follow.
> - If dad is the first in the family to become a Christian, there's a 93 percent probability that everyone else in the family will follow his lead.

I can attest to personal anecdotes which firmly support this. A follow-up post will touch on that story more. The article itself is short on solutions, so I invite my readers to take this opportunity to offer their thoughts on how to address this problem.

In the meantime, here is another good blog post by Beefy Levinson which touches on why the priest shortage in the US is artificially created.

Saturday Saints- #56

February 21, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is one who was quite popular during the Medieval era. Our saint is Saint Catherine of Alexandria:

> **Saint Catherine of Alexandria**, also known as **Saint Catherine of the Wheel** and **The Great Martyr Saint Catherine** (Greek: ἡ Ἁγία Αἰκατερίνα ἡ Μεγαλομάρτυς) is, according to tradition, a Christian saint and virgin, who was martyred in the early 4th century at the hands of the pagan emperor Maxentius. According to her hagiography, she was both a princess and a noted scholar, who became a Christian around the age of fourteen, and converted hundreds of people to Christianity. Over 1,100 years following her martyrdom, St. Joan of Arc identified Catherine as one of the Saints who appeared to her and counselled her.
>
> The Orthodox Church venerates her as a Great Martyr, and celebrates her feast day on 24 or 25 November (depending on the local tradition). In the Catholic Church she is traditionally revered as one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers. In 1969 the Catholic Church removed her feast day from the General Roman Calendar; however, she continued to be commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on November 25. In 2002, her feast was restored to the General Roman Calendar as an optional memorial.

In recent times there is some controversy over whether she was a historical person or a compilation of historical figures meshed together in one saint. Those interested in learning more about this figure can check out her wiki, located here.



St. Catherine

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #63

February 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage today is from the Letter to the Romans:

> [13] Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to
> put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. [14] I know and am
> persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for
> any one who thinks it unclean. [15] If your brother is being injured by what you eat,
> you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one
> for whom Christ died. [16] So do not let what is good to you be spoken of as evil.
> [17] For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and
> peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; [18] he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God
> and approved by men. [19] Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual
> upbuilding. [20] Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is
> indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; [21] it
> is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother
> stumble. [22] The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he
> who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves.
>
> (Romans 14:13-22)

Re-reading this particular passage, I realized that I haven't been keeping St. Paul's admonition in mind. Even as I go about my day, I don't stop to consider whether I am making it easier or harder for others to live the Faith. I think it is easy for us to forget that what we do affects others in profound ways, even when we don't intend it. Which means that it is essential we always keep others in mind with how we act, even when performing actions we ourselves consider innocuous. After all, we all have our own strengths, and our own weaknesses. Without knowing the weaknesses of others, it behooves us to actively work to build up others, lets we set a stumbling block in front of them.

Since we are on the topic of food, Lent has begun, which brings with it the topic of fasting and abstinence. It is common for many to give something up during Lent, whether an additional type of food or something else. But when making this sacrifice, we must be careful to not lead us to boast. Otherwise we shall be as the Pharisee Jesus warns of us:

> [9] He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were
> righteous and despised others: [10] "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one
> a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee stood and prayed thus
> with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust,
> adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all
> that I get.' [13] But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes
> to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' [14] I tell
> you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every

> one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

(Luke 18:9-14)

This failing is one that I suspect I am especially prone to. When we avoid most serious sins, we are too often inclined to think better of ourselves than we should. All too easily we forget that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23). Further, it is only with God’s strength, and not our own, that we can resist sin and temptation.

> [17] “Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.” [18] For it is not the man who commends himself that is accepted, but the man whom the Lord commends.

(2 Corinthians 10:17-18)

In Search Of Something… But What?

February 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Western media is starting to take notice of the fact that a number of western women are joining the "ranks" of ISIS. One such article from the New York Post can be found here. A few snippets:

> But why would "straight-A" students from London seek out ISIS, whose brutal MO includes savage beheadings and burning their captives alive?
>
> Some are coerced — but not all, says law professor Jayne Huckerby, head of Duke University's International Human Rights Clinic.
>
> "Why do they go? In many cases it's the same reason as men," Huckerby told The Post.

In case your curious, Jayne is a woman. I wasn't sure at first, as that name can be used by both men and women. I checked for reasons that will be clear later. But to continue, what are some of those reasons?

> Some are alienated by harassment or discrimination against Muslims at home, and want to join what they see as a pro-Muslim movement. Some, according to the ISD, enjoy the shocking violence.

and then there is this:

> Others find "a sense of camaraderie and sisterhood . . . in ISIS-controlled territory, in contrast to the fake and surface-level relationships they have in the West," according to the study.

All very interesting, especially that second snippet. There might even be some truth there. Of course, I have my own theories. As I'm sure do my readers. I very much doubt that most of the reasons these women have are the same as the men. However, they might well be related.

My principle theory is this: these women are seeking out what they perceive to be "real" men. Not the tame men around them, but wild, uncontrolled, unrestrained, *authentic* men. Perhaps Jayne is too caught up in her Leftist mindset to figure this out. When I first suspected it was a man speaking I thought it was merely blue-pill thought. But nope. Probably ideology getting in the way. Or maybe she doesn't want to express the truth, assuming she can even understand it. Setting that aside, I think that these women are searching for something they feel they cannot get at home in the West.

However, the "study" does get kinda close to the truth when it talks about "fake and surface-level relationships ." This is something we have forgotten in the West, to our great detriment. No matter how much we indoctrinate women, or men, some things will never change. One thing about female nature that cannot be changed is that women want real men- *masculine* men. Even when women don't understand what they want,

they will know they want it. And if they cannot find it, they will seek it out.

Of course, if any of my readers disagree, they are free to voice that disagreement below. But I'm not quite done. You see, I have another theory/idea I would like to bounce off folks.

What I wonder is if Christian women would act in a similar manner if Christian men went off to fight ISIS. Suppose that a Christian militia of overseas fighters was formed, almost like a new version of the Knights Templar or Hospitallar, dedicate to fighting ISIS. Further suppose that Christian men in the West joined it to go fight in the Middle East against ISIS and its allies. Would there be that same level of draw amongst Christian women as there is presently among Islamic women?

Feel free to chime in and let me know what you think.

Tradition Thursday- #13

February 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For the next set of posts in this series, I've decided to focus on Saint Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical letters. I will begin with the prologue to them, which is lengthy and thus necessary of heavy trimming. I will explain more about these letters in the next post of this series. Here are some selections:

> 1. Already there is an odour of blessedness upon you, O you who are soon to be enlightened : already you are gathering the spiritual flowers, to weave heavenly crowns: already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit has breathed upon you: already you have gathered round the vestibule of the King's palace ; may you be led in also by the King! For blossoms now have appeared upon the trees ; may the fruit also be found perfect! Thus far there has been an inscription of your names , and a call to service, and torches of the bridal train, and a longing for heavenly citizenship, and a good purpose, and hope attendant thereon. For he lies not who said, *that to them that love God all things work together for good*. God is lavish in beneficence, yet He waits for each man's genuine will: therefore the Apostle added and said, *to them that are called according to a purpose*. The honesty of purpose makes you called: for if your body be here but not your mind, it profits you nothing.
>
> 2. Even Simon Magus once came to the Laver : he was baptized, but was not enlightened; and though he dipped his body in water, he enlightened not his heart with the Spirit: his body went down and came up, but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor raised with Him. Now I mention the statements of (men's) falls, that you may not fall: for these things happened to them by way of example, *and they are written for the admonition* of those who to this day draw near. Let none of you be found tempting His grace, *lest any root of bitterness spring up and trouble you*. Let none of you enter saying, Let us see what the faithful are doing: let me go in and see, that I may learn what is being done. Do you expect to see, and not expect to be seen? And thinkest thou, that whilst you are searching out what is going on, God is not searching your heart?
>
> 3. A certain man in the Gospels once pried into the marriage feast , and took an unbecoming garment, and came in, sat down, and ate: for the bridegroom permitted it. But when he saw them all clad in white , he ought to have assumed a garment of the same kind himself: whereas he partook of the like food, but was unlike them in fashion and in purpose. The bridegroom, however, though bountiful, was not undiscerning: and in going round to each of the guests and observing them (for his care was not for their eating, but for their seemly behaviour), he saw a stranger *not having on a wedding garment*, and said to him, *Friend, how did you get in here?* In what a colour! With what a conscience! What though the door-keeper forbade you not, because of the bountifulness of the

entertainer? What though you were ignorant in what fashion you should come in to the banquet? — you came in, and saw the glittering fashions of the guests: should you not have been taught even by what was before your eyes? Should you not have retired in good season, that you might enter in good season again? But now you have come in unseasonably, to be unseasonably cast out. So he commands the servants, *Bind his feet*, which daringly intruded: *bind his hands*, which knew not how to put a bright garment around him: *and cast him into the outer darkness;* for he is unworthy of the wedding torches. You see what happened to that man: make your own condition safe.

4. For we, the ministers of Christ, have admitted every one, and occupying, as it were, the place of door-keepers we left the door open: and possibly thou entered with your soul bemired with sins, and with a will defiled. You entered, and were allowed: your name was inscribed. Tell me, do you behold this venerable constitution of the Church? Do you view her order and discipline , the reading of Scriptures , the presence of the ordained , the course of instruction ? Be abashed at the place, and be taught by what you see. Go out opportunely now, and enter most opportunely tomorrow.

If the fashion of your soul is avarice, put on another fashion and come in. Put off your former fashion, cloke it not up. Put off, I pray you, fornication and uncleanness, and put on the brightest robe of chastity. This charge I give you, before Jesus the Bridegroom of souls come in and see their fashions. A long notice is allowed you; you have forty days for repentance: you have full opportunity both to put off, and wash, and to put on and enter. But if you persist in an evil purpose, the speaker is blameless, but you must not look for the grace: for the water will receive, but the Spirit will not accept you. If any one is conscious of his wound, let him take the salve; if any has fallen, let him arise. Let there be no Simon among you, no hypocrisy, no idle curiosity about the matter.

5. Possibly too you have come on another pretext. It is possible that a man is wishing to pay court to a woman, and came hither on that account. The remark applies in like manner to women also in their turn. A slave also perhaps wishes to please his master, and a friend his friend. I accept this bait for the hook, and welcome you, though you came with an evil purpose, yet as one to be saved by a good hope. Perhaps you knew not whither you were coming, nor in what kind of net you are taken. You have come within the Church’s nets : be taken alive, flee not: for Jesus is angling for you, not in order to kill, but by killing to make alive: for you must die and rise again. For you have heard the Apostle say, *Dead indeed unto sin, but living unto righteousness* . Die to your sins, and live to righteousness, live from this very day.

…

7. We may not receive Baptism twice or thrice; else it might be said, Though I have failed once, I shall set it right a second time: whereas if you fail once, the

thing cannot be set right; for there is *one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism* : for only the heretics are re-baptized , because the former was no baptism.

8. For God seeks nothing else from us, save a good purpose. Say not, How are my sins blotted out? I tell you, By willing, by believing. What can be shorter than this? But if, while your lips declare you willing, your heart be silent, He knows the heart, who judges you. Cease from this day from every evil deed. Let not your tongue speak unseemly words, let your eye abstain from sin, and from roving after things unprofitable.

…

11. Let me give you this charge also. Study our teachings and keep them for ever. Think not that they are the ordinary homilies ; for though they also are good and trustworthy, yet if we should neglect them today we may study them tomorrow. But if the teaching concerning the laver of regeneration delivered in a consecutive course be neglected today, when shall it be made right? Suppose it is the season for planting trees: if we do not dig, and dig deep, when else can that be planted rightly which has once been planted ill? Suppose, pray, that the Catechising is a kind of building: if we do not bind the house together by regular bonds in the building, lest some gap be found, and the building become unsound, even our former labour is of no use. But stone must follow stone by course, and corner match with corner, and by our smoothing off inequalities the building must thus rise evenly. In like manner we are bringing to you stones, as it were, of knowledge. You must hear concerning the living God, you must hear of Judgment, must hear of Christ, and of the Resurrection. And many things there are to be discussed in succession, which though now dropped one by one are afterwards to be presented in harmonious connection. But unless thou fit them together in the one whole, and remember what is first, and what is second, the builder may build, but you will find the building unsound.

12. When, therefore, the Lecture is delivered, if a Catechumen ask you what the teachers have said, tell nothing to him that is without. For we deliver to you a mystery, and a hope of the life to come. Guard the mystery for Him who gives the reward. Let none ever say to you, What harm to you, if I also know it? So too the sick ask for wine; but if it be given at a wrong time it causes delirium, and two evils arise; the sick man dies, and the physician is blamed. Thus is it also with the Catechumen, if he hear anything from the believer: both the Catechumen becomes delirious (for he understands not what he has heard, and finds fault with the thing, and scoffs at what is said), and the believer is condemned as a traitor. But you are now standing on the border: take heed, pray, to tell nothing out; not that the things spoken are not worthy to be told, but because his ear is unworthy to receive. You were once yourself a Catechumen, and I described not what lay before you. When by experience you have learned how high are the matters of our teaching, then you will know that the

> Catechumens are not worthy to hear them.
>
> …
>
> 14. And when the Exorcism has been done, until the others who are being exorcised have come , let men be with men, and women with women. For now I need the example of Noah's ark: in which were Noah and his sons, and his wife and his sons' wives. For though the ark was one, and the door was shut, yet had things been suitably arranged. If the Church is shut, and you are all inside, yet let there be a separation, men with men, and women with women : lest the pretext of salvation become an occasion of destruction. Even if there be a fair pretext for sitting near each other, let passions be put away. Further, let the men when sitting have a useful book; and let one read, and another listen: and if there be no book, let one pray, and another speak something useful. And again let the party of young women sit together in like manner, either singing or reading quietly, so that their lips speak, but others' ears catch not the sound: *for I suffer not a woman to speak in the Church*. And let the married woman also follow the same example, and pray; and let her lips move, but her voice be unheard, that a Samuel may come, and your barren soul give birth to the salvation of God who has heard your prayer; for this is the interpretation of the name Samuel.
>
> …
>
> 17. We for our part as men charge and teach you thus: but make not our building *hay and stubble* and chaff, lest we *suffer loss*, from our *work being burnt up:* but make our work gold, *and silver, and precious stones*! For it lies in me to speak, but in you to set your mind upon it, and in God to make perfect. Let us nerve our minds, and brace up our souls, and prepare our hearts. The race is for our soul: our hope is of things eternal: and God, who knows your hearts, and observes who is sincere, and who is a hypocrite, is able both to guard the sincere, and to give faith to the hypocrite: for even to the unbeliever, if only he give his heart, God is able to give faith. So may He *blot out the handwriting that is against you* , and grant you forgiveness of your former trespasses; may He plant you into His Church, and enlist you in His own service, and put on you *the armour of righteousness* : may He fill you with the heavenly things of the New Covenant, and give you the seal of the Holy Spirit indelible throughout all ages, in Christ Jesus Our Lord: to whom be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

(Source here)

As always, comments may follow later as time and thought permits.

Saturday Saints- #57

February 28, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is another one who made a significant impact in Ireland. Our saint is Saint Declan of Ardmore:

> **Declán of Ardmore** (Irish: *Declán mac Eircc*, Latin: *Declanus*, died 5th century), also called **Déclán** or **Declan**, was an early Irish saint of the Déisi Muman, who was remembered for having converted the Déisi in the late 5th century and for having founded the monastery of Ardmore (*Ard Mór*) in what is now Co. Waterford. The principal source for his life and cult is a Latin *Life* of the 12th century. Like Ailbe of Emly, Ciarán of Saigir and Abbán of Moyarney, Declán is presented as a Munster saint who preceded Saint Patrick in bringing Christianity to Ireland. He was regarded as a patron saint of the Déisi of East Munster.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, found here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #64

March 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans is featured prominently in today's post. The first set of verses is found there:

> Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? [2] Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God. [3] What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? [4] By no means! Let God be true though every man be false, as it is written,

> "That thou mayest be justified in thy words,
> and prevail when thou art judged."

(Romans 3:1-4)

A not infrequent complaint that arises in this part of the web is formulated as a question: how can God, if He exists, allow for so many transgressions by His followers? How or why does He allow his Word to be abused? As this short passage from Romans demonstrates, this is not a new charge at all. From the beginning of the faith there were those who questioned God based on the actions of His people.

The problem with this approach is that it evaluates God based on human behavior. We look at the actions of men, not the actions of God. In so doing we miss the truth all around us:

> The works of his hands are faithful and just;
> all his precepts are trustworthy

(Psalm 111:7)

If we actually look at the works of the Lord, we see that He can be trusted. That He always fulfills His promises. In this respect we need to have the faith of Abraham:

> [17] By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, [18] of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named." [19] He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence he did receive him back, and this was a symbol.

(Hebrews 11:17-19)

Let us therefore evaluate God based on His actions, as is right and proper.

This brings me back to Romans:

> [21] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, [22] the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; [23] since

> all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, [25] whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; [26] it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.

(Romans 3:21-26)

I mentioned in my last post in this series how I have to force myself to avoid being boastful, if not in words then in my heart. Sometimes it is easy for me to forget that I also have fallen short of God's expectation. My understanding of classical Greek (which is dismal) is that the word for sin is best translated as *missing the mark*. If so, then I am no different than anyone else- I have missed the mark more times than I can count. What does it benefit me to say that others have missed it more often? Surely others who have gone before, and who will come after, will miss it less. This applies to all of us. As easy as it is to decry the wanton ways of those around us, it behooves us to remember that we too have fallen short. What this means for us is that we are as doomed as any if it were up to our own actions. We cannot save ourselves, no matter how hard we try. Our works by themselves cannot save us, cannot redeem us from our fate. Instead, it is the blood of Christ poured out for the world that has saved us:

> For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life.

(Leviticus 17:11)

Lastly, some encouraging words in these troubling times:

> [18] I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [19] For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; [20] for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; [21] because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. [22] We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; [23] and 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. [24] For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? [25] But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

(Romans 8:18-25)

One reason I started my Saturday Saints series is to help us remember that we are not the first to walk in the Faith. Many have gone before us who endured trials and tribulations. But despite their suffering they had hope, and carried on. May their lives give

us the inspiration to follow. And “let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

Analyzing Attraction- Part 5

March 3, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The latest in my long running series is here. The first post can be found here, and the fourth here. Today's post is going to be less focused than the last.

"Guypergamy"

One of the infamous commenters who occasionally frequents these parts has accused men of acting in a manner entirely similar to women when it comes to mate maximization. Her argument is that men are just as picky and choosey as women are, and that only the "hottest" women will get asked out/dated/married by men. She calls this "Guypergamy."

Setting aside the ridiculous name, there is an element of truth to this. As most who frequent this blog are aware, lifetime monogamy is not natural to the human condition- neither men nor women are naturally monogamous. Women are inclined to serial monogamy, while men are inclined to polygamy.

The natural male response when a man comes across a woman he wants is to add her to his existing "harem." If he runs across two at the same time, he takes both rather than choose between the two. Or as the old joke goes: If you ask a man whether he prefers a blonde, brunette or redhead, his answer will be "yes please." You can see this especially with David and Solomon in the Old Testament. Although Jacob is another good example. When he got Leah rather than Rachel at first, he didn't discard Leah when he later got Rachel. Essentially, the male instinct isn't to replace an existing woman with a new one when a man run across her. When a woman is "discarded", it is usually due to her age or a lack of resources on the man's part (prioritizing them for himself and the women he prefers).

This dynamic changes dramatically when men are forced into hard monogamy- aka, lifetime marriage. When men are confronted with "one and done," their behavior shifts. They start to become a lot pickier. Far more picky, in fact, then they are normally. However, I don't think that men are ever quite as picky as women tend to be. But it can be close.

And that is just in a "hard monogamy" marriage market. Things become even more complicated when the market is as distorted as it is now. When lifetime marriage and the MMP is distorted, two different forces are at work. On the one hand, the lack of viable product (marriageable women) forces men to lower their standards or go without. And on the other hand, the instability of marriage and easy dissolution of marriage makes men even more cautious and choosier. This leads to… interesting results.

The most likely result is that men simply leave the market. They give up and go home. But another result, the one more applicable to this neck of the woods, is a little more complicated. These are men who we might call R&D men- Resigned & Discriminatory.

While they haven't given up on marriage, they are resigned to the fact that they probably won't marry. And they are highly discriminatory about who they will actually marry. They have strict standards and will generally stick to them. I strongly suspect that most Christian men in the future will fall into this category. Not that there will be necessarily be a large number of such men- I see a strong contraction in the numbers of the faithful ahead in the future.

As for how choosey these men will be, I predict fairly choosey. Knowing the odds, they will insist on getting a good deal in the marriage market, or they will simply walk. This means a number of things will be part of their "list": lots of feminine traits, a high degree of devotion, chastity, minimal feminist/worldly beliefs, youth and good looks. The latter is what drew the ire of the aforementioned commenter. She (and others) disliked that men would only pay attention to the "hawt" girls.

I understand and sympathize a bit with her perspective. But only so much. It is unfair, certainly, as she and other "good" women aren't responsible for this mess. But a mess is what has been left to us. And men are finally starting to adapt to it. From a male perspective, here is what is going on in our heads:

If we are going to take the risk of marrying in the present environment, then we are going to insist we get the best possible deal out of it. In other words, we want a reward on equal footing with the risk. And that means, in large part, youth and beauty (which often go together). Beauty I will explain in the next section, but youth is also important to such men.

One of the rewards that men in this category are apt to seek is a large family. Not all, of course. But many will have that desire. The younger a woman, the more she brings to the table when it comes to fertility. This will increase her perceived "reward" value. And that is the conscious factor. Men are unconsciously drawn to youth in women. It has an appeal that we never really lose, as evidenced by various "studies" which show that the ideal age range of women for men is around 20-21.

Now, for a while men have been accepting older and older women as their brides. The general increase in median age of marriage demonstrates this. However, I suspect that men are going to be increasingly wary of marrying older women. This was tolerated at times in the past, but I don't think that toleration will hold in the current broken market. Desperation will still affect many, to be sure. There will always be "thirsty" men. But as more R&D men emerge, or put another way, as they become a larger share of the marriage market, I expect that women will have a harder time marrying later.

Those are just a few of my thoughts on the subject. I invite my male readers who might fall into that category to offer their own.

The Holy Lampstand

One constant in my various discussions of attraction is that someone shows up and says that Christians shouldn't be taking attractiveness into account when marriage is concerned. Most often it is directed only at men, and not women. One such person, going

by the moniker Corvinus, showed up recently at this thread over at Dalrock's to make that same, old, tired argument. He, assuming it was a he, basically stated was that all matters was for a woman to be a Christian. Her attractiveness doesn't matter. Fortunately a number of commenters there, including Feminine But Not Feminist, quickly took him(?) to task over his(?) foolhardy arguments. The following hypothetical from FBNF pretty effectively shut him down (as evidenced by the fact he hasn't responded to it):

> If a Christian woman were to show interest in marrying you (if you're a man; if you're a woman then just say so), but you had absolutely zero attraction to her to the point that the idea of having sex with her is repulsive to you, had trouble keeping up a conversation because you just don't "click", and she is so crazy and unkind to you that you don't even like being in her presence at all, but she still said she would be interested in marrying you… would YOU PERSONALLY be willing to marry this woman that you flat-out don't want, just because she "is Christian"? If "yes" then please back it up with something from Scripture that clearly shows that men are obligated to marry such a woman simply because she is Christian (good luck finding that). If "no" then please explain why you wouldn't do so but are telling every other man here that they should.

The thing is, you could remove the part about "clicking" and personality/craziness and it would still work. Marrying a woman whom you are not attracted to is a recipe for disaster. Even more so if she repulses you. The only exception might be for those men who have no sex drive. But they probably should marry at all, as St. Paul makes clear in 1 Cor 7. And that passage also highlights the importance of being being inflamed with passion towards your spouse. Because if you aren't towards her, than you will be towards someone else. And that leads to ruin, as the Book of Proverbs makes abundantly clear several times. Proverbs also makes it clear that the way to cool your passion is through your wife:

> [15] Drink water from your own cistern,
> flowing water from your own well.
> [16] Should your springs be scattered abroad,
> streams of water in the streets?
> [17] Let them be for yourself alone,
> and not for strangers with you.
> [18] Let your fountain be blessed,
> and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
> [19] a lovely hind, a graceful doe.
> Let her affection fill you at all times with delight,
> be infatuated always with her love.

(Proverbs 5:15-19)

It is kind of hard to rejoice in her if you never felt that "spark" in the first place. But even with that in mind, the notion that men should not or cannot consider a woman's beauty

has no scriptural basis. Far from it- in fact Scripture speaks to quite the opposite:

> [17] Like the shining lamp on the holy lampstand,
> so is a beautiful face on a stately figure.
> [18] Like pillars of gold on a base of silver,
> so are beautiful feet with a steadfast heart

(Sirach 26:17-18)

> [22] A woman's beauty gladdens the countenance,
> and surpasses every human desire.

(Sirach 36:22)

And then of course there is the entire Song of Songs, which extols female beauty (along with the handsomeness of the man). When you point this out (admittedly, a little harder for Protestants who have tossed aside the Book of Sirach) those who argue against considering attractiveness always like to trot out Proverbs 31:30. When you point out that Proverbs 31 didn't say to ignore or set aside beauty, but to remember it is fleeting, and that the rest of Proverbs warns about letting it bedazzle you, most usually huff and leave.

The thing is- life isn't fair. Some win and some lose when it comes to good looks and attractiveness. That doesn't sit well with a number of folks, but that is how the world is. As unfair as it is, men just like beauty. We do. There is something inherently pleasing and uplifting about it. Even when not in a direct sexual context, it "gladdens the countenance." I don't think women really understand just how powerful this can be. Telling men to set beauty aside will be no more successful in the long run than telling women they should be drawn to supplicating and weak men.

That is not to say that men cannot prioritize other features of a woman above her looks. We can, and many do. But it isn't easy. And we never really set it aside- instead, we make a conscious decision to accept less of it in the hopes of gaining something else (hopefully) more valuable instead. At least, that is the case for those with options. For those without options, then it is less determination and discrimination at work, and more desperation.

The key point, as always, is that a man should never marry a beautiful woman just because she is beautiful. That is a plus, certainly. But since looks fade over time it is a passing pleasure. So ground your decision on traits that don't fade like that. In the end, they are far more valuable to your enjoyment of your marriage, and life as a whole. Not to mention much safer for your soul. That said, there is no reason why, all things being equal, a man shouldn't marry the better looking of two women.

What Is In A Name?

In my previous post of this series, which examined Hypergamy, I ended up deciding that I didn't like the word as applied. I suggested that a new word or phrase was needed to explain the phenomena that it was used to describe. So I invite my readers to give it their best shot. Think of a new and more accurate name to describe the phenomena described

and commented on in my last post in this series.

That brings this post to a conclusion.

Tradition Thursday- #14

March 6, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In this post I continued Saint Cyril of Jerusalem's Cathechetical Letters or Lectures. Here we have the first of his lectures, a relatively short one that I will provide the full text of:

> **To those who are to be Enlightened, delivered extempore at Jerusalem, as an Introductory Lecture to those who had come forward for Baptism :**
>
> With a reading from Isaiah
>
> *Wash you, make you clean; put away your iniquities from your souls, from before my eyes*, and the rest Isaiah 1:16 .
>
> 1. Disciples of the New Testament and partakers of the mysteries of Christ, as yet by calling only, but ere long by grace also, *make you a new heart and a new spirit* Ezekiel 18:31, that there may be gladness among the inhabitants of heaven: for *if over one sinner that repents there is joy*, according to the Gospel Luke 15:7, how much more shall the salvation of so many souls move the inhabitants of heaven to gladness. As you have entered upon a good and most glorious path, run with reverence the race of godliness. For the Only-begotten Son of God is present here most ready to redeem you, saying, *Come unto Me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*. Matthew 11:28 You that are clothed with the rough garment of your offenses, who are *holden with the cords of your own sins*, hear the voice of the Prophet saying, *Wash you, make you clean, put away your iniquities from before My eyes* Isaiah 1:16: that the choir of Angels may chant over you, *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered*. You who have just lighted the torches of faith , guard them carefully in your hands unquenched; that He, who erewhile on this all-holy Golgotha opened Paradise to the robber on account of his faith, may grant to you to sing the bridal song.
>
> 2. If any here is a slave of sin, let him promptly prepare himself through faith for the new birth into freedom and adoption; and having put off the miserable bondage of his sins, and taken on him the most blessed bondage of the Lord, so may he be counted worthy to inherit the kingdom of heaven. *Put off*, by confession , *the old man, which waxes corrupt after the lusts of deceit*, that you may *put on the new man, which is renewed according to knowledge of Him that created him*. Get you *the earnest of the Holy Spirit* 2 Corinthians 1:22 through faith, that you may be able to be received *into the everlasting habitations*. Luke 16:9 Come for the mystical Seal, that you may be easily recognised by the Master; be numbered among the holy and spiritual flock of Christ, to be set apart on His right hand, and inherit the life prepared for you. For they to whom the rough garment of their sins still clings are found on the left hand, because they came not to the grace of God which is given through Christ at the new birth of

Baptism: new birth I mean not of bodies, but the spiritual new birth of the soul. For our bodies are begotten by parents who are seen, but our souls are begotten anew through faith: *for the Spirit blows where it lists* John 3:8: and then, if you be found worthy, you may hear, *Well done, good and faithful servant* Matthew 25:21, when you are found to have no defilement of hypocrisy in your conscience.

3. For if any of those who are present should think to tempt God's grace, he deceives himself, and knows not its power. Keep your soul free from hypocrisy, O man, because of Him *who searches hearts and reins*. For as those who are going to make a levy for war examine the ages and the bodies of those who are taking service, so also the Lord in enlisting souls examines their purpose: and if any has a secret hypocrisy, He rejects the man as unfit for His true service; but if He finds one worthy, to him He readily gives His grace. He gives not holy things to the dogs Matthew 7:6; but where He discerns the good conscience, there He gives the Seal of salvation, that wondrous Seal, which devils tremble at, and Angels recognise; that the one may be driven to flight, and the others may watch around it as kindred to themselves. Those therefore who receive this spiritual and saving Seal, have need also of the disposition akin to it. For as a writing-reed or a dart has need of one to use it, so grace also has need of believing minds.

4. You are receiving not a perishable but a spiritual shield. Henceforth you are planted in the invisible Paradise. Thou receive a new name, which you had not before. Heretofore you were a Catechumen, but now you will be called a Believer. You are transplanted henceforth among the spiritual olive-trees, being grafted from the wild into the good olive-tree Romans 11:24, from sins into righteousness, from pollutions into purity. You are made partaker of the Holy Vine. Well then, if you abide in the Vine, you grow as a fruitful branch; but if you abide not, you will be consumed by the fire. Let us therefore bear fruit worthily. God forbid that in us should be done what befell that barren fig-tree Matthew 21:19, that Jesus come not even now and curse us for our barrenness. But may all be able to use that other saying, *But I am like a fruitful olive-tree in the house of God: I have trusted in the mercy of God for ever* —an olive-tree not to be perceived by sense, but by the mind , and full of light. As then it is His part to plant and to water , so it is yours to bear fruit: it is God's to grant grace, but yours to receive and guard it. Despise not the grace because it is freely given, but receive and treasure it devoutly.

5. The present is the season of confession: confess what you have done in word or in deed, by night or by day; *confess in an acceptable time, and in the day of salvation* 2 Corinthians 6:2 receive the heavenly treasure. Devote your time to the Exorcisms: be assiduous at the Catechisings, and remember the things that shall be spoken, for they are spoken not for your ears only, but that by faith you may seal them up in the memory. Blot out from your mind all earthly care: for you are running for your soul. You are utterly forsaking the things of the world:

> little are the things which you are forsaking, great what the Lord is giving. Forsake things present, and put your trust in things to come. Have you run so many circles of the years busied in vain about the world, and have you not forty days to be free (for prayer), for your own soul's sake? *Be still , and know that I am God*, says the Scripture. Excuse yourself from talking many idle words: neither backbite, nor lend a willing ear to backbiters; but rather be prompt to prayer. Show in ascetic exercise that your heart is nerved. Cleanse your vessel, that you may receive grace more abundantly. For though remission of sins is given equally to all, the communion of the Holy Ghost is bestowed in proportion to each man's faith. If you have laboured little, you receive little; but if you have wrought much, the reward is great. You are running for yourself, see to your own interest.
>
> 6. If you have anything against any man, forgive it: you come here to receive forgiveness of sins, and thou also must forgive him that has sinned against you. Else with what face will you say to the Lord, Forgive me my many sins, if you have not yourself forgiven your fellow-servant even his little sins. Attend diligently the Church assemblies ; not only now when diligent attendance is required of you by the Clergy, but also after you have received the grace. For if, before you have received it, the practice is good, is it not also good after the bestowal? If before thou be grafted in, it is a safe course to be watered and tended, is it not far better after the planting? Wrestle for your own soul, especially in such days as these. Nourish your soul with sacred readings; for the Lord has prepared for you a spiritual table; therefore say thou also after the Psalmist, *The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall lack nothing: in a place of grass, there has He made me rest; He has fed me beside the waters of comfort, He has converted my soul* :— that Angels also may share your joy, and Christ Himself the great High Priest, having accepted your resolve, may present you all to the Father, saying, *Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me*. May He keep you all well-pleasing in His sight! To whom be the glory, and the power unto the endless ages of eternity. Amen.

(source)

As usual, comments may follow.

Saturday Saints- #58

March 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our saint for today hailed from what is now France. It is Saint Eligius:

> **Saint Eligius** (also **Eloy** or **Loye**) (French: *Éloi*) (c. 588 – 1 December 660) is the patron saint of goldsmiths, other metalworkers, and coin collectors. He is also the patron saint of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), a corps of the British Army, but he is best known for being the patron saint of horses and those who work with them. Eligius was chief counsellor to Dagobert I, Merovingian king of France. Appointed the bishop of Noyon-Tournai three years after the king's death in 642, Eligius worked for twenty years to convert the pagan population of Flanders to Christianity.

Despite coming from a prosperous background, St. Eligius never let money take a hold of him. His humility and concern for the poor, matched with a strong evangelical spirit, mark him as an strong example of how to live a Christian life. More can be found out about this saint at his wiki, located here.

Out Of The Picture

March 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Warning: This post contains will contain a great deal many film spoilers, including, but not limited to, the *Taken* series, *How to Train Your Dragon, Interstellar*, *Transformers, The Incredibles* and *Super 8*. The comments will almost certainly contain more. You have been warned.]

I had the opportunity, recently, to watch the second installment in the *How to Train Your Dragon* series. As far as such films go, it wasn't bad. But what struck me, besides some of the other PC garbage in there, was the dynamic involving the father.

As many who frequent these parts know, the way that Hollywood treats fathers in movies is very predictable. If a movie contains a strong father, then one of three things usually is the case:

1) The father is either revealed as not as strong as he appears, or otherwise suffers from some significant defect

2) The mother is just as strong and kick-ass as the father, or even more so

3) The mother is dead or killed off early in the movie

The *Taken* series involves the first scenario. I recommend reading this post by seriouslypleasedropit for a good review of that particular series. But basically, the dad is divorced, due to various deficiencies on his part. This is necessary to balance out the fact that the dad in that film is very dominant and powerful.

The Incredibles is a movie which features the second scenario. The father is a superhero with super-strength, which naturally makes him dominant in a number of respects. Of course, that naturally has to be balanced out by various flaws on his part. The mother, meanwhile, is also a superhero, whose super-elasticity makes her quite powerful. She is also a very skilled pilot. I should note that *The Incredibles* is not a great example of scenario 2, but was the only one I could think of on the fly. The mom is a stay at home mom and in a deleted scene (for obvious reasons) defends being a homemaker against a professional woman type. So apparently it had to be trimmed to fit the narrative even more.

Scenario 3 has been discussed a number of times in the 'sphere. The Widower is a trope among strong father types in Hollywood. *Interstellar, Super* 8 and the latest *Transformers* movie all feature strong fathers and dead mothers. I cannot remember any of the posts on the subject, but the general consensus (from what I recall) is that this trope exists because Hollywood is afraid of showing strong fathers. It can only be allowed when the mother isn't around, in order to demonstrate the man in question is upping his game to compensate for the mother being dead. The idea being that if mom is still alive then a dominant father will overshadow her, pushing her into a submissive role (unless she fits Scenario 2).

I mentioned *How to Train Your Dragon* before because that provides a new twist on this

particular practice. Again, spoiler alert. Seriously. Spoilers. The first movie showcases a hero whose dad is the chief of a village, and his mom is, you guessed it, dead. Now, the father is shown as a strong figure, although lacking in wisdom to trust his son. But definitely strong and IN CHARGE. Well, in the second movie it turns out that the mom *isn't* dead. Rather, she was just hiding for 20 years because she didn't think her husband would trust or believe her about something important. Naturally, the father/husband forgives her and they are all a happy family for a very short while. Of course, this cannot last. Remember, the father is the chief. He is in charge. That means he would need to be giving orders to mom, and we simply cannot have that. Of course, mom is also strong and powerful in her right (so a bit of Scenario 2). But still, the dad is so dominant that she cannot possibly match him on that. So what is the solution? *Kill off the dad*. There, problem solved. I'll admit, that surprised me. But it shouldn't have. I should have realized that a strong father figure couldn't be allowed to have a mother/wife around.

All of which makes me curious… is that movie unique? I invite my readers to submit other movies which have featured this particular dynamic- the strong father dying when the mother returns or is saved. Also, any thoughts about why Hollywood does this- whether they are different or merely better articulations of what I was going to say. The only thing that I would ask is that my readers put a spoiler tag at the front of their comment naming the movie(s) which they discuss.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #65

March 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Only two passages for today, mostly because the second is quite long. The first passage was the gospel passage at the Eastern Rite church I attended today. It is from the Gospel of Mark:

> 34 And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? 37 For what can a man give in return for his life? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

(Mark 8:22-38)

This passage resonated with me because of this particular language: “For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words.” The sad truth is that there are many “Christians” these days who are ashamed of Jesus. Even more so, they are ashamed of what he and his followers taught. Rather than be bold in their faith, they are meek in it. And rather than be meek in themselves, they are bold in themselves. These last few years have been truly eye-opening for me. I’ve witnessed this phenomena- being ashamed of the faith, all around me. Heck, I’ve manifested it myself in the past. Truly, it is a great pestilence that has infected much of the body of Christ, and is one that needs to be treated swiftly, and fiercely.

The second passage today comes from the Second Book of Kings:

> 3 In the eighteenth year of King Josi′ah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azali′ah, son of Meshul′lam, the secretary, to the house of the Lord, saying, 4 “Go up to Hilki′ah the high priest, that he may reckon the amount of the money which has been brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people; 5 and let it be given into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord; and let them give it to the workmen who are at the house of the Lord, repairing the house, 6 that is, to the carpenters, and to the builders, and to the masons, as well as for buying timber and quarried stone to repair the house. 7 But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money which is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly.”
>
> 8 And Hilki′ah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the book of the law[a] in the house of the Lord.” And Hilki′ah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, “Your servants have emptied out the money that was found

> in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord.” [10] Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, “Hilki′ah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king.
>
> [11] And when the king heard the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes.
> [12] And the king commanded Hilki′ah the priest, and Ahi′kam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micai′ah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asai′ah the king’s servant, saying, [13] “Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”
>
> [14] So Hilki′ah the priest, and Ahi′kam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asai′ah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they talked with her. [15] And she said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Tell the man who sent you to me, [16] Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. [17] Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. [18] But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words which you have heard, [19] because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have rent your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. [20] Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.’” And they brought back word to the king.

(2 Kings 22:3-20)

This passage moved me greatly when I re-read it recently. I’m working on a post based on it, and wanted to quote it at length so that I could link to it from that post when it finally goes live. While I will discuss it more, the major effect it had on me was to remind me of how much has been forgotten. So much of the faith as been set aside, or ignored, or even trashed, in recent times. Much like the book of the law, it was buried away.

Tall, Dark And Handsome

March 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

One of the arguments that I've raised on this blog which has consistently generated the most opposition is that Christian women have the same sexual attraction or arousal filters that secular women have. In fact, I created my LAMPS/PSALM model in large part as a response to Christian women who objected that they "Were Not Like That." My goal in creating LAMPS/PSALM was to provide a universal blueprint of the different factors or attributes that influence a woman's sexual attraction or arousal to a man. Naturally enough, that model has received its fair share of opposition (not all of it from women, it should be noted).

Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it) reality has a way of providing plentiful evidence to back up my theories. In particular, there are numerous accounts from Christian women which completely back up my theory. One such account, a sad tale indeed, can be found here. A thoughtful reader has helpfully alerted me to yet another account that supports my model. [It should be noted that this reader lives outside of America and Europe, and has confirmed that the harms of feminism and sexual liberation are not limited to those respective regions.] The title of the article is that of this post- Tall, Dark and Handsome. I recommend reading the whole article. It shouldn't take much time, as it isn't a lengthy one. As you will hopefully have read, the account contained therein follows the usual pattern:

- Good Christian Girl meets tall, dark and handsome Stranger
- Good Christian Girl learns that the Stranger is not a Christian (or his faith is lukewarm)
- Good Christian Girl is invited to spend time with Stranger
- Good Christian Girl decides that spending time with him is ok, its not like anything will happen
- Good Christian Girl discovers that she enjoys spending time with Stranger
- Good Christian Girl starts to experience "feelings" towards Stranger
- Good Christian Girl lies to herself about her "feelings"
- Good Christian Girl gets invited to some event or place where she would be alone with Stranger

This is where the usual pattern is broken. Fortunately for Camerin (the authoress of the article), she had some good friends with more sense than she did. They pointed out what was going on, and managed to get her to engage in some self-reflection. In having these friends Camerin demonstrated great luck. In acting reflecting on the situation, Camerin demonstrated far more wisdom than is typical in this day and age. It would have been very easy for things to have gone quite differently for her if she had lacked either.

As this story, and the countless other ones out there, should demonstrate, Christian women are affected by the same sexual attraction/arousal attributes that secular women

are. This used to be common knowledge. Sadly, that wisdom was lost all with so much else in the last few generations. Christian mothers need to impart this knowledge to their daughters as they grow up, so that their daughters stand a chance resisting the temptations of this world. And Christian women need to stop deceiving themselves that they aren't as drawn to the Tall, Dark and Handsome man as other women are.

Before I go, I wanted to quote and highlight this little tidbit:

> The next time I saw Jake was at a dinner with some friends. Jake and some of the guys told stories about stupid things they'd done while drunk. I knew they were exaggerating a bit to impress and/or shock us girls, but I still should have been turned off. But for some inexplicable reason, I was still attracted to him.

This thinking is what you get when ~~Christian~~ Churchian culture misleads women about their own nature. If Camerin had known about what she was really attracted to it might not have made a difference. She might not have realized what was going on until her friend forced her to confront the truth. But perhaps she might have been clued in sooner. That could only have been a good thing for her.

P.S. It should also be noted that Camerin's account appears to contain some other manospherian memes or tropes. There is Max, "my best guy friend," who is most likely a Beta Orbiter. And there is the delusion about what she was actually attracted to: "I also realized that most of my attraction had been to his attention and flattery." There are probably others, if I took the time to dig into the article further.

Preventive Medicine

March 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Word on the grapevine is that Rollo has a new book out. Here is how he describes the book:

> Building on the core works of The Rational Male – Preventive Medicine presents a poignant outline of the phases of maturity and the most commonly predictable experiences men can expect from women as they progress through various stages of life.
>
> Rational and pragmatic, the book explores the intergender and social dynamics of each stage of women's maturity and provides a practical understanding for men in dealing with women in those phases.
>
> Preventive Medicine also provides revealing outlines of feminine social primacy, Hypergamy, the 'Hierarchies of Love' and the importance of understanding the conventional nature of complementary masculinity in a world designed to keep men ignorant of it.

I had purchased Rollo's first book a while ago to give away as a gift and so have never read it myself. I may purchase this one to read though- I have found his exploration of the different "phases" of life quite illuminating. It would be nice to have it in a concise and compiled format. While the two of us don't see eye to eye on a lot of things, I've always appreciated his willingness to "leave no rock unturned." He was also quite influential in convincing me to start my own blog as well. So I would encourage my readers (although principally the male ones will be interested) to go over and take a look.

You can find a link to the print version at his blog, and here is a link to the Kindle version:

http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UERQSFU

Tradition Thursday- #15

March 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I will quoting from St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Second Catechetical Letter. As it is longer than previous entries, only certain selections from the first part will be provided. I will quote from the second part in the next post in this series.

> Ezekiel 18:20-23
>
> The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins, etc.
>
> 1. A fearful thing is sin, and the sorest disease of the soul is transgression, secretly cutting its sinews, and becoming also the cause of eternal fire; an evil of a man's own choosing, an offspring of the will. For that we sin of our own free will the Prophet says plainly in a certain place: *Yet I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true: how are you turned to bitterness, (and become) the strange vine* Jeremiah 2:21? The planting was good, the fruit coming from the will is evil; and therefore the planter is blameless, but the vine shall be burnt with fire since it was planted for good, and bore fruit unto evil of its own will. *For God*, according to the Preacher, *made man upright, and they have themselves sought out many inventions*. Ecclesiastes 7:29*For we are His workmanship*, says the Apostle, *created unto good works, which God afore prepared, that we should walk in them*. Ephesians 2:10 So then the Creator, being good, created for good works; but the creature turned of its own free will to wickedness. Sin then is, as we have said, a fearful evil, but not incurable; fearful for him who clings to it, but easy of cure for him who by repentance puts it from him. For suppose that a man is holding fire in his hand; as long as he holds fast the live coal he is sure to be burned, but should he put away the coal, he would have cast away the flame also with it. If however any one thinks that he is not being burned when sinning, to him the Scripture says, *Shall a man wrap up fire in his bosom, and not burn his clothes* Proverbs 6:27? For sin burns the sinews of the soul, [and breaks the spiritual bones of the mind, and darkens the light of the heart].
>
> 2. But some one will say, What can sin be? Is it a living thing? Is it an angel? Is it a demon? What is this which works within us? It is not an enemy, O man, that assails you from without, but an evil shoot growing up out of yourself. *Look right on with your eyes* Proverbs 4:25, and there is no lust. [Keep your own, and] seize not the things of others, and robbery has ceased. Remember the Judgment, and neither fornication, nor adultery, nor murder, nor any transgression of the law shall prevail with you. But whenever you forget God, immediately you begin to devise wickedness and to commit iniquity.
>
> 3. Yet you are not the sole author of the evil, but there is also another most wicked prompter, the devil. He indeed suggests, but does not get the mastery by

force over those who do not consent. Therefore says the Preacher, *If the spirit of him that has power rise up against you, quit not your place*. Shut your door, and put him far from you, and he shall not hurt you. But if you indifferently admit the thought of lust, it strikes root in you by its suggestions, and enthrals your mind, and drags you down into a pit of evils.

But perhaps you say, I am a believer, and lust does not gain the ascendant over me, even if I think upon it frequently. Do you not know that a root breaks even a rock by long persistence? Admit not the seed, since it will rend your faith asunder: tear out the evil by the root before it blossom, lest from being careless at the beginning thou have afterwards to seek for axes and fire. When your eyes begin to be diseased, get them cured in good time, lest you become blind, and then have to seek the physician.

4. The devil then is the first author of sin, and the father of the wicked: and this is the Lord's saying, not mine, *that the devil sins from the beginning* : none sinned before him. But he sinned, not as having received necessarily from nature the propensity to sin, since then the cause of sin is traced back again to Him that made him so; but having been created good, he has of his own free will become a devil, and received that name from his action. For being an Archangel he was afterwards called a devil from his slandering: from being a good servant of God he has become rightly named Satan; for *Satan* is interpreted *the adversary*. And this is not my teaching, but that of the inspired prophet Ezekiel: for he takes up a lamentation over him and says, *You were a seal of likeness, and a crown of beauty; in the Paradise of God were you born* : and soon after, *You were born blameless in your days, from the day in which you were created, until your iniquities were found in you.* Very rightly has he said, *were found in you*; for they were not brought in from without, but you yourself begot the evil. The cause also he mentions immediately: *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty: for the multitude of your sins were you wounded, and I did cast you to the ground*. In agreement with this the Lord says again in the Gospels: *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*. Luke 10:18 You see the harmony of the Old Testament with the New. He when cast out drew many away with him. It is he that puts lusts into them that listen to him: from him come adultery, fornication, and every kind of evil. Through him our forefather Adam was cast out for disobedience, and exchanged a Paradise bringing forth wondrous fruits of its own accord for the ground which brings forth thorns.

…

6. God is loving to man, and loving in no small measure. For say not, I have committed fornication and adultery: I have done dreadful things, and not once only, but often: will He forgive? Will He grant pardon? Hear what the Psalmist says: *How great is the multitude of Your goodness, O Lord*! Your accumulated offenses surpass not the multitude of God's mercies: your wounds surpass not the great Physician's skill. Only give yourself up in faith: tell the Physician your

ailment: say thou also, like David: *I said, I will confess me my sin unto the Lord:* and the same shall be done in your case, which he says immediately: *And you forgave the wickedness of my heart*.

…

9. Come with me now to the other class, those who were saved by repentance. But perhaps even among women some one will say, I have committed fornication, and adultery, I have defiled my body by excesses of all kinds: is there salvation for me? Turn your eyes, O woman, upon Rahab, and look thou also for salvation; for if she who had been openly and publicly a harlot was saved by repentance, is not she who on some one occasion before receiving grace committed fornication to be saved by repentance and fasting? For inquire how she was saved: this only she said: *For your God is God in heaven and upon earth*. Joshua 2:11*Your God;* for her own she did not dare to say, because of her wanton life. And if you wish to receive Scriptural testimony of her having been saved, you have it written in the Psalms: *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon among them that know me* . O the greatness of God's loving-kindness, making mention even of harlots in the Scriptures: nay, not simply *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon*, but with the addition, *among them that know me*. There is then in the case both of men and of women alike the salvation which is ushered in by repentance.

10. Nay more, if a whole people sin, this surpasses not the loving-kindness of God. The people made a calf, yet God ceased not from His loving-kindness. Men denied God, but God denied not Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13 *These be your gods, O Israel* Exodus 32:4, they said: yet again, as He was wont, the God of Israel became their Saviour. And not only the people sinned, but also Aaron the High Priest. For it is Moses that says: *And the anger of the Lord came upon Aaron: and I prayed for him*, says he, *and God forgave him*. Deuteronomy 9:20 What then, did Moses praying for a High Priest that sinned prevail with God, and shall not Jesus, His Only-begotten, prevail with God when He prays for us? And if He did not hinder Aaron, because of his offense, from entering upon the High Priesthood, will He hinder you, who has come out from the Gentiles, from entering into salvation? Only, O man, repent thou also in like manner, and grace is not forbidden you. Render your way of life henceforth unblameable; for God is truly loving unto man, nor can all time worthily tell out His loving kindness; nay, not if all the tongues of men unite together will they be able even so to declare any considerable part of His loving-kindness. For we tell some part of what is written concerning His loving-kindness to men, but how much He forgave the Angels we know not: for them also He forgives, since One alone is without sin, even Jesus who purges our sins. And of them we have said enough.

11. But if concerning us men you will have other examples also set before you , come on to the blessed David, and take him for an example of repentance. Great as he was, he fell: after his sleep, walking in the eventide on the housetop, he

> cast a careless look, and felt a human passion. His sin was completed, but there died not with it his candour concerning the confession of his fault. Nathan the Prophet came, a swift accuser, and a healer of the wound. *The Lord is angry*, he says, *and you have sinned*. 2 Samuel 12 So spoke the subject to the reigning king. But David the king was not indignant, for he regarded not the speaker, but God who had sent him. He was not puffed up by the array of soldiers standing round: for he had seen in thought the angel-host of the Lord, and he trembled *as seeing Him who is invisible*Hebrews 11:27; and to the messenger, or rather by him in answer to God who sent him, he said, *I have sinned against the Lord*. 2 Samuel 12:13 Do you see the humility of the king? Do you see his confession? For had he been convicted by any one? Were many privy to the matter? The deed was quickly done, and straightway the Prophet appeared as accuser, and the offender confesses the fault. And because he candidly confessed, he received a most speedy cure. For Nathan the Prophet who had uttered the threat, said immediately, *The Lord also has put away your sin*. You see the swift relenting of a merciful God. He says, however, *You have greatly provoked the enemies of theLord*. Though you had many enemies because of your righteousness, your self-control protected you; but now that you have surrendered your strongest armour, your enemies are risen up, and stand ready against you.
>
> 12. Thus then did the Prophet comfort him, but the blessed David, for all he heard it said, *The Lord has put away your sin*, did not cease from repentance, king though he was, but put on sackcloth instead of purple, and instead of a golden throne, he sat, a king, in ashes on the ground; nay, not only sat in ashes, but also had ashes for his food, even as he says himself, *I have eaten ashes as it were bread*. His lustful eye he wasted away with tears saying, *Every night will I wash my couch, and water my bed with my tears*. When his officers besought him to eat bread he would not listen. He prolonged his fast unto seven whole days. If a king thus made confession ought not thou, a private person, to confess? Again, after Absalom's insurrection, though there were many roads for him to escape, he chose to flee by the Mount of Olives, in thought, as it were, invoking the Redeemer who was to go up thence into the heavens. 2 Samuel 16:10-11 And when Shimei cursed him bitterly, he said, *Let him alone*, for he knew that *to him that forgives it shall be forgiven.*

(source)

I found this a highly edifying letter. The discourse on sin, the devil and the extent of forgiveness are all illuminating. Moreover, I didn't, upon my first read or two, notice any difference between what is found here and present day teaching of the Catholic or Orthodox Church. If anyone knows otherwise, please indicate so in the comments. I would be curious to see the differences and development of doctrine and theology since St. Cyril's time.

Saturday Saints- #59

March 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter for today's post is F, and that means our saint for today is St. Flavian of Constantinople:

> **Flavian** (or **Phlabianus**) (died August 11, 449) was Archbishop of Constantinople from 446 to 449. He is venerated as a saint by the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.
>
> Flavian was the guardian of the sacred vessels of the great Church of Constantinople and, according to Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, was reputed to lead a saintly life, when he was chosen to become Archbishop of Constantinople.

Here are a few facts about St. Flavian, drawn from his wiki:

- He was highly regarded by Pope Leo the Great, and wrote him a letter before learning of Flavian's death
- At a Council in Ephesus he was violently attacked at a church council, and later died from his injuries
- Because of the nature of his death, in opposition to the heretic Eutyches, he was later declared a saint by the church



St. Flavian

A Mountain Out Of A Molehill

March 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is an opportunity for my readers to help my out. I am concerned that I might have made something out to be a bigger deal than it really was. Or perhaps misunderstood the point that was being made. It began when I read this post over at Leane's blog. This paragraph in particular caught my eye:

> Men left to themselves too long tend to become rough, brutish, and even evil. I saw enough of this in the Army during the two years overseas with the same outfit. There was something vital missing in the lives of these soldiers. It was the influence of their mothers, their sisters, their wives, and their sweethearts. The deterioration of the soldiers overseas was slow and gradual but still very definite. The great mass of mankind finds it pretty difficult to climb very much above its environment. An all-male environment is not good for a man over a long period of time. God never intended for the average man to so live. Eve appeared on the scene soon after Adam.

I reacted… rashly to this message. Here is my response:

> I don't know how to describe this paragraph other than as vile. The central argument is that without women (presumably good women) in their lives then adult men will become uncivilized savages. To the best of my knowledge there is zero support for this in Sacred Scripture or Tradition. A great many monastics lived lives which stand as a strong testament against the proposition advanced here.
>
> Furthermore, even if this were true, and I contend it is not, this is an awful thing to include in advice supposedly directed at women. It is the worst kind of pastoral care. More than a few women will read this as saying that their presence is the only thing keeping the men in their life from being "ough, brutish, and even evil." This feeds into the worst parts of female nature. It is especially poisonous for wives who have rebellious tendencies- which happens to be all of them, as all human beings are rebellious at heart. Simply put, there is no good reason to include this paragraph in this particular work.
>
> Additionally, if I or another man was to write something similar, only with the roles reversed- describing the awful things women will do if left too long to themselves, would anyone simply leave it be? Or would it be called out?
>
> I am going to stop here. I am sorry for hijacking this comment thread, but I could not remain silent.

This drew, as expected, some opposition from female commenters, as well as the blog hostess herself. What I hope to hear from my readers is whether my reaction to that paragraph was on target, and whether I over-reacted or not. As a quick recap, and to help

folks better understand what I was saying, here are the three general points I was making:

1. The argument which the author made is not supported by Sacred Scripture or Tradition.
2. It was bad pastoral practice to include this paragraph in the book it was found in.
3. A similar paragraph or statement with the roles reversed would not be ignored like that paragraph was.

If anyone thinks I was wrong, please indicate where I screwed up. And if you have any problems with my response, besides the bad proofreading, please let me know. Don't hold back, let me have it. [Although I will say that I think the response of one of the female commenters to a piece of red meat I left in the second point justifies my third point.]

So, did I make a mountain out of a molehill?

[Update: It wasn't clear from my post, but Leane did not write that paragraph. Her post was quoting from a book called The Wife Desired. The book was written by a Catholic priest back in 1951.]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #66

March 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post begins with some sage advice from the Book of Sirach. It will end with two passages from the Gospel of John. The first verse for today covers the importance of wise counsel:

> [16] A wooden beam firmly bonded into a building
> will not be torn loose by an earthquake;
> so the mind firmly fixed on a reasonable counsel
> will not be afraid in a crisis.

(Sirach 22:16)

You can never go wrong by surrounding yourself with other wise people. Think of it as mutual reinforcement of each others mental and spiritual structures.

> [27] O that a guard were set over my mouth,
> and a seal of prudence upon my lips,
> that it may keep me from falling,
> so that my tongue may not destroy me!

(Sirach 22:27)

Something I wish I was better at was keeping silent. While I'm not exactly gregarious, I have a problem with speaking when I shouldn't. As Scripture is oft to remind us, rarely do we do better by speaking than bridling our tongue.

> [15] Slander has driven virtuous women from their homes,
> and deprived them of the fruit of their toil.

(Sirach 28:15)

I found this verse interesting, because my initial interpretation of what was likely not what the author intended. He probably warned against slander as it ruined the name of virtuous wives, whose husbands divorced them thinking that they had committed adultery. An understandable worry against an evil thing, certainly. My take, at least at first, was to think of those who slander husbands- which causes wives to leave them and break up families. While it wasn't what he intended at first, I would suspect that Ben Sira would warn against that slander all the same.

This brings me to the Gospel of John, and this passage:

> [44] You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. [45] But, because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. [46] Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you

> not believe me? [47] He who is of God hears the words of God; the reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

(John 8:44)

Reading this passage made me think back to my latest Tradition Thursday post. I saw the influence of St. John in St. Cyril's explanation of Satan, and how is the father of lies. Really, when you think about it this passage of Scripture is one of the most forthright ones when it comes to the nature of the Evil One.

Finally, we close with another passage from John, the woman at the well:

> Now when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John [2] (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), [3] he left Judea and departed again to Galilee. [4] He had to pass through Samar′ia. [5] So he came to a city of Samar′ia, called Sy′char, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. [6] Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.
>
> [7] There came a woman of Samar′ia to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." [8] For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. [9] The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samar′ia?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. [10] Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." [11] The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? [12] Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" [13] Jesus said to her, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, [14] 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." [15] The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."
>
> [16] Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." [17] The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; [18] for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly." [19] The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshiped on this mountain;[a] and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." [21] Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. [22] You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. [24] God is spirit, and those who

> worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” [25] The woman said to him, “I know
> that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us
> all things.” [26] Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”
>
> [27] Just then his disciples came. They marveled that he was talking with a woman,
> but none said, “What do you wish?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” [28] So the
> woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people,
> [29] “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”
> [30] They went out of the city and were coming to him.
>
> [31] Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” [32] But he said to
> them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” [33] So the disciples said to
> one another, “Has any one brought him food?” [34] Jesus said to them, “My food is
> to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. [35] Do you not say,
> ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? I tell you, lift up your eyes,
> and see how the fields are already white for harvest. [36] He who reaps receives
> wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice
> together. [37] For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ [38] I sent
> you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have
> entered into their labor.”

This passage was the Gospel reading at the parish that I attended last week. Not that is any great surprise- the readings during Lent follow a pattern every year. But what *was* new was the homily that followed. The priest explained that he had heard from a Biblical scholar that there is a key piece of information that most people lack when reading this passage. It concerns why the woman went to get water from the well at noon (the sixth hour from sunrise).

Noon was not the usual time to get water from the well. It would have been the hottest part of the day. Certainly the most unpleasant time to go and lug around a heavy water jar. Some might think that the woman choose that hour because she wouldn’t want to be seen by the other women collecting water. That she went when no one else would be there. Not so. A Jewish person living at the time of Jesus or John would have understood exactly what was going on.

You see, at noon the men would have stopped working and taken a break (what we here in the Americas might call a siesta). Rather than going at noon to avoid been seen, the woman was at the well to ensure that she was being seen. The woman, who had been married 5 times, and who wasn’t married to man number 6, was out there looking for man number 7. She was out there searching for something. Only she was looking for the wrong thing. This is why Jesus talks about the harvest later- she was someone who needed someone to help her find her way. Just like all of us. In fact, the priest quoted G.K. Chesterton, who noted that the man who knocked at the door of a brothel was looking for God… only he was looking the in wrong place. Thus it was for the woman at the well. She was looking for God, only she was looking in the wrong place. Fortunately for her, God showed up and *made* it the right place.

This leads to the lesson for all of us: We are all looking for God, whether or not we realize it. The question we should be asking ourselves is if we are looking for Him in the right place.

Tradition Thursday- #16

March 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is the fourth in a series on the Catechetical Letters of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Confession plays a significant role in this selection from his second letter:

> 13. You see that it is good to make confession. You see that there is salvation for them that repent. Solomon also fell but what says he? *Afterwards I repented*. Ahab, too, the King of Samaria, became a most wicked idolater, an outrageous man, the murderer of the Prophets 1 Kings 18:4, a stranger to godliness, a coveter of other men's fields and vineyards. Yet when by Jezebel's means he had slain Naboth, and the Prophet Elias came and merely threatened him, he rent his garments, and put on sackcloth. And what says the merciful God to Elias? *Hast than seen how Ahab is pricked in the heart before Me* ? As if almost He would persuade the fiery zeal of the Prophet to condescend to the penitent. For He says, *I will not bring the evil in his days*. And though after this forgiveness he was sure not to depart from his wickedness, nevertheless the forgiving God forgave him, not as being ignorant of the future, but as granting a forgiveness corresponding to his present season of repentance. For it is the part of a righteous judge to give sentence according to each case that has occurred.
>
> 14. Again, Jeroboam was standing at the altar sacrificing to the idols: his hand became withered, because he commanded the Prophet who reproved him to be seized: but having by experience learned the power of the man before him, he says, *Entreat the face of the Lord your God* 1 Kings 13:6; and because of this saying his hand was restored again. If the Prophet healed Jeroboam, is Christ not able to heal and deliver you from your sins? Manasses also was utterly wicked, who sawed Isaiah asunder , and was defiled with all kinds of idolatries, and *filled Jerusalem with innocent blood* 2 Chronicles 33:12-13; but having been led captive to Babylon he used his experience of misfortune for a healing course of repentance: for the Scripture says that Manasses *humbled himself before the Lord, and prayed, and the Lord heard him, and brought him back to his kingdom*. If He who sawed the Prophet asunder was saved by repentance, shall not thou then, having done no such great wickedness, be saved?
>
> 15. Take heed lest without reason you mistrust the power of repentance. Would you know what power repentance has? Would you know the strong weapon of salvation, and learn what the force of confession is? Hezekiah by means of confession routed a hundred and fourscore and five thousand of his enemies. A great thing verily was this, but still small in comparison with what remains to be told: the same king by repentance obtained the recall of a divine sentence which had already gone forth. For when he had fallen sick, Esaias said to him, *Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live*. 2 Kings 20:1 What expectation remained, what hope of recovery, when the Prophet said, *for you shall die*? Yet

Hezekiah did not desist from repentance; but remembering what is written, *When you shall turn and lament, then shall you be saved* Isaiah 30:15, he turned to the wall, and from his bed lifting his mind to heaven (for thickness of walls is no hindrance to prayers sent up with devotion), he said, *Remember me, O Lord, for it is sufficient for my healing that You remember me. You are not subject to times, but art Yourself the giver of the law of life. For our life depends not on a nativity, nor on a conjunction of stars, as some idly talk; but both of life and its duration. Then art Yourself the Lawgiver according to Your Will.* And he, who could not hope to live because of the prophetic sentence, had fifteen years added to his life, and for the sign the sun ran backward in his course. Well then, for Ezekias' sake the sun turned back but for Christ the sun was eclipsed, not retracing his steps, but suffering eclipse Isaiah 38:8, and therefore showing the difference between them, I mean between Ezekias and Jesus. The former prevailed to the cancelling of God's decree, and cannot Jesus grant remission of sins? Turn and bewail yourself, shut your door, and pray to be forgiven, pray that He may remove from you the burning flames. For confession has power to quench even fire, power to tame even lions.

16. But if you disbelieve, consider what befell Ananias and his companions. What streams did they pour out ? How many vessels of water could quench the flame that rose up forty-nine cubits high ? Nay, but where the flame mounted up a little too high, faith was there poured out as a river, and there spoke they the spell against all ills : *Righteous are You, O Lord, in all the things that You have done to us: for we have sinned, and transgressed Your law*. And their repentance quelled the flames. If you believe not that repentance is able to quench the fire of hell, learn it from what happened in regard to Ananias. But some keen hearer will say, Those men God rescued justly in that case: because they refused to commit idolatry, God gave them that power. And since this thought has occurred, I come next to a different example of penitence.

17. What do you think of Nabuchodonosor? Have you not heard out of the Scriptures that he was bloodthirsty, fierce , lion-like in disposition? Have you not heard that he brought out the bones of the kings from their graves into the light ? Have you not heard that he carried the people away captive? Have you not heard that he put out the eyes of the king, after he had already seen his children slain 2 Kings 25:7? Have you not heard that he broke in pieces the Cherubim? I do not mean the invisible beings—away with such a thought, O man —but the sculptured images, and the mercy-seat, in the midst of which God spoke with His voice. The veil of the Sanctuary he trampled under foot: the altar of incense he took and carried away to an idol-temple 2 Chronicles 36:7: all the offerings he took away: the Temple he burned from the foundations. How great punishments did he deserve, for slaying kings, for setting fire to the Sanctuary, for taking the people captive, for setting the sacred vessels in the house of idols? Did he not deserve ten thousand deaths?

> 18. You have seen the greatness of his evil deeds: come now to God’s loving-kindness. He was turned into a wild beast , he abode in the wilderness, he was scourged, that he might be saved. He had claws as a lion ; for he was a ravager of the Sanctuary. He had a lion’s mane: for he was a ravening and a roaring lion. He ate grass like an ox: for a brute beast he was, not knowing Him who had given him the kingdom. His body was wet from the dew; because after seeing the fire quenched by the dew he believed not. And what happened ? *After this*, says he, *I, Nabuchodonosor, lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and I blessed the Most High, and to Him that lives for ever I gave praise and glory*. Daniel 4:34 When, therefore, he recognised the Most High , and sent up these words of thankfulness to God, and repented himself for what he had done, and recognised his own weakness, then God gave back to him the honour of the kingdom.
>
> 19. What then ? When Nabuchodonosor, after having done such deeds, had made confession, did God give him pardon and the kingdom, and when you repent shall He not give you the remission of sins, and the kingdom of heaven, if you live a worthy life? The Lord is loving unto man, and swift to pardon, but slow to punish. Let no man therefore despair of his own salvation. Peter, the chiefest and foremost of the Apostles, denied the Lord thrice before a little maid: but he repented himself, and wept bitterly. Now weeping shows the repentance of the heart: and therefore he not only received forgiveness for his denial, but also held his Apostolic dignity unforfeited.
>
> 20. Having therefore, brethren, many examples of those who have sinned and repented and been saved, do ye also heartily make confession unto the Lord, that you may both receive the forgiveness of your former sins, and be counted worthy of the heavenly gift, and inherit the heavenly kingdom with all the saints in Christ Jesus; to Whom is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #60

March 21, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter for today's saint is G. Our saint for today reaches back when the first cracks between the Western and Eastern Church were starting to form. Fortunately, he was not one that contributed to the eventual schism, and in fact is well respected in both West and East. Our saint is Pope Gregory the First:

> **Pope Gregory I** (Latin: *Gregorius I*; c. 540 – 12 March 604), commonly known as **Saint Gregory the Great**, was Pope from 3 September 590 to his death in 604. Gregory is well known for his writings, which were more prolific than those of any of his predecessors as pope. He is also known as **St. Gregory the Dialogist** in Eastern Christianity because of his *Dialogues*. For this reason, English translations of Eastern texts will sometimes list him as "Gregory Dialogus".
>
> Throughout the Middle Ages he was known as "the Father of Christian Worship" because of his exceptional efforts in revising the Roman worship of his day. His contributions to the development of the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, still in use in the Byzantine Rite, were so significant that he is generally recognized as its de facto author.
>
> He was the first of the popes to come from a monastic background. Gregory is a Doctor of the Church and one of the Latin Fathers. He is considered a saint in the Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, Anglican Communion, and some Lutheran churches. Immediately after his death, Gregory was canonized by popular acclaim. The Protestant reformer John Calvin admired Gregory and declared in his Institutes that Gregory was the last good pope. He is the patron saint of musicians, singers, students, and teachers.

More can be found out about St. Gregory and his impact on the faith at his wiki, located here.



St. Gregory the Great

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #67

March 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few longer passages mark most of today's post. The first comes from the Acts of the Apostles:

> 13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in
> Pamphyl′ia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem; 14 but they passed on
> from Perga and came to Antioch of Pisid′ia. And on the sabbath day they went
> into the synagogue and sat down. 15 After the reading of the law and the
> prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you
> have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." 16 So Paul stood up, and
> motioning with his hand said:
>
> "Men of Israel, and you that fear God, listen. 17 The God of this people Israel chose
> our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and
> with uplifted arm he led them out of it. 18 And for about forty years he bore with
> them in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land
> of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance, for about four hundred and
> fifty years. 20 And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.
> 21 Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of
> the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised
> up David to be their king; of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David
> the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' 23 Of this man's
> posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. 24 Before his
> coming John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.
> 25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I
> am not he. No, but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not
> worthy to untie.'
>
> 26 "Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you that fear God,
> to us has been sent the message of this salvation. 27 For those who live in
> Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand
> the utterances of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled these by
> condemning him. 28 Though they could charge him with nothing deserving death,
> yet they asked Pilate to have him killed. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was
> written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. 30 But
> God raised him from the dead; 31 and for many days he appeared to those who
> came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the
> people. 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the
> fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is
> written in the second psalm,
>
> 'Thou art my Son,

today I have begotten thee.’

[34] And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke in this way,

‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

[35] Therefore he says also in another psalm,

‘Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption.’

[36] For David, after he had served the counsel of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid with his fathers, and saw corruption; [37] but he whom God raised up saw no corruption. [38] Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, [39] and by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. [40] Beware, therefore, lest there come upon you what is said in the prophets:

[41] ‘Behold, you scoffers, and wonder, and perish;
for I do a deed in your days,
a deed you will never believe, if one declares it to you.’”

[42] As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next sabbath. [43] And when the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

[44] The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God. [45] But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted what was spoken by Paul, and reviled him. [46] And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. [47] For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

‘I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.’”

[48] And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. [49] And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region. [50] But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. [51] But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and went to Ico′nium. [52] And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 13:13-52)

I chose this passage thanks to a discussion I had recently with a deacon about the evangelical work of St. Paul. He explained that most synagogues would have been

relatively small, and everyone would have known everyone else. So it would have been apparent when visitors were present. Often it was practice to have the visitors introduce themselves and say a few words. Paul, being a former Pharisee, probably still dressed as one. So those present would have seen that he was likely an expert of the Law and would have been eager to hear what he had to say. This is why he was given the opportunity to speak up and to explain to the Jews at the Synagogue the Good News.

Also this passage interested me because of the reaction of the Jewish leaders in the city. They incited not only the leading men of the city, but also the women of high standing. The fact that St. Luke saw fit to mention this shows that it had no small meaning. What I take from it is that it demonstrates that women were not powerless in that day and age, despite the claims of some modern interpreters, who use that argument as a means to distance modern practices from the faith as practiced by the Apostles. In fact the entire book of Acts is replete with examples of Holy women who help to advance the cause of the faith. It is just that the role of the ancient sisters in the faith was often different from that of that of the ancient brothers. Which should be no surprise, much less a cause for alarm or suspicion or anything else. After all, Scripture addresses this matter early on:

[27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

(Genesis 1:27)

God created us man and woman, each of us with noble work in mind. Some of the work will be the same, and some different. But all is worthy if made in service to the Glory of God.

This brings me to the next major passage, from the Prophet Isaiah:

> O Lord, you are my God;
> I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
> for you have done wonderful things,
> plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
> [2] For you have made the city a heap,
> the fortified city a ruin;
> the palace of aliens is a city no more,
> it will never be rebuilt.
> [3] Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
> cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
> [4] For you have been a refuge to the poor,
> a refuge to the needy in their distress,
> a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
> When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
> [5] the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,
> you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
> the song of the ruthless was stilled.

> [6] On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
> a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
> of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.
> [7] And he will destroy on this mountain
> the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
> the sheet that is spread over all nations;
> [8] he will swallow up death forever.
> Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
> and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
> for the Lord has spoken.
> [9] It will be said on that day,
> Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
> This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
> let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

(Isaiah 25:1-9)

The Jews who lived in Israel and in the Diaspora during the time of Jesus would have known of this passage. Isaiah was an important prophet, especially during that time, when the Messiah was supposed to appear. But they did not fully understand what the prophet foretold. They knew that the Lord would destroy the shroud, the veil that was kept over the people of the world and that death would be destroyed. But they didn't understand that it was the final death, the true death, the separation from God which was the result of Original Sin, that was to be destroyed. The disgrace the Lord took away from us was the disgrace of Eden, the disgrace of our father Adam and our mother Eve in rebelling against the Lord. Nor did they understand that when Isaiah said "this is our God", he was being literal- this was our God who would be present among us. More so, they did not understand that the mountain where death would be destroyed was not Zion, but Golgotha. Most important of all, they did not understand that the feast prepared for them was the body and blood of our Lord. That the banquet feast was the sacrifice made to atone for our sins. They did not understand, and sadly, even when it was explained to them, they still refused to believe:

> [35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. [36] But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. [37] Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; [38] for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. [39] And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. [40] This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."
>
> [41] Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." [42] They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of

> Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” [43] Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves. [44] No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. [45] It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. [46] Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. [47] Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. [48] I am the bread of life. [49] Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. [50] This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. [51] I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”
>
> [52] The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” [53] So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. [54] Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; [55] for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. [56] Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. [57] Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. [58] This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” [59] He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.
>
> [60] When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” [61] But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? [62] Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? [63] It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. [64] But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. [65] And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”
>
> [66] Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. [67] So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” [68] Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. [69] We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

(John 6:35-69)

What is unfortunate is that most of the time the truth is given to us plainly, and yet we refuse to accept it. We are either too committed to what we have believed for a long time, to our preconceived notions, or we refuse to embrace the truth because it requires more of us than we are willing to give. When we are given that truth, let us not follow in

the footsteps of those disciples who turned back. Instead, let us recognize that we have no others to whom we can go. Only One is the source of eternal life.

Random Musings and Links- #7

March 25, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Its been quite a while since I last wrote one of these posts, and thus it is long overdue. I'm going to cover some important links, relate a few of my thoughts and preview a few possible post ideas in the future.

To begin with, I wanted to give my readers a heads up that I am going to refrain from commenting at other blogs for the near future. I have not been pleased with my comments for a while. None have been good, much less great, and many were sub-par. Given the trouble that a few have caused me, I'm going to hold off with them for the moment, although I will still comment here. Part of my problem is that when I comment I usually write in haste, which does not lend itself well to careful thought or careful writing. So expect to see very little of me around for the time being.

Deep Strength has written a post exploring how AWALT and how NAWALT. There are three things he has as "questionable" that I wanted to briefly address:

> - Do women have the ability to agape love their husbands? There are no commands for women to agape love their husbands but to philea love them (Titus 2).
> - Do women have full moral agency?
> - Are women able to act as their own agent outside of men: what about the fact that women were under their fathers in the OT, and confirmed through 1 Cor 7 to also be under the authority of their fathers prior to marriage?

While others have provided good commentary, there are a few things I wanted to note. First, just because scripture doesn't command it doesn't meant that women don't have the ability to agape love their husbands. Scripture contains what is essential, surely, but it doesn't contain everything- it cannot, in fact. That is why Jesus gave us the Church, after all- for continued wisdom and guidance. Second, concerning moral agency, I think Deep Strength is conflating moral agency- the ability to choose between right and wrong- with [edit: potential or alleged] female susceptibility to deception. They are not incompatible. Women can choose to do the right thing, just as they can choose to do the wrong thing. Deception merely makes it more difficult to discriminate between the two. Third, women are indeed able to operate as agents outside of the authority of men. Scripture mentions ta number of instances of it, in both the OT and NT. However, that doesn't mean it is necessarily for the best, at least, all the time. This ties again to the susceptibility of deception- protecting women from deception probably had a large part to do with that. There might be more, of course, and this could be a subject worth exploring in a further post.

Elspeth has closed up shop, although she might comment from time to time. So has Mrs. ktc. Both are going to be moved to my inactive section shortly.

Empath talks about the subtle power of examples.

Stingray has a new blog focused on religious discussions.

Ballista provides yet another example of how conservatives either don't get it, or pretend not to get it when it comes to marriage.

Bonald has an interesting post, among a great many, which discusses inter-species romance. I mention this one specifically because James T. Kirk is involved.

Free Northerner explores the potential Selection Effects of War.

I agree with Beefy Levinson that enemies are easy to deal with, it is your treacherous friends that are the problem.

Related: Rebellion at a Catholic High School. I hope the admin stands firm.

Mrs. C. had an interesting post on St. Patrick's day which discussed welcoming sinners. I encourage my readers to read it, because I want to comment on it briefly. There is an interesting tension that the Church has endured since its creation between welcoming sinners, on one hand, and turning a blind eye to sin, on the other. Sometimes the Church has gone too far one way, and sometimes too far the other. I think that a major determinant of how the Church should act with regards to any given individual is determined by that person's background. The way I see it, there are four sorts of backgrounds someone might have: 1) someone who was born to the faith and never left the church (although they might have strayed), 2) someone who wasn't born to the faith but converted and is present still in the Church, 3) someone who was born to the faith but then left (prodigal son/daughter?) and 4) someone who wasn't born to the faith and hasn't converted before. Each needs to be treated somewhat differently. In brief, I would accord more leniency to persons from the latter backgrounds. The danger of too much leniency (or mercy) towards the former is that it might establish in the minds of the faithful the notion that eschewing sin is not an important or vital part of the faith. In other words, it acts as a stumbling block. This is less of an issue for someone who is coming to the Church for the first time, either ever or for a long time.

Vox brings a story of how Little girls need fathers.

As I was writing this post Rollo put up a new post of his own, where he delves into the subject of "Betas in Waiting." His efforts in examining the different "stages" of the life of most modern women have provided me with a lot of insights. Some of them will come into play in a future post of mine examining male and female "Sexual Strategies", and how they interact with one another.

Tradition Thursday- #17

March 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post continues the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters. This is the fifth in that series. Here we have the first part of his third letter, which concerns the Sacrament of Baptism:

> Or do you not know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Were buried therefore with Him by our baptism into death, etc.
>
> 1. *Rejoice, you heavens, and let the earth be glad* , for those who are to be sprinkled with hyssop, and cleansed with the spiritual hyssop, the power of Him to whom at His Passion drink was offered on hyssop and a reed. And while the Heavenly Powers rejoice, let the souls that are to be united to the spiritual Bridegroom make themselves ready. For *the voice* is heard *of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord*. Isaiah 40:3 For this is no light matter, no ordinary and indiscriminate union according to the flesh , but the All-searching Spirit's election according to faith. For the inter-marriages and contracts of the world are not made altogether with judgment: but wherever there is wealth or beauty, there the bridegroom speedily approves: but here it is not beauty of person, but the soul's clear conscience; not the condemned Mammon, but the wealth of the soul in godliness.
>
> 2. Listen then, O you children of righteousness, to John's exhortation when he says, *Make straight the way of the Lord*. Take away all obstacles and stumbling-blocks, that you may walk straight onward to eternal life. Make ready the vessels of the soul, cleansed by unfeigned faith, for reception of the Holy Ghost. Begin at once to wash your robes in repentance, that when called to the bride-chamber you may be found clean. For the Bridegroom invites all without distinction, because His grace is bounteous; and the cry of loud-voiced heralds assembles them all: but the same Bridegroom afterwards separates those who have come in to the figurative marriage. O may none of those whose names have now been enrolled hear the words, *Friend, how did you come in hither, not having a wedding garment* Matthew 22:12? But may you all hear, *Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things: enter thou into the joy of your lord* Matthew 25:12 .
>
> For now meanwhile you stand outside the door: but God grant that you all may say, *The King has brought me into His chamber*. Song of Songs 1:4 *Let my soul rejoice in the Lord: for He has clothed me with a garment of salvation, and a robe of gladness: He has crowned me with a garland as a bridegroom , and decked me with ornaments as a bride*: that the soul of every one of you may be found *not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing* Ephesians 5:7; I do not mean before you have received the grace, for how could that be? Since it is for remission of sins that you have been called; but that, when the grace is to be given, your

conscience being found uncondemned may concur with the grace.

3. This is in truth a serious matter, brethren, and you must approach it with good heed. Each one of you is about to be presented to God before tens of thousands of the Angelic Hosts: the Holy Ghost is about to seal your souls: you are to be enrolled in the army of the Great King. Therefore make you ready, and equip yourselves, by putting on I mean, not bright apparel , but piety of soul with a good conscience. Regard not the Laver as simple water, but rather regard the spiritual grace that is given with the water. For just as the offerings brought to the heathen altars , though simple in their nature, become defiled by the invocation of the idols , so contrariwise the simple water having received the invocation of the Holy Ghost, and of Christ, and of the Father, acquires a new power of holiness.

4. For since man is of twofold nature, soul and body, the purification also is twofold, the one incorporeal for the incorporeal part, and the other bodily for the body: the water cleanses the body, and the Spirit seals the soul; that we may draw near unto God, *having our heart sprinkled* by the Spirit, *and our body washed with pure water*. Hebrews 10:22 When going down, therefore, into the water, think not of the bare element, but look for salvation by the power of the Holy Ghost: for without both you can not possibly be made perfect. It is not I that say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the power in this matter: for He says, *Unless a man be born anew* (and He adds the words) *of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. John 3:3 Neither does he that is baptized with water, but not found worthy of the Spirit, receive the grace in perfection; nor if a man be virtuous in his deeds, but receive not the seal by water, shall he enter into the kingdom of heaven. A bold saying, but not mine, for it is Jesus who has declared it: and here is the proof of the statement from Holy Scripture. Cornelius was a just man, who was honoured with a vision of Angels, and had set up his prayers and almsdeeds as a good memorial before God in heaven. Peter came, and the Spirit was poured out upon them that believed, and they spoke with other tongues, and prophesied: and after the grace of the Spirit the Scripture says that Peter *commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ* Acts 10:48; in order that, the soul having been born again by faith , the body also might by the water partake of the grace.

5. But if any one wishes to know why the grace is given by water and not by a different element, let him take up the Divine Scriptures and he shall learn. For water is a grand thing, and the noblest of the four visible elements of the world. Heaven is the dwelling-place of Angels, but the heavens are from the waters : the earth is the place of men, but the earth is from the waters: and before the whole six days' formation of the things that were made, *the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water*. Genesis 1:2 The water was the beginning of the world, and Jordan the beginning of the Gospel tidings: for Israel deliverance from Pharaoh was through the sea, and for the world deliverance from sins *by the washing of*

water with the word Ephesians 5:26 of God. Where a covenant is made with any, there is water also. After the flood, a covenant was made with Noah: a covenant for Israel from Mount Sinai, but *with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop*. Hebrews 9:19 Elias is taken up, but not apart from water: for first he crosses the Jordan, then in a chariot mounts the heaven. The high-priest is first washed, then offers incense; for Aaron first washed, then was made high-priest: for how could one who had not yet been purified by water pray for the rest? Also as a symbol of Baptism there was a laver set apart within the Tabernacle.

6. Baptism is the end of the Old Testament, and beginning of the New. For its author was John, than whom was *none greater among them that are born of women*. The end he was of the Prophets: *for all the Prophets and the law were until John* Matthew 11:13: but of the Gospel history he was the first-fruit. For it says, *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, etc.*: *John came baptising in the wilderness*. You may mention Elias the Tishbite who was taken up into heaven, yet he is not greater than John: Enoch was translated, but he is not greater than John: Moses was a very great lawgiver, and all the Prophets were admirable, but not greater than John. It is not I that dare to compare Prophets with Prophets: but their Master and ours, the Lord Jesus, declared it: *Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John* Matthew 11:11: He says not *among them that are born of virgins,* but *of women*. The comparison is between the great servant and his fellow-servants: but the pre-eminence and the grace of the Son is beyond comparison with servants. Do you see how great a man God chose as the first minister of this grace?— a man possessing nothing, and a lover of the desert, yet no hater of mankind: who ate locusts, and winged his soul for heaven : feeding upon honey, and speaking things both sweeter and more salutary than honey: clothed with a garment of camel’s hair, and showing in himself the pattern of the ascetic life; who also was sanctified by the Holy Ghost while yet he was carried in his mother’s womb. Jeremiah was sanctified, but did not prophesy, in the womb Jeremiah 1:5: John alone while carried in the womb leaped for joy Luke 1:44, and though he saw not with the eyes of flesh, knew his Master by the Spirit: for since the grace of Baptism was great, it required greatness in its founder also.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #61

March 28, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint hails from a region which I haven't picked many saints to feature from. Our saint for today is St. Hubertus:

> **Saint Hubertus** or **Hubert** (c. 656–727 A.D.) became Bishop of Liège in 708 A.D. He was a Christian saint who was the patron saint of hunters, mathematicians, opticians, and metalworkers. Known as the **Apostle of the Ardennes**, he was called upon, until the early 20th century, to cure rabies through the use of the traditional St Hubert's Key.
>
> Saint Hubertus was widely venerated during the Middle Ages. The iconography of his legend is entangled with the legend of Saint Eustace. The Bollandists published seven early lives of Hubertus (*Acta Sanctorum*, November, i., 759–930 A.D.); the first of these was the work of a contemporary, though it is very sparing of details.
>
> He died 30 May 727 A.D. in Tervuren near Brussels, Belgium. His feast day is November 3.

More can be found out about St. Hubertus at his wiki, located here.



St. Hubertus

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #68

March 29, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

When I went to the Stations of the Cross on Friday I was reminded of a particular passages from the Letter to the Hebrews:

> [14] Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. [16] For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. [17] Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. [18] For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

(Hebrews 2:14-18)

This particular passage has always been a comfort to me. There is something reassuring to know that my God has undergone everything that mortal man must face- that he was our "brethren in every respect." God is not asking us to do anything that He Himself would not do, or to face anything He would not face, or to suffer anything that He would not suffer. We are not the first to walk the path of life- we are merely following in His footsteps. A trailblazer has gone ahead of us and marked the path for us. And for me at least, that is a comforting notion.

The next passage is an entire chapter from the Book of Joshua:

> When all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Per′izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb′usites, heard of this, [2] they gathered together with one accord to fight Joshua and Israel.
>
> [3] But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, [4] they on their part acted with cunning, and went and made ready provisions, and took worn-out sacks upon their asses, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, [5] with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes; and all their provisions were dry and moldy. [6] And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; so now make a covenant with us." [7] But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?" [8] They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?" [9] They said to him, "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God; for we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt,

[10] and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the
Jordan, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt in
Ash′taroth. [11] And our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us,
‘Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to
them, “We are your servants; come now, make a covenant with us.”’ [12] Here is
our bread; it was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the
journey, on the day we set forth to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and
moldy; [13] these wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they are
burst; and these garments and shoes of ours are worn out from the very long
journey.” [14] So the men partook of their provisions, and did not ask direction from
the Lord. [15] And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them,
to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

[16] At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard
that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them. [17] And the
people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities
were Gibeon, Chephi′rah, Be-er′oth, and Kir′iath-je′arim. [18] But the people of Israel
did not kill them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by
the Lord, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the
leaders. [19] But all the leaders said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to
them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. [20] This we
will do to them, and let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath
which we swore to them.” [21] And the leaders said to them, “Let them live.” So
they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, as
the leaders had said of them.

[22] Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, “Why did you deceive us, saying,
‘We are very far from you,’ when you dwell among us? [23] Now therefore you are
cursed, and some of you shall always be slaves, hewers of wood and drawers of
water for the house of my God.” [24] They answered Joshua, “Because it was told to
your servants for a certainty that the Lord your God had commanded his servant
Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from
before you; so we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and did this thing.
[25] And now, behold, we are in your hand: do as it seems good and right in your
sight to do to us.” [26] So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the
people of Israel; and they did not kill them. [27] But Joshua made them that day
hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of
the Lord, to continue to this day, in the place which he should choose.

(Joshua 9)

I am curious what the early Church fathers made of this passage. To me it seems to presage the admission of Gentiles into the ranks of the saved in the Acts of the Apostles. The Gibeonites knew that they faced destruction if they resisted the Israelites, so they chose to become servants instead. And in serving Israel they also served the Lord. In a

way, this is true of Christians as well. We all face destruction on the one hand, but we can overcome this by subjecting ourselves to the authority of God. Yet we are more blessed then the Gibeonites, for we who so subject ourselves not only are spared, but are adopted into the Lord's own family, and thus gain a share of the inheritance.

That passage also reminded me of this one:

> [21] And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.
> [22] And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." [23] But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." [24] He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [25] But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." [26] And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." [27] She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." [28] Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

(Matthew 15:21-28)

I suspect that most people have trouble with this particular narrative from the Gospels. At first blush it almost seems as though Jesus is cruel or unloving. But when you see this passage in light of the necessity of humility in holding to our faith, it makes sense. In emptying herself of value and worth, the Canaanite woman saves her daughter, and presumably herself. For what she has emptied, discarded or lowered about herself was of the world- status and a perception of how important we are in life. In its place she set faith, her faith in Jesus and His power.

Here is some of St. John Chrysostom's explanation of this passage:

> With this intent did Christ put her off, for He knew she would say this; for this did He deny the grant, that He might exhibit her high self-command.
>
> For if He had not meant to give, neither would He have given afterwards, nor would He have stopped her mouth again. But as He does in the case of the centurion, saying, *I will come and heal him,*Matthew 8:7 that we might learn the godly fear of that man, and might hear him say, *I am not worthy that You should come under my roof;*Matthew 8:8 and as He does in the case of her that had the issue of blood, saying, *I perceive that virtue has gone out of me,*Luke 8:46 that He might make her faith manifest; and as in the case of the Samaritanwoman, that He might show how not even upon reproof she desists: John 4:18 so also here, He would not that so great virtue in the woman should be hid. Not in insult then were His words spoken, but calling her forth, and revealing the treasure laid up in her.
>
> But do thou, I pray you, together with her faith see also her humility. For He had called the Jews*children,* but she was not satisfied with this, but even called them

> *masters;* so far was she from grieving at the praises of others.
>
> *Why, the dogs also,* says she, *eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.*Matthew 15:27
>
> Do you see the woman's wisdom, how she did not venture so much as to say a word against it, nor was stung by other men's praises, nor was indignant at the reproach? Do you see her constancy? He said, *It is not meet,* and she said, *Truth, Lord;* He called them *children,* but she *masters;* He used the name of a dog, but she added also the dog's act. Do you see this woman's humility?
>
> Hear the proud language of the Jews. *We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man;*John 8:33 and, *We be born of God.*John 8:41 But not so this woman, rather she calls herself a dog, and them masters; so for this she became a child. What then says Christ? *O woman, great is your faith.*Matthew 15:28
>
> Yea, therefore did He put her off, that He might proclaim aloud this saying, that He might crown the woman.

Jesus did not demean the Canaanite woman- he instead gave her a chance to shine and demonstrate her virtue and worth.

Ordering Deception

April 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A short post today.

In my most recent Musings post I made the assertion that women were more prone to being deceived than men. A brief debate ensued, and after some study and careful thought I came to reconsider my original position. Here is what I expressed later:

> I think that what might account for susceptibility to deception might in fact be primarily a result of deception from the other sex. I suspect that it might be that women are susceptible to men deceiving them. And the reverse definitely seems to be true based on many accounts from these parts.

In other words, women seem prone to deception, at least to men, because women are more susceptible to being deceived by men. And the reverse is also true- that men are prone to being deceived by women. A possible implication of this is that men are less susceptible to being deceived by other men, and women are less susceptible to being deceived by other women.

I think that the principal reason this might be the case is that men tend to be less knowledgeable about women. They don't know how they think, or what they think, or what they value, or why, to the degree that they do with men. And of course vice-verse. There are plenty of anecdotal stories from the manosphere which would back up that men can be deceived, easily even, by women. While the reverse has tended to be a predominate view, or at least was for a long time, that might be because most of the authors of such advice were men. Women might have, and probably did, have other ideas about how easy men were to deceive.

Seeing as I love to categorize, I see four different scenarios when individual deception is concerned (that is, individuals deceiving other individuals). They are:

- A man deceiving a woman
- A man deceiving another man
- A woman deceiving a man
- A woman deceiving another woman

What I wonder about is the order of susceptibility. By that I mean, which scenario is the most potent? Or are they the same between the opposites? That is, are men just as good at deceiving women as women are at deceiving men? I would invite my readers to contribute their thoughts on these questions, and the order of the specific scenarios from easiest to hardest.

A Pharmaceutical Symphony

April 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

One of Dalrock's most recent posts has become the host of a discussion and debate in the comments about the "red pill" and "blue pill" in music that I think many of my male readers would find quite interesting. The discussion starts a few comment in and keeps going.

Tradition Thursday- #18

April 3, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Seeing as this is Holy Thursday, I find it appropriate to interrupt our regularly scheduled post. Since this day celebrates the Last Supper, or as the Eastern Church refers to it, the Mystical Supper, so should this post. Therefore I am going to feature St. John Chrysostom's homily on the Lord's Supper as given to us by Matthew. A warning: I will be featuring the full homily, and so this will be a long post:

> *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; This is my body.*
>
> *And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; This is my blood of the New Testament, Which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*
>
> Ah! How great is the blindness of the traitor! Even partaking of the mysteries, he remained the same; and admitted to the most holy table, he changed not. And this Luke shows by saying, that after this Satan entered into him, not as despising the Lord's body, but thenceforth laughing to scorn the traitor's shamelessness. For indeed his sin became greater from both causes, as well in that he came to the mysteries with such a disposition, as that having approached them, he did not become better, either from fear, or from the benefit, or from the honor. But Christ forbad him not, although He knew all things, that you might learn that He omits none of the things that pertain to correction. Wherefore both before this, and after this, He continually admonished him, and checked him, both by deeds, and by words; both by fear, and by kindness; both by threatening, and by honor. But none of these things withdrew him from that grievous pest.
>
> Wherefore thenceforth He leaves him, and by the mysteries again reminds the disciples of His being slain, and in the midst of the meal His discourse is of the cross, by the continual repeating of the prediction, making His passion easy to receive. For if, when so many things had been done and foretold, they were troubled; if they had heard none of these things, what would they not have felt?
>
> *And as they were eating, He took bread, and broke it.* Why can it have been that He ordained this sacrament then, at the time of the passover? That you might learn from everything, both that He is the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and that the things therein are foreshadowed because of these things. Therefore, I say, where the type is, there He puts the truth.
>
> But the evening is a sure sign of the fullness of times, and that the things were now come to the very end.
>
> And He gives thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this sacrament, and to show that not unwillingly does He come to the passion, and to teach us whatever we may suffer to bear it thankfully, thence also suggesting good hopes.

For if the type was a deliverance from such bondage, how much more will the truth set free the world, and will He be delivered up for the benefit of our race. Wherefore, I would add, neither did He appoint the sacrament before this, but when henceforth the rites of the law were to cease. And thus the very chief of the feasts He brings to an end, removing them to another most awful table, and He says, *Take, eat, This is my body, Which is broken for many.*

And how were they not confounded at hearing this? Because He had before told unto them many and great things touching this. Wherefore that He establishes no more, for they had heard it sufficiently, but he speaks of the cause of His passion, namely, the taking away of sins. And He calls it blood of a New Testament, that of the undertaking, the promise, the new law. For this He undertook also of old, and this comprises the Testament that is in the new law. And like as the Old Testament had sheep and bullocks, so this has the Lord's blood. Hence also He shows that He is soon to die, wherefore also He made mention of a Testament, and He reminds them also of the former Testament, for that also was dedicated with blood. And again He tells the cause of His death, *which is shed for many for the remission of sins;* and He says, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Do you see how He removes and draws them off from Jewish customs. For like as you did that, He says, in remembrance of the miracles in Egypt, so do this likewise in remembrance of me. That was shed for the preservation of the firstborn, this for the remission of the sins of the whole world. For, *This,* says He, *is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins.*

But this He said, indicating thereby, that His passion and His cross are a mystery, by this too again comforting His disciples. And like as Moses says, *This shall be to you for an everlasting memorial,* Exodus 12:14 so He too, *in remembrance of me,* until I come. Therefore also He says, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover,* Luke 22:15 that is, to deliver you the new rites, and to give a passover, by which I am to make you spiritual.

And He Himself drank of it. For lest on hearing this, they should say, What then? Do we drink blood, and eat flesh? And then be perplexed (for when He began to discourse concerning these things, even at the very sayings many were offended), therefore lest they should be troubled then likewise, He first did this Himself, leading them to the calm participation of the mysteries. Therefore He Himself drank His own blood. What then must we observe that other ancient rite also? Some one may say. By no means. For on this account He said, *Do this,* that He might withdraw them from the other. For if this works remission of sins, as it surely does work it, the other is now superfluous.

As then in the case of the Jews, so here also He has bound up the memorial of the benefit with the mystery, by this again stopping the mouths of heretics. For when they say, Whence is it manifest that Christ was sacrificed? Together with the other arguments we stop their mouths from the mysteries also. For if Jesus

did not die, of what are the rites the symbols?

2. Do you see how much diligence has been used, that it should be ever borne in mind that He died for us? For since the Marcionists, and Valentinians, and Manichæans were to arise, denying this dispensation, He continually reminds us of the passion even by the mysteries, (so that no man should be deceived); at once saving, and at the same time teaching by means of that sacred table. For this is the chief of the blessings; wherefore Paul also is in every way pressing this.

Then, when He had delivered it, He says, *I will not drink of the fruit of this wine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* For because He had discoursed with them concerning passion and cross, He again introduces what He has to say of His resurrection, having made mention of a kingdom before them, table, and rise up in drunkenness, whereas it were meet to give thanks, and end with an hymn.

Hear this, as many as wait not again for the last prayer of the mysteries, for this is a symbol of that. He gave thanks before He gave it to His disciples, that we also may give thanks. He gave thanks, and sang an hymn after the giving, that we also may do this selfsame thing.

But for what reason does He go forth unto the mountain? Making Himself manifest, that He may be taken, in order not to seem to hide himself. For He hastened to go to the place which was also known to Judas.

Then *He says unto them, All you shall be offended in me.* Matthew 26:31 After this He mentions also a prophecy, *For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad:* at once persuading them ever to give heed to the things that are written, and at same time making it plain that He was crucified, according to God's purpose; and by everything showing He was no alien from the old covenant, nor from the God preached therein, but that what is done is a dispensation, and that the prophets all proclaimed all things beforehand from the beginning that are comprised in the matter, so that they be quite confident about the better things also.

And He teaches us to know what the disciples were before the crucifixion, what after the crucifixion. For indeed they who, when He was crucified, were not able so much as to stand their ground, these after His death were mighty, and stronger than adamant.

And this self-same thing is a demonstration of His death, the fright and cowardice, I mean, of His disciples. For if when so many things have been both done and said, still some are shameless, and say that He was not crucified; if none of these things had come to pass, to what pitch of wickedness would they not have proceeded? So for this reason, not by His own sufferings only, but by what took place with respect to the disciples, He confirms the word concerning His death, and by the mysteries also, in every way confounding those that are

diseased with the pest of Marcion. For this reason He suffers even the chief apostle to deny Him. But if He was not bound nor crucified, whence sprung the fear to Peter, and to the rest of the apostles.

He suffers them not however, on the other hand, to wait until the sorrows, but what says He? *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* For not from Heaven does He appear at once, neither will He depart into any distant country, but in the same nation, in which He had also been crucified, nearly in the same place, so as hereby again to assure them that He that was crucified was the very same that rose again, and in this way to comfort them more abundantly when in sorrow. Therefore also He said *in Galilee,* that being freed from the fears of the Jews they might believe His saying. For which cause indeed He appeared there.

But Peter answered and said, Though all men should be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.

3. What do you say, O Peter? The prophet said, *The sheep shall be scattered;* Christ has confirmed the saying, and do you say, No? Is not what passed before enough, when Thou said, *Far be it from You,* Matthew 16:22 and your mouth was stopped? For this then He suffers him to fall, teaching him thereby to believe Christ in all things, and to account His declaration more trustworthy than one's own conscience. And the rest too reaped no small benefit from his denial, having come to know man's weakness, and God?' s truth. For when He foretells anything, we must no longer be subtle, nor lift up ourselves above the common sort. For, *your rejoicing,* it is said, *you shall have in yourself, and not in another.* For where he should have prayed, and have said, Help us, that we be not cut off, he is confident in himself, and says, *Though all men should be offended in You, yet will I never;* though all should undergo this, I shall not undergo it, which led him on little by little to self-confidence. Christ then, out of a desire to put down this, permitted his denial. For since he neither submitted to Him nor the prophet (and yet for this intent He brought in the prophet besides, that they may not gainsay), but nevertheless since he submitted not to His words, he is instructed by deeds.

For in proof that for this intent He permitted it, that He might amend this in him, hear what He says, *I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.* For this He said sharply reproving him, and showing that his fall was more grievous than the rest, and needed more help. For the matters of blame were two; both that he gainsaid; and, that he set himself before the other; or rather a third too, namely, that he attributed all to himself.

To cure these things then, He suffered the fall to take place, and for this cause also leaves the others, and addresses Himself earnestly to him. For, *Simon,* says He, *Simon, behold Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat;* that is, that he may trouble, confound, tempt you; but *I have prayed for you, that*

your faith fail not.

And why, if Satan desired all, did He not say concerning all, I have prayed for you? Is it not quite plain that it is this, which I have mentioned before, that it is as reproving him, and showing that his fall was more grievous than the rest, that He directs His words to him?

And wherefore said He not, But I did not suffer it, rather than, *I have prayed?* He speaks from this time lowly things, on His way to His passion, that He may show His humanity. For He that has built His church upon Peter's confession, and has so fortified it, that ten thousand dangers and deaths are not to prevail over it; He that has given him the keys of Heaven, and has put him in possession of so much authority, and in no manner needed a prayer for these ends (for neither did He say, I have prayed, but with His own authority, *I will build my church, and I will give you the keys of Heaven*), how should He need to pray, that He might brace up the shaken soul of a single man? Wherefore then did He speak in this way? For the cause which I mentioned, and because of their weakness, for they had not as yet the becoming view of Him.

How then was it that He denied? He said not, that you may not deny, but that your faith fail not, that you perish not utterly. For this came from His care.

For indeed fear had driven out all else, for it was beyond measure, and it became beyond measure, since God had to an exceeding degree deprived him of His help, and He did exceedingly deprive him thereof, because there was to an exceeding degree in him the passion of self-will and contradiction. In order then that He might pluck it up by the roots, therefore He suffered the terror to overtake him.

For in proof that this passion was grievous in him, he was not content with his former words, gainsaying both prophet and Christ, but also after these things when Christ had said unto him, *Verily I say unto you, that this night, before the cock crow, you shall deny me thrice,* he replies, *Though I should die with You, I will not deny You in any wise.* And Luke signifies moreover, that the more Christ warned him, so much the more did Peter exceedingly oppose Him.

What mean these things, O Peter? When He was saying, *One of you shall betray me,* you feared lest you should be the traitor, and constrained the disciple to ask, although conscious to yourself of no such thing; but now, when He is plainly crying out, and saying, *All shall be offended,* are you gainsaying it, and not once only, but twice and often? For this is what Luke says.

Whence then did this come to him? From much love, from much pleasure. I mean, that after that he was delivered from that distressing fear about the betrayal, and knew the traitor, he then spoke confidently, and lifted himself up over the rest, saying, *Though all men shall be offended, yet will I not be offended.* And in some degree too his conduct sprung from jealousy, for at supper they reasoned *which of them is the greater,* Luke 22:24 to such a degree

did this passion trouble them. Therefore He checked him, not compelling him to the denial, God forbid! But leaving him destitute of His help, and convicting human nature.

See at any rate after these things how he was subdued. For after the resurrection, when he had said, *And what shall this man do?* John 21:21 and was silenced, he ventured no more to gainsay as here, but held his peace. Again, towards the assumption, when he heard, *It is not for you to know times or seasons,* Acts 1:7 again he holds his peace, and contradicts not. After these things, on the house, and by the sheet, when he heard a voice saying to him, *What God has cleansed, call not thou common,* Acts 10:15 even though he knew not for the time what the saying could be, he is quiet, and strives not.

4. All these things did that fall effect, and whereas before that he attributes all to himself, saying, *Though all men shall be offended, yet will I not be offended;* and, *If I should die, I will not deny You* (when he should have said, If I receive the assistance from You)—yet after these things altogether the contrary, *Why do ye give heed to us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk?*

Hence we learn a great doctrine, that a man's willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness. And both these things do Judas and Peter show; for the one, though he had received much help, was profited nothing, because he was not willing, neither contributed his part; but this one, though he was ready in mind, because he received no assistance, fell. For indeed of these two things is virtue's web woven.

Wherefore I entreat you neither (when you have cast all upon God) to sleep yourselves, nor, when laboring earnestly, to think to accomplish all by your own toils. For neither is it God's will that we should be supine ourselves, therefore He works it not all Himself; nor yet boasters, therefore He did not give all to us; but having removed what was hurtful in either way, left that which is useful for us. Therefore He suffered even the chief apostle to fall, both rendering him more humbled in mind, and training him thenceforth to greater love. *For to whom more is forgiven,* it is said, *he loves more.* Luke 7:47

Let us then in everything believe God, and gainsay Him in nothing, though what is said seem to be contrary to our thoughts and senses, but let His word be of higher authority than both reasonings and sight. Thus let us do in the mysteries also, not looking at the things set before us, but keeping in mind His sayings.

For His word cannot deceive, but our senses are easily beguiled. That has never failed, but this in most things goes wrong. Since then the word says, *This is my body,* let us both be persuaded and believe, and look at it with the eyes of the mind.

For Christ has given nothing sensible, but though in things sensible yet all to be

perceived by the mind. So also in baptism, the gift is bestowed by a sensible thing, that is, by water; but that which is done is perceived by the mind, the birth, I mean, and the renewal. For if you had been incorporeal, He would have delivered you the incorporeal gifts bare; but because the soul has been locked up in a body, He delivers you the things that the mind perceives, in things sensible.

How many now say, I would wish to see His form, the mark, His clothes, His shoes. Lo! You see Him, Thou touchest Him, you eat Him. And thou indeed desirest to see His clothes, but He gives Himself to you not to see only, but also to touch and eat and receive within you.

Let then no one approach it with indifference, no one faint-hearted, but all with burning hearts, all fervent, all aroused. For if Jews standing, and having on their shoes and their staves in their hands, ate with haste, much more ought thou to be watchful. For they indeed were to go forth to Palestine, wherefore also they had the garb of pilgrims, but you are about to remove unto Heaven.

5. Wherefore it is needful in all respects to be vigilant, for indeed no small punishment is appointed to them that partake unworthily.

Consider how indignant you are against the traitor, against them that crucified Him. Look therefore, lest you also yourself become guilty of the body and blood of Christ. They slaughtered the all-holy body, but you receive it in a filthy soul after such great benefits. For neither was it enough for Him to be made man, to be smitten and slaughtered, but He also commingles Himself with us, and not by faith only, but also in very deed makes us His body. What then ought not he to exceed in purity that has the benefit of this sacrifice, than what sunbeam should not that hand be more pure which is to sever this flesh, the mouth that is filled with spiritual fire, the tongue that is reddened by that most awful blood? Consider with what sort of honor you were honored, of what sort of table you are partaking. That which when angels behold, they tremble, and dare not so much as look up at it without awe on account of the brightness that comes thence, with this we are fed, with this we are commingled, and we are made one body and one flesh with Christ. *Who shall declare the mighty works of the Lord, and cause all His praises to be heard?* What shepherd feeds his sheep with his own limbs? And why do I say, shepherd? There are often mothers that after the travail of birth send out their children to other women as nurses; but He endures not to do this, but Himself feeds us with His own blood, and by all means entwines us with Himself.

Mark it, He was born of our substance. But, you say, this is nothing to all men; though it does concern all. For if He came unto our nature, it is quite plain that it was to all; but if to all, then to each one. And how was it, you say, that all did not reap the profit therefrom. This was not of His doing, whose choice it was to do this in behalf of all, but the fault of them that were not willing. With each one of the faithful does He mingle Himself in the mysteries, and whom He begot, He

nourishes by Himself, and puts not out to another; by this also persuading you again, that He had taken your flesh. Let us not then be remiss, having been counted worthy of so much both of love and honor. See ye not the infants with how much eagerness they lay hold of the breast? With what earnest desire they fix their lips upon the nipple? With the like let us also approach this table, and the nipple of the spiritual cup. Or rather, with much more eagerness let us, as infants at the breast, draw out the grace of the spirit, let it be our one sorrow, not to partake of this food. The works set before us are not of man's power. He that then did these things at that supper, this same now also works them. We occupy the place of servants. He who sanctifies and changes them is the same. Let then no Judas be present, no covetous man. If any one be not a disciple, let him withdraw, the table receives not such. For *I keep the passover,* He says, *with my disciples.* Matthew 26:18

This table is the same as that, and has nothing less. For it is not so that Christ wrought that, and man this, but He does this too. This is that upper chamber, where they were then; and hence they went forth unto the mount of Olives.

Let us also go out unto the hands of the poor, for this spot is the mount of Olives. For the multitude of the poor are olive-trees planted in the house of God, dropping the oil, which is profitable for us there, which the five virgins had, and the others that had not received perished thereby. Having received this, let us enter in that with bright lamps we may meet the bridegroom; having received this, let us go forth hence.

Let no inhuman person be present, no one that is cruel and merciless, no one at all that is unclean.

6. These things I say to you that receive, and to you that minister. For it is necessary to address myself to you also, that you may with much care distribute the gifts there. There is no small punishment for you, if being conscious of any wickedness in any man, you allow him to partake of this table. *His blood shall be required at your hands.* Ezekiel 33:8 Though any one be a general, though a deputy, though it be he himself who is invested with the diadem, and come unworthily, forbid him, the authority you have is greater than his. You, if you were entrusted to keep a spring of water clean for a flock, and then were to see a sheep having much mire on its mouth, you would not suffer it to stoop down unto it and foul the stream: but now being entrusted with a spring not of water, but of blood and of spirit, if you see any having on them sin, which is more grievous than earth and mire, coming unto it, are you not displeased? Do you not drive them off? And what excuse can you have?

For this end God has honored you with this honor, that you should discern these things. This is your office, this your safety, this your whole crown, not that you should go about clothed in a white and shining vestment.

And whence know I, you may say, this person, and that person? I speak not of the

> unknown, but of the notorious.
>
> Shall I say something more fearful. It is not so grievous a thing for the energumens to be within, as for such as these, whom Paul affirms to trample Christ under foot, and to *account the blood of the covenant unclean, and to do despite to the grace of the Spirit.* For he that has fallen into sin and draws near, is worse than one possessed with a devil. For they, because they are possessed are not punished, but those, when they draw near unworthily, are delivered over to undying punishment. Let us not therefore drive away these only, but all without exception, whomsoever we may see coming unworthily.
>
> Let no one communicate who is not of the disciples. Let no Judas receive, lest he suffer the fate of Judas. This multitude also is Christ's body. Take heed, therefore, you that ministerest at the mysteries, lest you provoke the Lord, not purging this body. Give not a sword instead of meat.
>
> Nay, though it be from ignorance that he come to communicate, forbid him, be not afraid. Fear God, not man. If you should fear man, you will be laughed to scorn even by him, but if God, you will be an object of respect even to men.
>
> But if you dare not to do it yourself, bring him to me; I will not allow any to dare do these things. I would give up my life rather than impart of the Lord's blood to the unworthy; and will shed my own blood rather than impart of such awful blood contrary to what is meet.
>
> But if any has not known the bad man, after much inquiry, it is no blame. For these things have been said about the open sinners. For if we amend these, God will speedily discover to us the unknown also; but if we let these alone, wherefore should He then make manifest those that are hidden.
>
> But these things I say, not that we repel them only, nor cut them off, but in order that we may amend them, and bring them back, that we may take care of them. For thus shall we both have God propitious, and shall find many to receive worthily; and for our own diligence, and for our care for others, receive great reward; unto which God grant we may all attain by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory world without end. Amen.

(Source)

Tested

April 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link



> [12] “Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
> because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;
> he reproaches us for sins against the law,
> and accuses us of sins against our training.
> [13] He professes to have knowledge of God,
> and calls himself a child of the Lord.
> [14] He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;
> [15] the very sight of him is a burden to us,
> because his manner of life is unlike that of others,
> and his ways are strange.
> [16] We are considered by him as something base,
> and he avoids our ways as unclean;
> he calls the last end of the righteous happy,
> and boasts that God is his father.
> [17] Let us see if his words are true,
> and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;
> [18] for if the righteous man is God’s son, he will help him,
> and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.
> [19] Let us test him with insult and torture,
> that we may find out how gentle he is,
> and make trial of his forbearance.
> [20] Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
> for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

(Wisdom 2:12-20)

Saturday Saints- #62

April 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is going to break from the typical trend, owing to this being Holy Week. Since yesterday was Good Friday, it seems appropriate to mention and honor one saint who played a role in those events, Joseph of Arimathea:

> **Joseph of Arimathea** was, according to all four canonical Gospels, the man who donated his own prepared tomb for the burial of Jesus after Jesus' crucifixion. A number of stories that developed during the Middle Ages connect him with both Glastonbury, where he is supposed to have founded the earliest Christian oratory, and also with the Grail legend.

More from his wiki:

> According to Mark 15:43, he was an "honourable counsellor (*bouleutēs*), meaning a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, who was waiting for the kingdom of God". Matthew 27:57 described this Joseph as a rich man and disciple of Jesus. According to John 19:38, upon hearing of Jesus' death, this secret disciple of Jesus, "went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus".
>
> Pilate, after a centurion confirmed the death, allowed Joseph's request. Joseph immediately purchased fine linen (Mark 15:46) and proceeded to Golgotha to take the body of Jesus down from the cross. There, according to John 19:39, Joseph and Nicodemus took the body, wrapped it in the fine linen, and applied the myrrh and aloes Nicodemus had brought. The disciples then conveyed the prepared corpse to the place previously bought for Joseph's own tomb, a man-made cave hewn from rock in a garden of his house nearby. This was done speedily, "for the Sabbath was drawing on". Luke 23:50–56 also mentions the event.

I'm not surprised that so much legend has built up around him, given the prominent and scarcely mentioned role he played in the faith.



Joseph of Arimathea

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #69

April 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The wait is over. The third day has come:

> But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. [2] And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, [3] but when they went in they did not find the body. [4] While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel; [5] and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. [6] Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, [7] that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise.” [8] And they remembered his words, [9] and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. [10] Now it was Mary Mag′dalene and Jo-an′na and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; [11] but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. [12] But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home wondering at what had happened.
>
> [13] That very day two of them were going to a village named Emma′us, about seven miles from Jerusalem, [14] and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. [15] While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. [16] But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. [17] And he said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. [18] Then one of them, named Cle′opas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” [19] And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. [21] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. [22] Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning [23] and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. [24] Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.” [25] And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” [27] And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all

> the scriptures the things concerning himself.
> [28] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, [29] but they constrained him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. [30] When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. [31] And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. [32] They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?” [33] And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, [34] who said, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” [35] Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.
> [36] As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” [37] But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. [38] And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? [39] 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.” [40] And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. [41] And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” [42] They gave him a piece of broiled fish, [43] and he took it and ate before them.
> [44] Then he said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.” [45] Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, [46] and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.”

(Luke 24:1-49)

Today is the central day of our Faith. Without today our faith means nothing, as St. Paul recognized long ago:

> [12] Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; [14] if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not

> raised, then Christ has not been raised. [17] If Christ has not been raised, your faith
> is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in
> Christ have perished. [19] If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all
> men most to be pitied.
>
> [20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who
> have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the
> resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be
> made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming
> those who belong to Christ. [24] Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom
> to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.
> [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last
> enemy to be destroyed is death. [27] "For God has put all things in subjection under
> his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection under him," it is plain
> that he is excepted who put all things under him. [28] When all things are subjected
> to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things
> under him, that God may be everything to every one.

(1 Corinthians 15:12-28)

Any words I say would be woefully insufficient for an occasion such as this. Thus I will leave the Scripture as is, and wish everyone a blessed and joyful Easter/Pascha.

Rejoice! Christ is Risen!

Guiding Young Men Through The Red Pill

April 6, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*Note: this post is going to be one of the rare ones where posting privileges will be restricted to my male readers/commenters. If any female readers/commenters would like to contribute, they can e-mail me what they would like to say. My e-mail can be found at my About page.*]

I caught a conversation recently over at Dalrock's between several male commenters who also happen to be fathers. They were discussing all of the difficulties that come with raising sons and introducing them to the "Red Pill", and then dealing with what happens after that introduction. Scott, who runs the Courtship Pledge, expressed a desire for a place to continue the conversation, as Dalrock's wasn't exactly the proper place for it. I am providing this post so that he and other fathers can continue the discussion. Furthermore, I'm not restricting participation only to biological or legal fathers. Men who are father figures to young men who need guidance through the "Red Pill" are also invited to participate. That can mean older brothers, uncles, cousins or a really close family friend.

One caveat that I should mention is that this post is primarily devoted to helping out Christian young men. As Deep Strength has explained recently, the deep philosophical differences between the secular manosphere and Christian manosphere lead down two different paths. Hence, any discussion needs to be geared towards one, or the other. And since this is a Christian blog, the focus of this post will be in helping, guiding, mentoring or teaching young Christian men.

As far as the discussion goes, I will leave it to those interested to voice their thoughts. I might chime in occasionally, but will leave it to them to kick it off. I will, however, be a bit more active in this post in terms of "trimming" off-topic discussion. If there is a big demand for it I will create a new off-topic post for folks to blow off some steam. But otherwise, keep to the topic. Since its a fairly broad one, I think that should be relatively easy to do.

Update: Related Links:

College Red Pill Truth

Raising Boys in this Brave New World

5 Step Process to Maturity in Relationships

Reconciling Different Views of Women

April 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Courtesy of Free Northerner, I came across a post at the Orthosphere which tried to resolve the apparent differences the manosphere and traditionalists hold about the nature of women. I was intrigued by the post because a number of the points were quite similar to some I've argued in the post. One example includes this snippet:

> I observe that women are generally conformists. They don't want to rock the boat. They don't want to make waves. They just want to get on with living as pleasant a life as possible, and this requires having good relations with other people and not feeling like a fish out of water when they listen to our leaders. Most women just want to agree with what the authorities are teaching and get on with having a comfortable existence.
>
> And this need not be a bad thing. When the times are properly ordered, it is good for a woman not to waste her precious psychic resources tilting against windmills when there is important practical work to be done raising the next generation. The ability and desire to raise children well is the unique gift of the woman, and the world is generally better off when most women leave the idealism to the men.
>
> Remember, generalizations *are* generalizations. Readers of the Orthosphere are different. If you're reading these words then you're probably not a conformist. But most of your sisters are.
>
> Many men are conformists too. But manliness is antithetical to conformity. Men, on average are different.

This advances the same idea I raised in my post The Herd and Women-Good/Men-Bad:

> *When society at large encourages moral behavior and discourages immoral behavior, more women than men will behave morally, but when society at large discourages moral behavior and encourages immoral behavior, more men than women will behave morally.*

Its always nice to know that I'm ahead of the curve. One thing that deserves to be commented on is this:

> Through most of human history, when the authorities taught the ideals of pre-marital chastity and post-marital fidelity, most women, being conformists, felt allegiance to this ideal. Being human, they occasionally failed to reach it. And those who fail to reach an ideal are tempted to deny it. But most women, most of the time, **endorsed** the ideal.

I have two problems with this. The first, which is addressed in the comments, is that teaching is not what made the system what it was. Teaching chastity and fidelity are the

small and easy steps. What matters, and what “traditional” societies did until recently, was to *enforce* what they taught. Tied to this is whether most women really “endorsed” the ideal. I don’t think that they did, any more than men did. Endorse is too strong of a word, it indicates far more support than I think most had. Rather, women *accepted* the requirements the ideal imposed on them. Some certainly accepted, or even endorsed, the ideal. But they would be the minority. The majority accepted it because the they wanted to avoid the consequences of deviancy.

Now, I did have some disagreements and observations about other parts of the post. For example, I definitely disagree with this statement:

> So why is the modern woman different? Because she’s a conformist, and so she conforms to the new ideal of selfishness.

While I do agree that woman are conforming to that ideal, that is not the only reason why modern women are different. In fact, I would argue that conforming to selfishness has only a small part to do with it. But that is a subject for my next major post.

Next, I wanted to point out a flaw with this part:

> Traditionalism of the Orthosphere variety doesn’t just order men to “man up and marry the woman” (to paraphrase a popular Manosphere saying.)

That isn’t a paraphrase of the manosphere saying, it is an alteration of it. And by alteration I mean change so significant as to be almost disingenuous. A more accurate paraphrase would be “Man Up and Marry That Harlot.” The difference between those two versions of the saying is profound, and thus a correction is necessary.

Also, I think that this bit:

> if men abdicate their responsibility *en masse* then the human race will founder

has pretty much been definitely proven by now. Our present “civilization” is a living example of what happens when men abdicate responsibility *en masse.* I suspect that there is little we can do about it now besides try out best to preserve and pass on that wisdom to the next few generations, in the hopes of not repeating that error again anytime soon.

Tradition Thursday- #19

April 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We resume our regularly scheduled ~~broadcast~~ series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical letters with today's post. Today's post features the second part of his third lecture:

> This man was baptizing in Jordan, and *there went out unto him all Jerusalem* Matthew 3:5, to enjoy the first-fruits of baptisms: for in Jerusalem is the prerogative of all things good. But learn, O you inhabitants of Jerusalem, how they that came out were baptized by him: *confessing their sins*, it is said. Matthew 3:6 First they showed their wounds, then he applied the remedies, and to them that believed gave redemption from eternal fire. And if you will be convinced of this very point, that the baptism of John is a redemption from the threat of the fire, hear how he says, *O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Be not then henceforth a viper, but as you have been formerly a viper's brood, put off, says he, the slough of your former sinful life. For every serpent creeps into a hole and casts its old slough, and having rubbed off the old skin, grows young again in body. In like manner enter thou also through the strait and narrow gate* Matthew 7:13-14: rub off your former self by fasting, and drive out that which is destroying you. *Put off the old man with his doings* Colossians 3:9, and quote that saying in the Canticles, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on* ?
>
> But there is perhaps among you some hypocrite, a man-pleaser, and one who makes a pretence of piety, but believes not from the heart; having the hypocrisy of Simon Magus; one who has come hither not in order to receive of the grace, but to spy out what is given: let him also learn from John: *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, Every tree therefore that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire*. Matthew 3:10 The Judge is inexorable; put away your hypocrisy.
>
> 8. What then must you do? And what are the fruits of repentance? *Let him that has two coats give to him that has none* Luke 3:11: the teacher was worthy of credit, since he was also the first to practise what he taught: he was not ashamed to speak, for conscience hindered not his tongue: *and he that has meat, let him do likewise*. Would you enjoy the grace of the Holy Spirit, yet judgest the poor not worthy of bodily food? Seekest thou the great gifts, and impartest not of the small? Though you be a publican, or a fornicator, have hope of salvation: *the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you*. Matthew 21:31Paul also is witness, saying, *Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor* the rest, *shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but you were washed, but you were sanctified*. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 He said not, *such are some of you*, but *such were some of you*. Sin committed in the

state of ignorance is pardoned, but persistent wickedness is condemned.

9. You have as the glory of Baptism the Son Himself, the Only-begotten of God. For why should I speak any more of man? John was great, but what is he to the Lord? His was a loud-sounding voice, but what in comparison with the Word? Very noble was the herald, but what in comparison with the King? Noble was he that baptized with water, but what to Him that baptizes *with the Holy Ghost and with fire* Matthew 3:11? The Saviour baptized the Apostles with the Holy Ghost and with fire, when *suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire: and it sat upon each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost* Acts 2:2 .

10. If any man receive not Baptism, he has not salvation; except only Martyrs, who even without the water receive the kingdom. For when the Saviour, in redeeming the world by His Cross, was pierced in the side, He shed forth blood and water; that men, living in times of peace, might be baptized in water, and, in times of persecution, in their own blood. For martyrdom also the Saviour is wont to call a baptism, saying, *Can you drink the cup which I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with* Mark 10:38? And the Martyrs confess, by *being made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men*1 Corinthians 4:9; and you will soon confess:— but it is not yet the time for you to hear of this.

11. Jesus sanctified Baptism by being Himself baptized. If the Son of God was baptized, what godly man is he that despises Baptism? But He was baptized not that He might receive remission of sins, for He was sinless; but being sinless, He was baptized, that He might give to them that are baptized a divine and excellent grace. For *since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same* Hebrews 2:14, that having been made partakers of His presence in the flesh we might be made partakers also of His Divine grace: thus Jesus was baptized, that thereby we again by our participation might receive both salvation and honour. According to Job, there was in the waters the dragon that *draws up Jordan into his mouth*. Job 40:23 Since, therefore, it was necessary to break the heads of the dragon in pieces , He went down and bound the strong one in the waters, that we might receive power to *tread upon serpents and scorpions*. Luke 10:19 The beast was great and terrible. *No fishing-vessel was able to carry one scale of his tail* : destruction ran before him , ravaging all that met him. The Life encountered him, that the mouth of Death might henceforth be stopped, and all we that are saved might say, *O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory*1 Corinthians 15:55? The sting of death is drawn by Baptism.

12. For you go down into the water, bearing your sins, but the invocation of grace , having sealed your soul, suffers you not afterwards to be swallowed up by the terrible dragon. Having gone down dead in sins, you come up quickened in

righteousness. For if you have been *united with the likeness of the Saviour's death* Romans 6:5, you shall also be deemed worthy of His Resurrection. For as Jesus took upon Him the sins of the world, and died, that by putting sin to death He might rise again in righteousness; so thou by going down into the water, and being in a manner buried in the waters, as He was in the rock, art raised again *walking in newness of life*.

13. Moreover, when you have been deemed worthy of the grace, He then gives you strength to wrestle against the adverse powers. For as after His Baptism He was tempted forty days (not that He was unable to gain the victory before, but because He wished to do all things in due order and succession), so thou likewise, though not daring before your baptism to wrestle with the adversaries, yet after you have received the grace and art henceforth confident in *the armour of righteousness*2 Corinthians 6:7, must then do battle, and preach the Gospel, if you will.

14. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, yet He preached not the Gospel before His Baptism. If the Master Himself followed the right time in due order, ought we, His servants, to venture out of order? *From that time Jesus began to preach Matthew 4:17* , when *the Holy Spirit had descended upon Him in a bodily shape, like a dove* Luke 3:22; not that Jesus might see Him first, for He knew Him even before He came in a bodily shape, but that John, who was baptizing Him, might behold Him. For *I*, says he, *knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever you shall see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, that is He*. John 1:33 If you too hast unfeigned piety, the Holy Ghost comes down on you also, and a Father's voice sounds over you from on high— not, *This is My Son,* but, *This has now been made My son;* for the *is* belongs to Him alone, because *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. To Him belongs the *is,* since He is always the Son of God: but to you *has now been made:* since you have not the sonship by nature, but receive it by adoption. He eternally *is;* but you receive the grace by advancement.

15. Make ready then the vessel of your soul, that you may become a son of God, and *an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ*Romans 8:17; if, indeed, you are preparing yourself that you may receive; if you are drawing near in faith that you may be made faithful; if of set purpose you are putting off the old man. For all things whatsoever you have done shall be forgiven you, whether it be fornication, or adultery, or any other such form of licentiousness. What can be a greater sin than to crucify Christ? Yet even of this Baptism can purify. For so spoke Peter to the three thousand who came to him, to those who had crucified the Lord, when they asked him, saying, *Men and brethren, what shall we do* Acts 2:37? For the wound is great. You have made us think of our fall, O Peter, by saying, *You killed the Prince of Life*. What salve is there for so great a wound? What cleansing for such foulness? What is the salvation for such perdition? *Repent*, says he, *and be*

> *baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*. O unspeakable loving-kindness of God! They have no hope of being saved, and yet they are thought worthy of the Holy Ghost. You see the power of Baptism! If any of you has crucified the Christ by blasphemous words; if any of you in ignorance has denied Him before men; if any by wicked works has caused the doctrine to be blasphemed; let him repent and be of good hope, for the same grace is present even now.
>
> 16. *Be of good courage, O Jerusalem; the Lord will take away all your iniquities*. *The Lord will wash away the filth of His sons and of His daughters by the Spirit of judgment, and by the Spirit of burning* Isaiah 4:4 . *He will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be cleansed from all your sin*. Ezekiel 36:25 Angels shall dance around you, and say, Who is this that comes up in white array, leaning upon her beloved ? For the soul that was formerly a slave has now adopted her Master Himself as her kinsman: and He accepting the unfeigned purpose will answer: *Behold, you are fair, my love; behold, you are fair: your teeth are like flocks of sheep new shorn*, (because of the confession of a good conscience: and further) *which have all of them twins* ; because of the twofold grace, I mean that which is perfected of water and of the Spirit , or that which is announced by the Old and by the New Testament. And God grant that all of you when you have finished the course of the fast, may remember what I say, and bringing forth fruit in good works, may stand blameless beside the Spiritual Bridegroom, and obtain the remission of your sins from God; to whom with the Son and Holy Spirit be the glory for ever. Amen.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #63

April 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We return to the letter “I”, and appropriately enough, Ireland, for today’s saint. It is Saint Ite of Killeedy:

> **Íte ingen Chinn Fhalad** (d. 570/577), also known as **Ita**, **Ida** or **Ides**, was an early Irish nun and patron saint of Killeedy (Cluain Credhail). She was known as the “foster mother of the saints of Erin”. The name “Ita” (“thirst for holiness”) was conferred on her because of her saintly qualities. Her feast day is 15 January.

Quite a lot more about this saint can be found at her wiki, located here.



St. Ite

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #70

April 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will feature a number of different verses and passages, most of them on the shorter side. I begin with this verse from Proverbs:

> When the righteous triumph, there is great glory,
> but when the wicked prevail, people go into hiding.

(Proverbs 28:12)

This verse is both very deep, and highly applicable in the present age. A great deal can be discerned about the moral character of a time period, and the leadership in charge, by observing how people act. When righteous people go into hiding, then you can be sure that their rulers are wicked. Many Christians, especially those holding orthodox beliefs, have to hide much of themselves right now in the West. While they are not fully in hiding, that they have to hide aspects of their belief or faith serves as a strong testament to the wickedness of this age and its rulers. We will know that things have truly turned a corner when this is no longer the case.

Then there is this passage from the prophet Amos:

> On that day I will raise up
> the booth of David that is fallen,
> and repair its breaches,
> and raise up its ruins,
> and rebuild it as in the days of old;
> [12] in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom
> and all the nations who are called by my name,
> says the Lord who does this.

> [13] The time is surely coming, says the Lord,
> when the one who plows shall overtake the one who reaps,
> and the treader of grapes the one who sows the seed;
> the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
> and all the hills shall flow with it.
> [14] I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
> and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
> they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
> and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.
> [15] I will plant them upon their land,
> and they shall never again be plucked up
> out of the land that I have given them,
> says the Lord your God.

(Amos 9:11-15)

While I understand the literal meaning of the phrase “he one who plows shall overtake the one who reaps“, and the phrase after it, I wonder if there is an allegorical meaning as well. I’m curious if any of my readers can clue me in to one. I ask because the last verse reminds me of what Jesus told Peter in the Gospel of Matthew:

> [17] And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. [18] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

(Matthew 16:17-18)

The mention of the booth (or house) of David earlier by Amos suggests a Messianic message here. So I’m wondering if this passage is a foretelling of the creation of the Church- that new and lasting Israel which God intended.

Finally I close with this small passage from the First Letter of St. Peter:

> [13] Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. [14] Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. [15] Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; [16] for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”
>
> [17] If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. [18] You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. [20] He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. [21] Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

(1 Peter 1:13-21)

Something that many of us are apt to do is to “check out holiness at the door” when we leave Church. But we are called to be holy in all our conduct, which of course means at all times and places. Sadly, this idle approach to holiness even carries across to our reverence. I find that something sadly lacking in most Christians these days. We have lost our sense of the sacred, and this is something I think plays a significant role in the deterioration of the faith. After all, if you are not offended by the irreverence of a “Jesus is my Boyfriend” song, what *will* offend you? I suspect rather little.

This Isn’t Revenge

April 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

An assertion that is made with some frequency around these parts, mostly but not always by female commenters, is that the present feminist paradigm is a response to the injustices of the previous social system. As is often explained, “the Evil Patriarchy” is responsible for the injustices of feminism, because its oppression drove women to overreact and go to the opposite extreme. In other words, it is all about revenge.

A similar assertion is sometimes made about folks in the manosphere, especially those who fall in the “Pick-Up Artist” camp. The general idea is that after years of suffering under feminism, these men are “turning the tables” on women and having their revenge through pump’n’dumps and the like.

What all of this seemingly points to is an endless cycle of revenge. One sex gets the advantage over the other, abuses that power, and causes the other sex to “rebel” and seek to dominate in turn. Patriarchy –> Feminism –> Patriarchy –> Feminism and on and on and on. It is a very tantalizing theory. Certainly there are plenty of people on both sides whose apparent motive is revenge. As far as theories go, it explains an awful lot.

Of course, it is also flat out wrong.

Revenge is certainly a factor for some people. For them, it gives real strength and impetus to their pursuits, whatever they may be. But something far more fundamental is at play than revenge. That something is base human nature, specifically our sexual nature. There are two very important things which must be understood in order to comprehend why this isn’t about revenge:

The first is that human male and human female base sexual strategies are *not* the same. Where men tend to by polygamists, women tend to be serial monogamists. Men want sexual variety, women want the best possible man around. The sexes both look for different traits in a mate, and have different approaches to deciding if someone of the opposite sex is worth commitment or a worthy long term partner.

The second is to understand Rollo’s Cardinal Rule of Sexual Strategies: *For one gender’s sexual strategy to succeed the other gender must compromise or abandon their own.* [Relevant post here.]

When you put both of these together you can immediately see that conflict is inescapable. Men and women have incompatible sexual strategies that cannot co-exist. At least one sex must be the “loser” in this conflict- at least one must see its preferred strategy and social order to support it, yield to the other. Of course, some among the “losing” sex will still benefit, and perhaps might even be individually winning. But on the whole that particular sex comes out behind.

[There is also the possibility that both “lose” in a social order which regulates both male and female sexual strategies towards some sort of “compromise point. Such systems are very difficult to sustain, as they are not natural to either sex and therefore will encounter

opposition, on various levels, from both sexes.]

All of this is leading towards the logical conclusion that the present conflict between the sexes, on whatever level it exists, was inevitable. If you were to wipe everyone's memory, so that the "evils" of the past and present were gone, the conflict would still be ongoing. Men would still want to be Pick-Up Artists, women would still want to be carousel riders who then latch onto "Betas." Revenge might give some individuals extra vigor, but our base nature is pushing us in that direction in the first place. Both movements are merely natural expressions of our base nature, a base nature that has lost none of its potency during the "rise of civilization." The theory of evolution and Genesis's Fall both point towards a humanity whose proclivities lead men and women to do exactly what they are doing now.

All of this is important to keep in mind in order to not get bogged down by distracting arguments. Don't get distracted by talk of "waves" or "payback" or "our turn" or the like. The blame game might be easy, and it might be fun, but it obscures what is really going on here. There is a conflict raging between men and women, one that has been going on since our species first appeared on this Earth. It is a conflict that will not abate as long as we remain human. At best we can merely control or contain it, but only through extraordinary, or even extreme, measures.

So when asking yourself, or when asked by others, what is driving feminists to oppress men, and what is driving men to respond by adopting "gutter tactics", keep the following in mind.

This isn't Revenge.

This is War.

Tradition Thursday- #19

April 17, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical letters continue to be the focus of the Tradition series of posts. Today's post features the first part of his 4th letter. Its focus is core doctrines of the faith:

> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, etc.
>
> 1. Vice mimics virtue, and the tares strive to be thought wheat, growing like the wheat in appearance, but being detected by good judges from the taste. *The devil also transfigures himself into an angel of light* 2 Corinthians 11:14; not that he may reascend to where he was, for having made *his heart hard as an anvil* , he has henceforth a will that cannot repent; but in order that he may envelope those who are living an Angelic life in a mist of blindness, and a pestilent condition of unbelief. Many wolves are going about *in sheeps' clothing* , their clothing being that of sheep, not so their claws and teeth: but clad in their soft skin, and deceiving the innocent by their appearance, they shed upon them from their fangs the destructive poison of ungodliness. We have need therefore of divine grace, and of a sober mind, and of eyes that see, lest from eating tares as wheat we suffer harm from ignorance, and lest from taking the wolf to be a sheep we become his prey, and from supposing the destroying Devil to be a beneficent Angel we be devoured: for, as the Scripture says, *he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*. 1 Peter 5:8 This is the cause of the Church's admonitions, the cause of the present instructions, and of the lessons which are read.
>
> 2. For the method of godliness consists of these two things, pious doctrines, and virtuous practice: and neither are the doctrines acceptable to God apart from good works, nor does God accept the works which are not perfected with pious doctrines. For what profit is it, to know well the doctrines concerning God, and yet to be a vile fornicator? And again, what profit is it, to be nobly temperate, and an impious blasphemer? A most precious possession therefore is the knowledge of doctrines: also there is need of a wakeful soul, since there are many *that make spoil through philosophy and vain deceit*. Colossians 2:8 The Greeks on the one hand draw men away by their smooth tongue, *for honey drops from a harlot's lips* Proverbs 5:3: whereas they of the Circumcision deceive those who come to them by means of the Divine Scriptures, which they miserably misinterpret though *studying them from childhood to old age* , and growing old in ignorance. But the children of heretics, *by their good words and smooth tongue, deceive the hearts of the innocent* , disguising with the name of Christ as it were with honey the poisoned arrows of their impious doctrines: concerning all of whom together the Lord says, Take heed lest any man mislead you. Matthew 24:4 This is the reason

for the teaching of the Creed and for expositions upon it.

3. But before delivering you over to the Creed , I think it is well to make use at present of a short summary of necessary doctrines; that the multitude of things to be spoken, and the long interval of the days of all this holy Lent, may not cause forgetfulness in the mind of the more simple among you; but that, having strewn some seeds now in a summary way, we may not forget the same when afterwards more widely tilled. But let those here present whose habit of mind is mature, and who *have their senses already exercised to discern good and evil* Hebrews 5:14, endure patiently to listen to things fitted rather for children, and to an introductory course, as it were, of milk: that at the same time both those who have need of the instruction may be benefited, and those who have the knowledge may rekindle the remembrance of things which they already know.

I. Of God.

4. First then let there be laid as a foundation in your soul the doctrine concerning God; that God is One, alone unbegotten, without beginning, change, or variation ; neither begotten of another, nor having another to succeed Him in His life; who neither began to live in time, nor ends ever: and that He is both good and just; that if ever thou hear a heretic say, that there is one God who is just, and another who is good , you may immediately remember, and discern the poisoned arrow of heresy. For some have impiously dared to divide the One God in their teaching: and some have said that one is the Creator and Lord of the soul, and another of the body ; a doctrine at once absurd and impious. For how can a man become the one servant of two masters, when our Lord says in the Gospels, *No man can serve two masters* ? There is then One Only God, the Maker both of souls and bodies: One the Creator of heaven and earth, the Maker of Angels and Archangels: of many the Creator, but of One only the Father before all ages—of One only, His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom He made *all things visible and invisible*.

5. This Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not circumscribed in any place , nor is He less than the heaven; *but the heavens are the works of His fingers* , and *the whole earth is held in His grasp* Isaiah 40:12: He is in all things and around all. Think not that the sun is brighter than He , or equal to Him: for He who at first formed the sun must needs be incomparably greater and brighter. He foreknows the things that shall be, and is mightier than all, knowing all things and doing as He will; not being subject to any necessary sequence of events, nor to nativity, nor chance, nor fate; in all things perfect, and equally possessing every absolute form of virtue, neither diminishing nor increasing, but in mode and conditions ever the same; who has prepared punishment for sinners, and a crown for the righteous.

6. Seeing then that many have gone astray in various ways from the One God, some having deified the sun, that when the sun sets they may abide in the night

season without God; others the moon, to have no God by day ; others the other parts of the world ; others the arts ; others their various kinds of food ; others their pleasures ; while some, mad after women, have set up on high an image of a naked woman, and called it Aphrodite , and worshipped their own lust in a visible form; and others dazzled by the brightness of gold have deified it and the other kinds of matter;— whereas if one lay as a first foundation in his heart the doctrine of the unity of God, and trust to Him, he roots out at once the whole crop of the evils of idolatry, and of the error of the heretics: lay thou, therefore, this first doctrine of religion as a foundation in your soul by faith.

Of Christ.

7. Believe also in the Son of God, One and Only, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was begotten God of God, begotten Life of Life, begotten Light of Light , Who is in all things like to Him that begot, Who received not His being in time, but was before all ages eternally and incomprehensibly begotten of the Father: The Wisdom and the Power of God, and His Righteousness personally subsisting : Who sits on the right hand of the Father before all ages.

For the throne at God’s right hand He received not, as some have thought, because of His patient endurance, being crowned as it were by God after His Passion; but throughout His being—a being by eternal generation —He holds His royal dignity, and shares the Father’s seat, being God and Wisdom and Power, as has been said; reigning together with the Father, and creating all things for the Father, yet lacking nothing in the dignity of Godhead, and knowing Him that has begotten Him, even as He is known of Him that has begotten; and to speak briefly, remember thou what is written in the Gospels, that *none knows the Son but the Father, neither knows any the Father save the Son*.

8. Further, do thou neither separate the Son from the Father, nor by making a confusion believe in a Son-Fatherhood ; but believe that of One God there is One Only-begotten Son, who is before all ages God the Word; not the uttered word diffused into the air, nor to be likened to impersonal words ; but the Word the Son, Maker of all who partake of reason, the Word who hears the Father, and Himself speaks. And on these points, should God permit, we will speak more at large in due season; for we do not forget our present purpose to give a summary introduction to the Faith.

Concerning His Birth of the Virgin.

9. Believe then that this Only-begotten Son of God for our sins came down from heaven upon earth, and took upon Him this human nature of like passions with us, and was begotten of the Holy Virgin and of the Holy Ghost, and was made Man, not in seeming and mere show , but in truth; nor yet by passing through the Virgin as through a channel ; but was of her made truly flesh, [and truly nourished with milk], and did truly eat as we do, and truly drink as we do. For if the Incarnation was a phantom, salvation is a phantom also. The Christ was of

two natures, Man in what was seen, but God in what was not seen; as Man truly eating like us, for He had the like feeling of the flesh with us; but as God feeding the five thousand from five loaves; as Man truly dying, but as God raising him that had been dead four days; truly sleeping in the ship as Man, and walking upon the waters as God.

Of the Cross.

10. He was truly crucified for our sins. For if you would deny it, the place refutes you visibly, this blessed Golgotha , in which we are now assembled for the sake of Him who was here crucified; and the whole world has since been filled with pieces of the wood of the Cross. But He was crucified not for sins of His own, but that we might be delivered from *our* sins. And though as Man He was at that time *despised of men*, and was buffeted, yet He was acknowledged by the Creation as God: for when the sun saw his Lord dishonoured, he grew dim and trembled, not enduring the sight.

Of His Burial.

11. He was truly laid as Man in a tomb of rock; but rocks were rent asunder by terror because of Him. He went down into the regions beneath the earth, that thence also He might redeem the righteous. For, tell me, could thou wish the living only to enjoy His grace, and that, though most of them are unholy; and not wish those who from Adam had for a long while been imprisoned to have now gained their liberty? Esaias the Prophet proclaimed with loud voice so many things concerning Him; would you not wish that the King should go down and redeem His herald? David was there, and Samuel, and all the Prophets , John himself also, who by his messengers said, *Are you He that should come, or look we for another* Matthew 11:3? Would you not wish that He should descend and redeem such as these?

Of the Resurrection.

12. But He who descended into the regions beneath the earth came up again; and Jesus, who was buried, truly rose again the third day. And if the Jews ever worry you, meet them at once by asking thus: Did Jonah come forth from the whale on the third day, and has not Christ then risen from the earth on the third day? Is a dead man raised to life on touching the bones of Elisha, and is it not much easier for the Maker of mankind to be raised by the power of the Father? Well then, He truly rose, and after He had risen was seen again of the disciples: and twelve disciples were witnesses of His Resurrection, who bore witness not in pleasing words, but contended even unto torture and death for the truth of the Resurrection. What then, *shall every word be established at the mouth of two of three witnesses* Deuteronomy 19:15, according to the Scripture, and, though twelve bear witness to the Resurrection of Christ, are you still incredulous in regard to His Resurrection?

Concerning the Ascension.

13. But when Jesus had finished His course of patient endurance, and had redeemed mankind from their sins, He ascended again into the heavens, a cloud receiving Him up: and as He went up Angels were beside Him, and Apostles were beholding. But if any man disbelieves the words which I speak, let him believe the actual power of the things now seen. All kings when they die have their power extinguished with their life: but Christ crucified is worshipped by the whole world. We proclaim The Crucified, and the devils tremble now. Many have been crucified at various times; but of what other who was crucified did the invocation ever drive the devils away?

14. Let us, therefore, not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ; but though another hide it, do thou openly seal it upon your forehead, that the devils may behold the royal sign and flee trembling far away. Make then this sign at eating and drinking, at sitting, at lying down, at rising up, at speaking, at walking: in a word, at every act. For He who was here crucified is in heaven above. If after being crucified and buried He had remained in the tomb, we should have had cause to be ashamed; but, in fact, He who was crucified on Golgotha here, has ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives on the East. For after having gone down hence into Hades, and come up again to us, He ascended again from us into heaven, His Father addressing Him, and saying, *Sit on My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool*.

Of Judgment to Come.

15. This Jesus Christ who is gone up shall come again, not from earth but from heaven: and I say, *not from earth,* because there are many Antichrists to come at this time from earth. For already, as you have seen, many have begun to say, *I am the Christ* Matthew 24:5: and *the abomination of desolation* is yet to come, assuming to himself the false title of Christ. But look thou for the true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, coming henceforth no more from earth, but from heaven, appearing to all more bright than any lightning and brilliancy of light, with angel guards attended, that He may judge both quick and dead, and reign in a heavenly, eternal kingdom, which shall have no end. For on this point also, I pray you, make yourself sure, since there are many who say that Christ's Kingdom has an end.

Of the Holy Ghost.

16. Believe thou also in the Holy Ghost, and hold the same opinion concerning Him, which you have *received to hold* concerning the Father and the Son, and follow not those who teach blasphemous things of Him. But learn thou that this Holy Spirit is One, indivisible, of manifold power; having many operations, yet not Himself divided; Who knows the mysteries, Who *searches all things, even the deep things of God* 1 Corinthians 2:10: Who descended upon the Lord Jesus Christ in form of a dove; Who wrought in the Law and in the Prophets; Who now also at the season of Baptism seals your soul; of Whose holiness also every

> intellectual nature has need: against Whom *if any dare to blaspheme, he has no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come* Matthew 12:32: *Who with the Father and the Son together* is honoured with the glory of the Godhead: of Whom also *thrones, and dominions, principalities, and powers* have need. Colossians 1:16 For there is One God, the Father of Christ; and One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of the Only God; and One Holy Ghost, the sanctifier and deifier of all , Who spoke in the Law and in the Prophets, in the Old and in the New Testament.
>
> 17. Have thou ever in your mind this seal , which for the present has been lightly touched in my discourse, by way of summary, but shall be stated, should the Lord permit, to the best of my power with the proof from the Scriptures. For concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the Faith, not even a casual statement must be delivered without the Holy Scriptures; nor must we be drawn aside by mere plausibility and artifices of speech. Even to me, who tell you these things, give not absolute credence, unless thou receive the proof of the things which I announce from the Divine Scriptures. For this salvation which we believe depends not on ingenious reasoning , but on demonstration of the Holy Scriptures.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #64

April 18, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint comes from the earlier days of the Church. Our saint is Juliana of Nicomedia:

> **Saint Juliana of Nicomedia** is said to have suffered Christian martyrdom during the Diocletian persecution in 304. She was popular in the Middle Ages, especially in the Netherlands, as the patron saint of sickness.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.



St. Juliana

Selected Sunday Scripture- #71

April 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage for today's post comes from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians:

> [6] The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. [7] Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. [9] As it is written,
>
> "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
> his righteousness endures forever."
>
> [10] He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. [11] You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; [12] for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. [13] Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, [14] while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. [15] Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

(2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

Reading through this, I was reminded of Dalrock's point that Feminists are miserly with love. I don't think this is limited to Feminists, however. I think we all must fight the tendency to be miserly with love. For myself, I know that I know that charity doesn't come easily most of the time. There are some things I can be generous with, but at other times I struggle to give of myself. It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that everything we give up in charity in this life is repaid in the next. I need to constantly remind myself of this, and I realize that it is something I need God's help in, because I haven't the strength myself.

This brings me to the next selection, which is Psalm 146:

> [1] Praise the Lord!
> Praise the Lord, O my soul!
> [2] I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
> I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

> [3] Do not put your trust in princes,
> in mortals, in whom there is no help.

> [4] When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
> on that very day their plans perish.
> [5] Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
> whose hope is in the Lord their God,
> [6] who made heaven and earth,
> the sea, and all that is in them;
> who keeps faith forever;
> [7] who executes justice for the oppressed;
> who gives food to the hungry.
> The Lord sets the prisoners free;
> [8] the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
> The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
> the Lord loves the righteous.
> [9] The Lord watches over the strangers;
> he upholds the orphan and the widow,
> but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

> [10] The Lord will reign forever,
> your God, O Zion, for all generations.
> Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 146)

Two things of note caught my attention while praying this Psalm recently. The first is found in verses 3 and 4. Trust is a delicate thing. One thing that has helped me in my faith is that I've always known I can trust God. He has always kept His faith with me, and I've never felt a sense of betrayal. All of the bad theology and false guidance I've received over the years I know to be the work of humans, not of God. I think this is an important thing for those of us to keep in mind who have been fed false theology for so long. We should know that in God alone can we trust, and that if anything, we should have expected to be let down (one way or another) by our fellow man.

Verses 7-9 also caught my attention, because they seem to describe Jesus to a T. Fed the hungry? Check. Set prisoners free? Check (think of those imprisoned in Sheol before His death). Opened the eyes of the blind? Check. And so on and so forth. There are lots of little hints like this scattered throughout Scripture, and its quite fun to come across them when you aren't expecting it. At least, so it seems to me.

Here is a little snippet from Deuteronomy I am curious about:

> [5] "When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.

(Deuteronomy 24:5)

My NAB translations says, instead of the man being happy, that the newlywed man would

“bring joy to his wife” by staying there. I’m curious if any of my readers who are better in translations than I have any thoughts on which is the better translation. I’ve a few thoughts on this, and the translation matters.

Finally, I conclude with this small bit from the Gospel of Matthew:

> [22] “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; [23] but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

(Mathew 6:22-23)

This is an interesting saying by Jesus, and one that has never been easy for me to understand. I’m curious what interpretations exist for it, and when I get a chance I will see what some of the saints have said. After re-reading it, I think that what Jesus is saying is that the way we look at the world (the health of our eye) affects everything we do. A cynical outlook that distorts the nature of God’s Creation will reverberate throughout out body, and affect everything about us. In essence, our body and our actions will come to match our dark outlook on life. Perhaps some of my readers can offer their thoughts.

A Truce… or Victory?

April 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my post This Isn't Revenge, I explained that what we are witnessing now is merely the latest phase in a long running war between the sexes. Novaseeker suggested that it might be more accurate to characterize this struggle as a competition:

> it's an endless competition to see who can outdo the other in terms of getting their genetic/sexual imperative vindicated.

While I agree that there is certainly competition here, I think that it is mostly an argument over semantics, as both war and competition are forms of struggle. And what we are seeing is certainly a struggle. Moreover, it is not just a struggle between men and women but also among men and among women. Men compete with one another for the best women, and women compete with one another for the best men. Novaseeker's comment, which I linked earlier, really goes into depth on this and I suggest that everyone read it for a thorough explanation of this. In a way this struggle is the "war of all against all" that Hobbes warned about centuries ago.

A number of points were raised about the central argument of my post, and I want to use this thread to address two which are related to one another: the notion of a truce and what might constitute "victory."

Commenter The Shadow Knight left the following comment, which is working examining :

> Yes, this is a war, but look at the effort expended to make sure that neither side will be interested in a truce. How many women are miserably working a terrible job when they want to be a mother? How many men are numbing the pain with drink, women, or games because they are not going to take the risk of ending up an ex husband? The enemy has to scream and threaten to get both sides to reluctantly oppose one another. Conflict is inevitable, but so is equilibrium.

TSK is correct that the present state of the conflict is the result of a concentrated effort to exacerbate the situation. However, removing that 'incitement' does not meat that both sides will be interested in a truce. If the incitement was removed, the conflict would still exist. That is the central premise of the first post. It might be more of a subtle conflict, with most of the "fighting" less visible, but the conflict will persist. Another thing to consider is that the incitement is a natural outgrowth of the conflict itself. Rather than being the cause, it is an effect. Our own preferences might drive some individuals to "stir up the pot" in order to benefit their own part of this struggle.

And besides, what kind of truce would be agreed upon? We had something of a truce before, and that didn't last. When I mentioned a social order in which both sexes would "lose," Stingray asked the following:

> Given that men give up polygamy and women give up serial monogamy, I would

> think (traditional) marriage would fall into this category. What am I missing?

Stingray didn't miss anything. Traditional marriage (not the modern day "traditional marriage" variety either) was a compromise, a truce of sorts. The thing is, neither side wants a compromise. Men and women want a system which supports their preferred sexual strategy. Equilibrium, at least, a static form of it, is not something that can last. In fact, it was TSK who pointed out that the destruction of Traditional Marrage "was a joint effort, because they both thought that they could get an advantage." Both men and women will always want to push the boundaries.

Something more likely than a truce is a withdrawal or retreat of sorts. What I mean is that members of one "side" decide to stop fighting and just remove themselves from the conflict as much as they can. The MGTOW movement is an example of this in action. Rather than compete, they merely try and survive. Of course, they cannot fully escape, thanks to taxes and such. But in so far as they can, they try to not get involved in the conflict. This is something I think will become more prominent in the future, at least among men. It is also possible we might see women start to do this as well- they are likely to be affected by a drop in male desirability just as men have been affected by a drop in female desirability.

Any sort of truce, which would have to be founded on a compromise, couldn't last unless it was enforced somehow. And that brings me to this comment by Cane Caldo:

> These "base strategies" that are "hard-wired" have been revealed from the beginning as fundamentally untrue. They only feel true because the hard-wiring has been shot through with 1.21 gigawatts of sin. The receptors are fried, man.

Cane is correct that what I referred to as "base" or "natural" impulses of men and women are something Christians should understand to be the product of the Fall. I put "lose" in quotes in my first post because I wanted to indicate that what we think is a loss might not necessarily be so. After all, what we want is not necessarily what is good for us. Usually it isn't. Sin blinds us, and directs our hearts (and other organs) in the wrong direction more often than not.

Once we understand this, we can finally see how victory is possible. You see, "victory" in the "war between the sexes" can come about only when we realize that this war is one which was stirred up by the Evil One. It is a war whose origins date back to the Fall, when the serpent pit man and woman against one another, and against God, for the first time (this was the first instance of someone playing "lets you and him fight"). This war can be won by recognizing that it is a war we shouldn't be fighting in the first place. "The only winning move is not to play." Instead of men and women fighting one another, ~~they~~ we, need to cooperate and fight against sin, which is the real enemy deserving of our attention.

This, I think, is where the real break between the secular and Christian "Red Pill" community is to be found. The secular PR community aims to equip men with the tools they need so they can get the best possible deal for themselves. In other words, to arm

them with the best weapons possible to wage war against women, so they can score as many big victories as possible (however each individual man chooses to define victory). However, that strategy cannot bring the war to the end. It only seeks to give men the best odds possible and make them the temporary "winners." The Christian RP community should recognize that this is not a winning strategy. Men who pursue this course are still puppets being controlled by the ruler of this world. Their "victories" are illusory. Keeping in line with the "red pill", they are still in the Matrix, as they are still slaves to their sin- they only think that they have escaped.

When I spoke of the natural in my first post, it was because I wanted to emphasize the necessity of the *supernatural* to overcome our base or worldly nature. By ourselves we cannot hope to overcome our sinfulness. It is only through God's Grace that we can achieve this. God has also provided us with the template of how a lasting "truce" between the sexes can be arranged, through the sacrament of marriage. There is no need to invent something new to get out us of the trench we find ourselves in. We have the tools, in fact we were given them a long time ago. We only need to remember that we have them, and to use them again as they were meant to be used. This will require that we set aside the notion that we know better than God. It will require humility, and patience, and lots of prayer. However, there is no other way. And it is certainly better than the alternative- an endless war that cannot be won.

One commenter asked in the previous post:

> Am I supposed to take comfort in the fact that it is not revenge [driving this situation], but rather WAR?

If it is the war between the sexes, no, there is no comfort to be found. But the war against sin? That is another matter. It is a war in which ultimate victory has already been assured. We just need to win the individual holding actions in which we find ourselves. I cannot think of any better way to conclude this post than with this advice from St. Paul:

> [10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12] For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; [16] above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. [17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

(Ephesians 6:10-17)

Mirrored Appeal

April 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In responding to the errors of the secular world, Christians, if they are not careful, can make errors of their own. The dominant message of the secular world right now, as far as men and women are concerned, is that they/we are the same- albeit with slightly different plumbing. Christians who have not fallen for this lie, or who have escaped it, rightly understand that rather than being interchangeable, men and women are complementary. We are made to "fit together." A common approach to understanding this complementarity is use a mirror analogy- rather than being the same, men and women mirror each other and have opposing tendencies. For example, if men value X, and C is the opposite of X, then women value C.

Simple enough, yes? And in many instances it happens to be true. But not all. Sometimes, when men and women are different, we are *really* different. We need to be careful and not try and fit men and women into neat cookie cutter pieces, a tendency not solely restricted to most segments of the secular world.

Over at The Thinking Housewife, the authoress features a comment concerning "Why Women Seek "Bad Boys" – and Men Seek "Bad Girls." Setting aside the notions expressed about "bad boys", I want to examine this particular paragraph:

> For the same reason sensitiveness and thoughtfulness in a woman reduce her sex appeal. These qualities make her appear weak, and… human. The godless individual resents nothing more than humanity. He cannot desire someone who reminds him constantly of his own mortality. A nonchalant demeanor (originating in vacuousness) is much more desirable to him.

The first sentence in that paragraph is, to use a scientific phrase, total bunk. A woman's sex appeal is not reduced by "sensitiveness and thoughtfulness." Even under the worst possible scenario, those character traits have *zero* affect on a woman's perceived sex appeal. They just don't. In this respect men are largely visual creatures. A woman's sexual appeal is based on her physical characteristics, not her personality. Her personality may affect how a approaches and interacts with her, as well as her long term goals, but not her sex appeal.

Reading through the whole comment, I get the impression that the author has let his philosophical or theological pondering trample over empirical reality. He is trying to make reality fit how he thinks things are- at least, that is how he perceives it. But in truth he is trying to make reality fit how he thinks things *should* be. This is a tendency we all possess, to some degree or another. And it can be a dangerous one. Much of "Churchianity" is nothing more than a vast, wide-scale expression of the tendency to make reality fit how we think things should be.

All of which leads to the purpose of this post: as a reminder, if only to myself, not to let my own preferences blind me to reality. I know I've done it before, and will probably do so

again. This was a chief failing, perhaps even the chief failing, of the Pharisees. They could not let go of their own preconceived notions of who the Messiah would be, and so could not see Him when He walked amongst them. Let us, like the Psalmist, pray for the Lord to open our eyes.

Tradition Thursday- #20

April 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series continues with St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters. This post features the second part of his fourth letter.

> **Of the Soul.**
>
> 18. Next to the knowledge of this venerable and glorious and all-holy Faith, learn further what you yourself art: that as man you are of a two-fold nature, consisting of soul and body; and that, as was said a short time ago, the same God is the Creator both of soul and body. Know also that you have a soul self-governed, the noblest work of God, made after the image of its Creator : immortal because of God that gives it immortality; a living being, rational, imperishable, because of Him that bestowed these gifts: having free power to do what it wills. For it is not according to your nativity that you sin, nor is it by the power of chance that you commit fornication, nor, as some idly talk, do the conjunctions of the stars compel you to give yourself to wantonness. Why do you shrink from confessing your own evil deeds, and ascribe the blame to the innocent stars? Give no more heed, pray, to astrologers; for of these the divine Scripture says, *Let the stargazers of the heaven stand up and save you*, and what follows: *Behold, they all shall be consumed as stubble on the fire, and shall not deliver their soul from the flame* Isaiah 47:13 .
>
> 19. And learn this also, that the soul, before it came into this world, had committed no sin , but having come in sinless, we now sin of our free-will. Listen not, I pray you, to any one perversely interpreting the words, *But if I do that which I would not* Romans 7:16: but remember Him who says, *If you be willing, and hearken unto Me, you shall eat the good things of the land: but if you be not willing, neither hearken unto Me, the sword shall devour you, etc.* Isaiah 1:19-20: and again, *As you presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification*. Romans 6:19 Remember also the Scripture, which says, *Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge* Romans 1:28: and, *That which may be known of God is mani festin them* Romans 1:19; and again, *their eyes they have closed*. Matthew 13:15 Also remember how God again accuses them, and says, *Yet I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true: how are you turned to bitterness, thou the strange vine* Jeremiah 2:21?
>
> 20. The soul is immortal, and all souls are alike both of men and women; for only the members of the body are distinguished. There is not a class of souls sinning by nature, and a class of souls practicing righteousness by nature : but both act from choice, the substance of their souls being of one kind only, and alike in all. I know, however, that I am talking much, and that the time is already long: but

what is more precious than salvation? Are you not willing to take trouble in getting provisions for the way against the heretics? And will you not learn the bye-paths of the road, lest from ignorance thou fall down a precipice? If your teachers think it no small gain for you to learn these things, should not thou the learner gladly receive the multitude of things told you?

21. The soul is self-governed: and though the devil can suggest, he has not the power to compel against the will. He pictures to you the thought of fornication: if you will, you accept it; if you will not, you reject. For if you were a fornicator by necessity, then for what cause did God prepare hell? If you were a doer of righteousness by nature and not by will, wherefore did God prepare crowns of ineffable glory? The sheep is gentle, but never was it crowned for its gentleness: since its gentle quality belongs to it not from choice but by nature.

Of the Body.

22. You have learned, beloved, the nature of the soul, as far as there is time at present: now do your best to receive the doctrine of the body also. Suffer none of those who say that this body is no work of God : for they who believe that the body is independent of God, and that the soul dwells in it as in a strange vessel, readily abuse it to fornication. And yet what fault have they found in this wonderful body? For what is lacking in comeliness? And what in its structure is not full of skill? Ought they not to have observed the luminous construction of the eyes? And how the ears being set obliquely receive the sound unhindered? And how the smell is able to distinguish scents, and to perceive exhalations? And how the tongue ministers to two purposes, the sense of taste, and the power of speech? How the lungs placed out of sight are unceasing in their respiration of the air? Who imparted the incessant pulsation of the heart? Who made the distribution into so many veins and arteries? Who skilfully knitted together the bones with the sinews? Who assigned a part of the food to our substance, and separated a part for decent secretion, and hid away the unseemly members in more seemly places? Who when the human race must have died out, rendered it by a simple intercourse perpetual?

23. Tell me not that the body is a cause of sin. For if the body is a cause of sin, why does not a dead body sin? Put a sword in the right hand of one just dead, and no murder takes place. Let beauties of every kind pass before a youth just dead, and no impure desire arises. Why? Because the body sins not of itself, but the soul through the body. The body is an instrument, and, as it were, a garment and robe of the soul: and if by this latter it be given over to fornication, it becomes defiled: but if it dwell with a holy soul, it becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. It is not I that say this, but the Apostle Paul has said, *Do you not know, that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you* 1 Corinthians 6:19? Be tender, therefore, of your body as being a temple of the Holy Ghost. Pollute not your flesh in fornication: defile not this your fairest robe: and if ever you have defiled it, now cleanse it by repentance: get yourself

washed, while time permits.

24. And to the doctrine of chastity let the first to give heed be the order of Solitaries and of Virgins, who maintain the angelic life in the world; and let the rest of the Church's people follow them. For you, brethren, a great crown is laid up: barter not away a great dignity for a petty pleasure: listen to the Apostle speaking: *Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright*. Hebrews 12:16 Enrolled henceforth in the Angelic books for your profession of chastity, see that thou be not blotted out again for your practice of fornication.

25. Nor again, on the other hand, in maintaining your chastity be thou puffed up against those who walk in the humbler path of matrimony. For as the Apostle says, *Let marriage be had in honour among all, and let the bed be undefiled*. Hebrews 13:4 Thou too who retainest your chastity, were you not begotten of those who had married? Because you have a possession of gold, do not on that account reprobate the silver. But let those also be of good cheer, who being married use marriage lawfully; who make a marriage according to God's ordinance, and not of wantonness for the sake of unbounded license; who recognise seasons of abstinence, *that they may give themselves unto prayer* 1 Corinthians 7:5; who in our assemblies bring clean bodies as well as clean garments into the Church; who have entered upon matrimony for the procreation of children, but not for indulgence.

26. Let those also who marry but once not reprobate those who have consented to a second marriage : for though continence is a noble and admirable thing, yet it is also permissible to enter upon a second marriage, that the weak may not fall into fornication. For *it is good for them*, says the Apostle, *if they abide even as I. But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn*. 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 But let all the other practices be banished afar, fornication, adultery, and every kind of licentiousness: and let the body be kept pure for the Lord, that the Lord also may have respect unto the body. And let the body be nourished with food, that it may live, and serve without hindrance; not, however, that it may be given up to luxuries.

Concerning Meats.

27. And concerning food let these be your ordinances, since in regard to meats also many stumble. For some deal indifferently with things offered to idols , while others discipline themselves, but condemn those that eat: and in different ways men's souls are defiled in the matter of meats, from ignorance of the useful reasons for eating and not eating. For we fast by abstaining from wine and flesh, not because we abhor them as abominations, but because we look for our reward; that having scorned things sensible, we may enjoy a spiritual and intellectual feast; and that *having now sown in tears we may reap in joy* in the world to come. Despise not therefore them that eat, and because of the

weakness of their bodies partake of food: nor yet blame these who *use a little wine for their stomach's sake and their often infirmities* 1 Timothy 5:23: and neither condemn the men as sinners, nor abhor the flesh as strange food; for the Apostle knows some of this sort, when he says: *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe*. 1 Timothy 4:3 In abstaining then from these things, abstain not as from things abominable , else you have no reward: but as being good things disregard them for the sake of the better spiritual things set before you.

28. Guard your soul safely, lest at any time thou eat of things offered to idols: for concerning meats of this kind, not only I at this time, but ere now Apostles also, and James the bishop of this Church, have had earnest care: and the Apostles and Elders write a Catholic epistle to all the Gentiles, that they should *abstain* first *from things offered to idols, and* then *from blood* also *and from things strangled*. For many men being of savage nature, and living like dogs, both lap up blood , in imitation of the manner of the fiercest beasts, and greedily devour things strangled. But do thou, the servant of Christ, in eating observe to eat with reverence. And so enough concerning meats.

Of Apparel.

29. But let your apparel be plain, not for adornment, but for necessary covering: not to minister to your vanity, but to keep you warm in winter, and to hide the unseemliness of the body: lest under pretence of hiding the unseemliness, thou fall into another kind of unseemliness by your extravagant dress.

Of the Resurrection.

30. Be tender, I beseech you, of this body, and understand that you will be raised from the dead, to be judged with this body. But if there steal into your mind any thought of unbelief, as though the thing were impossible, judge of the things unseen by what happens to yourself. For tell me; a hundred years ago or more, think where wast you yourself: and from what a most minute and mean substance you have come to so great a stature, and so much dignity of beauty. What then? Cannot He who brought the non-existent into being, raise up again that which already exists and has decayed ? He who raises the grain, which is sown for our sakes, as year by year it dies—will He have difficulty in raising us up, for whose sakes that grain also has been raised ? Do you see how the trees stand now for many months without either fruit or leaves: but when the winter is past they spring up whole into life again as if from the dead : shall not we much rather and more easily return to life? The rod of Moses was transformed by the will of God into the unfamiliar nature of a serpent: and cannot a man, who has fallen into death, be restored to himself again?

31. Heed not those who say that this body is not raised; for it is raised: and Esaias is witness, when he says: *The dead shall arise, and they that are in the*

tombs shall awake Isaiah 26:19: and according to Daniel, *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame*. Daniel 12:2 But though to rise again is common to all men, yet the resurrection is not alike to all: for the bodies received by us all are eternal, but not like bodies by all: for the just receive them, that through eternity they may join the Choirs of Angels; but the sinners, that they may endure for ever the torment of their sins.

Of the Laver.

32. For this cause the Lord, preventing us according to His loving-kindness, has granted repentance at Baptism , in order that we may cast off the chief— nay rather the whole burden of our sins, and having received the seal by the Holy Ghost, may be made heirs of eternal life. But as we have spoken sufficiently concerning the Laver the day before yesterday, let us now return to the remaining subjects of our introductory teaching.

Of the Divine Scriptures.

33. Now these the divinely-inspired Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament teach us. For the God of the two Testaments is One, Who in the Old Testament foretold the Christ Who appeared in the New; Who by the Law and the Prophets led us to Christ's school. *For before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law*, and, *the law has been our tutor to bring us unto Christ*. And if ever thou hear any of the heretics speaking evil of the Law or the Prophets, answer in the sound of the Saviour's voice, saying, Jesus *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it*. Matthew 5:17 Learn also diligently, and from the Church, what are the books of the Old Testament, and what those of the New. And, pray, read none of the apocryphal writings : for why do you, who know not those which are acknowledged among all, trouble yourself in vain about those which are disputed? Read the Divine Scriptures, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, these that have been translated by the Seventy-two Interpreters.

34. For after the death of Alexander, the king of the Macedonians, and the division of his kingdom into four principalities, into Babylonia, and Macedonia, and Asia, and Egypt, one of those who reigned over Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, being a king very fond of learning, while collecting the books that were in every place, heard from Demetrius Phalereus, the curator of his library, of the Divine Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets, and judged it much nobler, not to get the books from the possessors by force against their will, but rather to propitiate them by gifts and friendship; and knowing that what is extorted is often adulterated, being given unwillingly, while that which is willingly supplied is freely given with all sincerity, he sent to Eleazar, who was then High Priest, a great many gifts for the Temple here at Jerusalem, and caused him to send him six interpreters from each of the twelve tribes of Israel for the translation. Then, further, to make experiment whether the books were Divine or not, he took

precaution that those who had been sent should not combine among themselves, by assigning to each of the interpreters who had come his separate chamber in the island called Pharos, which lies over against Alexandria, and committed to each the whole Scriptures to translate. And when they had fulfilled the task in seventy-two days, he brought together all their translations, which they had made in different chambers without sending them one to another, and found that they agreed not only in the sense but even in words. For the process was no word-craft, nor contrivance of human devices: but the translation of the Divine Scriptures, spoken by the Holy Ghost, was of the Holy Ghost accomplished.

35. Of these read the two and twenty books, but have nothing to do with the apocryphal writings. Study earnestly these only which we read openly in the Church. Far wiser and more pious than yourself were the Apostles, and the bishops of old time, the presidents of the Church who handed down these books. Being therefore a child of the Church, trench thou not upon its statutes. And of the Old Testament, as we have said, study the two and twenty books, which, if you are desirous of learning, strive to remember by name, as I recite them. For of the Law the books of Moses are the first five, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And next, Joshua the son of Nave , and the book of Judges, including Ruth, counted as seventh. And of the other historical books, the first and second books of the Kings are among the Hebrews one book; also the third and fourth one book. And in like manner, the first and second of Chronicles are with them one book; and the first and second of Esdras are counted one. Esther is the twelfth book; and these are the Historical writings. But those which are written in verses are five, Job, and the book of Psalms, and Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, which is the seventeenth book. And after these come the five Prophetic books: of the Twelve Prophets one book, of Isaiah one, of Jeremiah one, including Baruch and Lamentations and the Epistle ; then Ezekiel, and the Book of Daniel, the twenty-second of the Old Testament.

36. Then of the New Testament there are the four Gospels only, for the rest have false titles and are mischievous. The Manichæans also wrote a Gospel according to Thomas, which being tinctured with the fragrance of the evangelic title corrupts the souls of the simple sort. Receive also the Acts of the Twelve Apostles; and in addition to these the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude; and as a seal upon them all, and the last work of the disciples, the fourteen Epistles of Paul. But let all the rest be put aside in a secondary rank. And whatever books are not read in Churches, these read not even by yourself, as you have heard me say. Thus much of these subjects.

37. But shun thou every diabolical operation, and believe not the apostate Serpent, whose transformation from a good nature was of his own free choice: who can over-persuade the willing, but can compel no one. Also give heed neither to observations of the stars nor auguries, nor omens, nor to the fabulous divinations of the Greeks. Witchcraft, and enchantment, and the wicked practices

> of necromancy, admit not even to a hearing. From every kind of intemperance stand aloof, giving yourself neither to gluttony nor licentiousness, rising superior to all covetousness and usury. Neither venture yourself at heathen assemblies for public spectacles, nor ever use amulets in sicknesses; shun also all the vulgarity of tavern-haunting. Fall not away either into the sect of the Samaritans, or into Judaism: for Jesus Christ henceforth has ransomed you. Stand aloof from all observance of Sabbaths , and from calling any indifferent meats *common or unclean*. But especially abhor all the assemblies of wicked heretics; and in every way make your own soul safe, by fastings, prayers, almsgivings, and reading the oracles of God; that having lived the rest of your life in the flesh in soberness and godly doctrine, you may enjoy the one salvation which flows from Baptism; and thus enrolled in the armies of heaven by God and the Father, may also be deemed worthy of the heavenly crowns, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #65

April 25, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As always, the letter K is one with a sparser set of saints to chose from. However, that does not mean that the field is devoid of entries. Our saint for today hails from the Eastern Church, Saint Kassia:

> **Kassia** (Greek: Κασσιανή *Kassiani*; 805/810 – before 865) was a Byzantine abbess, poet, composer, and hymnographer. She is one of the first medieval composers whose scores are both extant and able to be interpreted by modern scholars and musicians. Approximately fifty of her hymns are extant and twenty-three are included in Orthodox Church liturgical books. The exact number is difficult to assess, as many hymns are ascribed to different authors in different manuscripts and are often identified as anonymous.
>
> In addition, some 789 of her non-liturgical verses survive. Many are epigrams or aphorisms called "gnomic verse", for example, "I hate the rich man moaning as if he were poor."
>
> Kassia is notable as one of only two Byzantine women known to have written in their own names during the Middle Ages, other being Anna Comnena.

More can be learned about her at her wiki, found here.



St. Kassia

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #72

April 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A conversation I had earlier in the day, and a homily I heard, prompted me to seek out this particular part of the 127th Psalm:

> [3] Lo, sons are a heritage from the Lord,
> the fruit of the womb a reward.
> [4] Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
> are the sons of one's youth.
> [5] Happy is the man who has
> his quiver full of them!
> He shall not be put to shame
> when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

(Psalm 127: 3-5)

One of the points I've made a number of times on my blog is that life isn't fair and that God doesn't owe us anything. That means that he doesn't owe us a spouse… and he doesn't owe us any children. This particular Psalm is a powerful reminder that children are a gift from God. Given this, I have trouble understanding why so many Christians seem so eager to keep their families small. Financial hardships and worrying about having enough food on the table is one thing, but most of those I see adopt this attitude are not destitute. More than a few are quite well off. They could easily support more. For myself, I don't understand how they can reject such a gift as that from God. I think of all those who want children, or more of them, but cannot have them, and I imagine that they must be even more frustrated than I. And I suspect that God is the most frustrated of all, for in rejecting His gift they also reject him. With all of this in mind, I would ask my readers to pray for those husbands and wives who do want children, or more of them, but cannot. May God grant them that special blessing and the joy of being a parent.

This moves me to the second passage, from First Timothy:

> [17] Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; [18] for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." [19] Never admit any charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. [20] As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. [21] In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality. [22] Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in another man's sins; keep yourself pure.

(1 Timothy 5:17-22)

Two things interest me about this passage today. The first is that we should be generous

to our elders- our priests. They do the Lord's work, and this should be recognized and compensated by us. While they should always be in our prayers, let us also take the time to find ways to reward them for their labor. Whether it is in time, coin or something else, they deserve it.

The second bit that caught my attention is the public rebuke of sin. The scandals in the Catholic Church are an unfortunate example of what happens when we ignore scripture. While the Church should never be quick to punish a priest without verifying wrongdoing, such wrongdoing should never be covered up. Those who betray their sacred charge as inheritors of the Apostolic Tradition must be called out and exposed. It must be made clear to all that such actions can never be tolerated. We can see in the present day the terrible cost that comes when this sage instruction is ignored.

Finally, I conclude the post with this snippet from the Gospel according to St. Mark:

> [14] And he called the people to him again, and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: [15] there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him." [17] And when he had entered the house, and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. [18] And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, [19] since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) [20] And he said, "What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, [22] coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

(Mark 7:14-23)

It is not unheard of for some manospherian commenters to make the argument that Jesus never condemned fornication by men. They dismiss any criticism of their immoral lives by saying that it was the machinations of Jesus's disciples which lead the Church to condemn sexual immorality by men other than adultery. This is of course utter rubbish, on many levels. The most obvious is the fact that the apostles and disciples of Jesus, whom they condemn, are the ones who brought us the words of Jesus in the first place. But an even greater retort is this passage above, as well as its counterpart in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus clearly condemns several different sexually immoral practices here, including fornication, adultery and licentiousness. PUAs pretty obviously practice the first and the last of those, and therefore have no leg to stand upon. The passage above makes for an easy counter to their arguments, and so I keep it around whenever dealing with those sorts. I don't expect them to change their behavior, but for those wavering who are reading them, it might make a difference in helping them stay on the narrow path.

Tradition Thursday- #21

May 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It is Thursday again, and that means a continuation of my series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters. Today features his whole fifth letter, which is shorter than others but still long enough to make for a good read (and length post). Today's subject is faith:

> **Of Faith.**
>
> Hebrews 11:1, 2
>
> Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.
>
> 1. How great a dignity the Lord bestows on you in transferring you from the order of Catechumens to that of the Faithful, the Apostle Paul shows, when he affirms, *God is faithful, by Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ*. 1 Corinthians 1:9 For since God is called Faithful, thou also in receiving this title receive a great dignity. For as God is called Good, and Just, and Almighty, and Maker of the Universe, so is He also called Faithful. Consider therefore to what a dignity you are rising, seeing you are to become partaker of a title of God.
>
> 2. Here then it is further required, that each of you be found faithful in his conscience: *for a faithful man it is hard to find* Proverbs 20:6: not that you should show your conscience to me, for you are not to *be judged of man's judgment* ; but that thou show the sincerity of your faith to God, *who tries the reins and hearts* , and *knows the thoughts of men*. A great thing is a faithful man, being richest of all rich men. For *to the faithful man belongs the whole world of wealth* , in that he disdains and tramples on it. For they who in appearance are rich, and have many possessions, are poor in soul: since the more they gather, the more they pine with longing for what is still lacking. But the faithful man, most strange paradox, in poverty is rich: for knowing that we need only to have *food and raiment*, and being *therewith content* 1 Timothy 6:8, he has trodden riches under foot.
>
> 3. Nor is it only among us, who bear the name of Christ, that the dignity of faith is great : but likewise all things that are accomplished in the world, even by those who are aliens from the Church, are accomplished by faith.
>
> By faith the laws of marriage yoke together those who have lived as strangers: and because of the faith in marriage contracts a stranger is made partner of a stranger's person and possessions. By faith husbandry also is sustained, for he who believes not that he shall receive a harvest endures not the toils. By faith sea-faring men, trusting to the thinnest plank, exchange that most solid element, the land, for the restless motion of the waves, committing themselves to

uncertain hopes, and carrying with them a faith more sure than any anchor. By faith therefore most of men's affairs are held together: and not among us only has there been this belief, but also, as I have said, among those who are without. For if they receive not the Scriptures, but bring forward certain doctrines of their own, even these they accept by faith.

4. The lesson also which was read today invites you to the true faith, by setting before you the way in which you also must please God: for it affirms that *without faith it is impossible to please Him*. Hebrews 11:6 For when will a man resolve to serve God, unless he believes that *He is a giver of reward?* When will a young woman choose a virgin life, or a young man live soberly, if they believe not that for chastity there is *a crown that fades not away* 1 Peter 5:4? Faith is an eye that enlightens every conscience, and imparts understanding; for the Prophet says, *And if you believe not, you shall not understand*.

Faith *stops the mouths of lions* Hebrews 11:34, as in Daniel's case: for the Scripture says concerning him, that *Daniel was brought up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God*. Daniel 6:23 Is there anything more fearful than the devil? Yet even against him we have no other shield than faith , an impalpable buckler against an unseen foe. For he sends forth various arrows, and *shoots down in the dark night* those that watch not; but, since the enemy is unseen, we have faith as our strong armour, according to the saying of the Apostle, *In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*. Ephesians 6:16 A fiery dart of desire of base indulgence is often cast forth from the devil: but faith, suggesting a picture of the judgment, cools down the mind, and quenches the dart.

5. There is much to tell of faith, and the whole day would not be time sufficient for us to describe it fully. At present let us be content with Abraham only, as one of the examples from the Old Testament, seeing that we have been made his sons through faith. He was justified not only by works, but also by faith : for though he did many things well, yet he was never called the friend of God , except when he believed. Moreover, his every work was performed in faith. Through faith he left his parents; left country, and place, and home through faith. Hebrews 11:8-10 In like manner, therefore, as he was justified be thou justified also. In his body he was already dead in regard to offspring, and Sarah his wife was now old, and there was no hope left of having children. God promises the old man a child, and Abraham *without being weakened in faith, though he considered his own body now as good as dead* Romans 4:19, heeded not the weakness of his body, but the power of Him who promised, because *he counted Him faithful who had promised* Hebrews 11:11-12, and so beyond all expectation gained the child from bodies as it were already dead. And when, after he had gained his son, he was commanded to offer him up, although he had heard the word, *In Isaac shall your seed be called* , he proceeded to offer up his son, his

only son, to God, believing *that God is able to raise up even from the dead*. Hebrews 11:19 And having bound his son, and laid him on the wood, he did in purpose offer him, but by the goodness of God in delivering to him a lamb instead of his child, he received his son alive. Being faithful in these things, he was sealed for righteousness, *and received circumcision as a seal of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision* Romans 4:11, having received a promise *that he should be the father of many nations* Genesis 17:5 .

6. Let us see, then, how Abraham is the father of many nations. Romans 4:17-18 Of Jews he is confessedly the father, through succession according to the flesh. But if we hold to the succession according to the flesh, we shall be compelled to say that the oracle was false. For according to the flesh he is no longer father of us all: but the example of his faith makes us all sons of Abraham. How? And in what manner? With men it is incredible that one should rise from the dead; as in like manner it is incredible also that there should be offspring from aged persons as good as dead. But when Christ is preached as having been crucified on the tree, and as having died and risen again, we believe it. By the likeness therefore of our faith we are adopted into the sonship of Abraham. And then, following upon our faith, we receive like him the spiritual seal, being circumcised by the Holy Spirit through Baptism, not in the foreskin of the body, but in the heart, according to Jeremiah, saying, *And you shall be circumcised unto God in the foreskin of your heart* : and according to the Apostle, *in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism*, and the rest Colossians 2:11-12 .

7. This faith if we keep we shall be free from condemnation, and shall be adorned with all kinds of virtues. For so great is the strength of faith, as even to buoy men up in walking on the sea. Peter was a man like ourselves, made up of flesh and blood, and living upon like food. But when Jesus said, *Come* Matthew 14:29, he believed, and walked upon the waters, and found his faith safer upon the waters than any ground; and his heavy body was upheld by the buoyancy of his faith. But though he had safe footing over the water as long as he believed, yet when he doubted, at once he began to sink: for as his faith gradually relaxed, his body also was drawn down with it. And when He saw his distress, Jesus who remedies the distresses of our souls, said, *O thou of little faith, wherefore did you doubt* Mark 14:31? And being nerved again by Him who grasped his right hand, he had no sooner recovered his faith, than, led by the hand of the Master, he resumed the same walking upon the waters: for this the Gospel indirectly mentioned, saying, *when they had gone up into the ship*. For it says not that Peter swam across and went up, but gives us to understand that, after returning the same distance that he went to meet Jesus, he went up again into the ship.

8. Yea, so much power has faith, that not the believer only is saved, but some have been saved by others believing. The paralytic in Capernaum was not a believer, but they believed who brought him, and let him down through the tiles Mark 2:4: for the sick man’s soul shared the sickness of his body. And think not

that I accuse him without cause: the Gospel itself says, *when Jesus saw*, not his faith, but *their faith*, He says to the sick of the palsy, Arise! The bearers believed, and the sick of the palsy enjoyed the blessing of the cure.

9. Would you see yet more surely that some are saved by others' faith? Lazarus died John 11:14-44: one day had passed, and a second, and a third: his sinews were decayed, and corruption was preying already upon his body. How could one four days dead believe, and entreat the Redeemer on his own behalf? But what the dead man lacked was supplied by his true sisters. For when the Lord had come, the sister fell down before Him, and when He said, *Where have you laid him?* and she had made answer, *Lord, by this time he stinks; for he has been four days dead*, the Lord said, *If you believe, you shall see the glory of God*; as much as saying, Supply thou the dead man's lack of faith: and the sisters' faith had so much power, that it recalled the dead from the gates of hell. Have then men by believing, the one on behalf of the other, been able to raise the dead, and shall not thou, if you believe sincerely on your own behalf, be much rather profited? Nay, even if you be faithless, or of little faith, the Lord is loving unto man; He condescends to you on your repentance: only on your part say with honest mind, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief*. Mark 9:24 But if you think that thou really art faithful, but hast not yet the fullness of faith, thou too hast need to say like the Apostles, *Lord, increase our faith* Luke 17:5: for some part you have of yourself, but the greater part you receive from Him.

10. For the name of Faith is in the form of speech one, but has two distinct senses. For there is one kind of faith, the dogmatic, involving an assent of the soul on some particular point: and it is profitable to the soul, as the Lord says: *He that hears My words, and believes Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and comes not into judgment* John 5:24: and again, *He that believes in the Son is not judged, but has passed from death unto life*. Oh the great loving-kindness of God! For the righteous were many years in pleasing Him: but what they succeeded in gaining by many years of well-pleasing , this Jesus now bestows on you in a single hour. For if you shall believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved, and shall be transported into Paradise by Him who brought in there the robber. And doubt not whether it is possible; for He who on this sacred Golgotha saved the robber after one single hour of belief, the same shall save you also on your believing.

11. But there is a second kind of faith, which is bestowed by Christ as a gift of grace. *For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit: to another faith, by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing*. 1 Corinthians 12:8-9 This faith then which is given of grace from the Spirit is not merely doctrinal, but also works things above man's power. For whosoever has this faith, *shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove*. Mark 11:23 For whenever any one shall say this in faith, *believing that it comes to pass, and shall*

not doubt in his heart, then receives he the grace.

And of this faith it is said, *If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed*. Matthew 17:20 For just as the grain of mustard seed is small in size, but fiery in its operation, and though sown in a small space has a circle of great branches, and when grown up is able even to shelter the fowls Matthew 13:32; so, likewise, faith in the swiftest moment works the greatest effects in the soul. For, when enlightened by faith, the soul has visions of God, and as far as is possible beholds God, and ranges round the bounds of the universe, and before the end of this world already beholds the Judgment, and the payment of the promised rewards. Have thou therefore that faith in Him which comes from your own self, that you may also receive from Him that faith which works things above man.

12. But in learning the Faith and in professing it, acquire and keep that only, which is now delivered to you by the Church, and which has been built up strongly out of all the Scriptures. For since all cannot read the Scriptures, some being hindered as to the knowledge of them by want of learning, and others by a want of leisure, in order that the soul may not perish from ignorance, we comprise the whole doctrine of the Faith in a few lines. This summary I wish you both to commit to memory when I recite it , and to rehearse it with all diligence among yourselves, not writing it out on paper , but engraving it by the memory upon your heart , taking care while you rehearse it that no Catechumen chance to overhear the things which have been delivered to you. I wish you also to keep this as a provision through the whole course of your life, and beside this to receive no other, neither if we ourselves should change and contradict our present teaching, nor if an adverse angel, *transformed into an angel of light* 2 Corinthians 11:14 should wish to lead you astray. *For though we or an angel from heaven preach to you any other gospel than that you have received, let him be to you anathema*. Galatians 1:8-9 So for the present listen while I simply say the Creed , and commit it to memory; but at the proper season expect the confirmation out of Holy Scripture of each part of the contents. For the articles of the Faith were not composed as seemed good to men; but the most important points collected out of all the Scripture make up one complete teaching of the Faith. And just as the mustard seed in one small grain contains many branches, so also this Faith has embraced in few words all the knowledge of godliness in the Old and New Testaments. Take heed then, brethren, and *hold fast the traditions* which you now receive, and *write them on the table of your heart*.

13. Guard them with reverence, lest per chance the enemy despoil any who have grown slack; or lest some heretic pervert any of the truths delivered to you. For faith is like putting money into the bank , even as we have now done; but from you God requires the accounts of the deposit. *I charge you*, as the Apostle says, *before God, who quickens all things, and Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession, that you keep* this faith which is committed to you, *without spot, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*. A treasure of life

> has now been committed to you, and the Master demands the deposit at His appearing, *which in His own times He shall show, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only has immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man has seen nor can see. To Whom be glory, honour, and power* 1 Timothy 6:15-16 for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Getting Past Anger

May 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Deep Strength has an excellent post up today advising a reader on how to get past the "Anger Phase" of the "Red Pill." The whole thing is worth reading, so I won't quote selectively from it. Instead, I wanted to offer a few comments and some practical advice to his reader.

First, I would say that the anger phase is less dangerous than the "Bitter Phase" of the RP. The Bitter phase is what can really destroy a man, and I've seen it happen to a number of men who've found their way to these parts. Problem is, the Bitter Phase is the next phase after the Anger Phase if a man isn't careful (a certain amount of bitterness is unavoidable, but the phase involves lingering and stewing in bitterness). Successfully managing the Anger Phase is key to avoiding that slip into bitterness.

Second, I think that anger has some value if channeled appropriately. A little righteous anger can go a long way. If you use it as a motivator and something to give you that initial kick towards self-improvement, then it can be quite helpful. Just don't rely on it exclusively, or for long.

There were a few things that helped me get over the Anger Phase and not fall into the trap of the Bitter Phase. Here are a few of a more spiritual nature:

- Pray, and pray often. Sometimes small prayers throughout the day can be that extra something you need to get by.
- Read Scripture daily. I didn't do that before, and do now. Also, I recommend reading and praying aloud a Psalm a day, and if you have time, two. One in the morning and one at night would work well.
- Read up on the early Saints. Learn about their lives, and read their writings. This has really been profound for me. So much of what is going on now is a repeat of errors made long ago. St. Anthansius is an excellent source of inspiriation.

A few other bits of advice:

- Work out. It will make you feel great as well as look great. It can improve confidence and give you a sense of control in your life.
- Eat healthy. That fits with above, but you would be surprised what a difference healthy eating can make. It is another way of taking charge of your life in a positive way.
- Socialize more. Most especially, talk to women. Where? Everywhere? When? Whenever you can. Losing your old, bad habits can only be done through trial and experience, and the fires of experience.

Another thing worth covering is performance and approval. My advice would be to stop caring what women think of you. Stop trying to perform for them. That doesn't mean do

the opposite of what they want, it means to stop considering whether they would approve or not. You need to adopt an attitude of ambivalence. When you actively try and perform for women, or seek their approval, you give them power over you. That will never end well. In fact, that advice applies to men as well- just stop seeking approval from others and instead do what you must.

You need to focus on other matters, and other concerns in your life. Build yourself up, both spiritually and temporally. If you work at this hard enough and long enough, you will find that they (women primarily, but men as well) cannot affect you any longer. Fascinatingly enough, the better you are at this, the more success you will actually see with women.

Hope that is of some help.

Saturday Saints- #66

May 3, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is inspired by the letter "L." He also happens to be one of the earliest saints of the Church, and one of the most important, Saint Luke:

> **Luke the Evangelist** (Ancient Greek: Λουκᾶς, *Loukás*) is one of the Four Evangelists—the four authors of canonical Gospels of Jesus Christ. Luke was a native of the Hellenistic city of Antioch in Syria. The early church fathers ascribed to him authorship of both the Gospel according to Luke and the book of Acts of the Apostles, which originally formed a single literary work, referred to as Luke-Acts. Prominent figures in early Christianity such as Jerome and Eusebius later reaffirmed his authorship, although within scholarly circles, both secular and religious, discussions have taken place due to the lack of evidence as to the identity of the author of the works.
>
> The New Testament mentions Luke briefly a few times, and the Pauline epistle to the Colossians refers to him as a doctor; thus he is thought to have been both a physician and a disciple of Paul. Christians since the faith's early years have regarded him as a saint. He is believed to have died a martyr, although accounts of the events do vary.
>
> The Roman Catholic Church and other major denominations venerate him as **Saint Luke the Evangelist** and as a patron saint of artists, physicians, surgeons, students and butchers; his feast day takes place on 18 October.

As might be expected, much more can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.


St. Luke

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #73

May 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage for today comes from the Book of Genesis:

> Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the Lord had blessed
> Abraham in all things. [2] And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his house,
> who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh, [3] and I will
> make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and of the earth, that you will
> not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I
> dwell, [4] but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son
> Isaac.” [5] The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to
> follow me to this land; must I then take your son back to the land from which you
> came?” [6] Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there.
> [7] The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the
> land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your descendants I
> will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for
> my son from there. [8] But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be
> free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.” [9] So the
> servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him
> concerning this matter.

(Genesis 24:1-9)

While re-reading Genesis recently this passage caught my eye. I was particularly intrigued by Abraham’s insistence to his servant that Isaac not return to Ur. It got me thinking about why it was ok for Isaac to take a wife from there, but not live there. After some thought, I wondered if there might be some parallels to Christ and the Church. The Old Testament frequently compared the Lord’s relationship to Israel as that of husband and wife. The Song of Songs, of Solomon, is filled with allegories about such a relationship. But then we see in the New Testament that the spouse of the Lord is to be the Church. And the Church is the New Israel, not the old. Further it is a New Israel that is open to the Gentiles, and not merely the Jews. Part of me wonders if the lesson to be drawn from this passage, and its tie-ins throughout scripture, is that those who are not of God’s people can still become one with Him. However, to do so they must leave their old ways, their old habits, their old “lands” behind. In short, anyone can join with God, but to do so must leave all behind.

The second reading comes from the Book of Wisdom:

> [3] Those who dwelt of old in thy holy land
> [4] thou didst hate for their detestable practices,
> their works of sorcery and unholy rites,
> [5] their merciless slaughter of children,

> and their sacrificial feasting on human flesh and blood.
> These initiates from the midst of a heathen cult,
> [6] these parents who murder helpless lives,
> thou didst will to destroy by the hands of our fathers,
> [7] that the land most precious of all to thee
> might receive a worthy colony of the servants of God.
> [8] But even these thou didst spare, since they were but men,
> and didst send wasps as forerunners of thy army,
> to destroy them little by little,
> [9] though thou wast not unable to give the ungodly into the hands of the righteous in battle,
> or to destroy them at one blow by dread wild beasts or thy stern word.
> [10] But judging them little by little thou gavest them a chance to repent,
> though thou wast not unaware that their origin was evil
> and their wickedness inborn,
> and that their way of thinking would never change.
> [11] For they were an accursed race from the beginning,
> and it was not through fear of any one that thou didst leave them unpunished for their sins.
>
> …

> [19] Through such works thou has taught thy people
> that the righteous man must be kind,
> and thou hast filled thy sons with good hope,
> because thou givest repentance for sins.
> [20] For if thou didst punish with such great care and indulgence
> the enemies of thy servants and those deserving of death,
> granting them time and opportunity to give up their wickedness,
> [21] with what strictness thou hast judged thy sons,
> to whose fathers thou gavest oaths and covenants full of good promises!
> [22] So while chastening us thou scourgest our enemies ten thousand times more,
> so that we may meditate upon thy goodness when we judge,
> and when we are judged we may expect mercy.

(Wisdom 12:1-11, 19-22)

Here we have an important lesson in mercy and forgiveness. As scripture reminds us, the people who lived in Egypt and later in Canaan at the time of Moses were unbelievably wicked (ok, not really, given the depredations of the present age, but still). Yet despite their evil ways God did not destroy them immediately, but gave them a chance to repent. Of course, they had no intention of doing so. But He gave them that chance nonetheless. If He was willing to show mercy and give a chance to repent to them, then we too should match His mercy.

Finally, we conclude with the Gospel according to Luke:

> [11] On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samar′ia and Galilee.
> [12] And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance
> [13] and lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” [14] When
> he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as
> they went they were cleansed. [15] Then one of them, when he saw that he was
> healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; [16] and he fell on his face at
> Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. [17] Then said Jesus, “Were
> not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? [18] Was no one found to return and give
> praise to God except this foreigner?” [19] And he said to him, “Rise and go your
> way; your faith has made you well.”

(Luke 17:11-19)

What is interesting to me about this passage is found in the final words of Jesus: “your faith has made you well.” Other translations say instead “your faith has saved you.” This seems to me to be an instance where translational efforts can have a significant impact on the meaning of scripture. Far more significance can, I think, be drawn from “your faith has saved you” as compared to “your faith has made you well.” For it seems to me that the former is concerned not with temporary health, but Eternal Salvation. And we see in the person of this Samaritan a man who demonstrates real faith.

How so? His faith was alive, not dead. Upon discovering that he was healed, he cannot help but go and praise God. He cannot help, in fact, but seek him out. That is real faith. That is faith which is alive. And that is the faith which is necessary for salvation.

Of course, I might be entirely wrong in this. Perhaps some of my readers, whose understanding of the original Greek is quite capable, can offer their thoughts on this particular passage. Let me know if I might be on the right track or not.

A Man, A Mission, And A Podcast

May 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Ace of Spades recently appeared on a podcast hosted by a gentleman who goes by the name of Beppo Venerdi. You can find the podcast, and Ace's post on the subject, here. I cannot recommend it enough.

A wide array of subjects are discussed, ranging from a little bit of Ace's bio to how he found the 'sphere to whether the Red Pill or The Sunglasses are a better analogy all the way to how men need to approach their Mission in life. It has given me a lot to think about, and I should probably get around to writing a post or two in response.

The most likely subject that I will write about will tie in to a post of mine that Ace mentioned in the podcast, It's Not The Fall That Kills You. That post is almost 2 years old now, and I still think it is one of my best. Its long past overdue for me to take that subject up again and continue where I left off. In the interim, listen to the podcast if you can find the time. I think most will find it quite profitable.

Tradition Thursday- #22

May 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post continues my series on the Catechetical letters of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. His sixth letter is featured in today's post, specifically the beginning of it. The topic is the nature of God:

> Isaiah 45:16, 17. (Sept.)
>
> Sanctify yourselves unto Me, O islands. Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed, neither shall they be confounded for ever, etc.
>
> 1. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed also be His Only-begotten Son. For with the thought of *God* let the thought of *Father* at once be joined, that the ascription of glory to the Father and the Son may be made indivisible. For the Father has not one glory, and the Son another, but one and the same, since He is the Father's Only-begotten Son; and when the Father is glorified, the Son also shares the glory with Him, because the glory of the Son flows from His Father's honour: and again, when the Son is glorified, the Father of so great a blessing is highly honoured.
>
> 2. Now though the mind is most rapid in its thoughts, yet the tongue needs words, and a long recital of intermediary speech. For the eye embraces at once a multitude of the 'starry quire;' but when any one wishes to describe them one by one, which is the Morning-star, and which, the Evening-star, and which each one of them, he has need of many words. In like manner again the mind in the briefest moment compasses earth and sea and all the bounds of the universe; but what it conceives in an instant, it uses many words to describe. Yet forcible as is the example I have mentioned, still it is after all weak and inadequate. For of God we speak not all we ought (for that is known to Him only), but so much as the capacity of human nature has received, and so much as our weakness can bear. For we explain not what God is but candidly confess that we have not exact knowledge concerning Him. For in what concerns God to confess our ignorance is the best knowledge. Therefore magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together —all of us in common, for one alone is powerless; nay rather, even if we be all united together, we shall yet not do it as we ought. I mean not you only who are here present, but even if all the nurslings of the whole Church throughout the world, both that which now is and that which shall be, should meet together, they would not be able worthily to sing the praises of their Shepherd.
>
> 3. A great and honourable man was Abraham, but only great in comparison with men; and when he came before God, then speaking the truth candidly he says, *I am earth and ashes*. Genesis 18:27 He did not say 'earth,' and then cease, lest

he should call himself by the name of that great element; but he added *'and ashes,'* that he might represent his perishable and frail nature. Is there anything, he says, smaller or lighter than ashes? For take, says he, the comparison of ashes to a house, of a house to a city, a city to a province, a province to the Roman Empire, and the Roman Empire to the whole earth and all its bounds, and the whole earth to the heaven in which it is embosomed;— the earth, which bears the same proportion to the heaven as the centre to the whole circumference of a wheel, for the earth is no more than this in comparison with the heaven : consider then that this first heaven which is seen is less than the second, and the second than the third, for so far Scripture has named them, not that they are only so many, but because it was expedient for us to know so many only. And when in thought you have surveyed all the heavens, not yet will even the heavens be able to praise God as He is, nay, not if they should resound with a voice louder than thunder. But if these great vaults of the heavens cannot worthily sing God's praise, when shall *'earth and ashes,'* the smallest and least of things existing, be able to send up a worthy hymn of praise to God, or worthily to speak of God, *that sits upon the circle of the earth, and holds the inhabitants thereof as grasshoppers* Isaiah 40:22 .

4. If any man attempt to speak of God, let him first describe the bounds of the earth. You dwell on the earth, and the limit of this earth which is your dwelling you know not: how then shall you be able to form a worthy thought of its Creator? You behold the stars, but their Maker you behold not: count these which are visible, and then describe Him who is invisible, *Who tells the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names*. Violent rains lately came pouring down upon us, and nearly destroyed us: number the drops in this city alone: nay, I say not in the city, but number the drops on your own house for one single hour, if you can, but you can not. Learn then your own weakness; learn from this instance the mightiness of God: for *He has numbered the drops of rain* , which have been poured down on all the earth, not only now but in all time. The sun is a work of God, which, great though it be, is but a spot in comparison with the whole heaven; first gaze steadfastly upon the sun, and then curiously scan the Lord of the sun. *Seek not the things that are too deep for you, neither search out the things that are above your strength: what is commanded you, think thereupon* Sirach 3:21-22 .

5. But some one will say, If the Divine substance is incomprehensible, why then do you discourse of these things? So then, because I cannot drink up all the river, am I not even to take in moderation what is expedient for me? Because with eyes so constituted as mine I cannot take in all the sun, am I not even to look upon him enough to satisfy my wants? Or again, because I have entered into a great garden, and cannot eat all the supply of fruits, would you have me go away altogether hungry? I praise and glorify Him that made us; for it is a divine command which says, *Let every breath praise the Lord*. I am attempting now to

glorify the Lord, but not to describe Him, knowing nevertheless that I shall fall short of glorifying Him worthily, yet deeming it a work of piety even to attempt it at all. For the Lord Jesus encourages my weakness, by saying, *No man has seen God at any time*.

6. What then, some man will say, is it not written, *The little ones' Angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven* Matthew 18:10? Yes, but the Angels see God not as He is, but as far as they themselves are capable. For it is Jesus Himself who says, *Not that any man has seen the Father, save He which is of God, He has seen the Father*. John 6:46 The Angels therefore behold as much as they can bear, and Archangels as much as they are able; and Thrones and Dominions more than the former, but yet less than His worthiness: for with the Son the Holy Ghost alone can rightly behold Him: for *He searches all things, and knows even the deep things of God* 1 Corinthians 2:10: as indeed the Only-begotten Son also, with the Holy Ghost, knows the Father fully: For *neither*, says He, *knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him*. Matthew 11:27 For He fully beholds, and, according as each can bear, reveals God through the Spirit: since the Only-begotten Son together with the Holy Ghost is a partaker of the Father's Godhead. He, who was begotten knows Him who begot; and He Who begot knows Him who is begotten. Since Angels then are ignorant (for to each according to his own capacity does the Only-begotten reveal Him through the Holy Ghost, as we have said), let no man be ashamed to confess his ignorance. I am speaking now, as all do on occasion: but how we speak, we cannot tell: how then can I declare Him who has given us speech? I who have a soul, and cannot tell its distinctive properties, how shall I be able to describe its Giver?

7. For devotion it suffices us simply to know that we have a God; a God who is One, a living , an ever-living God; always like Himself ; who has no Father, none mightier than Himself, no successor to thrust Him out from His kingdom: Who in name is manifold, in power infinite, in substance uniform. For though He is called Good, and Just, and Almighty and Sabaoth , He is not on that account diverse and various; but being one and the same, He sends forth countless operations of His Godhead, not exceeding here and deficient there, but being in all things like Himself. Not great in loving-kindness only, and little in wisdom, but with wisdom and loving-kindness in equal power: not seeing in part, and in part devoid of sight; but being all eye, and all ear, and all mind : not like us perceiving in part and in part not knowing; for such a statement were blasphemous, and unworthy of the Divine substance. He foreknows the things that be; He is Holy, and Almighty, and excels all in goodness, and majesty, and wisdom: of Whom we can declare neither beginning, nor form, nor shape. For *you have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape* John 5:37, says Holy Scripture. Wherefore Moses says also to the Israelites: *And take good heed to your own souls, for you saw no similitude*. Deuteronomy 4:15 For if it is wholly impossible to imagine His

likeness, how shall thought come near His substance?

8. There have been many imaginations by many persons, and all have failed. Some have thought that God is fire; others that He is, as it were, a man with wings, because of a true text ill understood, *You shall hide me under the shadow of Your wings*. They forgot that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten, speaks in like manner concerning Himself to Jerusalem, *How often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen does gather her chickens under her wings, and you would not*. Matthew 23:37 For whereas God's protecting power was conceived as wings, they failing to understand this sank down to the level of things human, and supposed that the Unsearchable exists in the likeness of man. Some again dared to say that He has seven eyes, because it is written, *seven eyes of the Lord looking upon the whole earth*. Zechariah 4:10 For if He has but seven eyes surrounding Him in part, His seeing is therefore partial and not perfect: but to say this of God is blasphemous; for we must believe that God is in all things perfect, according to our Saviour's word, which says, *Your Father in heaven is perfect* Matthew 5:48: perfect in sight, perfect in power, perfect in greatness, perfect in foreknowledge, perfect in goodness, perfect in justice, perfect in loving-kindness: not circumscribed in any space, but the Creator of all space, existing in all, and circumscribed by none. *Heaven is His throne*, but higher is He that sits thereon: *and earth is His footstool* Isaiah 66:1, but His power reaches unto things under the earth.

9. One He is, everywhere present, beholding all things, perceiving all things, creating all things through Christ: *For all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made*. John 1:3 A fountain of every good, abundant and unfailing, a river of blessings, an eternal light of never-failing splendour, an insuperable power condescending to our infirmities: whose very Name we dare not hear. *Will you find a footstep of the Lord?* says Job, *or have you attained unto the least things which the Almighty has made* ? If the least of His works are incomprehensible, shall He be comprehended who made them all? *Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him*. 1 Corinthians 2:9 If the things which God has prepared are incomprehensible to our thoughts, how can we comprehend with our mind Himself who has prepared them? *O the depth of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out* Romans 11:33! says the Apostle. If His judgments and His ways are incomprehensible, can He Himself be comprehended?

10. God then being thus great, and yet greater, (for even were I to change my whole substance into tongue, I could not speak His excellence: nay more, not even if all Angels should assemble, could they ever speak His worth), God being therefore so great in goodness and majesty, man has yet dared to say to a stone that he has graven, *You are my God* Isaiah 44:17! O monstrous blindness, that

> from majesty so great came down so low! The tree which was planted by God, and nourished by the rain, and afterwards burnt and turned into ashes by the fire—this is addressed as God, and the true God is despised. But the wickedness of idolatry grew yet more prodigal, and cat, and dog, and wolf were worshipped instead of God: the man-eating lion also was worshipped instead of God, the most loving friend of man. The snake and the serpent , counterfeit of him who thrust us out of Paradise, were worshipped, and He who planted Paradise was despised. And I am ashamed to say, and yet do say it, even onions were worshipped among some. Wine was given *to make glad the heart of man* : and Dionysus (Bacchus) was worshipped instead of God. God made grain by saying, *Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed after his kind and after his likeness* Genesis 1:11, *that bread may strengthen man's heart* : why then was Demeter (Ceres) worshipped? Fire comes forth from striking stones together even to this day: how then was Hephæstus (Vulcan) the creator of fire?
>
> 11. Whence came the polytheistic error of the Greeks ? God has no body: whence then the adulteries alleged among those who are by them called gods? I say nothing of the transformations of Zeus into a swan: I am ashamed to speak of his transformations into a bull: for bellowings are unworthy of a god. The god of the Greeks has been found an adulterer, yet are they not ashamed: for if he is an adulterer let him not be called a god. They tell also of deaths , and falls , and thunder-strokes of their gods. Do you see from how great a height and how low they have fallen? Was it without reason then that the Son of God came down from heaven? Or was it that He might heal so great a wound? Was it without reason that the Son came? Or was it in order that the Father might be acknowledged? You have learned what moved the Only-begotten to come down from the throne at God's right hand. The Father was despised, the Son must needs correct the error: for He Through Whom All Things Were Made must bring them all as offerings to the Lord of all. The wound must be healed: for what could be worse than this disease, that a stone should be worshiped instead of God?

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #67

May 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is Maximus of Turin:

> **Saint Maximus of Turin** (Italian: *San Massimo*; date of birth unknown – death between 408 and 423) was a bishop and theological writer. Maximus is believed to have been a native of Rhaetia (Modern day Northern Italy.

He is another one of the early saints of which we know relatively little. And even of what we do know much is probably legend. Some of his works have survived, however, and give an idea of the thought and practices of the Church of his time. Somewhat more can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



St. Maximus of Turin

MCJDGI

May 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I've decided to adopt the acronym which is this post's title and use it in the future, both in posts and comments. I'm not sure if it is original or not; it wouldn't surprise me if someone else thought it up before me.

Oh, as for what MCJDGI means? Simple enough:

Most Christians Just Don't Get It

I chose that particular acronym because it was more civil and polite than some of the others I thought up. It doesn't really roll off the tongue though, and I may choose another one if I can think up something that sounds better. But enough of that.

The reason for this post is founded in the simple enough notion that Most Christians Just Don't Get It. They (most Christians) have no clue what is going on in the world around them, and make a mess of things when they try and solve various problems, either in the church or general society. I suppose I could say Churchians, instead of Christians, but I think even most actual Christians don't get a lot. An excellent example of how MCJDGI can be found in the issue of pornography. While they understand it is a problem, their proposed solutions, and their understanding of why it is a problem, are sorely lacking.

Case in point: this article which Lori Alexander posted on her blog. Read it before continuing.

Now, set aside the obvious theological errors contained therein. [Of course there is a link between bad theology and the other errors, but ignore that for the moment.]

Set aside the unnecessary male bashing and the misunderstanding of the present marriage market (which are pretty much case in point with most Christians these days).

Focusing only on pornography, we can see from that small article that this Michael fellow Just Doesn't Get It. He fails to grasp a simple enough truth:

Rampant pornography usage is a SYMPTOM.

That is right, a SYMPTOM. A sign of another, greater problem. Or several of them, as case may be.

Here is the thing: boys and young men have been looking at naughty pictures of various stripes for thousands of years. This is nothing new. The ease of access, and the life-like nature of it might be new, but the drive to access it is not new at all.

And offsetting all of that was the easy access in the past to prostitution. I don't think we in the West understand just how ubiquitous prostitution used to be. Boys and young men didn't have to settle for pornography in the past- they could get the real thing at a local brothel for fairly cheap. Let's face it- most men have always needed an outlet for their sex drive. That is just the way we are wired. Teaching young men discipline and restrain can help a lot, but its not a permanent solution for most. Young marriage was the solution that the early Church taught, so as to help young men avoid the sin of fornication; too

bad most Christians these days don't encourage it (or even actively oppose it).

Of course, that only explains part of it. There is another cause at play here, another source of this particular symptom. And it happens to be the *real* problem. That problem that Michael Pearl doesn't identify? A lack of strong fathers in the lives of young men.

When you get down to it, most of the deviancy or immoral behavior that he describes can be attributed to the absence of strong fathers in most Christian families. Sometimes this is because mom has kicked dad out (and brought in dad #2 or #3 or whatever). Other times the actual father might be present. But he is anything but strong. In most instances he is weak willed and incapable of exerting the kind of presence and influence over his son that is necessary to help the son build up true discipline. Most young Christian men have no masculine role models in their lives, and it shows. Without strong fathers to guide them, we should expect that many, if not most, young Christian men are going to go astray somehow.

Unfortunately, MCJDGI. They cannot see how this particular issue- the crisis of Christian fatherhood, is at the root of most ills in the church. And as long as they are blind to it (whether willfully or by ignorance), things are only going to get worse.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #74

May 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's first passages comes from the Gospel according to Luke:

> And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. [2] He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. [3] And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' [4] For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, [5] yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" [6] And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. [7] And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? [8] I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

(Luke 18:1-8)

This particular passages always makes me cringe a little at the end. The question that Jesus asks at the end seems directed not towards the disciples, but to us who read so very many years later. I have no doubt it was intentional- Jesus knew those words of His would be saved and recorded, and would serve as a warning to his disciples in later ages. But at the same time, it should also encourage us, for He cared for us who did not exist even then. Such is His love for us, that it transcends time.

This brings me to the second passage today, from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians:

> [14] I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. [15] For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. [16] I urge you, then, be imitators of me. [17] That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. [18] Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. [19] But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. [20] For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. [21] What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

(1 Corinthians 4:14-21)

I am curious about this passage, in so far as St. Paul referring to himself as a spiritual father to the Corinthians. Do any of my Catholic or Orthodox readers know if this passage plays a role in the apostolic tradition of referring to priests as "Father?"

I heard a homily today concerning the evils of gossip, and how it can undermine faith and community. With that in mind, this passage from the Letter of St. James seems appropriate:

> Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we
> who teach will be judged with greater strictness. [2] For we all stumble in many
> ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able
> also to bridle his whole body. [3] If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that
> they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. [4] Look at the ships also:
> though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a
> very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. [5] So also the tongue is a
> small member, yet it boasts of great things.
>
> How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! [6] And the tongue is a fire, a
> world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the
> whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. [7] For
> every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has
> been tamed by mankind, [8] but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a
> restless evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with
> it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. [10] From the same mouth
> come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. [11] Does
> a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? [12] Can a fig
> tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt
> pond yield fresh water.

(James 3:1-12)

James spends a lot of time addressing the evil of gossip and the unbridled tongue in his letter. I rather suspect that the Church in Jerusalem (which I recall was where he was overseer) had some significant problems with that specific vice. Sadly, nothing has really changed as gossip is still finding fertile ground within the church today. Hence the importance of keeping St. James's words in our hearts.

Resisting Timidity In The Modern Church

May 12, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Monseigneur Pope has an excellent article discussing St. Paul's freeing of the sooth-saying slave girl and how that relates to widespread cowardice in the Church today. A snippet:

> **And what of us today?** We have gone through a long period during which the faith could be lived quietly and generally fit quite well into the world in which we lived. Harmony and "getting along" were highly prized. Particularly here in America, Catholics wanted to reassure the general populace that our faith in no way hindered us from being full participants in the American scene and that we could fit right in and be just like everyone else. With the election of the first Catholic president back in 1960, we could say that we had finally made it and had been fully accepted. Finally we fit in.
>
> **Of course the culture was not in such disrepair in those days** and there was a fairly wide moral consensus rooted in the Judeo-Christian vision. Now that we have finally "made it," the fire of our distinctively Catholic culture seems to have faded away. At the same time, Western culture has also largely died. (Is it a coincidence?)
>
> **In recent years, so-called Catholic universities and other institutions have been caving in to pressure.** They are affording marriage benefits to same-sex bedfellows and succumbing to the HHS mandates to provide contraceptives and abortifacients. This is sad, pathetic, wrong, and cowardly—hardly the revolutionary faith that got Paul arrested.
>
> **And now we are coming full circle. We must rediscover how revolutionary our Catholic faith truly is to this world gone mad.** And as we proclaim healing and profess an allegiance to something other than this world, we will become increasingly repugnant to the world around us.

I would encourage my readers to read the entire article.

Falling Dominoes: Enforcing Silence

May 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This is the first in an irregular series that will continue the ideas I expressed long ago in my post It's Not The Fall That Kills You. It will cover various ways that society, the church or various institutions are starting to fall apart. In that post I compared the collapse of society with lines of dominoes toppling, one after another. Here is a snippet of that explanation:

> Many people seem to expect that there will be some kind of "collapse", or catastrophic event which marks "the Decline," or perhaps its culmination. This is proceeded usually by a period of free-fall which may be what most think of in terms of "the Decline."
>
> Instead Ace provides us with an analogy which highlights that the Decline is a series of discrete events, each of which when triggered will fall and potentially trigger another event. The sheer complexity of the situation is too much for a single line of dominoes, instead we are talking about lines and lines of dominoes, linking around and intermixing with one another, all connected by a myriad of pathways. So even a few dominoes being toppled will quickly lead to line after line being set into motion; before long matters will quickly spiral out of control. Everything will topple.

Today's post addresses a subject that a few others have addressed before, although I aim to explore it in a somewhat different light: the enforcement of "anti-discrimination" laws so as to require Christians to engage in conduct they otherwise would not want to engage in. Most recently this has focused on bakeries owned or operated by Christians who have been asked to cater for same-sex unions.

Now, others have examined whether Christians ought to refuse or not before, with Deep Strength's post on the subject being a good example. But that is not my focus. Whether or not Christians should refuse or not isn't what concerns me. Rather, what I am concerned with is "anti-discrimination" laws in the first place, and the enforcement regime they create.

As I see it, such laws (at least when the subject of homosexuality is concerned) have two greater and generally under the radar purposes-

The first is social affirmation. Protecting something means that is has value; this can apply to behavior or identity or some combination thereof. Anti-discrimination laws (in this context) give those they "protect" a sense of validation that essentially allows them to feel good about themselves.

The second, and ultimately more important purpose, is to squelch any public expression of Christian orthodoxy when it comes to homosexuality. However, refusing to recognize homosexual behavior is only among the first aspects of the Faith belief to be targeted. It

won’t end there.

I won’t mince any words here. The goal, the long term goal, is to criminalize *any* outward signs of orthodox Christian beliefs. Anything that is an orthodox Christian belief will be targeted if it conflicts with modernist sensibilities. Nothing is sacred, and nothing is safe. In fact, it won’t stop there. Christians may well be affirmatively required in some circumstances to express views that conflict with core tenets of the Faith.

I called this particular post “Enforcing Silence” because silencing Christians is the main goal. But even silence may not be enough for some. Those who refuse to parrot acceptable slogans ~~might~~ will find themselves under suspicion. Christians who hold to orthodox beliefs will find it increasingly difficult, as time passes, to work within the general confines of society. Their silence will not be overlooked.

Ultimately, I suspect that those who hold to orthodoxy will have to isolate themselves from greater society. Think the Amish. While it may not be enforced at the point of a gun, it will be the only way to be safe from the intrusions of the State. Of course, this might well only work for a time. The Amish have been tolerated for some time, and those who join them in isolated Christian communities might be tolerated as well. But modernists (and especially SJWs) are relentless and totalitarian. There is a very good chance that they would turn their eyes upon those communities given enough time, and without other, more pressing distractions. The real question is whether the system will last that long.

As for how this ties in to falling dominoes? Well, every time such a law is enacted a domino falls. Every time one is enforced a domino falls. Every time a Christian is forced to close his or her business, or cannot voice their beliefs, another domino topples.

The acceptance, by many ~~Christians~~ Churchians, of these kinds of laws, is a demonstration of just how many dominoes have toppled already. Things are already so far gone most Christians fail to see the situation for what it is. And even if they could, many would still choose to love the world, and not God.

Where is this heading? Well, the past (especially the earliest days of the Church) holds some clues. But things are somewhat different, and I might, in another post, explore why the future will not be a repeat of the past.

[*Apologies for the roughness of this post. Some of the ideas are still not crystal clear in my head, but I felt that it was important to get this post out sooner, rather than later. Hopefully the comments will provide needed clarity and expansion of thought.*]

Tradition Thursday- #23

May 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is the second part of St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters. In this section of the letter St. Cyril examines various heresies. It is a very long read, butI've decided to abridge it any. History is featured as much as theology, and I think some of my readers might find some of the early heresies and their history fascinating.

> 12. And not among the heathen only did the devil make these assaults; for many of those who are falsely called Christians, and wrongfully addressed by the sweet name of Christ, have ere now impiously dared to banish God from His own creation. I mean the brood of heretics, those most ungodly men of evil name, pretending to be friends of Christ but utterly hating Him. For he who blasphemes the Father of the Christ is an enemy of the Son. These men have dared to speak of two Godheads, one good and one evil! O monstrous blindness! If a Godhead, then assuredly good. But if not good, why called a Godhead? For if goodness is an attribute of God; if loving-kindness, beneficence, almighty power, are proper to God, then of two things one, either in calling Him God let the name and operation be united; or if they would rob Him of His operations, let them not give Him the bare name.
>
> 13. Heretics have dared to say that there are two Gods, and of good and evil two sources, and these unbegotten. If both are unbegotten it is certain that they are also equal, and both mighty. How then does the light destroy the darkness? And do they ever exist together, or are they separated? Together they cannot be; *for what fellowship has light with darkness?* says the Apostle. But if they are far from each other, it is certain that they hold also each his own place; and if they hold their own separate places, we are certainly in the realm of one God, and certainly worship one God. For thus we must conclude, even if we assent to their folly, that we must worship one God. Let us examine also what they say of the good God. Hath He power or no power? If He has power, how did evil arise against His will? And how does the evil substance intrude, if He be not willing? For if He knows but cannot hinder it, they charge Him with want of power; but if He has the power, yet hinders not, they accuse Him of treachery. Mark too their want of sense. At one time they say that the Evil One has no communion with the good God in the creation of the world; but at another time they say that he has the fourth part only. Also they say that the good God is the Father of Christ; but Christ they call this sun. If, therefore according to them, the world was made by the Evil One, and the sun is in the world, how is the Son of the Good an unwilling slave in the kingdom of the Evil? We bemire ourselves in speaking of these things, but we do it lest any of those present should from ignorance fall into the mire of the heretics. I know that I have defiled my own mouth and the ears of my listeners: yet it is expedient. For it is much better to hear absurdities charged against

others, than to fall into them from ignorance: far better that thou know the mire and hate it, than unawares fall into it. For the godless system of the heresies is a road with many branches, and whenever a man has strayed from the one straight way, then he falls down precipices again and again.

14. The inventor of all heresy was Simon Magus : that Simon, who in the Acts of the Apostles thought to purchase with money the unsaleable grace of the Spirit, and heard the words, *You have neither part nor lot in this matter* Acts 8:18-21, and the rest: concerning whom also it is written, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us*. 1 John 2:19 This man, after he had been cast out by the Apostles, came to Rome, and gaining over one Helena a harlot , was the first that dared with blasphemous mouth to say that it was himself who appeared on Mount Sinai as the Father, and afterwards appeared among the Jews, not in real flesh but in seeming , as Christ Jesus, and afterwards as the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send as the Paraclete. And he so deceived the City of Rome that Claudius set up his statue, and wrote beneath it, in the language of the Romans, *Simoni Deo Sancto,* which being interpreted signifies, *To Simon the Holy God.*

15. As the delusion was extending, Peter and Paul, a noble pair, chief rulers of the Church, arrived and set the error right ; and when the supposed god Simon wished to show himself off, they straightway showed him as a corpse. For Simon promised to rise aloft to heaven, and came riding in a dæmon.' chariot on the air; but the servants of God fell on their knees, and having shown that agreement of which Jesus spoke, that *If two of you shall agree concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done unto them* Matthew 18:19, they launched the weapon of their concord in prayer against Magus, and struck him down to the earth. And marvellous though it was, yet no marvel. For Peter was there, who carries the keys of heaven : and nothing wonderful, for Paul was there , who was *caught up to the third heaven*, and *into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful far a man to utter*. These brought the supposed God down from the sky to earth, thence to be taken down to the regions below the earth. In this man first the serpent of wickedness appeared; but when one head had been cut off, the root of wickedness was found again with many heads.

16. For Cerinthus *made havoc of the Church*, and Menander , and Carpocrates , Ebionites also, and Marcion , that mouthpiece of ungodliness. For he who proclaimed different gods, one the Good, the other the Just, contradicts the Son when He says, *O righteous Father*. John 17:25 And he who says again that the Father is one, and the maker of the world another, opposes the Son when He says, *If then God so clothes the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the furnace of fire* Luke 12:28; and, *Who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust*. Matthew 5:45 Here again is a second inventor of more mischief, this Marcion. For being confuted by the testimonies from the Old Testament which are quoted in the

New, he was the first who dared to cut those testimonies out , and leave the preaching of the word of faith without witness, thus effacing the true God: and sought to undermine the Church’s faith, as if there were no heralds of it.

17. He again was succeeded by another, Basilides, of evil name, and dangerous character, a preacher of impurities. The contest of wickedness was aided also by Valentinus , a preacher of thirty gods. The Greeks tell of but few: and the man who was called— but more truly was not— a Christian extended the delusion to full thirty. He says, too, that Bythus the Abyss (for it became him as being an abyss of wickedness to begin his teaching from the Abyss) begot Silence, and of Silence begot the Word. This Bythus was worse than the Zeus of the Greeks, who was united to his sister: for Silence was said to be the child of Bythus. Do you see the absurdity invested with a show of Christianity? Wait a little, and you will be shocked at his impiety; for he asserts that of this Bythus were begotten eight Æons; and of them, ten; and of them, other twelve, male and female. But whence is the proof of these things? See their silliness from their fabrications. Whence have you the proof of the thirty Æons? Because, says he, it is written, that *Jesus was baptized*, *being thirty years old*. Luke 3:23 But even if He was baptized when thirty years old, what sort of demonstration is this from the thirty years? Are there then five gods, because He broke five loaves among five thousand? Or because he had twelve Disciples, must there also be twelve gods?

18. And even this is still little compared with the impieties which follow. For the last of the deities being, as he dares to speak, both male and female, this, he says, is Wisdom. What impiety! For *the Wisdom of God* 1 Corinthians 1:24 is Christ His Only-begotten Son: and he by his doctrine degraded the Wisdom of God into a female element, and one of thirty, and the last fabrication. He also says that Wisdom attempted to behold the first God, and not bearing His brightness fell from heaven, and was cast out of her thirtieth place. Then she groaned, and of her groans begot the Devil , and as she wept over her fall made of her tears the sea. Mark the impiety. For of Wisdom how is the Devil begotten, and of prudence wickedness, or of light darkness? He says too that the Devil begot others, some of whom created the world: and that the Christ came down in order to make mankind revolt from the Maker of the world.

19. But hear whom they say Christ Jesus to be, that you may detest them yet more. For they say that after Wisdom had been cast down, in order that the number of the thirty might not be incomplete, the nine and twenty Æons contributed each a little part, and formed the Christ : and they say that He also is both male and female. Can anything be more impious than this? Anything more wretched? I am describing their delusion to you, in order that you may hate them the more. Shun, therefore, their impiety, and *do not even give greeting to* a man of this kind, lest you have *fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness* Ephesians 5:11: neither make curious inquiries, nor be willing to enter into conversation with them.

20. Hate all heretics, but especially him who is rightly named after mania , who arose not long ago in the reign of Probus. For the delusion began full seventy years ago , and there are men still living who saw him with their very eyes. But hate him not for this, that he lived a short time ago; but because of his impious doctrines hate thou the worker of wickedness, the receptacle of all filth, who gathered up the mire of every heresy. For aspiring to become pre-eminent among wicked men, he took the doctrines of all, and having combined them into one heresy filled with blasphemies and all iniquity, he makes havoc of the Church, or rather of those outside the Church, roaming about like a lion and devouring. Heed not their fair speech, nor their supposed humility: for they are serpents, *a generation of vipers*. Matthew 3:7 Judas too *said Hail! Master* , even while he was betraying Him. Heed not their kisses, but beware of their venom.

21. Now, lest I seem to accuse him without reason, let me make a digression to tell who this Manes is, and in part what he teaches: for all time would fail to describe adequately the whole of his foul teaching. But *for help in time of need* Hebrews 4:16, store up in your memory what I have said to former hearers, and will repeat to those now present, that they who know not may learn, and they who know may be reminded. Manes is not of Christian origin, God forbid! nor was he like Simon cast out of the Church, neither himself nor the teachers who were before him. For he steals other men’s wickedness, and makes their wickedness his own: but how and in what manner you must hear.

22. There was in Egypt one Scythianus , a Saracen by birth, having nothing in common either with Judaism or with Christianity. This man, who dwelt at Alexandria and imitated the life of Aristotle , composed four books , one called a Gospel which had not the acts of Christ, but the mere name only, and one other called the book of Chapters, and a third of Mysteries, and a fourth, which they circulate now, the Treasure. This man had a disciple, Terebinthus by name. But when Scythianus purposed to come into Judæa, and make havoc of the land, the Lord smote him with a deadly disease, and stayed the pestilence.

23. But Terebinthus, his disciple in this wicked error, inherited his money and books and heresy , and came to Palestine, and becoming known and condemned in Judæa he resolved to pass into Persia: but lest he should be recognised there also by his name he changed it and called himself Buddas. However, he found adversaries there also in the priests of Mithras : and being confuted in the discussion of many arguments and controversies, and at last hard pressed, he took refuge with a certain widow. Then having gone up on the housetop, and summoned the dæmons of the air, whom the Manichees to this day invoke over their abominable ceremony of the fig , he was smitten of God, and cast down from the housetop, and expired: and so the second beast was cut off.

24. The books, however, which were the records of his impiety, remained; and both these and his money the widow inherited. And having neither kinsman nor any other friend, she determined to buy with the money a boy named Cubricus :

him she adopted and educated as a son in the learning of the Persians, and thus sharpened an evil weapon against mankind. So Cubricus, the vile slave, grew up in the midst of philosophers, and on the death of the widow inherited both the books and the money. Then, lest the name of slavery might be a reproach, instead of Cubricus he called himself Manes, which in the language of the Persians signifies discourse. For as he thought himself something of a disputant, he surnamed himself Manes, as it were an excellent master of discourse. But though he contrived for himself an honourable title according to the language of the Persians, yet the providence of God caused him to become a self-accuser even against his will, that through thinking to honour himself in Persia, he might proclaim himself among the Greeks by name a maniac.

25. He dared too to say that he was the Paraclete, though it is written, *But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, has no forgiveness*. Mark 3:29 He committed blasphemy therefore by saying that he was the Holy Ghost: let him that communicates with those heretics see with whom he is enrolling himself. The slave shook the world, since *by three things the earth is shaken, and the fourth it cannot bear—if a slave became a king*. Proverbs 30:21-22 Having come into public he now began to promise things above man's power. The son of the King of the Persians was sick, and a multitude of physicians were in attendance: but Manes promised, as if he were a godly man, to cure him by prayer. With the departure of the physicians, the life of the child departed: and the man's impiety was detected. So the would-be philosopher was a prisoner, being cast into prison not for reproving the king in the cause of truth, not for destroying the idols, but for promising to save and lying, or rather, if the truth must be told, for committing murder. For the child who might have been saved by medical treatment, was murdered by this man's driving away the physicians, and killing him by want of treatment.

26. Now as there are very many wicked things which I tell you of him, remember first his blasphemy, secondly his slavery (not that slavery is a disgrace, but that his pretending to be free-born, when he was a slave, was wicked), thirdly, the falsehood of his promise, fourthly, the murder of the child, and fifthly, the disgrace of the imprisonment. And there was not only the disgrace of the prison, but also the flight from prison. For he who called himself the Paraclete and champion of the truth, ran away: he was no successor of Jesus, who readily went to the Cross, but this man was the reverse, a runaway. Moreover, the King of the Persians ordered the keepers of the prison to be executed: so Manes was the cause of the child's death through his vain boasting, and of the jailers' death through his flight. Ought then he, who shared the guilt of murder, to be worshipped? Ought he not to have followed the example of Jesus, and said, *If you seek Me, let these go their way* John 18:8? Ought he not to have said, like Jonas, *Take me, and cast me into the sea: for this storm is because of me* Jonah 1:12?

27. He escapes from the prison, and comes into Mesopotamia: but there Bishop

Archelaus, a shield of righteousness, encounters him : and having accused him before philosophers as judges, and having assembled an audience of Gentiles, lest if Christians gave judgment, the judges might be thought to show favour—Tell us what you preach, said Archelaus to Manes. And he, whose *mouth was as an open sepulchre* , began first with blasphemy against the Maker of all things, saying, The God of the Old Testament is the author of evils, as He says of Himself, *I am a consuming fire*. Deuteronomy 4:24 But the wise Archelaus undermined his blasphemous argument by saying, *If the God of the Old Testament, as you say, calls Himself a fire, whose Son is He who says, I came to send fire on the earth Luke 12:49? If you find fault with Him who says, The Lord kills, and makes alive 1 Samuel 2:6, why do you honour Peter, who raised up Tabitha, but struck Sapphira dead? If again you find fault, because He prepared fire, wherefore do you not find fault with Him who says, Depart from Me into everlasting fire Matthew 25:41? If you find fault with Him who says, I am God that make peace, and create evil Isaiah 45:7, explain how Jesus says, I came not to send peace but a sword. Matthew 10:34 Since both speak alike, of two things one, either both are good, because of their agreement, or if Jesus is blameless in so speaking. why do you blame Him that says the like in the Old Testament?*

28. Then Manes answers him: *And what sort of God causes blindness? For it is Paul who says, In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the Gospel should shine unto them.* But Archelaus made a good retort, saying, Read a little before: *But if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing*. 2 Corinthians 4:3 Do you see that in them that are perishing it is veiled? For it is not right *to give the things which are holy unto the dogs*. Matthew 7:6 Again, Is it only the God of the Old Testament that has blinded the minds of them that believe not? Hath not Jesus Himself said, *For this cause speak I unto them in parables, that seeing they may not see* ? Was it from hating them that He wished them not to see? Or because of their unworthiness, since *their eyes they had closed*. Matthew 13:15 For where there is wilful wickedness, there is also a withholding of grace: *for to him that has shall be given; but from him that has not shall be taken even that which he seems to have*.

29. *But if some are right in their interpretation, we must say as follows (for it is no unworthy expression)— If indeed He blinded the thoughts of them that believe not he blinded them for a good purpose, that they might look with new sight on what is good. For he said not, He blinded their soul, but, the thoughts of them that believe not. And the meaning is something of this kind: 'Blind the lewd thoughts of the lewd, and the man is saved: blind the grasping and rapacious thought of the robber, and the man is saved.' But will you not understand it thus? Then there is yet another interpretation. The sun also blinds those whose sight is dim: and they whose eyes are diseased are hurt by the light and blinded. Not that the sun's nature is to blind, but that the substance of the eyes is incapable*

of seeing. In like manner unbelievers being diseased in their heart cannot look upon the radiance of the Godhead. Nor has he said, 'He has blinded their thoughts, that they should not hear the Gospel:' but, that the light of the glory of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ should not shine unto them. For to hear the Gospel is permitted to all: but the glory of the Gospel is reserved for Christ's true children only. Therefore the Lord spoke in parables to those who could not hear Matthew 13:13: but to the Disciples he explained the parables in private Mark 4:34: for the brightness of the glory is for those who have been enlightened, the blinding for them that believe not. These mysteries, which the Church now explains to you who art passing out of the class of Catechumens, it is not the custom to explain to heathen. For to a heathen we do not explain the mysteries concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, nor before Catechumens do we speak plainly of the mysteries: but many things we often speak in a veiled way, that the believers who know may understand, and they who know not may get no hurt.

30. By such and many other arguments the serpent was overthrown: thus did Archelaus wrestle with Manes and threw him. Again, he who had fled from prison flees from this place also: and having run away from his antagonist, he comes to a very poor village, like the serpent in Paradise when he left Adam and came to Eve. But the good shepherd Archelaus taking forethought for his sheep, when he heard of his flight, straightway hastened with all speed in search of the wolf. And when Manes suddenly saw his adversary, he rushed out and fled: it was however his last flight. For the officers of the King of Persia searched everywhere, and caught the fugitive: and the sentence, which he ought to have received in the presence of Archelaus, is passed upon him by the king's officers. This Manes, whom his own disciples worship, is arrested and brought before the king. The king reproached him with his falsehood and his flight: poured scorn upon his slavish condition, avenged the murder of his child, and condemned him also for the murder of the jailers: he commands him to be flayed after the Persian fashion. And while the rest of his body was given over for food of wild beasts, his skin, the receptacle of his vile mind, was hung up before the gates like a sack. He that called himself the Paraclete and professed to know the future, knew not his own flight and capture.

31. This man has had three disciples, Thomas, and Baddas, and Hermas. Let none read the Gospel according to Thomas : for it is the work not of one of the twelve Apostles, but of one of the three wicked disciples of Manes. Let none associate with the soul-destroying Manicheans, who by decoctions of chaff counterfeit the sad look of fasting, who speak evil of the Creator of meats, and greedily devour the daintiest, who teach that the man who plucks up this or that herb is changed into it. For if he who crops herbs or any vegetable is changed into the same, into how many will husbandmen and the tribe of gardeners be changed ? The gardener, as we see, has used his sickle against so many: into which then is he changed? Verily their doctrines are ridiculous, and fraught with

their own condemnation and shame! The same man, being the shepherd of a flock, both sacrifices a sheep and kills a wolf. Into what then is he changed? Many men both net fishes and lime birds: into which then are they transformed?

32. Let those children of sloth, the Manicheans, make answer; who without labouring themselves eat up the labourers' fruits: who welcome with smiling faces those who bring them their food, and return curses instead of blessings. For when a simple person brings them anything, *Stand outside a while,* says he, *and I will bless you.* Then having taken the bread into his hands (as those who have repented and left them have confessed), *I did not make you,* says the Manichee to the bread: and sends up curses against the Most High; and curses him that made it, and so eats what was made. If you hate the food, why did you look with smiling countenance on him that brought it to you? If you are thankful to the bringer, why do you utter your blasphemy to God, who created and made it? So again he says, *I sowed you not: may he be sown who sowed you! I reaped you not with a sickle: may he be reaped who reaped you! I baked you not with fire: may he be baked who baked you!* A fine return for the kindness!

33. These are great faults, but still small in comparison with the rest. Their Baptism I dare not describe before men and women. I dare not say what they distribute to their wretched communicants. …Truly we pollute our mouth in speaking of these things. Are the heathen more detestable than these? Are the Samaritans more wretched? Are Jews more impious? Are fornicators more impure ? But the Manichee sets these offerings in the midst of the altar as he considers it. And do you, O man, receive instruction from such a mouth? On meeting this man do you greet him at all with a kiss? To say nothing of his other impiety, do you not flee from the defilement, and from men worse than profligates, more detestable than any prostitute?

34. Of these things the Church admonishes and teaches you, and touches mire, that you may not be bemired: she tells of the wounds, that you may not be wounded. But for you it is enough merely to know them: abstain from learning by experience. God thunders, and we all tremble; and they blaspheme. God lightens, and we all bow down to the earth; and they have their blasphemous sayings about the heavens. These things are written in the books of the Manichees. These things we ourselves have read, because we could not believe those who told of them: yes, for the sake of your salvation we have closely inquired into their perdition.

35. But may the Lord deliver us from such delusion: and may there be given to you a hatred against the serpent, that as they lie in wait for the heel, so you may trample on their head. Remember what I say. What agreement can there be between our state and theirs? *What communion has light with darkness* 2 Corinthians 6:14? What has the majesty of the Church to do with the abomination of the Manichees? Here is order, here is discipline , here is majesty, here is purity: here even *to look upon a woman to lust after her* Matthew 5:28 is

> condemnation. Here is marriage with sanctity , here steadfast continence, here virginity in honour like the Angels: here partaking of food with thanksgiving, here gratitude to the Creator of the world. Here the Father of Christ is worshipped: here are taught fear and trembling before Him who sends the rain: here we ascribe glory to Him who makes the thunder and the lightning.
>
> 36. Make thou your fold with the sheep: flee from the wolves: depart not from the Church. Hate those also who have ever been suspected in such matters: and unless in time thou perceive their repentance, do not rashly trust yourself among them. The truth of the Unity of God has been delivered to you: learn to distinguish the pastures of doctrine. Be an approved banker , *holding fast that which is good, abstaining from every form of evil*. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Or if you have ever been such as they, recognise and hate your delusion. For there is a way of salvation, if you reject the vomit, if you from your heart detest it, if you depart from them, not with your lips only, but with your soul also: if you worship the Father of Christ, the God of the Law and the Prophets, if you acknowledge the Good and the Just to be one and the same God. And may He preserve you all, guarding you from falling or stumbling, established in the Faith, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #68

May 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Some of my readers have in the past requested that I feature more controversial figures for my Saturday Saints posts. With that in mind, and guided by the fact we are on the letter “N”, our saint for today is Pope Nicholas I:

> **Pope Saint Nicholas I** (Latin: *Nicholaus I*; c. 800 – 13 November 867), also called **Saint Nicholas the Great**, was Pope from 24 April 858 to his death in 867. He is remembered as a consolidator of papal authority and power, exerting decisive influence upon the historical development of the papacy and its position among the Christian nations of Western Europe. Nicholas I asserted that the pope should have suzerain authority over all Christians, even royalty, in matters of faith and morals.
>
> He is venerated as a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, with a feast day on 13 November.
>
> He refused to grant an annulment to King Lothair II of Lotharingia from Teutberga so that Lothair could marry his mistress Waldrada. When a Council pronounced in favor of annulment, Nicholas I declared the Council to be deposed, its messengers excommunicated, and its decisions void. Despite pressure from the Carolingians, who laid siege to Rome, his decision held. During his reign, relations with the Byzantine Empire soured over his support for Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had been removed from his post in favor of Photius.

Far more can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



Pope Nicholas I

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #75

May 17, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post features a broad selection of passages from Scripture. Deep Strength's most recent post got me thinking about how we should look for evidence of positive traits in a woman, and how that ties in to scripture. Here is a snippet from the Book of Sirach on what makes for a good wife:

> [13] A wife's charm delights her husband,
> and her skill puts fat on his bones.
> [14] A silent wife is a gift of the Lord,
> and there is nothing so precious as a disciplined soul.
> [15] A modest wife adds charm to charm,
> and no balance can weigh the value of a chaste soul.
> [16] Like the sun rising in the heights of the Lord,
> so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.

(Sirach 26:13-16)

What binds the positive traits in a wife (or a women a man is considering for a wife) listed here is that all can be detected and discerned by observation. What are those traits, and how can they be observed? A few from those four verses:

- Pleasant personality- Can be discerned based on how she interacts with other people and how they respond to her
- Skilled Cook- Easy to test- just taste some of what she cooks
- Reticent- Can be observed over time to see how often she talks, and if it is unnecessary or not
- Modest- Observed body language is important here
- An able Homemaker- An examination of her living space, whatever it might be, will reveal if she knows how to keep an ordered home or not

We can never know a person's heart. But we can know a great deal based on the fruit of a person's works. And while we are on the topic of fruit, here are some sobering words from our Lord:

> [33] "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. [34] You brood of vipers! how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. [35] The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. [36] I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; [37] for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

(Matthew 12:33-37)

Knowing when to speak, and when not to speak, is one of the most important disciplines that a Christian can practice. I know that it is one that I myself must constantly strive to work on, as all too often I tend towards one extreme or the other. Like a horse, we must bridle and train our speech, else we find ourselves thrown astray.

An example of how speech can condemn us can be found in the story of David. While in flight from his rebellious son Absalom, David and his party ran across a man named Shimei:

> [5] When King David came to Bahu′rim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shim′e-i, the son of Gera; and as he came he cursed continually. [6] And he threw stones at David, and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. [7] And Shim′e-i said as he cursed, “Begone, begone, you man of blood, you worthless fellow! [8] The Lord has avenged upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Ab′salom. See, your ruin is on you; for you are a man of blood.”
>
> [9] Then Abi′shai the son of Zeru′iah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head.” [10] But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeru′iah? If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’” [11] And David said to Abi′shai and to all his servants, “Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord has bidden him. [12] It may be that the Lord will look upon my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for this cursing of me today.” [13] So David and his men went on the road, while Shim′e-i went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him and flung dust.

(2 Samuel 16:5-13)

David spared Shimei this time, but later advised his son Solomon to deal with him. And so Solomon did:

> [36] Then the king sent and summoned Shim′e-i, and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and do not go forth from there to any place whatever. [37] For on the day you go forth, and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die; your blood shall be upon your own head.” [38] And Shim′e-i said to the king, “What you say is good; as my lord the king has said, so will your servant do.” So Shim′e-i dwelt in Jerusalem many days.
>
> [39] But it happened at the end of three years that two of Shim′e-i’s slaves ran away to Achish, son of Ma′acah, king of Gath. And when it was told Shim′e-i, “Behold, your slaves are in Gath,” [40] Shim′e-i arose and saddled an ass, and went to Gath to Achish, to seek his slaves; Shim′e-i went and brought his slaves from Gath.

> [41] And when Solomon was told that Shim′e-i had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned, [42] the king sent and summoned Shim′e-i, and said to him, “Did I not make you swear by the Lord, and solemnly admonish you, saying, ‘Know for certain that on the day you go forth and go to any place whatever, you shall die’? And you said to me, ‘What you say is good; I obey.’ [43] Why then have you not kept your oath to the Lord and the commandment with which I charged you?” [44] The king also said to Shim′e-i, “You know in your own heart all the evil that you did to David my father; so the Lord will bring back your evil upon your own head. [45] But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever.” [46] Then the king commanded Benai′ah the son of Jehoi′ada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died.
>
> So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

(1 Kings 2:36-46)

You reap what you sow. Shimei sowed hated, and it bloomed into fell fruit in due course. His tale is a warning to us all not to anger others without later seeking their forgiveness. Jesus addressed this subject, with a lesson that Shimei could have benefited from:

> [21] “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’ [22] But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire. [23] So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. [25] Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; [26] truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.

(Matthew 5:21-26)

Our time on this world is short. We would do well to seek forgiveness while we still have time to do so.

The Consolation Prize

May 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In his latest post, Ace of Spades examines the dreaded "Friend Zone." His post focuses on one particular line from the web-comic which his post examines:

"Sorry my friendship is a crappy consolation prize!"

Ace gets right to the point:

> Putting aside the childishly stated false apology (as irritating as it is), I arrive at this:
>
> It isn't a *"crappy consolation prize".*
>
> It simply isn't a prize at all.
>
> …
>
> It's an effectively useless offering.

What Ace is pointing out is something that has been pointed out in the 'sphere many, many times- when a woman "friendzones" a man, she isn't interested in actually being his friend about 99% (0r more) of the time. Rather, she keeps him around as a meatshield, as a mule, and as a walking ATM.

Ace asks three questions to point out the absurdity of claiming friendship in these kinds of scenarios:

> What do we have in common?
>
> What are the interests we share?
>
> What are the tasks you can and, more importantly, will do for me when I'm in need?

It is the third question which really gets to the heart of the matter. I can have things in common, I can share interests with people who aren't my friends. As a matter of fact I know a fair number of people with whom I share many interests and have much in common who are anything but my friends. What makes a friend a true friend is a willingness to help you when you are in need and without expectation of immediate or even long-term payback. The "Friend-Zoner" has no interest in any such thing. As Scripture warns:

> There are friends who pretend to be friends,
> but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

(Proverbs 18:24)

The "Friend-Zoner" is not among the latter.

Of course, Ace isn't done. He has this to say:

> …I already have a handful of men that can and will readily do those things for

> me.
>
> They'll talk with me.
>
> Share with me.
>
> Help me out of a jam.
>
> I don't need another person to do those things.
>
> Plus, they'll back me up in a physical altercation, should it be necessary.
>
> They'll also help me move heavy things.
>
> **The great irony here, is that both men and women seek male friendship for what quantifiable things men can provide.**

Ace doesn't ask the question, but he certainly implies it. And what is that question? Simple:

What benefits does a female friend provide that a male one doesn't?

In this modern day age of empowered, strong, independent women, what does a modern women provide as a friend that a man cannot? What valuable skills does she bring to the table? What unique talents is she offering as a friend?

Do yourself a favor, and don't spend too long on those questions.

Pretty much all of my male friends are better cooks than the women I know. Few, if any, of the women I know are able to sew. Even on those tasks which were traditionally female, women are no better than men these days. As I sit here at my desk, I am scratching my head trying to think of how a female friend is better than a male friend in the modern age (or any age, for that matter). So far the only thing I can think of is that she can offer her perspective, biased and subjective as it is, about your current dress and appearance. Otherwise I have nothing- at least for men in general. Specific men with unique circumstances might find something, but in general a female friend confers no advantages… and plenty of disadvantages.

And even for those men who find some advantage, there is always this:

> Not to mention, the majority of women are miserly with their resources, emotional, financial and non-sexually physical.
>
> …
>
> **They conserve them, wisely – to be fair, for the men with whom they are enamored (reciprocated or not).**

I suspect that if a man were to expect little, he would not be disappointed.

As I think on it, I should note that I only have a few female friends. And they are real friends, in that they will -and have- helped me out in the past. What is shared in common between all of them is that I never had a romantic interest in any of them. Not simply that I expressed none, but had none, for a variety of reasons. The reverse is also true as near as I can tell. And I suspect that is the reason why they are actual friends. But even then, what Ace explained is correct- they are more miserly than my male friends. Not that I

blame them- they are doing exactly what Ace described- conserving their resources for “the men with whom they are enamored.”

Now, before I sign off, there is another matter. One that I want to explore in this post. A concept or a theory I want to bounce off my readers.

I call it the “LJBF Drop-off.”

Now, I haven’t been the subject of many LJBF “offers” in my life- for a variety of reasons. In recent years I can only think of one or two that might qualify.

With those, and others I’ve seen/experienced in mind, I notice something: when that LJBF moment arrives, the nature of the relationship invariably changes. Even if a man accepts the “offer,” the woman doesn’t treat him the same. While she never was lavish with her “resources” before, afterwards she is even more stingy. I suspect that this is the case any time a woman rejects a man as a romance candidate. Once that rejection is made, her interest in and “support” of that man drops off. She will offer little, although still take as much as before. I’m curious if my readers have spotted that as well.

Tradition Thursday- #24

May 21, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series continues with St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters. Starting with the letter for today he examines the Nicene Creed. Today we cover the Seventh Letter in its entirety, which addresses the subject of God the Father:

> **The Father.**
>
> Ephesians 3:14, 15
>
> For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,…of whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named, etc.
>
> 1. Of God as the sole Principle we have said enough to you yesterday : by *enough* I mean, not what is worthy of the subject, (for to reach that is utterly impossible to mortal nature), but as much as was granted to our infirmity. I traversed also the bye-paths of the manifold error of the godless heretics: but now let us shake off their foul and soul-poisoning doctrine, and remembering what relates to them, not to our own hurt, but to our greater detestation of them, let us come back to ourselves, and receive the saving doctrines of the true Faith, connecting the dignity of Fatherhood with that of the Unity, and believing In One God the Father: for we must not only believe in one God; but this also let us devoutly receive, that He is the Father of the Only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> 2. For thus shall we raise our thoughts higher than the Jews , who admit indeed by their doctrines that there is One God, (for what if they often denied even this by their idolatries?); but that He is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, they admit not; being of a contrary mind to their own Prophets, who in the Divine Scriptures affirm, *The Lord said unto me, You are My Son, this day have I begotten you*. And to this day they *rage and gather themselves together against the Lord, and against His Anointed* , thinking that it is possible to be made friends of the Father apart from devotion towards the Son, being ignorant that *no man comes unto the Father but by* John 14:6 the Son, who says, *I am the Door, and I am the Way*. He therefore that refuses the Way which leads to the Father, and he that denies the Door, how shall he be deemed worthy of entrance unto God? They contradict also what is written in the eighty-eighth Psalm, *He shall call Me, You are my Father, my God, and the helper of my salvation. And I will make him my first-born, high among the kings of the earth*. For if they should insist that these things are said of David or Solomon or any of their successors, let them show how *the throne* of him, who is in their judgment described in the prophecy, is *as the days of heaven, and as the sun before God, and as the moon established for ever*. And how is it also that they are not abashed at that which is written, *From the womb before the morning-star have I begotten you* : also this, *He shall endure with the sun, and before the moon, from generation to*

generation. To refer these passages to a man is a proof of utter and extreme insensibility.

3. Let the Jews, however, since they so will, suffer their usual disorder of unbelief, both in these and the like statements. But let us adopt the godly doctrine of our Faith, worshipping one God the Father of the Christ, (for to deprive Him, who grants to all the gift of generation, of the like dignity would be impious): and let us Believe in One God the Father, in order that, before we touch upon our teaching concerning Christ, the faith concerning the Only-begotten may be implanted in the soul of the hearers, without being at all interrupted by the intervening doctrines concerning the Father.

4. For the name of the Father, with the very utterance of the title, suggests the thought of the Son: as in like manner one who names the Son thinks straightway of the Father also. For if a Father, He is certainly the Father of a Son; and if a Son, certainly the Son of a Father. Lest therefore from our speaking thus, In One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of All Things Visible and Invisible, and from our then adding this also, And in One Lord Jesus Christ, any one should irreverently suppose that the Only-begotten is second in rank to heaven and earth—for this reason before naming them we named God the Father, that in thinking of the Father we might at the same time think also of the Son: for between the Son and the Father no being whatever comes.

5. God then is in an improper sense the Father of many, but by nature and in truth of One only, the Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; not having attained in course of time to being a Father, but being ever the Father of the Only-begotten. Not that being without a Son before, He has since by change of purpose become a Father: but before every substance and every intelligence, before times and all ages, God has the dignity of Father, magnifying Himself in this more than in His other dignities; and having become a Father, not by passion , or union, not in ignorance, not by effluence , not by diminution, not by alteration, *for every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow of turning*. James 1:17 Perfect Father, He begot a perfect Son, and delivered all things to Him who is begotten: (for *all things*, He says, *are delivered unto Me of My Father* Matthew 11:27 and is honoured by the Only-begotten: for, *I honour My Father* John 8:49, says the Son; and again, *Even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love*. John 15:10 Therefore we also say like the Apostle, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation* 2 Corinthians 1:3: and, *We bow our knees unto the Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named* Ephesians 3:14-15: glorifying Him with the Only-begotten: for *he that denies the Father, denies the Son also* : and again, *He that confesses the Son, has the Father also* ; knowing that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father Philippians 2:11 .

6. We worship, therefore, as the Father of Christ, the Maker of heaven and earth, *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* Exodus 3:6; to whose honour the former temple also, over against us here, was built. For we shall not tolerate the heretics who sever the Old Testament from the New , but shall believe Christ, who says concerning the temple, *Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house* Luke 2:49? And again, *Take these things hence, and make not my Father's house a house of merchandise* John 2:16, whereby He most clearly confessed that the former temple in Jerusalem was His own Father's house. But if any one from unbelief wishes to receive yet more proofs as to the Father of Christ being the same as the Maker of the world, let him hear Him say again, *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and not one of them shall fall on the ground without My Father which is in heaven* ; this also, *Behold the fowls of the heaven that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feeds them* Matthew 6:26; and this, *My Father works hitherto, and I work* John 5:17 .

7. But lest any one from simplicity or perverse ingenuity should suppose that Christ is but equal in honour to righteous men, from His saying, *I ascend to My Father, and your Father*, it is well to make this distinction beforehand, that the name of the Father is one, but the power of His operation manifold. And Christ Himself knowing this has spoken unerringly, *I go to My Father, and your Father:* not saying 'to our Father,' but distinguishing, and saying first what was proper to Himself, *to My Father*, which was by nature; then adding, *and your Father*, which was by adoption. For however high the privilege we have received of saying in our prayers, *Our Father*, *which art in heaven*, yet the gift is of loving-kindness. For we call Him Father, not as having been by nature begotten of Our Father which is in heaven; but having been transferred from servitude to sonship by the grace of the Father, through the Son and Holy Spirit, we are permitted so to speak by ineffable loving-kindness.

8. But if any one wishes to learn how we call God *Father,* let him hear Moses, the excellent schoolmaster, saying, *Did not this your Father Himself buy you, and make you, and create you* Deuteronomy 32:6? Also Esaias the Prophet, *And now, O Lord. You are our Father: and we all are clay, the works of Your hands*. Isaiah 64:8 For most clearly has the prophetic gift declared that not according to nature, but according to God's grace, and by adoption, we call Him Father.

9. And that you may learn more exactly that in the Divine Scriptures it is not by any means the natural father only that is called father, hear what Paul says:— *For though you should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I begot you through the Gospel*. 1 Corinthians 4:15 For Paul was father of the Corinthians, not by having begotten them after the flesh, but by having taught and begotten them again after the Spirit. Hear Job also saying, *I was a father of the needy* Job 29:16: for he called himself a father, not as having begotten them all, but as caring for them. And God's Only-begotten

Son Himself, when nailed in His flesh to the tree at the time of crucifixion, on seeing Mary, His own Mother according to the flesh, and John, the most beloved of His disciples, said to him, *Behold! Your mother*, and to her, *Behold! Your Son* John 19:26-27: teaching her the parental affection due to him , and indirectly explaining that which is said in Luke, and *His father and His mother marvelled at Him* Luke 2:33: words which the tribe of heretics snatch up, saying that He was begotten of a man and a woman. For like as Mary was called the mother of John, because of her parental affection, not from having given him birth, so Joseph also was called the father of Christ, not from having begotten Him (for *he knew her not*, as the Gospel says, *until she had brought forth her first-born Son* Matthew 1:25), but because of the care bestowed on His nurture.

10. Thus much then at present, in the way of a digression, to put you in remembrance. Let me, however, add yet another testimony in proof that God is called the Father of men in an improper sense. For when in Esaias God is addressed thus, *For You are our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us* Isaiah 63:16, and *Sarah travailed not with us* , need we inquire further on this point? And if the Psalmist says, *Let them be troubled from His countenance, the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows* , is it not manifest to all, that when God is called the Father of orphans who have lately lost their own fathers, He is so named not as begetting them of Himself, but as caring for them and shielding them. But whereas God, as we have said, is in an improper sense the Father of men, of Christ alone He is the Father by nature, not by adoption: and the Father of men in time, but of Christ before all time, as He says, *And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Your own self, with the glory which I had with You before the world was* John 17:5 .

11. We believe then In One God the Father the Unsearchable and Ineffable, *Whom no man has seen* 1 Timothy 2:16, *but the Only-begotten alone has declared Him*. John 1:18 *For He which is of God, He has seen God* : whose face the Angels do always behold in heaven Matthew 18:10, behold, however, each according to the measure of his own rank. But the undimmed vision of the Father is reserved in its purity for the Son with the Holy Ghost.

12. Having reached this point of my discourse, and being reminded of the passages just before mentioned, in which God was addressed as the Father of men, I am greatly amazed at men’s insensibility. For God with unspeakable loving-kindness deigned to be called the Father of men—He in heaven, they on earth—and He the Maker of Eternity, they made in time,— He *who holds the earth in the hollow of His hand*, they upon the earth as grasshoppers. Yet man forsook his heavenly Father, and said to the stock, *You are my father, and to the stone, You have begotten me*. Jeremiah 2:27 And for this reason, methinks, the Psalmist says to mankind, *Forget also your own people, and your father’s house* , whom you have chosen for a father, whom you have drawn upon yourself to your destruction.

13. And not only stocks and stones, but even Satan himself, the destroyer of souls, have some ere now chosen for a father; to whom the Lord said as a rebuke, *You do the deeds of your father* John 8:41, that is of the devil, he being the father of men not by nature, but by fraud. For like as Paul by his godly teaching came to be called the father of the Corinthians, so the devil is called the father of those who of their own will *consent unto him*.

For we shall not tolerate those who give a wrong meaning to that saying, *Hereby know we the children of God, and the children of the devil* 1 John 3:10, as if there were by nature some men to be saved, and some to be lost. Whereas we come into such holy sonship not of necessity but by choice: nor was the traitor Judas by nature a son of the devil and of perdition; for certainly he would never have cast out devils at all in the name of Christ: *for Satan casts not out Satan*. Mark 3:23 Nor on the other hand would Paul have turned from persecuting to preaching. But the adoption is in our own power, as John says, *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe in His name*. John 1:12 For not before their believing, but from their believing they were counted worthy to become of their own choice the children of God.

14. Knowing this, therefore, let us walk spiritually, that we may be counted worthy of God's adoption. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. Romans 8:14 For it profits us nothing to have gained the title of Christians, unless the works also follow; lest to us also it be said, *If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham*. John 8:39 *For if we call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, let us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear* 1 Peter 1:17, *loving not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. 1 John 2:15 Wherefore, my beloved children, let us by our works offer glory to *our Father which is in heaven, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven*. Matthew 5:16 *Let us cast all our care upon Him, for our Father knows what things we have need of*.

15. But while honouring our heavenly Father let us honour also *the fathers of our flesh* Hebrews 12:9: since the Lord Himself has evidently so appointed in the Law and the Prophets, saying, *Honour your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, and your days shall be long in the land*. Deuteronomy 5:16 And let this commandment be especially observed by those here present who have fathers and mothers. *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord*. Colossians 3:20 For the Lord said not, *He that loves father or mother is not worthy of Me*, lest you from ignorance should perversely mistake what was rightly written, but He added, *more than Me*. Matthew 10:37 For when our fathers on earth are of a contrary mind to our Father in heaven, then we must obey Christ's word. But when they put no obstacle to godliness in our way, if we are ever carried away by ingratitude, and, forgetting their benefits to us,

> hold them in contempt, then the oracle will have place which says, *He that curses father or mother, let him die the death*.
>
> 16. The first virtue of godliness in Christians is to honour their parents, to requite the troubles of those who begot them , and with all their might to confer on them what tends to their comfort (for if we should repay them ever so much, yet we shall never be able to return their gift of life), that they also may enjoy the comfort provided by us, and may confirm us in those blessings which Jacob the supplanter shrewdly seized; and that our Father in heaven may accept our good purpose, and judge us worthy *to shine amid righteous as the sun in the kingdom of our Father Matthew 13:43* : To whom be the glory, with the Only-begotten our Saviour Jesus Christ, and with the Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, to all eternity. Amen.

(Source)

Yet Another Domino…

May 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

…hits the floor.

As the article makes clear, you cannot win as a Christian who professes orthodox beliefs. Compliance with their sundry demands is not enough. It will not, it *cannot,* be enough that you don't act on your beliefs. You ~~won't be~~ aren't allowed to voice them either. And very soon (already?) you will be forced to voice beliefs that are not your own. Followed not long after by being forced to act consistent with *their* beliefs.

You know who they are.

And you know who their father is.

[This is a follow-up to my post here.]

Saturday Saints- #69

May 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

O is the letter for today's Saint. This gives us our saint, Saint Opportuna of Montreuil:

> **Saint Opportuna of Montreuil** (died 770) was a French Benedictine nun and abbess. A *Vita et miracula Sanctae Opportunae* was written within a century of her death (*ca* 885-88) by St. Adalhelm (later rendered Adelin), bishop of Séez, who believed he owed his life and his see to Opportuna.

More can be learned about her at her wiki, found here.



St. Opportuna

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #76

May 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Pentecost Sunday, a fact which has influenced my choice of the first passage of Scripture to examine in today's post. Here we have the story of Babel from the Book of Genesis:

> Now the whole earth had one language and few words. [2] And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. [3] And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. [4] Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." [5] And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. [6] And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. [7] Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." [8] So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. [9] Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

(Genesis 11:1-9)

What interests me about this passage is not the confusion God creates, or even why, but the effect of its absence. In particular I am interested in this: "this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them." Looking at this, I wonder if God's motivation here is to humble humanity. By limiting what we can achieve, and what we think we can do, He becomes that much more obviously necessary for us. However, when we can achieve nearly anything ourselves as human beings… what need have we of God?

Our abundance of power is, in my opinion, a major reason for the troubles of the present age. We have overcome the limitations of language and distance through the power of technology. At the same time we have achieved unequaled power over the natural world. And even as this has happened, we have pushed God further and further out of our lives. This is no accident. We lack humility in the modern age; instead we believe that nothing is impossible for us to achieve on our own.

It seems to me that the solution to this particular trouble isn't to abandon technology, but to embrace humility. Simply discarding technology is no sure path to living a more humble life. It may help, but it is not and can never be a guarantee.

> And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one

> another, for
>
> “God opposes the proud,
> but gives grace to the humble.”

(1 Peter 5:5)

Since we are on the subject of humility, this passage from St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians seems appropriate:

> [3] Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than
> yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the
> interests of others. [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus,
> [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing
> to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in
> the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form he humbled himself and
> became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly
> exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, [10] that at
> the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the
> earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God
> the Father.

(Philippians 2:3-11)

This passage serves not only to highlight both the extent and necessity of humility, but also shows as false modernist notions of equality. As Christians we know that we are all equal in the eyes of the Lord- we all are equal inheritors of the Kingdom. But equality as the world understands it is an entirely different thing altogether. And it is incompatible with our Faith. If Christ Jesus, who is God, did not seek equality then why do we? If He saw it as nothing something to be grasped, why do we do otherwise? Surely we don’t think we are wiser than He. The real reason is obvious enough: we are not chasing after Him, but after the world.

How easy we forget the words of our Lord and Savior:

> And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, “If any one would be
> first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

(Mark 9:35)

Because He served more than anyone else, because He lowered Himself more than anyone else, because He placed everyone else ahead of Him, He was exalted above all others. In a world which values Equality and “empowerment,” and denigrates service and authority, let us endeavor to keep our priorities straight and keep God, not the world, foremost in our thoughts and heart.

Diagnosing Objectivity And Subjectivity

May 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

So it seems there has been some sort of skirmish in the 'sphere lately involving "Roosh" and a number of folks over at the Red Pill Sub-Reddit. Personally, I don't care much about this battle- I read neither, and so have no interest in getting involved- much less taking sides. Cail Corishev has an interesting analysis on the situation which some of my readers might find interesting, as it covers both the "schism" as well as provides some useful background info.

Apparently Rollo was involved in this matter to some degree, as he has written a post in response to what has been going on. What interests me about that post is not the commentary about Roosh, but rather about Rollo's preference for an apolitical or neutral "Red Pill." In this most recent post he quotes from one of his own posts a few weeks back, The Political is Personal:

> It's my opinion that red pill awareness needs to remain fundamentally apolitical, non-racial and non-religious because the moment the Red Pill is associated with any social or religious movement, you co-brand it with an ideology, and the validity of it will be written off along with any preconceptions associated with that specific ideology.
>
> Furthermore, any co-branding will still be violently disowned by whatever ideology it's paired with because the Feminine Imperative has already co-opted and trumps the fundaments of that ideology. The fundamental truth is that the manosphere, pro-masculine thought, Red Pill awareness or its issues are an entity of its own.

Now, if I am reading Rollo right what he is saying in that post and in his post recent post is that the "Red Pill" should remain a movement focused on an objective diagnosis of reality. That is, the "Red Pill" shouldn't be about telling people (men primarily) how to live. That would be *Prescription,* as Rollo calls it. Rather, the Red Pill should be about telling people how the world, specifically human socio-sexual behavior, works (*Description*). Then they can decide for themselves how they want to live.

I agree with Rollo that any sort of Prescriptive approach to the Red Pill would be inherently subjective- it would necessarily intersect with ideology or religion. This naturally will divide people, as we are now seeing (and in fact have seen for a while now). However, I must respectfully disagree with Rollo that even if the Red Pill was only Descriptive that it could ever be truly objective. While there is certainly a strong appeal to this notion, as it allows us all something in common, I don't think it is consistent with human behavior.

Human beings are inherently subjective creatures. Pure objectivity is not really possible for us, even when we are merely trying to describe things. That's right, even if we merely leave off at simply describing what we see, our internal filters will have an effect on what

we notice. And if we take it further to try and understand what phenomena are at work, that involves even more of our subjective understanding and belief. To paraphrase the TV show *House*: if a neurologist, a cardiologist and an oncologist all examine the same patient, they are all apt to give a different diagnosis. This is because their training and background makes them look for different things, to examine the same symptoms differently, and to connect facts together in a different manner. What might be remarkable to one would be overlooked by another.

Our subjective beliefs influence our perception, and this means two men watching the same behavior can come to two different conclusions about what is going on. Part of the reason why scientific studies and papers are supposed to be peer reviewed is to help screen out biases. This same principle applies to the Red Pill.

The solution, however, is not to reject any attempt to provide a description of what is going on around us. A subjective observation can still be a correct observation, after all. Rather, what human subjectivity should make clear is the necessity of a place where people can share their observations with another, as well as their conclusions about those observations. A vibrant community helps provide a greater pool of observations, as well as helps weed out bad data (inaccurate observations), which naturally will help lead towards more accurate conclusions as well.

And those conclusions are not necessarily prescriptive. As I think on it, I believe that we can distinguish between description and diagnosis. By separating them we can better understand the process of what is going on. And speaking of "what," I think that word gets to the heart of three different steps involved in this whole process:

- Description- What I just observed
- Diagnosis- What I think that observation means
- Prescription- What I think should be done about it

Again, I don't think that you can make any one of these steps objective. Human nature precludes this. But I do think that wide-scale collaboration can overcome the negative aspects of subjectivity, at least in the area of Diagnosis. Diagnosis is really about creating effective models or theories of human behavior. Then using those theories or models to predict future behavior. If a model fails repeatedly to predict behavior accurately, then it either needs to be refined or discarded. The collaborative nature of the 'sphere allows for this kind of testing on wider scale than any individual could hope to achieve themselves. In many ways this is what PUAs have been doing from the very beginning.

My LAMPS/PSALM model is an example of one of my efforts to diagnose female behavior. That model tries to explain what it is that drives female arousal/sexual attraction. By understanding the bounds set in place by that model, a man can focus his self-improvement in areas which will provide direct and positive effects on his overall sexual attractiveness to women. What is great about the 'sphere is that men can learn about that model and test it out for themselves to determine its accuracy. So far I think it has been a fairly successful model. Not perfect, by any means, but it has held up well.

I can understand Rollo's concern with the Description and Diagnosis process being caught up in an ideological or religious battle. However, I think that the damage can be mitigated to a large degree by keeping that community large and open. But even if there was Balkanization, or some faction or another dominated the movement, that wouldn't be the end of the world. After all, whoever is left will still need to provide effective and accurate models/theories. If they don't, then those who are looking for an explanation of the world around them will go somewhere else. After all, the rise of the Red Pill is attributable in large part to the fact that general society's own models and theories are lacking. I think that those who would find a model or theory invalid because of its "taint" are probably not likely to accept the model in the first place- after all, their minds are not yet freed (to continue the Matrix analogy). [As a side-note, a model should be judged on its efficacy, not its source. To disregard it because of who created it would be a mistake- for anyone.]

If Rollo wishes to focus on Description and Diagnosis, then by all means he should do so. Nor should anyone fault him for focusing only on them. They are still vital areas which should not be ignored. While there is a lot of Description out there, new Diagnosis is always welcome. It would be the height of presumption to think that "the science is settled" and that no new models or theories should be developed to help explain or understand human behavior.

As for myself, my blog initially focused mostly on Diagnosis. Over time I became more and more focused on Prescription. I suspect that the latter will continue to be my dominant focus in the near future. But don't be surprised to see me direct my attention back to Diagnosis from time to time.

Absence Makes The Heart Grow Emptier

May 28, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Background: One of the deepest writers in the entire 'sphere also happens to be one of those who writes the least: Ace of Spades. His posts can sometimes be just a few short sentences in length, spaced apart by the occasional break. When added together they rarely amount to more than a paragraph or two. However, each word is fraught with meaning (almost always on multiple levels), and he can accomplish with a few lines what others need an essay to convey. Yet the insight he hopes to convey isn't always obvious, and all of his posts need to be "unpacked" (or unzipped, to use computer terminology) to some degree. I've unpacked posts of his before, and he expressed appreciation for my effort. At the same time he asked me to make similar efforts in the future, and this post follows in that path.

The post I want to examine today is **"… [there's] oh so many ways for me to show you how your dogma has abandoned you…"** Like nearly all of his posts, it begins with a song which helps set tone and context. I suggest listening to it before reading further. I intend to analyze his post line by line, so it may help to read the full post at his site, as I don't intend to post it all together here. Also, while each line will have analysis, much of it will be at the end of the post as well. Now to get to it:

> All pig-tails and patent-leather shoes.

These two features together hint at femininity in a juvenile context- a young school-age girl. She is young and innocent, and looks the part- wearing her hair in pig-tails and dressing up in nice looking clothes for when she goes to school. This sets up the point of view of the post- that of a young girl (at least in the beginning).

> Daddy never seems to care.

The key language in this line is the word "*seems*." Ace included that word on purpose. Whatever "Daddy's" actual intentions might be, they are ultimately irrelevant in this context. What matters is how the young girl from the above line perceives his concern, his lack of care about her.

This is important because "Daddy" might care, but not be in a position to do anything about it. If the father of a young girl has been kicked out of the home and separated from his children by force of law because "Mommy" decide to frivorce him, then what he wants or intends doesn't matter. The amount of time he can spend with his daughter will be limited, in some cases quite severely. And no matter how much Daddy tells his daughter that he loves her, that he cares for her, that he wants to spend time with her… she won't believe him if he doesn't spend much time with her. She cannot help but rationalize his limited contact as a lack of care on his part, no matter how much the matter is explained to her. For a child, a father's presence, or the lack thereof, is not something which is guided and directed by a rational thought process (no matter how smart the child).

As a side note, even if the biological father is present, but he doesn't act like an actual father (that is, as a masculine man exercising the office of fatherhood), it is like he isn't even there at all.

> **And fathers are the first glimpse of God all children see.**

The fact that this line alone is in bold makes it clear that this is the most important line in the whole post. So why bold it?

Numerous studies have shown that it is the father, not the mother, who has the greatest influence on a child's faith. A devout father can lead his children to follow his faith, no matter the beliefs of the mother. Yet not amount of holiness by the mother can compensate for a father's disbelief. The reason why is as Ace describes- in their father children see their first real glimpse of God. How so? A father- a true father who can act as such, acts much as God: he admonishes and disciplines when necessary, he provides strength and comfort in times of distress, he pushes for improvement as required, and he loves throughout.

A child's relationship with his or (in this case) her father helps that child understand boundaries, to understand authority, to get a sense of what is right, and what is wrong. Nothing can replace this understanding.

> Left little choice, you choose to sin.

An interesting line. choice in what? By itself this line is incomplete.

> Just to get some attention.

Now the previous line makes sense. The young girl from before is feeling the effects of her father's absence. Without realizing it, without understanding it, part of her- deep in her subconscious- needs a strong male presence in her life. Specifically, she needs the presence of a father. Only she cannot comprehend that. She can only understand that she wants male attention. And so she seeks it. She seeks it from other men, to get that attention and validation that she knows she wants, without understanding why. Without that firm foundation which can only be build over years by a strong and loving father, she will invariably seek that attention in a sinful fashion. Fornication cannot help but seem like love to her.

> But boys are not the Almighty.

This line hints at two things, neither of which is mutually exclusive. And when you get down to it, they derive from the same point. Why "Almighty," when the previous lines suggest that it is a father that the young woman (for she is no longer a girl at this point) seeks? Because she is also seeking God. For just as her need for a father's presence was not met, so too her need for a sense of God's presence in her life is not met. For as was indicated earlier, our ability to know God is in large part shaped by our father. To not know the former is to inhibit our connection to the latter.

The men she is sleeping around with cannot (and even if they could, likely would not)

give her the love that she seeks. *Eros* is what her hormones tell her to seek, but it is *Agape* that her soul longs for- the true, lasting and selfless love of a father, both one of this world, and Eternal. Sadly, this is beyond her ken.

> Thus, the emptiness still grows—

Eros without *Agape* is poison to the soul. We cannot fill ourselves solely with Eros, no matter how hard we try. Instead we simply feed into our hunger, demanding more and more. **[Edit:** Think of it like salt and water. Salt is good and necessary for our health, and adds much flavor to life. But too much salt, and not enough water, and we throw our electrolyte balance off. This can kill our body if not swiftly correct. Just as *Eros* can add flavor to our life, without *Agape* to keep us balanced we risk death, only of the eternal sort for it is our soul which is threatened.]

All the while the emptier and emptier we feel. For the young woman caught in this trap, there is seemingly no escape. She moves from man to man, and yet her need for that male presence only grows greater. She thirsts, and goes to the well, but cannot be satisfied. All because she is going to the wrong well, which she knows not.

> regardless of how much they put in you.

The obvious inference here is what this double *entendre* suggests: the sexual act, which literally involves putting something in the young woman. However, it is more than just that. Some of the men might mean well or even be serious in their attentions/intentions. They might actually love the young woman. But that doesn't matter- they cannot provide what she needs.

> The years fall away and that little girl continues to struggle.

This is a trap from which the young woman cannot seem to escape [but I repeat myself]. Ironically, while she is no longer a little girl in body, in many ways her mind and emotional state never advanced beyond the tender years. How could they?

> (Still wearing pigtails and patent-leather shoes.)

Once again, two meanings are present. As the previous line hinted at, the young woman is still mentally and emotionally a little girl. Her maturation process was incomplete, as a core ingredient was missing.

The other meaning hints at the sexualized lifestyle of the young woman, as well as her increasing age. In an effort to try and recapture her youth, and that sense of innocence from before, she tries to adopt a more youthful appearance. She wears clothing and hairstyles that make her seem younger, or otherwise bear some connection to her youth. On the one hand this ties into her sexuality, and a desire to keep it at its peak (even though that is only a brief window). On the other hand, this attempt to recapture her youth is a desperate attempt by the woman to try and repeat her childhood. To have a youth again where that strong man she desperately needs will be present *this* time.

> To wrestle love from the unloving.

Yet another reminder that those men she associates with, those men she sleeps with and gives herself to, cannot give her what she ~~wants~~ needs. Nor can they be truly blamed in this [absence on her part], as it is not their place.

But it is not only men who she attempts to wrestle with. It is causes and movements. Anything and everything that gives even the faintest flicker of potential meaning and purpose. She longs for a place where she can belong. But causes and movements are cold. Unloving. They too cannot give her what she ~~wants~~ needs: a family as it was meant to be.

> To punish herself until absolution arrives.

Self-loathing invariably becomes a part of this. The young woman is miserable, and no matter how much she may deny it to others, she knows it deep down inside. Her misery is something she knows is a result of having done something wrong, although she may not know what. Her sense of guilt, as ill-formed as it is, drives her to yet further misery. All in the hope that it will end someday. That she will finally have paid a heavy enough price for whatever it was that she did wrong. A wrong for which she was punished by not having a real father in her life.

> Yet it never does.

Of course, she was not responsible for her father not being in her life. Her upbringing is not something she shares blame in. But this is something she never hears, or rather, never hears as she should. She might be told that it isn't her fault. But that is meaningless or ultimately futile without being told whose fault it is, without understanding why things were wrong in the first place.

> The humanist sacristy is empty.

A sacristy is a place where clergy prepare for services. So what does Ace mean by this line? He is trying to indicate that humanism has nothing, has no one, to actually carry out services in the first place. Its very nature is to leave people to fend for themselves, to suffer through life's trials without solace or guide… or absolution.

> The progressive wine is soured.

I take this to mean that much of the appeal of progressivism is gone now. It has sat at the same place for so long it has gone stale. No one wants to drink it, although they may feel compelled to do so. After all, it is a liturgical center-piece of the present-age "social gospel," and so cannot simply be dispensed with.

> And no one listens in the digital confessional…

We, all of us, seek absolution. We may not realize the need to repent and confess our sins, but we have it all the same. Sometimes (perhaps even most of the time), we rationalize away this impulse. We call it something else. But its essence remains the

same- after all, a rose by any other name is still a rose.

Alas, the internet is no proper confessional. Ace says that no on listens, because to hear, and to listen, are two different things. To listen to something is to pay attention to it, to recognize its meaning and to try and understand what is being said, even as we hear it. But over the internet true listening is not possible. Only hearing. Too much is lost in the process of putting words onto digital ink, of spilling it across monitors the world over. There is something inhumanly mechanical about the internet which disconnects us, even as it helps bring us together like never before. Because of this, the internet can never replace the confession booth.

> save the echo.

Interestingly enough, part of us still knows what we are saying, even if we cannot accept that truth. So ultimately a digital confession merely rebounds at us and amplifies the need we feel.

> You were forgiven – and loved – long before you strayed.

This line applies both to the young woman's earthly father, as well as her father in heaven. The theology involved should be pretty basic to most any Christian, and so I won't go into too much depth. But it is worth pointing out that God knows we are going to stray, that we are going to sin, long before we ever do. His sacrifice at Calvary was not merely for what we have done, but for what we have yet to do. It is a sacrificial love that persists throughout the ages.

Underlying this is the call by both Daddy and our Father to return. To come home. To seek him/Him out and to try and create a proper relationship this time.

> Oh, child, who told you that you were naked?

The end is always a good place to return to the beginning, to Genesis. Here Ace alludes to the Fall, to the eating of the Fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil. Yes, I know, obvious. So why include it? To remind us that no one told Adam and Eve they were naked. They knew it themselves as a result of eating the Forbidden Fruit. Likewise, the young woman (or should I say women?) featured here was never told that she was on the wrong path. No one needed to tell her. The understanding that she is naked, that she is in a shameful place, is intrinsic to her nature. When we revolt against the natural law, we cannot help but recognize that a crime (of sorts) has taken place.

So what is the full context of what Ace is trying to say? Again, there are many layers here.

On one level Ace states that the absence of a strong father in a young woman's life will almost invariably lead her towards a life of dissolution and sin. The absence of a strong masculine presence will ache within her akin to hunger pains, and she will gorge herself upon men (seeking masculinity) in order to try and sate that hunger. Sadly, such binge eating will never alleviate her need.

Ace is also explaining that the crisis of faith we are seeing now in Christianity is the

product of the destruction of the institution or office of fatherhood. Without strong fathers in their lives many children cannot help but abandon the faith. Of course to them there is no abandonment; without a father they never really knew God in the first place.

He is also pointing out that the humanist and progressive institutions of our day cannot replace what they destroyed. They are, at best, base mockeries of something greater. Though they may mimic the form of Faith, they can never replicate the function. Just as realizing their nakedness was innate to Adam and Eve after taking the fruit, the desire to confess and be absolved of our sins is also innate within us. The present progressive paradigm, however, cannot meet that need, as it rejects its existence in the first place. You cannot heal a spiritual injury when you refuse to recognize there is an injury in the first place, or even anything spiritual.

I am sure there is more to it, but my time is limited and so I must cap my analysis here. Mayhaps Ace will fill in what I could not.

[Update: I fixed a number of typos and grammatical errors, plus added a few words and an example to the post. Hopefully it will be easier to read now. Sorry for any confusion or post ugliness- I hadn’t intended for this post to go public when it did.]

Tradition Thursday- #25

May 29, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series based on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters continues. His eighth letter resumes the discussion on the Nicene Creed, focusing on the Omnipotence of God:

> Jeremiah 39:18, 19 (Septuagint).
>
> *The Great, the strong God, Lord of great Counsel, and mighty in His works, the Great God, the Lord Almighty and of great name*.
>
> 1. By believing In One God we cut off all misbelief in many gods, using this as a shield against Greeks; and every opposing power of heretics; and by adding, In One God the Father, we contend against those of the circumcision, who deny the Only-begotten Son of God. For, as was said yesterday, even before explaining the truths concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, we made it manifest at once, by saying *The Father,* that He is the Father of a Son: that as we understand that God is, so we may understand that He has a Son. But to those titles we add that He is also *Almighty;* and this we affirm because of Greeks and Jews together, and all heretics.
>
> 2. For of the Greeks some have said that God is the soul of the world : and others that His power reaches only to heaven, and not to earth as well. Some also sharing their error and misusing the text which says, *And Your truth unto the clouds ,* have dared to circumscribe God's providence by the clouds and the heaven, and to alienate from God the things on earth; having forgotten the Psalm which says, *If I go up into heaven, You are there, if I go down into hell, You are present*. For if there is nothing higher than heaven, and if hell is deeper than the earth, He who rules the lower regions reaches the earth also.
>
> 3. But heretics again, as I have said before, know not One Almighty God. For He is Almighty who rules all things, who has power over all things. But they who say that one God is Lord of the soul, and some other of the body, make neither of them perfect, because either is wanting to the other. For how is he almighty, who has power over the soul, but not over the body? And how is he almighty who has dominion over bodies, but no power over spirits? But these men the Lord confutes, saying on the contrary, *Rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*. Matthew 10:28 For unless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has the power over both, how does He subject both to punishment? For how shall He be able to take the body which is another's and cast it into hell, *except He first bind the strong man, and spoil his goods* ?
>
> 4. But the Divine Scripture and the doctrines of the truth know but One God, who rules all things by His power, but endures many things of His will. For He rules even over the idolaters, but endures them of His forbearance: He rules also over the heretics who set Him at nought, but bears with them because of His long-

suffering: He rules even over the devil, but bears with him of His long-suffering, not from want of power; as if defeated. For *he is the beginning of the Lord's creation, made to be mocked* , not by Himself, for that were unworthy of Him, but *by the Angels* whom He has made. But He suffered him to live, for two purposes, that he might disgrace himself the more in his defeat, and that mankind might be crowned with victory. O all wise providence of God! Which takes the wicked purpose for a groundwork of salvation for the faithful. For as He took the unbrotherly purpose of Joseph's brethren for a groundwork of His own dispensation, and, by permitting them to sell their brother from hatred, took occasion to make him king whom He would; so he permitted the devil to wrestle, that the victors might be crowned; and that when victory was gained, he might be the more disgraced as being conquered by the weaker, and men be greatly honoured as having conquered him who was once an Archangel.

5. Nothing then is withdrawn from the power of God; for the Scripture says of Him, *for all things are Your servants*. All things alike are His servants, but from all these One, His only Son, and One, His Holy Spirit, are excepted; and all the things which are His servants serve the Lord through the One Son and in the Holy Spirit. God then rules all, and of His long-suffering endures even murderers and robbers and fornicators, having appointed a set time for recompensing every one, that if they who have had long warning are still impenitent in heart, they may receive the greater condemnation. They are kings of men, who reign upon earth, but not without the power from above: and this Nebuchadnezzar once learned by experience, when he said; *For His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His power from generation to generation* Daniel 4:34 .

6. Riches, and gold, and silver are not, as some think, the devil's : for *the whole world of riches is for the faithful man, but for the faithless not even a penny*. Now nothing is more faithless than the devil; and God says plainly by the Prophet, *The gold is Mine, and the silver is Mine, and to whomsoever I will I give it*. Do thou but use it well, and there is no fault to be found with money: but whenever you have made a bad use of that which is good, then being unwilling to blame your own management, thou impiously throwest back the blame upon the Creator. A man may even be justified by money: *I was hungry, and you gave Me meat* Matthew 25:35-36: that certainly was from money. *I was naked, and you clothed Me*: that certainly was by money. And would you learn that money may become a door of the kingdom of heaven? *Sell*, says He, *that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven*.

7. Now I have made these remarks because of those heretics who count possessions, and money, and men's bodies accursed. For I neither wish you to be a slave of money, nor to treat as enemies the things which God has given you for use. Never say then that riches are the devil's: for though he say, *All these will I give you, for they are delivered unto me* , one may indeed even reject his assertion; for we need not believe the liar: and yet perhaps he spoke the truth,

> being compelled by the power of His presence: for he said not, *All these will I give you*, for they are mine, but, *for they are delivered unto me*. He grasped not the dominion of them, but confessed that he had been entrusted with them, and was for a time dispensing them. But at a proper time interpreters should inquire whether his statement is false or true.
>
> 8. God then is One, the Father, the Almighty, whom the brood of heretics have dared to blaspheme. Yea, they have dared to blaspheme the Lord of Sabaoth , *who sits above the Cherubim* : they have dared to blaspheme the Lord Adonai : they have dared to blaspheme Him who is in the Prophets the Almighty God. But worship thou One God the Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Flee from the error of many gods, flee also from every heresy, and say like Job, *But I will call upon the Almighty Lord, which does great things and unsearchable, glorious things and marvellous without number* , and, *For all these things there is honour from the Almighty* : to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #70

May 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For the third time this series finds itself at the letter “P.” This time our saint for today is Saint Philip of Agira:

> **Saint Philip of Agira** (also **Aggira**, **Agirone**, **Agirya** or **Argira**) was an early Christian confessor. There are two parallel stories of this saint which give to possible dates in which this saint lived. Traditionally, through the writings of St. Athanasius, it is maintained that Philip of Agira is a saint of the 1st century, born in the year AD 40 in Cappadocia (modern Turkey) and died on 12 May, AD 103.
>
> Another recent study says to have been born of a Syrian father in Thrace on an unknown date in the 5th century whose elder brothers drowned whilst fishing. Philip was known as the “Apostle of the Sicilians”, as he was the first Christian missionary to visit that island. Nothing else can be certainly stated about him.

The source of this is his wiki, found here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #77

June 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A regular practice of mine is to read/pray a Psalm aloud before going to bed each night. In hindsight, I realize that I often don't really think on what I am saying. In that sense, it really isn't much of a prayer. This realization on my part partly arose when I recently read/prayed the 136 Psalm:

> O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever.
> 2 O give thanks to the God of gods,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever.
> 3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;

> 4 to him who alone does great wonders,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 5 to him who by understanding made the heavens,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 6 to him who spread out the earth upon the waters,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 7 to him who made the great lights,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 8 the sun to rule over the day,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 9 the moon and stars to rule over the night,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> **10 to him who smote the first-born of Egypt,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **11 and brought Israel out from among them,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **12 with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **13 to him who divided the Red Sea in sunder,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **14 and made Israel pass through the midst of it,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **16 to him who led his people through the wilderness,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **17 to him who smote great kings,**

> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **18 and slew famous kings,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **19 Sihon, king of the Amorites,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **20 and Og, king of Bashan,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **21 and gave their land as a heritage,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever;**
> **22 a heritage to Israel his servant,**
> **for his steadfast love endures for ever.**
> 23 It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 24 and rescued us from our foes,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever;
> 25 he who gives food to all flesh,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever.

> 26 O give thanks to the God of heaven,
> for his steadfast love endures for ever.

(Psalm 136)

Reading it again, I was struck by the apparent contradiction of God's smiting someone and then that line being followed by a reference to his love (or mercy, depending on translation- this uses the RSV). I have some thoughts on this Psalm, but I am curious what others have to say. So I invite my readers to offer their thoughts, or those of theologians who've spoken on the subject.

Finally, to conclude this short post, I have this passage from the Prophet Micah:

> 7 Then the remnant of Jacob shall be
> in the midst of many peoples
> like dew from the Lord,
> like showers upon the grass,
> which tarry not for men
> nor wait for the sons of men.
> 8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations,
> in the midst of many peoples,
> like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
> like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,
> which, when it goes through, treads down
> and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.
> 9 Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,
> and all your enemies shall be cut off.

> [10] And in that day, says the Lord,
> I will cut off your horses from among you
> and will destroy your chariots;
> [11] and I will cut off the cities of your land
> and throw down all your strongholds;
> [12] and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
> and you shall have no more soothsayers;
> [13] and I will cut off your images
> and your pillars from among you,
> and you shall bow down no more
> to the work of your hands;
> [14] and I will root out your Ashe′rim from among you
> and destroy your cities.
> [15] And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance
> upon the nations that did not obey.

(Micah 5:7-15)

This particular passage refers to Israel's remnant, and is after the famous prophesy that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem. Reading through it, I realized that it was filled with metaphors for the work of the early apostles. Indeed, several parts of the Acts of the Apostles seem to fulfill this prophecy, unless I am much mistaken. It is unfortunate that the Israelites got this all wrong. Their focus on war and conquest as a physical, material thing blinded them to the spiritual warfare that they were being tasked to fulfill. The sad part is that they should have known better. After all, God told them many times that it was He who was their spear; He would gave them victory. All they needed was faith. This should have clued them in that He didn't need them to use violence to achieve what He already did. At least, that is how I see it. Perhaps others have a different take.

Sympathy for a Stranger

June 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was out and about town yesterday when I overheard a conversation between several older ladies. Probably very early Boomers, if I was to guess. It wasn't my intent to overhear them, and I missed most of what they said. However, I caught some of it, and will paraphrase the small part that I did hear.

> Lady 1: …and she [grand-daughter, I think- I never heard for certain] is going with a new guy now. He treats her well, is very respectful and considerate.
>
> Lady 2: He seems nice.
>
> Lady 1: Oh, he is. I like him. He has a good job and seems very responsible. I hope that it works out between them.
>
> Lady 3: Oh, so you think it/he [not sure which was said] has potential?
>
> Lady 1: I think so. She is [in her late twenties] and is starting to think about settling down now. He would be a good choice.

The first thing that ran through my head upon hearing this was as follows:

That poor son of a #@$&, he has no idea what he is getting himself into it*.

After a moment I realized what I had thought, and further realized that I didn't know these people. I didn't know the ladies, I didn't know the grand-daughter, and I didn't know the man. What was I doing making all of these assumptions and coming to these conclusions?

Yet, the thing is, I'm more likely right than wrong, and I know it. I've seen this before. I caught that conversation because of some of the "trigger" words used by those ladies. A minute's worth of conversation had me convinced that this guy was your typical Beta White-Knight. I could always be wrong, but I don't think I am. The way that the ladies described him fits that profile to a T. The grand-daughter I was less certain about, but that comment about settling down (coupled with her age), made me think that she was at or approaching her Epiphany Phase. The tone used by the [presumed] grandmother also lent credence to that inference [I almost thought I picked up a hint that the woman in question might have some regrets].

As I contemplated that conversation later that day, I couldn't help but feel sympathy for that unknown man. I have no idea who is he, but that didn't stop me all the same. And while it is possible that I misread everything, and that my sympathy is unneeded, the sentiment was still expressed. Having seen what can happen to a man who falls for that particular trap, I would have trouble wishing it on my worst enemies. What I am curious about is if I am alone in feeling this. Do some of my male readers experience similar sympathies? Or is this just me? I ask because it isn't an isolated occurrence for me- I often feel for men who are caught, or look to be caught, in the web of lies that is sometimes referred to as "Blue Pill land." Feel free to add your thoughts on this, and

anything else related to the subject, in the comments.

Tradition Thursday- #26

June 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's post I feature yet another of St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters. The focus for today will be his eighth letter, which continues to examine the Nicene Creed, and the phrase "Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of All Things Visible and Invisible" in particular.

> Job 38:2-3
>
> *Who is this that hides counsel from Me, and keeps words in his heart, and thinks to hide them from Me ?*
>
> 1. To look upon God with eyes of flesh is impossible: for the incorporeal cannot be subject to bodily sight: and the Only begotten Son of God Himself has testified, saying, *No man has seen God at any time*. John 1:18 For if according to that which is written in Ezekiel any one should understand that Ezekiel saw Him, yet what says the Scripture? *He saw the likeness of the glory of the Lord* Ezekiel 1:28; not the Lord Himself, but *the likeness of His glory*, not the glory itself, as it really is. And when he saw merely *the likeness of the glory*, and not the glory itself, he fell to the earth from fear. Now if the sight of the likeness of the glory brought fear and distress upon the prophets, any one who should attempt to behold God Himself would to a certainty lose his life, according to the saying, *No man shall see My face and live*. Exodus 33:20 For this cause God of His great loving-kindness spread out the heaven as a veil of His proper Godhead, that we should not perish. The word is not mine, but the Prophet's. *If You shall rend the heavens, trembling will take hold of the mountains at sight of You, and they will flow down*. And why do you wonder that Ezekiel fell down on seeing *the likeness of the glory?* when Daniel at the sight of Gabriel, though but a servant of God, straightway shuddered and fell on his face, and, prophet as he was, dared not answer him, until the Angel transformed himself into the likeness of a son of man. Now if the appearing of Gabriel wrought trembling in the Prophets, had God Himself been seen as He is, would not all have perished?
>
> 2. The Divine Nature then it is impossible to see with eyes of flesh: but from the works, which are Divine, it is possible to attain to some conception of His power, according to Solomon, who says, *For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the Maker of them is seen*. He said not that from the creatures the Maker is seen, but added *proportionably*. For God appears the greater to every man in proportion as he has grasped a larger survey of the creatures: and when his heart is uplifted by that larger survey, he gains withal a greater conception of God.
>
> 3. Would you learn that to comprehend the nature of God is impossible? The Three Children in the furnace of fire, as they hymn the praises of God, say

Blessed are you that beholdest the depths, and sittest upon the Cherubim. Tell me what is the nature of the Cherubim, and then look upon Him who sits upon them. And yet Ezekiel the Prophet even made a description of them, as far as was possible, saying that *every one has four faces*, one of a man, another of a lion, another of an eagle, and another of a calf; and that each one had six wings , and they had eyes on all sides; and that under each one was a wheel of four sides. Nevertheless though the Prophet makes the explanation, we cannot yet understand it even as we read. But if we cannot understand the throne, which he has described, how shall we be able to comprehend Him who sits thereon, the Invisible and Ineffable God? To scrutinise then the nature of God is impossible: but it is in our power to send up praises of His glory for His works that are seen.

4. These things I say to you because of the following context of the Creed, and because we say, We Believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of All Things Visible and Invisible; in order that we may remember that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same as He that made the heaven and the earth , and that we may make ourselves safe against the wrong paths of the godless heretics, who have dared to speak evil of the All wise Artificer of all this world , men who see with eyes of flesh, but have the eyes of their understanding blinded.

5. For what fault have they to find with the vast creation of God?— they, who ought to have been struck with amazement on beholding the vaultings of the heavens: they, who ought to have worshipped Him who reared the sky as a dome, who out of the fluid nature of the waters formed the stable substance of the heaven. For God said, *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water*. Genesis 1:6 God spoke once for all, and it stands fast, and falls not. The heaven is water, and the orbs therein, sun, moon, and stars are of fire: and how do the orbs of fire run their course in the water? But if any one disputes this because of the opposite natures of fire and water, let him remember the fire which in the time of Moses in Egypt flamed amid the hail, and observe the all-wise workmanship of God. For since there was need of water, because the earth was to be tilled, He made the heaven above of water that when the region of the earth should need watering by showers, the heaven might from its nature be ready for this purpose.

6. But what? Is there not cause to wonder when one looks at the constitution of the sun? For being to the sight as it were a small body he contains a mighty power; appearing from the East, and sending forth his light unto the West: whose rising at dawn the Psalmist described, saying: *And he comes forth out of his chamber as a bridegroom*. He was describing the brightness and moderation of his state on first becoming visible unto men: for when he rides at high noon, we often flee from his blaze: but at his rising he is welcome to all as a bridegroom to look on.

Observe also his arrangement (or rather not his, but the arrangement of Him who

by an ordinance determined his course), how in summer he rises higher and makes the days longer, giving men good time for their works: but in winter contracts his course, that the period of cold may be increased, and that the nights becoming longer may contribute to men’s rest, and contribute also to the fruitfulness of the products of the earth. See also how the days alternately respond each to other in due order, in summer increasing, and in winter diminishing; but in spring and autumn granting equal intervals one to another. And the nights again complete the like courses; so that the Psalmist also says of them, *Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night proclaims knowledge*. For to the heretics who have no ears, they all but cry aloud, and by their good order say, that there is none other God save the Creator who has set them their bounds, and laid out the order of the Universe.

7. But let no one tolerate any who say that one is the Creator of the light, and another of darkness : for let him remember how Isaiah says, *I am the God who made the light, and created darkness*. Why, O man, are you vexed thereat? Why are you offended at the time that is given you for rest ? A servant would have had no rest from his masters, had not the darkness necessarily brought a respite. And often after wearying ourselves in the day, how are we refreshed in the night, and he who was yesterday worn with toils, rises vigorous in the morning because of the night’s rest ? And what more helpful to wisdom than the night ? For herein oftentimes we set before our minds the things of God; and herein we read and contemplate the Divine Oracles. And when is our mind most attuned to Psalmody and Prayer? Is it not at night? And when have we often called our own sins to remembrance? Is not at night ? Let us not then admit the evil thought, that another is the maker of darkness: for experience shows that this also is good and useful.

8. They ought to have felt astonishment and admiration not only at the arrangement of sun and moon, but also at the well-ordered choirs of the stars, their unimpeded courses, and their risings in the seasons due to each: and how some are signs of summer, and others of winter; and how some mark the season for sowing, and others show the commencement of navigation. And a man sitting in his ship, and sailing amid the boundless waves, steers his ship by looking at the stars. For of these matters the Scripture says well, *And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for years* Genesis 1:14, not for fables of astrology and nativities. But observe how He has also graciously given us the light of day by gradual increase: for we do not see the sun at once arise; but just a little light runs on before, in order that the pupil of the eye may be enabled by previous trial to look upon his stronger beam: see also how He has relieved the darkness of the night by rays of moonlight.

9. *Who is the father of the rain? And who has begotten the drops of dew Job 38:28* ? Who condensed the air into clouds, and bade them carry the waters of the rain , now *bringing golden-tinted clouds from the north* , now changing

these into one uniform appearance, and again transforming them into manifold circles and other shapes? *Who can number the clouds in wisdom* Job 38:37? Whereof in Job it says, And He knows the separations of the clouds , *and has bent down the heaven to the earth* : and, *He who numbers the clouds in wisdom*: and, *the cloud is not rent under Him*. For so many measures of waters lie upon the clouds, yet they are not rent: but come down with all good order upon the earth. Who *brings the winds out of their treasuries* ? *And who*, as we said before, *is he that has begotten the drops of dew? And out of whose womb comes the ice* Job 38:28? For its substance is like water, and its strength like stone. And at one time the water becomes *snow like wool*, at another it ministers to Him *who scatters the mist like ashes* , and at another it is changed into a stony substance; since *He governs the waters as He will*. Its nature is uniform, and its action manifold in force. Water becomes in vines *wine that makes glad the heart of man:* and in olives *oil that makes man's face to shine:* and is transformed also into *bread that strengthens man's heart* , and into fruits of all kinds which He has created.

10. What should have been the effect of these wonders? Should the Creator have been blasphemed? Or worshipped rather? And so far I have said noticing of the unseen works of His wisdom. Observe, I pray you, the spring, and the flowers of every kind in all their likeness still diverse one from another; the deepest crimson of the rose, and the purest whiteness of the lily: for these spring from the same rain and the same earth, and who makes them to differ? Who fashions them? Observe, pray, the exact care: from the one substance of the tree there is part for shelter, and part for various fruits: and the Artificer is One. Of the same vine part is for burning , and part for shoots, and part for leaves, and part for tendrils, and part for clusters.

Admire also the great thickness of the knots which run round the reed, as the Artificer has made them. From one and the same earth come forth creeping things, and wild beasts, and cattle, and trees, and food; and gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and stone. The nature of the waters is but one, yet from it comes the substance of fishes and of birds; whereby as the former swim in the waters, so the birds fly in the air.

11. *This great and wide sea, therein are things creeping innumerable*. Who can describe the beauty of the fishes that are therein? Who can describe the greatness of the whales, and the nature of its amphibious animals, how they live both on dry land and in the waters? Who can tell the depth and the breadth of the sea, or the force of its enormous waves? Yet it stays at its bounds, because of Him who said, *Hitherto shall you come, and no further, but within yourself shall your waves be broken*. Job 38:11 Which sea also clearly shows the word of the command imposed upon it, since after it has run up, it leaves upon the beach a visible line made by the waves, showing, as it were, to those who see it, that it has not passed its appointed bounds.

12. Who can discern the nature of the birds of the air? How some carry with them a voice of melody, and others are variegated with all manner of painting on their wings, and others fly up into mid air and float motionless, as the hawk: for by the Divine command *the hawk spreads out his wings and floats motionless, looking towards the south*. What man can behold the eagle's lofty flight? If then you can not discern the soaring of the most senseless of the birds, how would you understand the Maker of all?

13. Who among men knows even the names of all wild beasts? Or who can accurately discern the physiology of each? But if of the wild beasts we know not even the mere names, how shall we comprehend the Maker of them? God's command was but one, which said, *Let the earth bring forth wild beasts, and cattle, and creeping things, after their kinds* Genesis 1:24 and from one earth , by one command, have sprung diverse natures, the gentle sheep and the carnivorous lion, and various instincts of irrational animals, bearing resemblance to the various characters of men; the fox to manifest the craft that is in men, and the snake the venomous treachery of friends, and the neighing horse the wantonness of young men Jeremiah 5:8, and the laborious ant, to arouse the sluggish and the dull: for when a man passes his youth in idleness, then he is instructed by the irrational animals, being reproved by the divine Scripture saying, *Go to the ant, thou sluggard, see and emulate her ways, and become wiser than she*. For when you see her treasuring up her food in good season, imitate her, and treasure up for yourself fruits of good works for the world to come. And again, *Go to the bee, and learn how industrious she is* : how, hovering round all kinds of flowers, she collects her honey for your benefit: that thou also, by ranging over the Holy Scriptures, may lay hold of salvation for yourself, and being filled with them may say, *How sweet are your words unto my throat, yea sweeter than honey and the honeycomb unto my mouth*.

14. Is not then the Artificer worthy the rather to be glorified? For what? If you know not the nature of all things, do the things that have been made immediately become useless? Can you know the efficacy of all herbs? Or can you learn all the benefit which proceeds from every animal? Ere now even from venomous adders have come antidotes for the preservation of men. But you will say to me, *The snake is terrible.* Fear thou the Lord, and it shall not be able to hurt you. *A scorpion stings.* Fear the Lord, and it shall not sting you. *A lion is bloodthirsty.* Fear thou the Lord, and he shall lie down beside you, as by Daniel. But truly wonderful also is the action of the animals: how some, as the scorpion, have the sharpness in a sting; and others have their power in their teeth; and others do battle with their claws; while the basilisk's power is his gaze. So then from this varied workmanship understand the Creator's power.

15. But these things perhaps you know not: you would have nothing in common with the creatures which are without you. Enter now into yourself, and from your own nature consider its Artificer. What is there to find fault with in the framing of

your body? Be master of yourself, and nothing evil shall proceed from any of your members. Adam was at first without clothing in Paradise with Eve, but it was not because of his members that he deserved to be cast out. The members then are not the cause of sin, but they who use their members amiss; and the Maker thereof is wise. Who prepared the recesses of the womb for child-bearing? Who gave life to the lifeless thing within it? *Who knitted us with sinews and bones, and clothed us with skin and flesh* Job 10:11, and, as soon as the child was born, brought streams of milk out of the breasts? How grows the babe into a boy, and the boy into a youth, and then into a man; and, still the same, passes again into an old man, while no one notices the exact change from day to day? Of the food, how is one part changed into blood, and another separated for excretion, and another part changed into flesh? Who gives to the heart its unceasing motion? Who wisely guarded the tenderness of the eyes with the fence of the eyelids ? For as to the complicated and wonderful contrivance of the eyes, the voluminous books of the physicians hardly give us explanation. Who distributes the one breath to the whole body? You see, O man, the Artificer, you see the wise Creator.

16. These points my discourse has now treated at large, having left out many, yea, ten thousand other things, and especially things incorporeal and invisible, that you may abhor those who blaspheme the wise and good Artificer, and from what is spoken and read, and whatever you can yourself discover or conceive, *from the greatness and beauty of the creatures may proportionably see the maker of them* Wisdom 13:5, and bending the knee with godly reverence to the Maker of the worlds, the worlds, I mean, of sense and thought, both visible and invisible, you may with a grateful and holy tongue, with unwearied lips and heart, praise God and say, *How wonderful are Your works, O Lord; in wisdom have You made them all*. For to You belongs honour, and glory, and majesty, both now and throughout all ages. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #71

June 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Ah Q… that most difficult of letters to find a saint for. I had to really look for one. Fortunately I found one, and an excellent choice of a saint at that. Today's saint is St. Quadratus of Athens:

> **Saint Quadratus of Athens** (Greek: Άγιος Κοδράτος) is said to have been the first of the Christian apologists. He is counted among the Seventy Apostles in the tradition of the Eastern Churches.
>
> He is said by Eusebius of Caesarea to have been a disciple of the Apostles (*auditor apostolorum*).

Some more about what is known of him, and what is speculated about him, can be found at his wiki, located here.

St. Quadratus

[image]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #78

June 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

To start off today's post I want to explore two short passages from the Gospel of Luke which can seem somewhat odd when placed together. The first:

> [49] John answered, "Master, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." [50] But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you."

(Luke 9:49-50)

and the second:

> [14] Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled. [15] But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Be-el′zebul, the prince of demons"; [16] while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. [17] But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and house falls upon house. [18] And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Be-el′zebul. [19] And if I cast out demons by Be-el′zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. [20] But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. [21] When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; [22] but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. [23] He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

(Luke 11:14-23)

Reading those two passages recently, I wondered how exactly this worked. How is it that those who aren't against the apostles are for them, and yet at the same time those who aren't for, or with, Jesus are against him? Trying to resolve this in my head, I think that the solution might be found in this passage from the Gospel of John:

> [18] "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. [21] But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me. [22] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. [23] He who hates me hates my Father also. [24] If I had not done among them the works

> which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. [25] It is to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’ [26] But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; [27] and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.

(John 15:18-27)

We are either for Jesus, or against him. There is no “Middle Way” as far as He is concerned. Now, those who are for Him ought to be on the side of His disciples. After all, that littlest thing we do for our fellow Brothers and Sisters we also do for Him. At the same time, those who are *not* for Him will be opposed to His disciples. How could they not? His disciples, his friends, keep His commandments, and those who are against Him despise His commandment. They cannot help but oppose Jesus’ disciples, as His followers are an extension of Him:

> [12] For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13] For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
>
> …
>
> [27] Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. [28] And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. [29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? [30] Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? [31] But earnestly desire the higher gifts.
>
> And I will show you a still more excellent way.

(1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27-31)

His enemies struck at His body while He walked among us. Therefore it is only natural that they will continue to strike at the Church. With the world hating Him so, only those who are for Him will be for His disciples. At least, that is how I read it. I’m curious what my readers have to say about this. Do any of my Catholic/Orthodox commenters know of any writings of the Saints on this? I would appreciate confirmation or correction.

Words Of Power

June 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I recently came across this essay by Bonald, who blogs over at Throne and Alter. Somehow I had missed it when he posted it a few weeks back. I wish I hadn't as there were some interesting points raised both in the main post as well as in the comments. This [post will explore a few of them. Naturally enough I hope my readers will provide their thoughts.

To start with, I found this paragraph concerning customs of how men should interact with women interesting:

> Men are stronger than women. Women thus enter the public sphere from a position of weakness. The sense of helplessness this might inspire is alleviated by customs whereby men appear to cede high status to women, what we now call "chivalry" (which is, of course, distinct from the medieval warrior code of the same name). Our many ritual acts of deference to our ladies, holding the door for them and so forth, wouldn't make sense except as a corrective to the real power everyone knows men hold. Manosphere writers misunderstand these customs when they imagine them stemming from a view that women are inherently more valuable, while feminists who regard such "benevolent sexism" as a part of the patriarchy are basically correct (but with their moral evaluations reversed, as always with them).

I've always found the argument that deferential behavior was driven by some biological recognition that women were more "valuable" than men to be a stretch. At least, a stretch to imagine that was the only force at work. Fortunately a commenter by the name of JMsmith offered this:

> As you say, the old courtesies were the means whereby a man signaled that he was not a sexual threat. For instance, a man removed his hat to make himself shorter and less physically imposing. He also spoke in tones that were lower and more soothing. In various ways, some of them entirely symbolic, he put his strength and hardihood at the woman's service. I remember being taught that, when walking with a girl, I must always walk on the outside of the sidewalk, lest a passing car splash her with mud, slush or puddled water.
>
> But none of these courtesies were *emasculating*. On the contrary, they affirmed a man's manhood, which is why the feminist declared war on them (sort of). The old courtesies allowed a male to be gentle *and a man*. In other words a gentleman.
>
> The behavior of the "consummate gentleman" was, in other words, a sexual "kill button." It served to set women at ease by assuring them that they were not in, or about to enter, a sexual situation. The manosphere is largely populated by

> men who were misinformed about this, and who consequently went through life leaning on the sexual “kill button” under the mistaken belief it was a sexual detonator.

Now *this* has some real merit to it, I think. Especially that last paragraph. When you think about it, deferential customs (when they are kept to sane levels) help to make social interactions between men orderly. In fact, you can extend it to women as well. De-sexualizing social interactions helps to reduce competitive behaviors between men and women. Modesty is a female counterpart to male deference- modestly dressed women are less overtly sexual and thus less likely to incite or generate more sexualized responses from men. This will naturally lead to competition between men, which strains the social order.

Bonald’s mention of “language of conquest” was also worth noting:

> Men want sex more than women. This means women have a stronger bargaining hand in the bedroom. No man wants to beg for sex; that would be humiliating and contemptible. We thus ritually correct the power asymmetry by describing sexual intercourse in terms that flatter the man’s agency: he “took her”, “had his way with her”, and so forth. Feminists misunderstand this language by taking it literally, thinking it reflects a “rape culture” and that men experience their sexual appetite as a strength rather than a weakness. In fact, men often experience lust as perturbability, as weakness, and we are embarrassed by its power over us. Here it is the writers of the manosphere who seem closer to the mark, pointing out that the woman herself prefers to be “conquered” than to be petitioned.

I’m not sure that I agree with the first two sentences, at least in how they translate into “ritual language.” Men, being stronger than women, really can “take it” if they want to. Of course, there might be serious consequences for it, but that potential still exists. However, civilized living requires men to set aside that power or at least severely restrain it. In that sense men are willfully restricting their power in a manner similar to, although not the same as, deferential custom. I would wager that men use that language because it allows them to remove, at least in their minds, the restraints that society places on their sexuality. That it comes from stronger female bargaining power seems a bit weak to me.

On the other hand, I very much agreed with this paragraph:

> And this role we hate. Folk wisdom has it that when a boy pulls a girl’s pigtails, it probably means he likes her. I’m sure this is true. When a man becomes attracted to a girl, he feels a paradoxical urge to tease and offend her. Girl’s are cute when they’re shocked and offended–no doubt about that. If you can amuse and shock a girl all at once–get her to exclaim “I can’t believe you just said that!” in between suppressed giggles, it feels like, like *victory*. You’re not some beggar pleading for sex. No! It feels like you’re in charge.

Lastly, in the comments the subject of women wanting sex and how they react when it was denied came up. I think that the strong reaction women have isn't simply that they aren't used to being denied it. Rather, I think that women cannot handle rejection in this area as well as men normally done. Possibly it is because women experience it less. But I think that there is an innate female aspect to this as well.

Of course, I might be completely wrong, and my readers have a chance here in the comments to demonstrate my folly.

[*As an aside, I am working on a follow-up to my post on sympathy, as it is obvious that some things need to be cleared up, in addition to my desire to explore the nature of the responses to that post.*]

Tradition Thursday- #27

June 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series on the Catechetical Letters of St. Cyril of Jerusalem continues. This post will feature his tenth letter, which addresses the section of the Nicene Creed covering Jesus. Specifically it will cover the first half or so, to keep this post a more manageable length:

> *For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth ; yet to us there is One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and One Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.*
>
> 1. They who have been taught to believe *In One God the Father Almighty,* ought also to believe in His Only-begotten Son. For *he that denies the Son, the same has not the Father*. 1 John 2:23 *I am the Door* , says Jesus; *no one comes unto the Father but through Me*. For if you deny the Door, the knowledge concerning the Father is shut off from you. *No man knows the father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him*. Matthew 11:27 For if you deny Him who reveals, you remain in ignorance. There is a sentence in the Gospels, saying, *He that believes not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.* John 3:36 For the Father has indignation when the Only-begotten Son is set at nought. For it is grievous to a king that merely his soldier should be dishonoured; and when one of his nobler officers or friends is dishonoured, then his anger is greatly increased: but if any should do despite to the king's only-begotten son himself, who shall appease the father's indignation on behalf of his only-begotten son?
>
> 2. If, therefore, any one wishes to show piety towards God, let him worship the Son, since otherwise the Father accepts not his service. The Father spoke with a loud voice from heaven, saying, *This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. Matthew 3:17 The Father was well pleased; unless thou also be well pleased in Him, you have not life. Be not thou carried away with the Jews when they craftily say, There is one God alone; but with the knowledge that God is One, know that there is also an Only-begotten Son of God. I am not the first to say this, but the Psalmist in the person of the Son says, *The Lord said unto Me, You are My Son*. Heed not therefore what the Jews say, but what the Prophets say. Do you wonder that they who stoned and slew the Prophets, set at nought the Prophet.' words?
>
> 3. Believe thou In One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God. For we say *One Lord Jesus Christ,* that His Sonship may be *Only-begotten:* we say *One,* that you may not suppose another: we say *One,* that you may not profanely diffuse the many names of His action among many sons. For He is called a Door ; but take not the name literally for a thing of wood, but a spiritual, a living Door, discriminating those who enter in. He is called a Way John 14:6, not one trodden by feet, but leading to the Father in heaven; He is called a Sheep , not an

irrational one, but the one which through its precious blood cleanses the world from its sins, which is led before the shearers, and knows when to be silent. This Sheep again is called a Shepherd, who says, *I am the Good Shepherd* John 10:11: a Sheep because of His manhood, a Shepherd because of the loving-kindness of His Godhead. And would you know that there are rational sheep? The Saviour says to the Apostles, *Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves*. Again, He is called a Lion , not as a devourer of men, but indicating as it were by the title His kingly, and steadfast, and confident nature: a Lion He is also called in opposition to the lion our adversary, who roars and devours those who have been deceived. 1 Peter 5:8 For the Saviour came, not as having changed the gentleness of His own nature, but as the strong *Lion of the tribe of Judah* , saving them that believe, but treading down the adversary. He is called a Stone, not a lifeless stone, cut out by men's hands, but a *chief corner-stone* , on whom *whosoever believes shall not be put to shame*.

4. He is called Christ, not as having been anointed by men's hands, but eternally anointed by the Father to His High-Priesthood on behalf of men. He is called Dead, not as having abode among the dead, as all in Hades, but as being alone *free among the dead*. He is called Son of Man, not as having had His generation from earth, as each of us, but as coming upon the clouds To Judge Both Quick and Dead. He is called Lord, not improperly as those who are so called among men, but as having a natural and eternal Lordship. He is called Jesus by a fitting name, as having the appellation from His salutary healing. He is called Son, not as advanced by adoption, but as naturally begotten. And many are the titles of our Saviour; lest, therefore, His manifold appellations should make you think of many sons, and because of the errors of the heretics, who say that Christ is one, and Jesus another, and the Door another, and so on , the Faith secures you beforehand, saying well, In One Lord Jesus Christ: for though the titles are many, yet their subject is one.

5. But the Saviour comes in various forms to each man for his profit. For to those who have need of gladness He becomes a Vine; and to those who want to enter in He stands as a Door; and to those who need to offer up their prayers He stands a mediating High Priest. Again, to those who have sins He becomes a Sheep, that He may be sacrificed for them. *He is made all things to all men*
1 Corinthians 9:22, remaining in His own nature what He is. For so remaining, and holding the dignity of His Sonship in reality unchangeable, He adapts Himself to our infirmities, just as some excellent physician or compassionate teacher; though He is Very Lord, and received not the Lordship by advancement , but has the dignity of His Lordship from nature, and is not called Lord improperly , as we are, but is so in verity, since by the Father's bidding He is Lord of His own works. For our lordship is over men of equal rights and like passions, nay often over our elders, and often a young master rules over aged servants. But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lordship is not so: but He is first Maker, then Lord : first He

made all things by the Father's will, then, He is Lord of the things which were made by Him.

6. *Christ the Lord* is He who was *born in the city of David*. Luke 2:11 And would you know that Christ is Lord with the Father even before His Incarnation , that you may not only accept the statement by faith, but may also receive proof from the Old Testament? Go to the first book, Genesis: God says, *Let us make man*, not 'in My image,' but, *in Our image*. Genesis 1:26 And after Adam was made, the sacred writer says, *And God created man; in the image of God created He him*. For he did not limit the dignity of the Godhead to the Father alone, but included the Son also: that it might be shown that man is not only the work of God, but also of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself also Very God. This Lord, who works together with the Father, wrought with Him also in the case of Sodom, according to the Scripture: *And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven*. This Lord is He who afterwards was seen of Moses, as much as he was able to see. For the Lord is loving unto man, ever condescending to our infirmities.

7. Moreover, that you may be sure that this is He who was seen of Moses, hear Paul's testimony, when he says, *For they all drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ*. 1 Corinthians 10:4 And again: *By faith Moses forsook Egypt* Hebrews 11:27, and shortly after he says, *accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*. This Moses says to Him, *Show me Yourself*. You see that the Prophets also in those times saw the Christ, that is, as far as each was able. *Show me Yourself, that I may see You with understanding*. But He says, *There shall no man see My face, and live*. Exodus 33:20 For this reason then, because no man could see the face of the Godhead and live, He took on Him the face of human nature, that we might see this and live. And yet when He wished to show even that with a little majesty, when *His face did shine as the sun* Matthew 17:2, the disciples fell down affrighted. If then His bodily countenance, shining not in the full power of Him that wrought, but according to the capacity of the Disciples, affrighted them, so that even thus they could not bear it, how could any man gaze upon the majesty of the Godhead? 'A great thing,' says the Lord, you desire, O Moses: and I approve your insatiable desire, *and I will do this thing* for you, but according as you are able. *Behold, I will put you in the cleft of the rock* Exodus 33:22: for as being little, you shall lodge in a little space.'

8. Now here I wish you to make safe what I am going to say, because of the Jews. For our object is to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ was with the Father. The Lord then says to Moses, *I will pass by before you with My glory, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you*. Being Himself the Lord, what Lord does He proclaim? You see how He was covertly teaching the godly doctrine of the Father and the Son. And again, in what follows it is written word for word: *And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of*

the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, both keeping righteousness and showing mercy unto thousands, taking away iniquities, and transgressions, and sins. Then in what follows, *Moses bowed his head and worshipped* Exodus 34:8 before the Lord who proclaimed the Father, and said: Go then, O Lord, in the midst of us.

9. This is the first proof: receive now a second plain one. *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand*. The Lord says this to the Lord, not to a servant, but to the Lord of all, and His own Son, to whom He put all things in subjection. *But when He says that all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him*, and what follows; *that God may be all in all*. 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 The Only-begotten Son is Lord of all, but the obedient Son of the Father, for He grasped not the Lordship , but received it by nature of the Father's own will. For neither did the Son grasp it, nor the Father grudge to impart it. He it is who says, *All things are delivered unto Me of My Father* ; *delivered unto Me, not as though I had them not before; and I keep them well, not robbing Him who has given them.*

10. The Son of God then is Lord: He is Lord, who was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, according to the Angel who said to the shepherds, *I bring you good tidings of great joy, that unto you is born this day in the city of David Christ the Lord* Luke 2:10-11: of whom an Apostle says elsewhere, *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all*. Acts 10:36 But when he says, *of all*, do thou except nothing from His Lordship: for whether Angels, or Archangels, or principalities, or powers, or any created thing named by the Apostles, all are under the Lordship of the Son. Of Angels He is Lord, as you have it in the Gospels, *Then the Devil departed from Him, and the Angels came and ministered unto Him* Matthew 4:11; for the Scripture says not, they succoured Him, but they *ministered unto Him*, that is, like servants. When He was about to be born of a Virgin, Gabriel was then His servant, having received His service as a peculiar dignity. When He was about to go into Egypt, that He might overthrow the gods of Egypt made with hands , again *an Angel appears to Joseph in a dream*. Matthew 2:13 After He had been crucified, and had risen again, an Angel brought the good tidings, and as a trustworthy servant said to the women, *Go, tell His disciples that He is risen, and goes before you into Galilee; lo, I have told you* : almost as if he had said, *I have not neglected my command, I protest that I have told you; that if you disregard it, the blame may not be on me, but on those who disregard it.* This then is the One Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the lesson just now read speaks: *For though there be many that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth*, and so on, *yet to us there is One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and One Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him* 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 .

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #72

June 14, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter “R” returns once again as inspiration for today’s saint. Thus, our saint for today is Saint Rabanus Maurus:

> **Rabanus Maurus Magnentius** (c. 780 – 4 February 856), also known as **Hrabanus** or **Rhabanus**, was a Frankish Benedictine monk, the archbishop of Mainz in Germany and a theologian. He was the author of the encyclopaedia *De rerum naturis* (*“On the Natures of Things”* or *“On the Universe”*). He also wrote treatises on education and grammar and commentaries on the Bible. He was one of the most prominent teachers and writers of the Carolingian age, and was called “Praeceptor Germaniae,” or “the teacher of Germany.” On the Roman calendar (*Martyrologium Romanum*, 2001, pp. 126f.), he is celebrated on 4 February and listed as ‘sanctus,’ though the online version of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* of nearly a century earlier lists him as ‘beatus.’

More can be found out about him here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #79

June 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Ace's most recent post got me thinking about the human heart. The obvious verse from Scripture that my mind was drawn towards was that famous one from the Prophet Jeremiah:

> The heart is deceitful above all things,
> and desperately corrupt;
> who can understand it?

(Jeremiah 17:9)

This verse has been demonstrably proven time and time again. Yet it is one that we, even among the faithful, seem to constantly forget. Even now many who would call themselves Christians would no doubt defend the statement "The Heart Wants What it Wants." How easily they forget (ignore?) the words of our Savior, who warned us that: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:21). If someone does naught but gather material pleasures, then it is in the material world where that person's heart will be found. He also warned us that:

> No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,
> or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

(Matthew 6:24)

Either our heart is for God, and we accumulate spiritual treasure, or our heart is for the world (and its dark master), and we accumulate only material "treasures."

While on the subject of masters, I wanted to briefly note that this applies to some of the ideas expressed in Dalrock's most recent post. Those "Christian" leaders that Dalrock mentions have replaced God as the Master to be served. In His place we have worship of Romantic Love. Specifically, Romantic Love as defined by The Woman (whomever she happens to be). In a twist of fate that seems disturbingly appropriate, it only goes to accord the Prophet Isaiah:

> My people—children are their oppressors,
> and women rule over them.
> O my people, your leaders mislead you,
> and confuse the course of your paths.

(Isaiah 3:12)

I have more to say on Dalrock's post later, but in the meantime I have a little more scripture to cover. Specifically, a section from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans:

> As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over
> opinions. [2] One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only

> vegetables. [3] Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. [4] Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.
>
> [5] One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind. [6] He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. [7] None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. [8] If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. [9] For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.
>
> [10] Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; [11] for it is written,
>
> "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
> and every tongue shall give praise to God."
>
> [12] So each of us shall give account of himself to God.

(Romans 14:1-12)

There are two components to this section that stand out- eating and the observation of days. From what I recall reading elsewhere, Saint Paul was addressing the Mosaic food laws and Liturgical calendar (the various Jewish feasts, etc). Note how it is not sinful to observe any of those old practices. But they are not mandatory either. Instead, St. Paul tells us to direct everything towards God. However, St. Paul is using very broad language here which seems to go beyond merely the Mosaic laws and traditions. What I am curious about is the Catholic/Orthodox theology on this section as it relates to liturgical calendars and various fasts. Specifically, I'm curious about Lent. Because this passage to me always seemed to make such observances optional, not mandatory, albeit highly encouraged. Are there any writings of the Saints on this matter? Would love to know more.

Mea Culpa

June 17, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This short post is meant to act as a clarification of my post Sympathy for a Stranger. I was surprised by the reaction to that post, greatly surprised even. It generated a lot of what can only be called hostility. Several different people communicated to me in different channels their thoughts, and helped clarify matters (somewhat). Interestingly enough (to me at least), the hostility seemed to be based on two things: the first was a perception that I had been judging a woman I didn't know, and the second was a perception that I was defending my actions.

Let me clarify- the first perception is correct. I had been judging that woman. I thought that my post made that abundantly clear. Why it was worth arguing over whether I had or not seemed a waste of time to me. However, the second perception was incorrect. I was by no means attempting to defend my actions. I was wrong, and I thought, when I wrote that post, that if I didn't state it outright it was at least implied.

However, people read me otherwise. As for who those people were… I found it noteworthy that at least a few of my male readers understood what I was doing: I was admitting fault in a display of sympathy and was asking other men if they had done the same thing. My female readers, on the other hand, largely didn't seem to understand what I was trying to convey. This only goes to show how delicate communication between the sexes can be. It is terribly easy for us to misunderstand one another, and that post was evidence of that. One of the subjects that this blog covers is miscommunication between men and women, so expect some follow up there.

That post was also evidence of something else, only I haven't quite settled on what that is. As I indicated before, I have some suspicions, but I think I will run them by a few others first, before committing a post to the subject. If any of my commenters have thoughts of their own, this post is a proper place to voice them.

Also, as an aside, I am considering taking the month of July off from blogging. While I may offer the occasional comment or two, my plan is not to post at all. That may change, but I wanted to give folks a heads up for why they may not hear from me for a while.

Tradition Thursday- #28

June 19, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post picks-up where last week's post left off. I have been covering St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters, and we are now up to letter ten. This post covers the second half of that letter.

> 11. And He is called by two names, Jesus Christ; Jesus, because He saves,—Christ, because He is a Priest. And knowing this the inspired Prophet Moses conferred these two titles on two men distinguished above all : his own successor in the government, Auses , he renamed Jesus; and his own brother Aaron he surnamed Christ , that by two well-approved men he might represent at once both the High Priesthood, and the Kingship of the One Jesus Christ who was to come. For Christ is a High Priest like Aaron; since He *glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that spoke unto Him, You are a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*. And Jesus the son of Nave was in many things a type of Him. For when he began to rule over the people, he began from Jordan Joshua 3:1, whence Christ also, after He was baptized, began to preach the gospel. And the son of Nave appoints twelve to divide the inheritance ; and twelve Apostles Jesus sends forth, as heralds of the truth, into all the world. The typical Jesus saved Rahab the harlot when she believed: and the true Jesus says, *Behold, the publicans and the harlots go before you into the kingdom of God*. Matthew 21:31 With only a shout the walls of Jericho fell down in the time of the type: and because Jesus said, *There shall not be left here one stone upon another* Matthew 24:2, the Temple of the Jews opposite to us is fallen, the cause of its fall not being the denunciation but the sin of the transgressors.
>
> 12. There is One Lord Jesus Christ, a wondrous name, indirectly announced beforehand by the Prophets. For Esaias the Prophet says, *Behold, your Saviour comes, having His own reward*. Now Jesus in Hebrew is by interpretation *Saviour*. For the Prophetic gift, foreseeing the murderous spirit of the Jews against their Lord , veiled His name, lest from knowing it plainly beforehand they might plot against Him readily. But He was openly called Jesus not by men, but by an Angel, who came not by his own authority, but was sent by the power of God, and said to Joseph, *Fear not to take unto you Mary your wife; for that which is con ceivedin her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus*. Matthew 1:20 And immediately he renders the reason of this name, saying, *for He shall save His people from their sins*. Consider how He who was not yet born could have a *people*, unless He was in being before He was born. This also the Prophet says in His person, *From the bowels of my mother has He made mention of My name* Isaiah 49:1; because the Angel foretold that He should be called Jesus. And again concerning Herod's plot again he says, *And under the shadow of His hand has He hid Me*.

13. Jesus then means according to the Hebrew *Saviour,* but in the Greek tongue *The Healer;* since He is physician of souls and bodies, curer of spirits, curing the blind in body , and leading minds into light, healing the visibly lame, and guiding sinners' steps to repentance, saying to the palsied, *Sin no more*, and, *Take up your bed and walk*. For since the body was palsied for the sin of the soul, He ministered first to the soul that He might extend the healing to the body. If, therefore, any one is suffering in soul from sins, there is the Physician for him: and if any one here is of little faith, let him say to Him, *Help my unbelief*. Mark 9:24 If any is encompassed also with bodily ailments, let him not be faithless, but let him draw near; for to such diseases also Jesus ministers , and let him learn that Jesus is the Christ.

14. For that He is Jesus the Jews allow, but not further that He is Christ. Therefore says the Apostle, *Who is the liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ* 1 John 2:22? But Christ is a High Priest, *whose priesthood passes not to another* Hebrews 7:24, neither having begun His Priesthood in time , nor having any successor in His High-Priesthood: as you heard on the Lord's day, when we were discoursing in the congregation on the phrase, *After the Order of Melchizedek*. He received not the High-Priesthood from bodily succession, nor was He anointed with oil prepared by man , but before all ages by the Father; and He so far excels the others as *with an oath* He is made Priest: *For they are priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him that said, The Lord swore, and will not repent*. Hebrews 7:21 The mere purpose of the Father was sufficient for surety: but the mode of assurance is twofold, namely that with the purpose there follows the oath also, *that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong encouragement* for our faith, who receive Christ Jesus as the Son of God.

15. This Christ, when He had come, the Jews denied, but the devils confessed. But His forefather David was not ignorant of Him, when he said, *I have ordained a lamp for mine Anointed* : which lamp some have interpreted to be the brightness of Prophecy , others the flesh which He took upon Him from the Virgin, according to the Apostle's word, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels*. The Prophet was not ignorant of Him, when He said, *and announces unto men His Christ*. Moses also knew Him, Isaiah knew Him, and Jeremiah; not one of the Prophets was ignorant of Him. Even devils recognised Him, for He rebuked them, and the Scripture says, *because they knew that He was Christ*. Luke 4:41 The Chief-priests knew Him not, and the devils confessed Him: the Chief Priests knew Him not, and a woman of Samaria proclaimed Him, saying, *Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ* John 4:29?

16. This is Jesus Christ who came *a High-Priest of the good things to come* Hebrews 9:11; who for the bountifulness of His Godhead imparted His own title to us all. For kings among men have their royal style which others may not share: but Jesus Christ being the Son of God gave us the dignity of being called

Christians. But some one will say, The name of *Christians* is new, and was not in use aforetime : and new-fashioned phrases are often objected to on the score of strangeness. The prophet made this point safe beforehand, saying, *But upon My servants shall a new name be called, which shall be blessed upon the earth*. Let us question the Jews: Are you servants of the Lord, or not? Show then your new name. For you were called Jews and Israelites in the time of Moses, and the other prophets, and after the return from Babylon, and up to the present time: where then is your new name? But we, since we are servants of the Lord, have that new name: *new* indeed, but the *new name, which shall be blessed upon the earth*. This name caught the world in its grasp: for Jews are only in a certain region, but Christians reach to the ends of the world: for it is the name of the Only-begotten Son of God that is proclaimed.

17. But would you know that the Apostles knew and preached the name of Christ, or rather had Christ Himself within them? Paul says to his hearers, *Or seek a proof of Christ that speaks in me* 2 Corinthians 13:3? Paul proclaims Christ, saying, *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake*. Who then is this? The former persecutor. O mighty wonder! The former persecutor himself preaches Christ. But wherefore? Was he bribed? Nay there was none to use this mode of persuasion. But was it that he saw Him present on earth, and was abashed? He had already been taken up into heaven. He went forth to persecute, and after three days the persecutor is a preacher in Damascus. By what power? Others call friends as witnesses for friends but I have presented to you as a witness the former enemy: and do you still doubt? The testimony of Peter and John, though weighty, was yet of a kind open to suspicion: for they were His friends. But of one who was formerly his enemy, and afterwards dies for His sake, who can any longer doubt the truth?

18. At this point of my discourse I am truly filled with wonder at the wise dispensation of the Holy Spirit; how He confined the Epistles of the rest to a small number, but to Paul the former persecutor gave the privilege of writing fourteen. For it was not because Peter or John was less that He restrained the gift; God forbid! But in order that the doctrine might be beyond question, He granted to the former enemy and persecutor the privilege of writing more, in order that we all might thus be made believers. For *all were amazed* at Paul, and said, *Is not this he that* was formerly a persecutor Acts 9:21? Did he not come hither, that he might lead us away bound to Jerusalem? Be not amazed, said Paul, I know that *it is hard for me to kick against the pricks:* I know that *I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God* 1 Corinthians 15:9; but I did it *in ignorance* 1 Timothy 1:13: for I thought that the preaching of Christ was destruction of the Law, and knew not that He came Himself to fulfil the Law and not to destroy it. Matthew 5:17 *But the grace of God was exceeding abundant in me* 1 Timothy 1:14 .

19. Many, my beloved, are the true testimonies concerning Christ. The Father

bears witness from heaven of His Son: the Holy Ghost bears witness, descending bodily in likeness of a dove: the Archangel Gabriel bears witness, bringing good tidings to Mary: the Virgin Mother of God bears witness: the blessed place of the manger bears witness. Egypt bears witness, which received the Lord while yet young in the body : Symeon bears witness, who received Him in his arms, and said, *Now, Lord, let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people*. Luke 2:29-30 Anna also, the prophetess, a most devout widow, of austere life, bears witness of Him. John the Baptist bears witness, the greatest among the Prophets, and leader of the New Covenant, who in a manner united both Covenants in Himself, the Old and the New. Jordan is His witness among rivers; the sea of Tiberias among seas: blind and lame bear witness, and dead men raised to life, and devils saying, *What have we to do with You, Jesus? We know You, who You are, the Holy One of God*. Mark 1:24 Winds bear witness, silenced at His bidding: five loaves multiplied into five thousand bear Him witness. The holy wood of the Cross bears witness, seen among us to this day, and from this place now almost filling the whole world, by means of those who in faith take portions from it. The palm-tree on the ravine bears witness, having supplied the palm-branches to the children who then hailed Him. Gethsemane bears witness, still to the thoughtful almost showing Judas. Golgotha , the holy hill standing above us here, bears witness to our sight: the Holy Sepulchre bears witness, and the stone which lies there to this day. The sun now shining is His witness, which then at the time of His saving Passion was eclipsed : the darkness is His witness, which was then from the sixth hour to the ninth: the light bears witness, which shone forth from the ninth hour until evening. The Mount of Olives bears witness, that holy mount from which He ascended to the Father: the rain-bearing clouds are His witnesses, having received their Lord: yea, and the gates of heaven bear witness [having received their Lord], concerning which the Psalmist said, *Lift up your doors, O you Princes, and be lifted up you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in*. His former enemies bear witness, of whom the blessed Paul is one, having been a little while His enemy, but for a long time His servant: the Twelve Apostles are His witnesses, having preached the truth not only in words, but also by their own torments and deaths: *the shadow of Peter* Acts 5:15 bears witness, having healed the sick in the name of Christ. The handkerchiefs and aprons bear witness, as in like manner by Christ’s power they wrought cures of old through Paul. Persians and Goths , and all the Gentile converts bear witness, by dying for His sake, whom they never saw with eyes of flesh: the devils, who to this day are driven out by the faithful, bear witness to Him.

20. So many and diverse, yea and more than these, are His witnesses: is then the Christ thus witnessed any longer disbelieved? Nay rather if there is any one who formerly believed not, let him now believe: and if any was before a believer, let him receive a greater increase of faith, by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, and

> let him understand whose name he bears. You are called a Christian: be tender of the name; let not our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, be blasphemed through you: but rather *let your good works shine before men* Matthew 5:16 that they who see them may in Christ Jesus our Lord glorify the Father which is in heaven: To whom be the glory, both now and for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #73

June 21, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint is inspired by the letter "S." Hence, our saint for today is Saint Simeon Stylites the Elder:

> **Saint Simeon Stylites** or **Symeon the Stylite** (Classical Syriac: ܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܣܛܘܢܝܐ *šam'un dasṭonáyá*, Ancient Greek: Συμεὼν ὁ στυλίτης *Symeon Stylites*, Arabic: سمعان العمودي *semaan al aamoudi*) (c. 388 – 2 September 459) was a Syriac ascetic saint who achieved fame for living 37 years on a small platform on top of a pillar near Aleppo in Syria. Several other stylites later followed his model (the Greek word *style* means *pillar*). He is known formally as **Saint Simeon Stylites the Elder** to distinguish him from Simeon Stylites the Younger, Simeon Stylites III and Saint Symeon Stylites of Lesbos.

His is a rather fascinating account. An ascetic who found an intriguing way of trying to escape the world, he was much sought after for advice. More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



Patriarchy and Fatherhood

June 21, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Novaseeker recently left a comment in this post over at Dalrock's that is so good it clearly deserves its own post. Here it is in its entirety:

> *By saying that children don't need fathers and women don't need them to raise children successfully, you cut the legs out from under the arguments for child support.*
>
> Well, the thing is that in some places donors can actually be successfully sued for child support. It isn't universal but there have been cases where sperm donors have been made to pay child support precisely because they are the biological fathers. It certainly isn't 10% airtight for sperm donors, although it does vary by state.
>
> On the broader issue, it really makes plain what everyone here already knows: **fatherhood, in the era of feminist matriarchy, is solely dependent on whether the mother wants it to exist.** A mother can choose full fatherhood (i.e., married to the bio dad), reduced, or semi-, fatherhood (divorced with "visitation" or "shared parenting" arrangements), or no practical fatherhood but financial, or no fatherhood at all. It's a menu for mothers, now, and they can switch between different menu items at any time without cost to themselves. Fathers have precisely as much of a role in their children's lives as the mother, at any point in time, wants and is willing to accept.
>
> Of course, anyone who has been paying attention should not be surprised by this. **You can't really retain a meaningful fatherhood on a mass scale when you ditch patriarchy. More than anything else, patriarchy was about securing fatherhood — securing paternity, which is the basis of fatherhood.** When you get rid of it, you ipso facto undermine fatherhood in a way that motherhood can never be undermined because fatherhood is simply more tenuous than motherhood is. And so we shouldn't be surprised that in a society which has loudly and triumphantly and enthusiastically discarded patriarchy, that fatherhood is amorphous, tenuous, uncertain and in many ways simply failing.
>
> A society can't have this both ways, really. **Either you support fatherhood institutionally, and get more fathers and less fatherlessness, or you undermine fatherhood institutionally in the name of equality and empowering women and their reproductive and romantic freedoms, and you get less fathers and more fatherlessness.** It isn't rocket science. But our society is so "all in" committed to burying all aspects of patriarchy under the banner of female liberation and empowerment that it will choose, again and again and again, every manner of artificial and nonsensical support mechanism

> to prop up fatherlessness, rather than simply admitting that it was a bad idea to get rid of patriarchy. In other words, as between less freedom/empowerment for women and more fathers, on the one hand, and more freedom/empowerment for women and less fathers (and more fatherlessness), our society will happily choose the latter, and with gusto and enthusiasm, and will simply find more props to support fatherless families.

The main point which can be taken from this comment is simple:

Patriarchy = Fatherhood

Or perhaps better stated…

A = Patriarchy

B = Fatherhood

If A, then B; if not A, then not B

(or something like that; its been way too long since I took a logic class)

In order to have effective Fatherhood, you need at least some form of structural Patriarchy (in a general sense of the term). Without it fatherhood, as an institution, cannot be sustained against the ravages of time + human nature. In terms of Dominoes, the domino of Fatherhood can only be placed upright after, or perhaps at the same time as, Patriarchy. Contra what most of society believes and states, Patriarchy *is* progress; our current social path is actually regression. The structural benefits of a strong institution of fatherhood, secured only by Patriarchy, are petering out now in the West. We can see the consequences all around us.

Fatherhood, as an institution, is only going to get worse as time passes. The West has pretty much dismantled/destroyed the foundation of Patriarchy, and put (in Novaseeker's words) a feminist Matriarchy in its place. Of course, I don't think the two are really separate, but that doesn't matter in the context of this post. What does matter is that Fatherhood *cannot* be fixed until we rebuild a solid foundation for it. Simply reversing bad laws isn't enough. A complete social reorganization will be necessary. And I just don't see that happening voluntarily. There are simply too many who are invested in this system, man and woman alike, for peaceful change to happen on any meaningful time scale. The whole system would collapse before then. Which is to say that the whole system *will* collapse. Or at least, that is what I'm seeing from my vantage point right now. I'd love to be wrong, but I don't think that I am.

With that in mind, the Benedict Option is something that Christians should be considering right now. I know that I am. Novaseeker has some thoughts of his own about the Benedict Option.

Also worth reading: this comment by Dalrock.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #80

June 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage from scripture in today's post comes from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians:

> [12] Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; [13] for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
>
> [14] Do all things without grumbling or questioning, [15] that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, [16] holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. [17] Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. [18] Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

(Philippians 2:12-18)

The verse in this passage about grumbling is what caught my eye. I grumble a lot, and question a lot. Most of the time I keep it to myself, but that doesn't mean I don't do it. And it certainly doesn't meant that God doesn't know, or that it doesn't affect my actions. This was a needed wake-up call for me. Hopefully its one that I can keep in mind past this post.

The second passage is from Colossians:

> [9] For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, [10] and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. [11] In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; [12] and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. [13] And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14] having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. [15] He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.

(Colossians 2:9-15)

Reading those lines by St. Paul reminded me of these ones from the Prophet Isaiah:

> [4] Surely he has borne our griefs
> and carried our sorrows;

> yet we esteemed him stricken,
> smitten by God, and afflicted.
> [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions,
> he was bruised for our iniquities;
> upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
> and with his stripes we are healed.
> [6] All we like sheep have gone astray;
> we have turned every one to his own way;
> and the Lord has laid on him
> the iniquity of us all.

(Isaiah 53:4-6)

I imagine back then Isaiah 53 would have been difficult enough for Jews to understand. But the fact that Jesus sacrificed Himself for not just the Jews, but the Gentiles as well, was (at first) largely incomprehensible to both. As St. Paul explained elsewhere, “the cross was a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.” I don’t think that much has changed in this regard; it is still a difficult concept to understand for many. Looking back, I realize I took a long time for me to fully understand this atonement. That is something of a humbling realization, which is perhaps what was intended.

Tradition Thursday- #29

June 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Here it is, once again, a Thursday. This means it is time for another post on Tradition, continuing the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Letters/Lectures. Today's post features the beginning of his eleventh lecture. As before, the subject is the Nicene Creed:

> Hebrews 1:1
>
> God, who at sundry times and in various manners spoke in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.
>
> 1. That we have hope in Jesus Christ has been sufficiently shown, according to our ability, in what we delivered to you yesterday. But we must not simply believe in Christ Jesus nor receive Him as one of the many who are improperly called Christs. For they were figurative Christs, but He is the true Christ; not having risen by advancement from among men to the Priesthood, but ever having the dignity of the Priesthood from the Father. And for this cause the Faith guarding us beforehand lest we should suppose Him to be one of the ordinary Christs, adds to the profession of the Faith, that we believe In One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God.
>
> 2. And again on hearing of a *Son,* think not of an adopted son but a Son by nature , an Only-begotten Son, having no brother. For this is the reason why He is called *Only-begotten,* because in the dignity of the Godhead, and His generation from the Father, He has no brother. But we call Him the Son of God, not of ourselves, but because the Father Himself named Christ His Son : and a true name is that which is set by fathers upon their children.
>
> 3. Our Lord Jesus Christ erewhile became Man, but by the many He was unknown. Wishing, therefore, to teach that which was not known, He called together His disciples, and asked them, *Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am*Matthew 13:16? — not from vain-glory, but wishing to show them the truth, lest dwelling with God, the Only-begotten of God , they should think lightly of Him as if He were some mere man. And when they answered that some said Elias, and some Jeremias, He said to them, They may be excused for not knowing, but you, My Apostles, who in My name cleanse lepers, and cast out devils, and raise the dead, ought not to be ignorant of Him, through whom you do these wondrous works. And when they all became silent (for the matter was too high for man to learn), Peter, the foremost of the Apostles and chief herald of the Church, neither aided by cunning invention, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but enlightened in his mind from the Father, says to Him, *You are the Christ*, not only so, but *the Son of the living God*. And there follows a blessing upon his speech (for in truth it was above man), and as a seal upon what he had said, that it was the Father who

had revealed it to him. For the Saviour says, *Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but My Father which is in heaven*. Matthew 16:17 He therefore who acknowledges our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, partakes of this blessedness; but he who denies the Son of God is a poor and miserable man.

4. Again, I say, on hearing of a Son, understand it not merely in an improper sense, but as a Son in truth, a Son by nature, without beginning ; not as having come out of bondage into a higher state of adoption , but a Son eternally begotten by an inscrutable and incomprehensible generation. And in like manner on hearing of the First-born , think not that this is after the manner of men; for the first-born among men have other brothers also. And it is somewhere written, *Israel is My son, My first-born*. Exodus 4:22 But Israel is, as Reuben was, a first-born son rejected: for Reuben went up to his father's couch; and Israel cast his Father's Son out of the vineyard, and crucified Him.

To others also the Scripture says, *You are the sons of the Lord your God*Deuteronomy 14:1: and in another place, *I have said, You are gods, and you are all sons of the Most High*. *I have said*, not, *I have begotten.* They, when God so *said*, received the sonship, which before they had not: but He was not begotten to be other than He was before; but was begotten from the beginning Son of the Father, being above all beginning and all ages, Son of the Father, in all things like to Him who begot Him, eternal of a Father eternal, Life of Life begotten, and Light of Light, and Truth of Truth, and Wisdom of the Wise, and King of King, and God of God, and Power of Power.

5. If then thou hear the Gospel saying, *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*Matthew 1:1, understand *according to the flesh.* For He is the Son of David *at the end of the ages*Hebrews 9:26, but the Son of God Before All Ages, without beginning. The one, which before He had not, He received; but the other, which He has, He has eternally as begotten of the Father. Two fathers He has: one, David, according to the flesh, and one, God, His Father in a Divine manner. As the Son of David, He is subject to time, and to handling, and to genealogical descent: but as Son according to the Godhead , He is subject neither to time nor to place, nor to genealogical descent: for *His generation who shall declare* ? *God is a Spirit*John 4:24; He who is a Spirit has spiritually begotten, as being incorporeal, an inscrutable and incomprehensible generation. The Son Himself says of the Father, *The Lord said unto Me, You are My Son, today have I begotten You*. Now this *today* is not recent, but eternal: a timeless today, before all ages. *From the womb, before the morning star, have I begotten You*.

6. Believe thou therefore on Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, and a Son Only-Begotten, according to the Gospel which says, *For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. John 3:16 And again, *He that believes in the Son is not judged, but has passed out of death into life*. *But he that believes not the*

Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. And John testified concerning Him, saying, *And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the father—full of grace and truth* : at whom the devils trembled and said, *Ah! What have we to do with You, Jesus, Thou Son of the living God*Luke 4:34 .

7. He is then the Son of God by nature and not by adoption , begotten of the Father. *And he that loves Him that begot, loves Him also that is begotten of Him*1 John 5:1; but he that despises Him that is begotten casts back the insult upon Him who begot. And whenever thou hear of God begetting, sink not down in thought to bodily things, nor think of a corruptible generation, lest you be guilty of impiety. *God is a Spirit* , His generation is spiritual: for bodies beget bodies, and for the generation of bodies time needs must intervene; but time intervenes not in the generation of the Son from the Father. And in our case what is begotten is begotten imperfect: but the Son of God was begotten perfect; for what He is now, that is He also from the beginning , begotten without beginning. We are begotten so as to pass from infantile ignorance to a state of reason: your generation, O man, is imperfect, for your growth is progressive. But think not that it is thus in His case, nor impute infirmity to Him who has begotten. For if that which He begot was imperfect, and acquired its perfection in time, you are imputing infirmity to Him who has begotten; if so be, the Father did not bestow from the beginning that which, as you say, time bestowed afterwards.

8. Think not therefore that this generation is human, nor as Abraham begot Isaac. For in begetting Isaac, Abraham begot not what he would, but what another granted. But in God the Father’s begetting there is neither ignorance nor intermediate deliberation. For to say that He knew not what He was begetting is the greatest impiety; and it is no less impious to say, that after deliberation in time He then became a Father. For God was not previously without a Son, and afterwards in time became a Father; but has the Son eternally, having begotten Him not as men beget men, but as Himself only knows, who begot Him before all ages Very God.

9. For the Father being Very God begot the Son like Himself, Very God ; not as teachers beget disciples, not as Paul says to some, *For in Christ Jesus I begot you through the Gospel*. 1 Corinthians 4:15 For in this case he who was not a son by nature became a son by discipleship, but in the former case He was a Son by nature, a true Son. Not as you, who are to be illuminated, are now becoming sons of God: for you also become sons, but by adoption of grace, as it is written, *But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe in His name: which were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*. John 1:12-13 And we indeed are begotten of water and of the Spirit, but not thus was Christ begotten of the Father. For at the time of His Baptism addressing Him, and saying, *This is My Son*Matthew 3:17, He did not say, *This has now become My Son,* but, *This is My Son;* that He might make manifest, that even before the operation of Baptism

He was a Son.

10. The Father begot the Son, not as among men mind begets word. For the mind is substantially existent in us; but the word when spoken is dispersed into the air and comes to an end. But we know Christ to have been begotten not as a word pronounced , but as a Word substantially existing and living; not spoken by the lips, and dispersed, but begotten of the Father eternally and ineffably, in substance. For, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*John 1:1, sitting at God's right hand—the Word understanding the Father's will, and creating all things at His bidding: the Word, which came down and went up; for the word of utterance when spoken comes not down, nor goes up; the Word speaking and saying, *The things which I have seen with My Father, these I speak*John 8:38: the Word possessed of power, and reigning over all things: for *the Father has committed all things unto the Son*.

11. The Father then begot Him not in such wise as any man could understand, but as Himself only knows. For we profess not to tell in what manner He begot Him, but we insist that it was not in this manner. And not we only are ignorant of the generation of the Son from the Father, but so is every created nature. *Speak to the earth, if perchance it may teach you*Job 12:8: and though thou inquire of all things which are upon the earth, they shall not be able to tell you. For the earth cannot tell the substance of Him who is its own potter and fashioner. Nor is the earth alone ignorant, but the sun also : for the sun was created on the fourth day, without knowing what had been made in the three days before him; and he who knows not the things made in the three days before him, cannot tell forth the Maker Himself. Heaven will not declare this: for at the Father's bidding *the heaven also was like smoke established* by Christ. Nor shall *the heaven of heavens* declare this, *nor the waters which are above the heavens*. Why then art you cast down, O man, at being ignorant of that which even the heavens know not? Nay, not only are the heavens ignorant of this generation, but also every angelic nature. For if any one should ascend, were it possible, into the first heaven, and perceiving the ranks of the Angels there should approach and ask them how God begot His own Son, they would say perhaps, *We have above us beings greater and higher; ask them.* Go up to the second heaven and the third; attain, if you can, to Thrones, and Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers: and even if any one should reach them, which is impossible, they also would decline the explanation, for they know it not.

12. For my part, I have ever wondered at the curiosity of the bold men, who by their imagined reverence fall into impiety. For though they know nothing of Thrones, and Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers, the workmanship of Christ, they attempt to scrutinise their Creator Himself. Tell me first, O most daring man, wherein does Throne differ from Dominion, and then scrutinise what pertains to Christ. Tell me what is a Principality, and what a Power, and what a Virtue, and what an Angel: and then search out their Creator, *for all things were*

> *made by Him*. John 1:3 But you will not, or you can not ask Thrones or Dominions. What else is there that *knows the deep things of God 1 Corinthians 2:10-11* , save only the Holy Ghost, who spoke the Divine Scriptures? But not even the Holy Ghost Himself has spoken in the Scriptures concerning the generation of the Son from the Father. Why then do you busy yourself about things which not even the Holy Ghost has written in the Scriptures? Thou that know not the things which are written, busiest you yourself about the things which are not written? There are many questions in the Divine Scriptures; what is written we comprehend not, why do we busy ourselves about what is not written? It is sufficient for us to know that God has begotten One Only Son.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #74

June 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter “T” is the feature letter in today’s post. Given recent events, it seems to me that one saint deserves special recognition today. That saint is Saint Thomas More:

> **Sir Thomas More** (/ˈmɔr/; 7 February 1478 – 6 July 1535), venerated by Catholics as **Saint Thomas More**, was an English lawyer, social philosopher, author, statesman and noted Renaissance humanist. He was also a councillor to Henry VIII, and Lord Chancellor from October 1529 to 16 May 1532.
>
> More opposed the Protestant Reformation, in particular the theology of Martin Luther and William Tyndale. He also wrote *Utopia*, published in 1516, about the political system of an ideal and imaginary island nation. More opposed the King’s separation from the Catholic Church, refusing to accept him as Supreme Head of the Church of England, and what he saw as Henry’s bigamous marriage to Anne Boleyn. Tried for treason for his refusal to condone this, More was convicted and beheaded.
>
> Pope Pius XI canonised More in 1935 as a martyr of the schism that separated the Church of England from Rome; Pope John Paul II in 2000 declared him the “heavenly Patron of Statesmen and Politicians”. Since 1980, the Church of England has remembered More liturgically as a Reformation martyr. He was honoured by the Soviet Union, due to the Communistic attitude regarding property in *Utopia*.

Further details about Saint More can be found at his wiki, located here.


Saint Thomas More

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #81

June 28, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Recent events led me to think about God's Remnant. Several passages of scripture stand out when that theme is concerned. Here are a few, starting with the Prophet Elijah:

> [9] There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord
> came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" [10] He said, "I
> have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel
> have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets
> with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it
> away." [11] And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And
> behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and
> broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And
> after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. [12] And after
> the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the
> sound of a low whisper.[a] [13] And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his
> cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there
> came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" [14] He said, "I
> have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel
> have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets
> with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it
> away." [15] And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of
> Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.
> [16] And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha
> the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.
> [17] And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and
> the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. [18] Yet I will
> leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and
> every mouth that has not kissed him."

(1 Kings 19:9-18)

Then we move to the Prophet Isaiah:

> [20] In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no
> more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of
> Israel, in truth. [21] A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.
> [22] For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them
> will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. [23] For the Lord
> God of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.

(Isaiah 10:20-22)

Finally, we have St. Paul writing to the Christian community in Rome:

> I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham,[a] a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." 4 But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.
>
> 7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, 8 as it is written,
>
> "God gave them a spirit of stupor,
> eyes that would not see
> and ears that would not hear,
> down to this very day."
>
> 9 And David says,
>
> "Let their table become a snare and a trap,
> a stumbling block and a retribution for them;
> 10 let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,
> and bend their backs forever."

(Romans 11:1-10)

Something that has been difficult for me in the last few years was not having any fellow believers whom I could meaningfully talk with and connect with. As my faith was being reinvigorated during that time, the absence of the truly devout become ever more noticeable. Fortunately, over time I was able to find brothers and sisters in Christ who had not knelt to Baal. Some were discovered here, in this neck of the woods. Others I met in "real life", in parishes that were off the beaten path. Discovering these people was something very reassuring to me, which is to my shame. I, like Elijah, had not trusted that God would save a faithful Remnant.

But I've met many among that Remnant, as of late. The recent Desolating Abomination which was raised in the US seems to have acted as a galvanizing force. Those few among the Remnant have, at least from my experience, been seeking one another out. In the past few days I've met many more than I had found in most of the previous year. More than a few were actively what could be done to adapt to the present age. Among most of the devout believers I've talked to in the last few days, there was a general consensus that things were going to get worse. My priest today echoed their thoughts, and said during his homily that persecution was coming. The matter of fact tone he used to describe what was coming wasn't what was disturbing, however. It was the fact that, from what I could tell, no one in church was in the least bit surprised, much less shocked, by what he said. We know it is coming. In the meantime, these words of St. Paul seem

appropriate:

> [10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12] For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; [16] above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. [17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. [18] Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints…

(Ephesians 6:10-18)

A Pinch Of Incense

June 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been interesting to read the various reactions to the recent declaration (decision seems too mild of a descriptor). Many have realized that this was never about legitimacy, or equality.

It was about absolution.

Those who act against the natural law cannot help but recognize, somewhere deep down inside, that their actions are disordered. As St. Paul explained in his letter to the Romans, the law is written on our hearts. They know, whether or not they will admit it to themselves (they certainly wouldn't admit it to others), that they do wrong. Naturally enough this leads to guilt. As a general rule, we human beings don't like guilt. Not in the slightest. And so we seek a way to remove it, however we can.

One particularly easy (although not ultimately successful) method to deal with guilt is to have others approve the actions which lead to it. After all, if others say that we are in the right, how can we possibly be in the wrong? Of course, this won't last. And the reason why this is only just the beginning.

They won't stop here. Legitimacy can still be threatened by those who express disagreement. That is still possible- for the moment. Disagreement and dissent will be intolerable to them. After all, their goal is to have everyone affirm what they are doing. Conflicting viewpoints break up this harmony and threaten the comfort they are trying to build for themselves. What they want is to be told that they are right; what they fear is to be told that they are wrong.

What we see now is only the first step in a larger plan. It has three "phases," if you will.

Phase 1 is to legitimize their actions in general society. This has been effectively accomplished.

Phase 2 will be to silence any who dissent, any who break from the "party line." This is being worked towards even as you read this.

Phase 3 will involve forcing everyone to affirmatively voice their support for "the new normal." We, all of us, will be required to say that nothing is wrong about what they do. That their actions and lifestyle are just as valid as any other. In short, we will be required to offer a pinch of incense before the idols of this present age.

Understand that silence is not enough for them. The Romans once said "*Qui tacet consentit*." It can be translated as *silence gives consent*. That isn't enough. You see, they will know that if you don't speak up and voice your support, it means you disagree. That you dissent. [That massive display of support recently was based on this awareness- those who participated wanted to make it clear that they don't dissent.] Knowing that someone dissents will be enough to discomfort them, and that just won't do. After all, much of the reason for what is going on is so they can be comfortable. Anything that can negatively affect that comfort will be seen as a threat. And threats must be crushed.

So they will require everyone to speak up and affirm them. No one will be exempt from this. The choice presented to us will be simple: say that we support them, their views and their choices, *or else*.

What is that *else*?

The priest at church this Sunday was particularly blunt. He warned us that persecution was coming. Few words were spared about it; little needed to be said because it was obvious to most, if not all, of us there.

It will start subtle at first, and build over time. I don't think it will be prison, at least not in the beginning. My suspicion is that they will go for our soft spots, the places where we are truly vulnerable: our livelihoods to start off, I think. They will threaten us with losing our employment, our means of support. Going after our finances will be easy and relatively bloodless. Only those who are self-employed will be safe… at first. In the long run I fully expect them to find ways to go after even those who are their own boss. Discrimination laws, boycotts, and all manner of coercive acts in between will all find a use.

After that I expect that they will go after parents with children. It will only get worse from there.

Do not expect things to suddenly get better. Do not expect "the silent majority" to grow a spine and suddenly strike back against those who are "going overboard." They lack the will and attention span to do anything more than delay what is coming. Nor should you expect the law or the Constitution to provide any defense. In the end those words on paper will mean whatever they want them to mean.

Let's not lie to ourselves. They are going to do their damnedest to push us out of civil society. We need to prepare ourselves. We need to organize. We need to form new communities, built to withstand the coming storm. It is unclear how much time we have. I figure that we have, at most, a generation or so before Phase 3 arrives in full force. So it behooves us to start immediately. Failure on our part will mean that we are pushed back to the catacombs. It may come to that anyways. But if we act now we have a chance of preserving that which matters.

Parting Thoughts Before The Break

July 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As I mentioned before, I am going to take the month of July off from blogging. Unless something extraordinary happens I won't resume posting until August. In the meantime I might drop a comment or two here or there, and will try and moderate comments here on the blog (although less frequently than I do now). Before I go, a few things I want to mention.

Free Northerner has a post up about Why Young People Leave the Church. While there is more to it than simply a lack of potential spouses, it is definitely a factor. After all, meeting your spouse in church makes it much more likely you will stay in the church (ties matter). The good news is that some Traditional Catholics seem to "get it." Typically the younger they are, the more they realize things are broken and the more that they are open to when it comes to fixing it. Sadly, I don't expect that this will help myself or my generation (save perhaps the youngest Millenials). But hopefully the next generation will have it easier, assuming we can maintain our communities, that is.

Keep your eyes on Europe. The mess in Greece has the potential for a lot of economic trouble far beyond its borders. At this point it is impossible to guess how far everything will spill over. Even more troubling, however, is Russia. I don't think I'm being melodramatic anymore when I say that war is coming. Putin has put his country on war footing, and is moving Russia into an increasingly aggressive posture. I can't say where that war will be, whether in Ukraine or the Baltic states, or both or somewhere else entirely. But I don't think Putin is playing games. Not now. Russia has some serious issues internally, and they have made Putin desperate. Desperate men are dangerous, as they are willing to take risks others wouldn't. I mention all of this because a conflict over there could find its way over here through various means. Cyber-attacks are a strong possibility and could cause major, major disruptions over here. Shutting down the EBT system for a week, for example, could cause quite a firestorm. Given all this, I would recommend that folks keep their pantries well stocked, and their gas tanks full, just in case. Hopefully nothing comes of it, but you never know.

On another note, the last few months have seen plenty of comments left on this blog which have expressed disagreement (to put it mildly) with the topics I cover, or how I cover them. Many never were approved, but they were there all the same. I just want those who have left them to understand that I am unconvinced, and unimpressed, with their efforts. If what I write offends you, stop reading my blog and go elsewhere. Those of you who are easily offended should consider this a "trigger warning." When I resume blogging in August I intend to say all kinds of offensive things which will offend your delicate sensibilities.

Finally, since I will be gone for a while, this post will serve as a sort of off-topic post should anyone feel like so using it. Feel free to leave comments or links or carry on all manner of discussions. Any particularly worthy links might be added in updates to this

post, should I feel it warranted. Post requests are acceptable, of course. And should anyone have any ideas for guest posts, I will be glad to host them in July while I’m gone. And with that, I am signing off (mostly), for now. I’ll leave the light on for everyone.

Guest Post: 4 Rules And A Guideline

July 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post from a reader who wishes to go by the name “Anon.” As always with guest posts, they represent the beliefs of the author and not my own. I am hosting it both because I think it has some value, as well as the fact that it should hopefully generate some good discussion. [Side note: my hiatus might extend a bit into August as well. Not sure yet, just want to give folks a heads up.]

———————————————————————————————–

Some dating advice from a guy who has very little experience dating girls, and no experience marrying them.

Some comforting lies:

– There’s someone out there for everyone.

– God’s got a plan for you.

– The One is waiting.

Some unpleasant truth:

There are people who have no one out there for them, and you might be one of them.

God does have a plan, but his plan is definitely not your plan, and you may absolutely hate his plan, and it’s quite likely that you getting married to a wonderful woman isn’t part of his plan.

There is no One. There is only the ‘one’ that you picked (or settled for). Marriage will work if the parties involved want it to–romance and fuzzy feels optional.

With this in mind, I suggest to all young Christian men looking for marriage that:

– you cast as wide a net as possible

– next ladies as efficiently as possible

– and pray as much as possible. For some reason God responds to whiners.

To help with nexting useless ladies, I propose an extremely small number of rules.

You should date a girl if:

1. She passes the boner test. There is no 1-10 scale, only a 0-1 scale. If you think you could get it up for her, she’s hot enough.
2. She passes the Christian test. And by this I mean only that she’ll self identify as some sort of Christian, regardless of how real you think her faith is.

You should marry a girl you’re dating if:

3. She passes the virgin test. If you’re more than 95% confident she’s a virgin, then that’s good enough.
4. She passes the age test. This is up to you, what qualifies as

young enough, but my age test is:

a. younger than, or equal to my age AND

b. younger than 26.5 years old.

5. She has some of the good-wife guidelines. These are soft-rules that are more or less optional because women can be trained.

   Good wives:

   a. will follow your lead

   b. will know how to cook

   c. will be willing to homeschool your kids

   d. will maintain their looks

   e. will do the boring, hard work of being married adults with kids

   f. won't emotionally manipulate you more than necessary.

   g. are sane. (good luck on this one. unicorns exist?)

These rules are built to be as wide as possible, while still maintaining high odds of successful marriages. Notice what is missing from these rules. No personality questions. No movies/music/books/tv tastes questions. No life goals questions. If you're considering a girl who breaks any of 1-4, you have been warned, your choice has big warning signs. Sometimes you navigate rocky waters just fine, but sometimes you sink and drown, and you only get one shot at marriage.

If your girl doesn't have any good-wife qualities, then the real question is, can you reasonably do better? The answer is probably no. Get to training her.

The world we live in is harsh and unforgiving, but our God is kind and full of Grace. Life with a sex-partner sounds great, but life with God is the only true life. If you can't find a wife in this modern world of harlots and fatties, don't despair or dwell on what is lost, think only of what is gained. Knowing God is the only thing that matters in the long run, and men are supposed to be the ones with low time-preference. Don't settle for a #^@$% wife, or lots of porn, or other immoralities, but set your sights on drawing near to God, and then bug the &*$@ out of God until he relents and throws a wife at you or gives you eternal joy instead.

Guest Post: The Irrational Female

July 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post from reader and comment mdavid. As always with guest posts, they represent the beliefs of the author and not my own. I am hosting it both because I think it has some value, as well as the fact that it should hopefully generate some good discussion. [Yes, this is pretty much the same disclaimer as before.]

————————————————————————————————————

The blog Rational Male explores the psychological 'why' of male-female relations. It's fairly taboo stuff; the author writes under the moniker Rollo Tomassi (*the guy who gets away with it*). The general theme: helping men understand the indifference of female hypergamy.

It's an exceptional blog. For those detached from today's sexual marketplace, it resembles an honest, all-guy watercooler discussion about today's sexual landscape. It's nearly always thought-provoking. Needless to say, I read Rollo regularly.

Rollo recently did a live interview with Goldmund. Below is a transcript of a part I found intriguing. It called to my attention how marriage has become a wholly bimodal institution. The traditionally religious now have completely different marriages than secular versions. This was not the case even 30 years ago. Rollo mused:

I think that after 19 years of marriage there is a certain degree of development between the two of you where you know what's expected of one another. And I also understand that it could all end tomorrow; you know, that's another thing to keep in mind. ***Even if you think you have the most unique woman in the world, you think you have the best marriage you ever had, you know there's a lot of guys in divorce court right now who've said exactly the same thing.*** *And I understand that. If you are looking for a woman it's important, if you want to have a long term relationship you have to keep that in mind. I wrote in the book this chapter called The Pet and how women can go feral on you and* ***if you really, really want to have some sort of an honest relationship with a woman it's important to accept the fact that she can go feral on you.***

What I found so intriguing about the above comment was its bland, stoical acceptance that a marriage may simply "blow up" at any time. Note that Rollo's a smart, experienced guy and no blowhard; I accept what he says as fact for the average American male. Divorce is an ever-present risk, one that looms over a modern man's marriage.

Nevertheless, I cannot personally agree with Rollo's above quote. Why? It's simply not true for people of my religious background. I have familiarity with a fair number of traditional people; exactly zero of them have been in divorce court. None seem concerned with spousal abandonment. More than a few are of low SES status and thus more statistically prone to divorce, so it's not that I travel in elite circles and am ignorant of the proletariat. Divorce is frankly not even a minor concern for traditional religious people.

This makes sense. For a traditional religious woman to divorce she must reject her extended family and entire community. She would become alienated from her (likely numerous) children. She would be a public disappointment, an embarrassment to everyone she knows. Women, unlike many men, are sensitive to social pressure, so divorce simply doesn't happen often in these communities.

In Rollo's interview (which is worth listening to, by the way) he is asked: *"What's the most important trait you as a man can display to prevent [a wife] from going feral?"* I was once again dumbfounded at the underlying assumption. Is there really such an outrageous expectation of male performance today? Is it now a man's purview to prevent his wife from destroying her own marriage? Divorce is certainly not in a woman's best genetic interest in nearly every case, since her fertility window is tight and modern culture is very K-strategy focused. Single mothers may have raised Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, but they are far more likely to visit their kid in prison than the White House. And they know it.

So why do modern women so often go feral? It can't be traditional female nature; traditional women don't behave this way at all. Seen many Amish feminists lately? Me neither. My hypothesis: The modern loss of female fidelity is an organic reaction to below replacement birth rates. Modern women intuit they are going extinct* and this triggers a subconscious yet frantic quest for a fruitful mate.

I'm inclined to this explanation since it handles the data while avoiding fuzzy psychological, religious, or moral guesswork. For every childless woman in a tribe, it's a plain fact that another woman must crank out 4.2 children just to *break even* (only 7% of women of childbearing age are currently doing so). Natural selection would likely evolve a feral response for unfruitful women since empty wombs are a first-order death knell of any culture. Visit Southern California for pointers. Brush up on your Spanish first.

Having children is a woman's primary raison d'être. She either breeds at replacement or vanishes into the dustbin of history. Empty wombs (especially amid the extreme wealth of today) *should* cause modern women to go feral. Men, however, are not encoded to so panic, having evolved to find meaning and purpose as worker bees for the tribe (e.g.

soldiers). This enables their brothers, extended family, and tribe to march on to genomic victory.

The battle between the sexes has clearly heated up to epic levels. Men have responded to the challenge of women's unilateral control of family with a brilliantly effective scorched earth tactic: boycotting the husbanding of children and family while taking sex whenever possible. Subconsciously men believe all is genetically well, since they are having sex and that's enough for r-strategy survival. For this reason, men's happiness versus women's has been increasing over the last decade. What's not for him to like? Less work, more varied sex options, and no family obligations.

Women, undeniably barren, are driven into unhappy desperation. As a final insult, they are expected to work outside the home and can't help but subconsciously note migrants populating the gaps left by their own lack of children. For most men this culture, while worth enjoying, is certainly not worth fighting for. So they sit poolside, having accepted and even embraced the status quo.

**US Census shows 42% of women of childbearing age currently have no children. 22% have two, 17% one, 12% three, and 7% four or more. That means only 1/5 of women today have yet to dodge the ignominy of the Darwin Award. Interestingly, nearly all of the traditional women I know (who eschew divorce, natch) are in that final 7%. Having won the genetic lottery, why go feral? Domesticated animals rarely leave the warm farm if the farmer is feeding and breeding them well.*

Saturday Saints- #75

August 1, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series on saints resumes. Our letter for today is “U”, and our saint is St. Ursicinus:

> **Saint Ursicinus** (also *Hursannus, Ursitz, Oschanne*, fl. 600) was an Irish missionary and hermit in the Jura region.
>
> A *vita* of his is preserved in a redaction of the 11th century. According to this account, he was a disciple of Saint Columbanus at Luxeuil who followed his master when he was banished from Burgundy in 610, but then retired as a hermit in the Doubs valley. Veneration of Ursicinus is attested since the 7th century. In Grandval, a church was dedicated to Ursicinus in 675. By the 11th century, he was part of the local canon of saints of the Besançon diocese. His feast day was on 20 December. The supposed sarcophagus of Ursicinus is preserved in St-Ursanne in what is now the canton of Jura in Switzerland. In iconography, Ursicinus is depicted as holding a book and lilies in his hands

(source: wikipedia)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #82

August 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

And this series resumes. The first passage is from the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

> [33] "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. [34] You brood of vipers! how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. [35] The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. [36] I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; [37] for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

(Matthew 12:33-37)

I was drawn to this passage because of Jesus' admonition against careless words. Speaking without thinking is a habit that I sometimes engage in, despite recognizing it for the flaw it is. It never hurts to be reminded of the consequence of careless speech. Warnings against careless speech are quite common throughout Scripture, and for good reason. It can bring about your downfall, as the Book of Sirach warns:

> [9] Do not winnow with every wind,
> nor follow every path:
> the double-tongued sinner does that.
> [10] Be steadfast in your understanding,
> and let your speech be consistent.
> [11] Be quick to hear,
> and be deliberate in answering.
> [12] If you have understanding, answer your neighbor;
> but if not, put your hand on your mouth.
> [13] Glory and dishonor come from speaking,
> and a man's tongue is his downfall.

> [14] Do not be called a slanderer,
> and do not lie in ambush with your tongue;
> for shame comes to the thief,
> and severe condemnation to the double-tongued.

(Sirach 5:9-14)

St. James also warned us to be careful in our speech:

> Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness. [2] For we all make many mistakes, and if any one makes no mistakes in what he says he is a perfect man, able to

> bridle the whole body also. [3] If we put bits into the mouths of horses that they
> may obey us, we guide their whole bodies. [4] Look at the ships also; though they
> are so great and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small
> rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. [5] So the tongue is a little member
> and boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!
>
> [6] And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our
> members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the cycle of nature, and set on
> fire by hell. [7] For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be
> tamed and has been tamed by humankind, [8] but no human being can tame the
> tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With it we bless the Lord and
> Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God. [10] From
> the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brethren, this ought not to be so.
> [11] Does a spring pour forth from the same opening fresh water and brackish?
> [12] Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt
> water yield fresh.

(James 3:1-12)

I suppose that if Hell is our own little lake of fire, then our tongue will act as the match to set the blaze if we aren't careful.

Resuming Broadcasting

August 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Now that I finally have a little free time, I am going to try and start blogging again. I would like to thank those who submitted guest posts while I was taking my leave of absence, it was good to keep some discussion going on this blog. For the moment, expect some shorter posts on my part, until I can work out what major projects I want to undertake.

Where The Wild Things Are

August 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[I've updated the post with new thoughts. Look towards the bottom to find them.]

In his guest post The Irrational Female, commenter mdavid offered his thoughts on why many modern women have gone "feral." At the time I was too busy to offer my own thoughts, and intend to give them now on that subject. Since it has been a few days, and a few other posts have intervened, I think a new post on the topic would be appropriate.

Having read through mdavid's post, and the responses to it, I have to say that while I agree with many of his observations, I disagree with many of his conclusions. Family size is tied to the phenomenon of "feral" women, but I don't think it is a causal factor. Rather, it is a symptom of the actual forces at work.

My personal theory on the matter is that in our present "fallen" state, all human beings start out as feral. It is our "natural" state- or perhaps better termed, "base" state. In order for a human being to not be feral, he or she must be reared and socialized appropriately. Furthermore, since our "base" nature is feral, then it is the norm towards which we revert. Absent other forces at work, human beings will slowly revert back towards being feral. A failure to properly socialize and raise a child means that the child never leaves a feral state in the first place, or will quickly revert back to being feral once left to their own devices.

In order to keep humans from reverting to our feral nature, civilization developed and evolved various structures which promoted civilized behavior. In other words, we incentivized good behavior, and decentivized bad behavior. Laws, cultural codes and mores were all put in place in order to keep humans from going feral. These tools are, or rather, were, in place at every stage of a person's life.

They were no means fool-proof, either. There have always been those who bucked the laws and customs of civilization. Various names have been used to describe them: criminals, outlaws, malcontents. However they are described, for the large part most have rejected the institutions and tools by which civilization was maintained. At the same time, civilizations would do their best to contain and isolate these individuals. A failure to do so almost invariably ended with the destruction of the attendant civilization.

What we see now in the West in the form of "feral women" is the natural result of the slow dismantling of the tools of civilization. Women, no less than men, needed strong social institutions and customs in place to keep their "wild side" in check. However, in the last few centuries those checks have been either removed or weakened. For the most part, women are no longer punished for socially destructive behavior. They are shielded in many instances from the worst consequences of their conduct. Everything that used to be in place to coerce women to behave is either going or gone.

Even worse, women are often encouraged to engage in this self-destruction. It isn't

enough that women no longer face barriers in the way of their exercising their feral nature. Simply being allowed to engage in what they want doesn't go far enough. Instead, they must be affirmatively enabled in this. All of which is to say that "empowerment" as used today is nothing more and nothing less than the creation of a new social structure whose purpose is to allow women to go feral.

So, for a brief summary:

- Human beings start feral and need to be socialized throughout their lives in order for them to become "civilized"
- The tools civilization created in the past to socialize women so that they could be civilized have been weakened or dismantled
- In recent years this has been taken a step further and new tools have been put in place which make it easier for women to act feral

Update:

Based on the comments below, I have reworked my original theory. First some background, and then I will start at the beginning.

Ours is a God of Order. (1 Cor 14:33). It stands to reason then that harmony with the will of God is in natural alignment with Order. On the other hand, that which is not in harmony with God's will must be consistent with chaos, or Disorder. With this in mind, we might imagine a simple continuum, with Order on one side and Disorder on the other. The further we are towards Order, the more in line we are with God's will. And the further towards Disorder, the less in line we are with God's will. With this in mind lets to move to human beings.

Human beings have a couple of different forces acting upon them. First, you have our sinful inclinations as result of the Fall. Sin leads us away from God, and thus is inherently a tool of Disorder. Second, you have "the law written in our hearts." This is our latent understanding of the Natural Law. Since the Natural Law is in harmony with God's will, it is inherently a tool of Order. Thus, human beings are at their core conflicted- we have the effects of the Natural Law and of the Fall both working within us.

This conflict between those two forces within us, between Order and Disorder, form our base nature (not us being "feral" as I asserted before). Unfortunately, the Fall damaged our ability to understand the Natural Law. This impairment means that, by ourselves, we can only ever have an imperfect understanding of it, and will only be able to imperfectly follow it. Hence, it is extremely rare for human beings to, on our own, live an Ordered life. But it isn't impossible. Some individuals are gifted with a greater ability to reason and act rationally. This permits them to act more consistently with the Natural Law, and thus create Order. These individuals are the ones who build civilizations. Especially when they can work in concert, they can instill Order in the world around them. However, as stated before, most individuals aren't like that. By themselves, they will act in a Disordered way.

One way this can be overcome is of course through careful parenting. Scripture is filled with numerous admonitions of the importance of disciplining children. And for good

reason- this is essential to help them develop the tools necessary to live an Ordered life. When parents fail to properly raise their children, they risk those children "backsliding" and becoming captive to their passions.

Another method for instilling Order is through Law. Whether it be formal laws imposed by whatever government exists, or informal customs or conditions, they all have as their function the imposition of restraints on human behavior for the purpose of instilling Order. These social tools are essential to maintaining Order in any society. St. Paul explained why:

> [8] Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, [9] understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, [10] immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine…

(1 Timothy 1:8-10)

There are some who are just inclined towards disobedience. There are others who will have trouble obeying. Thus, social restraints are essential for keeping them in check.

Throughout history, numerous civilizations have tried to impose their own version of Order. However, as noted earlier, they were operating under an imperfect understanding of the Natural Law. This means they would never, could never, achieve true order. They were always conflicted. Thus, you had the Aztec Empire committing human sacrifice, and the Romans maintaining a slave state, and various Indian empires using an inflexible caste system, just to name some examples. Because they lacked a complete understanding of the Natural Law, they were doomed to fail. Any civilization that is founded only on worldly things is so doomed. If an external threat doesn't destroy them, internal conflicts will. [Incidentally, those civilizations that were closest to obeying the natural law were also the most secure.]

What changes this is Christ. With Christ and the sacraments, human beings can overcome the limitations placed on their understanding of the Natural Law by the Fall. This means we can determine the means to create a truly Ordered society that is in harmony with God's Will. But at the same time, we are still human beings who sin. So we can reject the Grace extended to us. Because of that, we still need law, as there will always be those who are disobedient.

In the West now there are several things going on. First, we have a widespread rejection of Christ- a rebellion against sound teaching and doctrine. That invariably leads to Disorder, as it brings people further away from grasping the Natural Law. We also have a massive dismantling of social restraints. What I said earlier in the post still applies. Those restraints are essential, no matter the society. There will always be those who disobey or who are likely to stray. Without them, Disorder is only to be expected. Since the restraints on women in particular have been removed the most, we are seeing a lot of Disordered (or "feral") women in the West these days. I expect that as Disorder continues to grow in

the West that men will increasingly follow suit.

And now for an attempt to re-summarize:

- Human beings are conflicted at heart- we are torn between Order and Disorder
- Since Disorder tends to win out for most, human beings need to be conditioned and subject to various social restraints in order to stay “civilized”, that is, to be Orderly
- Women are not reared as well now as they were in the past
- The tools civilizations created in the past to restrain female behavior have been weakened or dismantled
- In recent years this has been taken a step further and new tools have been put in place which encourage Disorderly female tendencies
- As a result, women in the West have become more and more Disordered

Human Nature Doesn’t Change- Example #1198

August 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

No matter how much we often like to pretend otherwise, human nature doesn’t change. Beefy Levinson, in his post Midieval Game, explains why. Example #8 seems very on point as far as recent discussion on this blog are concerned.

Tradition Thursday- #30

August 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We resume the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. Last time we featured the beginning of his 1th lecture, which was covering the Nicene Creed. This post will cover the end of that lecture.

> 13. Be not ashamed to confess your ignorance, since you share ignorance with Angels. Only He who begot knows Him who was begotten, and He who is begotten of Him knows Him who begot. He who begot knows what He begot: and the Scriptures also testify that He who was begotten is God. For *as the Father has life in Himself, so also has He given to the Son to have life in Himself* John 5:26; and, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father* ; and, *as the Father quickens* whom He will, even so the Son quickens whom He will. Neither He who begot suffered any loss, nor is anything lacking to Him who was begotten (I know that I have said these things many times, but it is for your safety that they are said so often): neither has He who begot, a Father, nor He who was begotten, a brother. Neither was He who begot changed into the Son , nor did He who was begotten become the Father. Of One Only Father there is One Only-begotten Son: neither two Unbegotten , nor two Only-begotten; but One Father, Unbegotten (for He is Unbegotten who has no father); and One Son, eternally begotten of the Father; begotten not in time, but before all ages; not increased by advancement, but begotten that which He now is.
>
> 14. We believe then In the Only-Begotten Son of God, Who Was Begotten of the Father Very God. For the True God begets not a false god, as we have said, nor did He deliberate and afterwards beget ; but He begot eternally, and much more swiftly than our words or thoughts: for we speaking in time, consume time; but in the case of the Divine Power, the generation is timeless. And as I have often said, He did not bring forth the Son from non-existence into being, nor take the non-existent into sonship : but the Father, being Eternal, eternally and ineffably begot One Only Son, who has no brother. Nor are there two first principles; but the Father is *the head of the Son* 1 Corinthians 11:3; the beginning is One. For the Father begot the Son Very God, called Emmanuel; and Emmanuel *being interpreted is, God with us* Matthew 1:23 .
>
> 15. And would you know that He who was begotten of the Father, and afterwards became man, is God? Hear the Prophet saying, *This is our God, none other shall be accounted of in comparison with Him. He has found out every way of knowledge, and given it to Jacob His servant, and to Israel His beloved. Afterwards He was seen on earth, and conversed among men*. Do you see herein God become man, after the giving of the law by Moses? Hear also a second testimony to Christ's Deity, that which has just now been read, *Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. Hebrews 1:8 For lest, because of His presence here in

the flesh, He should be thought to have been advanced after this to the Godhead, the Scripture says plainly, *Therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows*. Do you see Christ as God anointed by God the Father?

16. Would you receive yet a third testimony to Christ's Godhead? Hear Esaias saying, *Egypt has laboured, and the merchandise of Ethiopia:* and soon after, *In You shall they make supplication, because God is in You, and there is no God save You. For You are God, and we knew it not, the God of Israel, the Saviour*. You see that the Son is God, having in Himself God the Father: saying almost the very same which He has said in the Gospels: *The Father is in Me, and I am in the Father*. John 14:11 He says not, I am the Father, but *the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father*. And again He said not, I and the Father am one, but, *I and the Father am one*, that we should neither separate them, nor make a confusion of Son-Father. One they are because of the dignity pertaining to the Godhead, since God begot God. One in respect of their kingdom; for the Father reigns not over these, and the Son over those, lifting Himself up against His Father like Absalom: but the kingdom of the Father is likewise the kingdom of the Son. One they are, because there is no discord nor division between them: for what things the Father wills, the Son wills the same. One, because the creative works of Christ are no other than the Father's; for the creation of all things is one, the Father having made them through the Son: *For He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created*, says the Psalmist. For He who speaks, speaks to one who hears: and He who commands, gives His commandment to one who is present with Him.

17. The Son then is Very God, having the Father in Himself, not changed into the Father; for the Father was not made man, but the Son. For let the truth be freely spoken. The Father suffered not for us, but the Father sent Him who suffered. Neither let us say, There was a time when the Son was not; nor let us admit a Son who is the Father : but let us walk in the king's highway; let us turn aside neither on the left hand nor on the right. Neither from thinking to honour the Son, let us call Him the Father; nor from thinking to honour the Father, imagine the Son to be some one of the creatures. But let One Father be worshipped through One Son, and let not their worship be separated. Let One Son be proclaimed, sitting at the right hand of the Father before all ages: sharing His throne not by advancement in time after His Passion, but by eternal possession.

18. *He who has seen the Son, has seen the Father* John 14:9: for in all things the Son is like to Him who begot Him ; begotten Life of Life and Light of Light, Power of Power, God of God; and the characteristics of the Godhead are unchangeable in the Son; and he who is counted worthy to behold Godhead in the Son, attains to the fruition of the Father. This is not my word, but that of the Only-begotten: *Have I been so long time with you, and have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me, has seen the Father*. John 14:9 And to be brief, let us neither

separate them, nor make a confusion : neither say thou ever that the Son is foreign to the Father, nor admit those who say that the Father is at one time Father, and at another Son: for these are strange and impious statements, and not the doctrines of the Church. But the Father having begotten the Son, remained the Father and is not changed. He begot Wisdom, yet lost not wisdom Himself; and begot Power, yet became not weak: He begot God, but lost not His own Godhead: and neither did He lose anything Himself by diminution or change; nor has He who was begotten any thing wanting. Perfect is He who begot, Perfect that which was begotten: God was He who begot, God He who was begotten; God of all Himself, yet entitling the Father His own God. For He is not ashamed to say, I *ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God* John 20:17 .

19. But lest you should think that He is in a like sense Father of the Son and of the creatures, Christ drew a distinction in what follows. For He said not, *I ascend to our Father,* lest the creatures should be made fellows of the Only-begotten; but He said, *My Father and your Father*; in one way Mine, by nature; in another yours, by adoption. And again, *to my God and your God*, in one way Mine, as His true and Only-begotten Son, and in another way yours, as His workmanship. The Son of God then is Very God, ineffably begotten before all ages (for I say the same things often to you, that it may be graven upon your mind). This also believe, that God has a Son: but about the manner be not curious, for by searching you will not find. Exalt not yourself, lest you fall: *think upon those things only which have been commanded you*. Sirach 3:22 Tell me first what He is who begot, and then learn that which He begot; but if you can not conceive the nature of Him who has begotten, search not curiously into the manner of that which is begotten.

20. For godliness it suffices you to know, as we have said, that God has One Only Son, One naturally begotten; who began not His being when He was born in Bethlehem, but Before All Ages. For hear the Prophet Micah saying, *And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephrata, art little to be among the thousands of Judah. Out of you shall come forth unto Me a Ruler, who shall feed My people Israel: and His goings forth are from the beginning, from days of eternity*. Think not then of Him who is now come forth out of Bethlehem , but worship Him who was eternally begotten of the Father. Suffer none to speak of a beginning of the Son in time, but as a timeless Beginning acknowledge the Father. For the Father is the Beginning of the Son, timeless, incomprehensible, without beginning. The fountain of the river of righteousness, even of the Only-begotten, is the Father, who begot Him as Himself only knows. And would you know that our Lord Jesus Christ is King Eternal? Hear Him again saying, *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad*. John 8:56 And then, when the Jews received this hardly, He says what to them was still harder, *Before Abraham was, I am*. And again He says to the Father, *And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with*

Your own self, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. He says plainly, *before the world was, I had the glory which is with You.* And again when He says, *For You loved Me before the foundation of the world* John 17:24, He plainly declares, *The glory which I have with you is from eternity.*

21. We believe then In One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father Very God Before All Worlds, by Whom All Things Were Made. For *whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were made through Him* Colossians 1:16, and of things created none is exempted from His authority. Silenced be every heresy which brings in different creators and makers of the world; silenced the tongue which blasphemes the Christ the Son of God; let them be silenced who say that the sun is the Christ, for He is the sun's Creator, not the sun which we see. Silenced be they who say that the world is the workmanship of Angels , who wish to steal away the dignity of the Only-begotten. For whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or anything that is named, all things were made by Christ. He reigns over the things which have been made by Him, not having seized another's spoils, but reigning over His own workmanship, even as the Evangelist John has said, *All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made*. John 1:3 All things were made by Him, the Father working by the Son.

22. I wish to give also a certain illustration of what I am saying, but I know that it is feeble; for of things visible what can be an exact illustration of the Divine Power? But nevertheless as feeble be it spoken by the feeble to the feeble. For just as any king, whose son was a king, if he wished to form a city, might suggest to his son, his partner in the kingdom, the form of the city, and he having received the pattern, brings the design to completion; so, when the Father wished to form all things, the Son created all things at the Father's bidding, that the act of bidding might secure to the Father His absolute authority , and yet the Son in turn might have authority over His own workmanship, and neither the Father be separated from the lordship over His own works, nor the Son rule over things created by others, but by Himself. For, as I have said, Angels did not create the world, but the Only-begotten Son, begotten, as I have said, before all ages, By Whom All Things Were Made, nothing having been excepted from His creation. And let this suffice to have been spoken by us so far, by the grace of Christ.

23. But let us now recur to our profession of the Faith, and so for the present finish our discourse. Christ made all things, whether thou speak of Angels, or Archangels, of Dominions, or Thrones. Not that the Father wanted strength to create the works Himself, but because He willed that the Son should reign over His own workmanship, God Himself giving Him the design of the things to be made. For honouring His own Father the Only-begotten says, *The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for what things soever He does, these also does the Son likewise*. John 5:19 And again, *My Father works*

hitherto, and I work , there being no opposition in those who work. *For all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine*, says the Lord in the Gospels. And this we may certainly know from the Old and New Testaments. For He who said, *Let us make man in our image and after our likeness* Genesis 1:26, was certainly speaking to some one present. But clearest of all are the Psalmist's words, *He spoke and they were made; He commanded, and they were created* , as if the Father commanded and spoke, and the Son made all things at the Father's bidding. And this Job said mystically, *Which alone spread out the heaven, and walks upon the sea as on firm ground* Job 9:8; signifying to those who understand that He who when present here walked upon the sea is also He who aforetime made the heavens. And again the Lord says, *Or did Thou take earth, and fashion clay into a living being* ? Then afterwards, *Are the gates of death opened to You through fear, and did the door-keepers of hell shudder at sight of You* ? Thus signifying that He who through loving-kindness descended into hell, also in the beginning made man out of clay.

24. Christ then is the Only-begotten Son of God, and Maker of the world. For *He was in the world, and the world was made by Him;* and *He came unto His own*, as the Gospel teaches us. John 1:10-11 And not only of the things which are seen, but also of the things which are not seen, is Christ the Maker at the Father's bidding. For *in Him*, according to the Apostle, *were all things created that are in the heavens, and that are upon the earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things have been created by Him and for Him; and He is before all, and in Him all things consist*. Colossians 1:16-17 Even if you speak of the worlds, of these also Jesus Christ is the Maker by the Father's bidding. For *in these last days God spoke unto us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds Hebrews 1:2*. To whom be the glory, honour, might, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #76

August 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter “V” is the showcase for today’s post. This gives us today’s saint, Saint Vergilius of Salzburg:

> **Vergilius of Salzburg** (also **Virgilius**, **Feirgil** or **Fergal**) (born c. 700 in Ireland; died 27 November 784 in Salzburg) was an Irish churchman, an early astronomer, bishop of Ossory and later, bishop of Salzburg. He was called “the geometer”.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



St. Virgilius

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #83

August 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A common theme will be quickly noted in the following passages. I've highlighted most, if not all of them, before, and for good reason. They are all of great value. I will explain why I chose them again at the end of the post.

> [10] When he entered Media and already was approaching Ecbatana, [11] Raphael said to the young man, "Brother Tobias." "Here I am," he answered. Then Raphael said to him, "We must stay this night in the home of Raguel. He is your relative, and he has a daughter named Sarah. [12] He has no male heir and no daughter except Sarah only, and you, as next of kin to her, have before all other men a hereditary claim on her. Also it is right for you to inherit her father's possessions. Moreover, the girl is sensible, brave, and very beautiful, and her father is a good man."

(Tobit 6:10-12)

> The wise woman builds her house,
> but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

(Proverbs 14:1)

> She opens her mouth with wisdom,
> and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

(Proverbs 31:26)

> Do not deprive yourself of a wise and good wife,
> for her charm is worth more than gold.

(Sirach 7:19)

> [23] A friend or companion is always welcome,
> but a sensible wife is better than either.

(Sirach 40:23)

I had the occasion recently to run across a woman I hadn't seen in quite a while. She wasn't really a friend, more of an acquaintance. The last I had seen of her, she had been quite taken with a man who I knew was trouble. He was a former "bad boy" who had supposedly turned his life around. Only I didn't believe that he had. I had tried to explain this to her, but to no avail. As many of you would guess, she made excuses about his behavior. She refused to accept that my read of him was accurate. There was no reasoning with her.

And that is where the selection of today's verses comes in. Wisdom, or sensibility, is one of the most valuable traits a woman can have. In fact I would go so far as to say it is

essential. This young woman lacked sense. I don't know how else to describe it. She wasn't at all wise. ~~Devout~~ Pious? Most certainly. Haven't met many women who [seemed to take]/took their faith more seriously. But she wasn't sensible and it showed. She was good looking, unusually feminine for a western woman, and ~~devout~~ pious. But without wisdom she was doomed to make a mess of her life.

And that is exactly what she did. Just as I had predicted, the man she had been interested in had used her and hurt her. She was a mess, and on a lot of different levels. The word "Alpha Widow" comes to mind. Sadly, she was finally starting to get some sense, as she was able to realize just how messed up she was. But at the same time she couldn't admit that she was responsible for her troubles. Even though I and some of her friends and family had pointed out exactly what would happen, she still refused to acknowledge that this could have been avoided. "It could happen to anyone" was her line.

All of this goes to show the value of sense in a woman. Devotion is a wonderful thing, but a woman without wisdom will most assuredly tear down her house. I've seen it before, and sadly I suspect I will see it again. So my advice to men: look for a sensible woman. From my experience, it is easier for a sensible woman to grow in faith, than it is for a devout woman to grow sense. Something to keep in mind.

[Update: See the comments below for more- I played somewhat fast and loose with what I said in the post.]

Tradition Thursday- #31

August 14, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My series on the Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem continues. We are now on the twelfth lecture, which examines the incarnation. As before, it is length, so only the first half will be featured.

> Isaiah 7:10-14
>
> *And the Lord spoke again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask you a sign, etc.:* and *Behold! A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, etc.*
>
> 1. Nurslings of purity and disciples of chastity, raise we our hymn to the Virgin-born God with lips full of purity. Deemed worthy to partake of the flesh of the Spiritual Lamb , let us take the head together with the feet , the Deity being understood as the head, and the Manhood taken as the feet. Hearers of the Holy Gospels, let us listen to John the Divine. For he who said, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* John 1:1, went on to say, *and the Word was made flesh*. For neither is it holy to worship the mere man, nor religious to say that He is God only without the Manhood. For if Christ is God, as indeed He is, but took not human nature upon Him, we are strangers to salvation. Let us then worship Him as God, but believe that He also was made Man. For neither is there any profit in calling Him man without Godhead nor any salvation in refusing to confess the Manhood together with the Godhead. Let us confess the presence of Him who is both King and Physician. For Jesus the King when about to become our Physician, *girded Himself with the linen* of humanity , and healed that which was sick. The perfect Teacher of babes Romans 2:20 became a babe among babes, that He might give wisdom to the foolish. The Bread of heaven came down on earth that He might feed the hungry.
>
> 2. But the sons of the Jews by setting at nought Him that came, and looking for him who comes in wickedness, rejected the true Messiah, and wait for the deceiver, themselves deceived; herein also the Saviour being found true, who said, *I have come in My Father's name, and you receive Me not: but if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive*. It is well also to put a question to the Jews. Is the Prophet Esaias, who says that Emmanuel shall be born of a virgin, true or false Isaiah 7:14? For if they charge him with falsehood, no wonder: for their custom is not only to charge with falsehood, but also to stone the Prophets. But if the Prophet is true, point to the Emmanuel, and say, Whether is He who is to come, for whom you are looking, to be born of a virgin or not? For if He is not to be born of a virgin, you accuse the Prophet of falsehood: but if in Him that is to come you expect this, why do you reject that which has come to pass already?
>
> 3. Let the Jews, then, be led astray, since they so will: but let the Church of God

be glorified. For we receive God the Word made Man in truth, not, as heretics say , of the will of man and woman, but of The Virgin and the Holy Ghost according to the Gospel, Made Man , not in seeming but in truth. And that He was truly Man made of the Virgin, wait for the proper time of instruction in this Lecture, and you shall receive the proofs : for the error of the heretics is manifold. And some have said that He has not been born at all of a virgin : others that He has been born, not of a virgin, but of a wife dwelling with a husband. Others say that the Christ is not God made Man, but a man made God. For they dared to say that not He— the pre-existent Word— was made Man; but a certain man was by advancement crowned.

4. But remember thou what was said yesterday concerning His Godhead. Believe that He the Only-begotten Son of God— He Himself was again begotten of a Virgin. Believe the Evangelist John when he says, *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*. John 1:14 For the Word is eternal, Begotten of the Father Before All Worlds: but the flesh He took on Him recently for our sake. Many contradict this, and say: *What cause was there so great, for God to come down into humanity? And, is it at all God's nature to hold intercourse with men? And, is it possible for a virgin to bear, without man?* Since then there is much controversy, and the battle has many forms, come, let us by the grace of Christ, and the prayers of those who are present, resolve each question.

5. And first let us inquire for what cause Jesus came down. Now mind not my argumentations, for perhaps you may be misled but unless thou receive testimony of the Prophets on each matter, believe not what I say: unless thou learn from the Holy Scriptures concerning the Virgin, and the place, the time, and the manner, *receive not testimony from man*. John 5:34 For one who at present thus teaches may possibly be suspected: but what man of sense will suspect one that prophesied a thousand and more years beforehand? If then you seek the cause of Christ's coming, go back to the first book of the Scriptures. In six days God made the world: but the world was for man. The sun however resplendent with bright beams, yet was made to give light to man, yea, and all living creatures were formed to serve us: herbs and trees were created for our enjoyment. All the works of creation were good, but none of these was an image of God, save man only. The sun was formed by a mere command, but man by God's hands: *Let us make man after our image, and after our likeness*. Genesis 1:26 A wooden image of an earthly king is held in honour; how much more a rational image of God?

But when this the greatest of the works of creation was disporting himself in Paradise, the envy of the Devil cast him out. The enemy was rejoicing over the fall of him whom he had envied: would you have had the enemy continue to rejoice? Not daring to accost the man because of his strength, he accosted as being weaker the woman, still a virgin: for it was after the expulsion from Paradise that *Adam knew his wife*.

6. Cain and Abel succeeded in the second generation of mankind: and Cain was the first murderer. Afterwards a deluge was poured abroad because of the great wickedness of men: fire came down from heaven upon the people of Sodom because of their transgression. After a time God chose out Israel: but Israel also turned aside, and the chosen race was wounded. For while Moses stood before God in the mount, the people were worshipping a calf instead of God. In the lifetime of Moses, the law-giver who had said, *You shall not commit adultery*, a man dared to enter a place of harlotry and transgress. Numbers 25:6 After Moses, Prophets were sent to cure Israel: but in their healing office they lamented that they were not able to overcome the disease, so that one of them says, *Woe is me! For the godly man is perished out of the earth, and there is none that does right among men* Micah 7:2: and again, *They are all gone out of the way, they are together became unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one* : and again, *Cursing and stealing, and adultery, and murder are poured out upon the land*. Hosea 4:2 *Their sons and their daughters they sacrificed unto devils*. *They used auguries, and enchantments, and divinations*. 2 Chronicles 33:6 *And again, they fastened their garments with cords, and made hangings attached to the altar*.

7. Very great was the wound of man's nature; *from the feet to the head there was no soundness in it;* none could apply *mollifying ointment, neither oil, nor bandages*. Isaiah 1:6 Then bewailing and wearying themselves, the Prophets said, *Who shall give salvation out of Sion* ? And again, *Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, and upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself: so will not we go back from You*. And another of the Prophets entreated, saying, *Bow the heavens, O Lord and come down*. The wounds of man's nature pass our healing. *They slew Your Prophets, and cast down Your altars*. 1 Kings 19:10 The evil is irretrievable by us, and needs you to retrieve it.

8. The Lord heard the prayer of the Prophets. The Father disregarded not the perishing of our race; He sent forth His Son, the Lord from heaven, as healer: and one of the Prophets says, *The Lord whom you seek, comes, and shall suddenly come*. Malachi 3:1 Whither? *The Lord* shall come *to His own temple*, where you stoned Him. Then another of the Prophets, on hearing this, says to him: In speaking of the salvation of God, do you speak quietly? In preaching the good tidings of God's coming for salvation, do you speak in secret? *O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get you up into the high mountain. Speak to the cities of Judah*. What am I to speak? *Behold our God! Behold! The Lord comes with strength* Isaiah 40:9-10! Again the Lord Himself says, *Behold! I come, and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the Lord. And many nations shall flee unto the Lord*. Zechariah 2:10-11 The Israelites rejected salvation through Me: *I come to gather all nations and tongues*. Isaiah 66:18 For *He came to His own and His own received Him not*. John 1:11 You come and what dost Thou bestow on the nations? *I come to gather all nations, and I will leave on them a sign*. For from My

conflict upon the Cross I give to each of My soldiers a royal seal to bear upon his forehead. Another also of the Prophets said, *He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under His feet*. For His coming down from heaven was not known by men.

9. Afterwards Solomon hearing his father David speak these things, built a wondrous house, and foreseeing Him who was to come into it, said in astonishment, *Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth* ? Yea, says David by anticipation in the Psalm inscribed *For Solomon*, wherein is this, *He shall come down like rain into a fleece* : *rain*, because of His heavenly nature, and into a fleece, because of His humanity. For rain, coming down into a fleece, comes down noiselessly: so that the Magi, not knowing the mystery of the Nativity, say, *Where is He that is born King of the Jews* Matthew 2:2? And Herod being troubled inquired concerning Him who was born, and said, *Where is the Christ to be born* ?

10. But who is this that comes down? He says in what follows, *And with the sun He endures, and before the moon generations of generations*. And again another of the Prophets says, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold! Your King comes unto you, just and having salvation*. Zechariah 9:9 Kings are many; of which do you speak, O Prophet? Give us a sign which other Kings have not. If you say, A king clad in purple, the dignity of the apparel has been anticipated. If you say, Guarded by spear-men, and sitting in a golden chariot, this also has been anticipated by others. Give us a sign peculiar to the King whose coming you announce. And the Prophet makes answer and says, *Behold! Your King comes unto you, just, and having salvation: He is meek, and riding upon an ass and a young foal*, not on a chariot. You have a unique sign of the King who came. Jesus alone of kings sat upon an unyoked foal, entering into Jerusalem with acclamations as a king. And when this King has come, what does He? *Thou also by the blood of the covenant hast sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water* Zechariah 9:11 .

11. But He might perchance even sit upon a foal: give us rather a sign, where the King that enters shall stand. And give the sign not far from the city, that it may not be unknown to us: and give us the sign plain before our eyes, that even when in the city we may behold the place. And the Prophet again makes answer, saying: *And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east*. Does any one standing within the city fail to behold the place?

12. We have two signs, and we desire to learn a third. Tell us what the Lord does when He has come. Another Prophet says, *Behold! Our God*, and afterwards, *He will come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be distinct*. Isaiah 35:4-6 But let yet another testimony be told us. You say, O Prophet, that the Lord comes, and does signs such as never were: what other clear sign tellest thou? *The Lord Himself enters into judgment*

with the elders of His people, and with the princes thereof. A notable sign! The Master judged by His servants, the elders, and submitting to it.

13. These things the Jews read, but hear not: for they have stopped the ears of their heart, that they may not hear. But let us believe in Jesus Christ, as having come in the flesh and *been made Man*, because we could not receive Him otherwise. For since we could not look upon or enjoy Him as He was, He became what we are, that so we might be permitted to enjoy Him. For if we cannot look full on the sun, which was made on the fourth day, could we behold God its Creator ? The Lord came down in fire on Mount Sinai, and the people could not bear it, but said to Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear; and let not God speak to us, lest we die* Exodus 20:19: and again, *For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, and shall live* Deuteronomy 5:26? If to hear the voice of God speaking is a cause of death, how shall not the sight of God Himself bring death? And what wonder? Even Moses himself says, *I exceedingly fear and quake* Hebrews 12:21 .

14. What would you then? That He who came for our salvation should become a minister of destruction because men could not bear Him? Or that He should suit His grace to our measure? Daniel could not bear the vision of an Angel, and were thou capable of the sight of the Lord of Angels? Gabriel appeared, and Daniel fell down: and of what nature or in what guise was he that appeared? His countenance was like lightning Daniel 10:6; not like the sun: *and his eyes as lamps of fire*, not as a furnace of fire: *and the voice of his words as the voice of a multitude*, not as the voice of twelve legions of angels; nevertheless the Prophet fell down. And the Angel comes unto him, saying, *Fear not, Daniel, stand upright: be of good courage, your words are heard*. Daniel 10:12 And Daniel says, I stood up trembling : and not even so did he make answer, until the likeness of a man’s hand touched him. And when he that appeared was changed into the appearance of a man, then Daniel spoke: and what says he? *O my Lord, at the vision of You my inward parts were turned within me, and no strength remains in me, neither is there breath left in me*. If an Angel appearing took away the Prophet’s voice and strength, would the appearance of God have allowed him to breathe? And until *there touched me as it were a vision of a man* , says the Scripture, Daniel took not courage. So then after trial shown of our weakness, the Lord assumed that which man required: for since man required to hear from one of like countenance, the Saviour took on Him the nature of like affections, that men might be the more easily instructed.

15. Learn also another cause. Christ came that He might be baptized, and might sanctify Baptism: He came that He might work wonders, walking upon the waters of the sea. Since then before His appearance in flesh, *the sea saw Him and fled, and Jordan was turned back* , the Lord took to Himself His body, that the sea might endure the sight, and Jordan receive Him without fear. This then is one cause; but there is also a second. Through Eve yet virgin came death; through a

virgin, or rather from a virgin, must the Life appear: that as the serpent beguiled the one, so to the other Gabriel might bring good tidings. Men forsook God, and made carved images of men. Since therefore an image of man was falsely worshipped as God, God became truly Man, that the falsehood might be done away. The Devil had used the flesh as an instrument against us; and Paul knowing this, says, *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity* Romans 7:23, and the rest. By the very same weapons, therefore, wherewith the Devil used to vanquish us, have we been saved. The Lord took on Him from us our likeness, that He might save man's nature: He took our likeness, that He might give greater grace to that which lacked; that sinful humanity might become partaker of God. *For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. It behooved the Lord to suffer for us; but if the Devil had known Him, he would not have dared to approach Him. *For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*.
1 Corinthians 2:8 His body therefore was made a bait to death that the dragon , hoping to devour it, might disgorge those also who had been already devoured. For *Death prevailed and devoured*; and again, *God wiped away every tear from off every face*.

16. Was it without reason that Christ was made Man? Are our teachings ingenious phrases and human subtleties? Are not the Holy Scriptures our salvation? Are not the predictions of the Prophets? Keep then, I pray you, this deposit undisturbed, and let none remove you: believe that God became Man. But though it has been proved possible for Him to be made Man, yet if the Jews still disbelieve, let us hold this forth to them: What strange thing do we announce in saying that God was made Man, when yourselves say that Abraham received the Lord as a guest ? What strange thing do we announce, when Jacob says, *For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved* ? The Lord, who ate with Abraham, ate also with us. What strange thing then do we announce? Nay more, we produce two witnesses, those who stood before Lord on Mount Sinai: Moses was in a *cleft of the rock* Exodus 33:22, and Elias was once in a cleft of the rock 1 Kings 19:8: they being present with Him at His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, *spoke* to the Disciples *of His decease which fire should accomplish at Jerusalem*. But, as I said before, it has been proved possible for Him to be made man: and the rest of the proofs may be left for the studious to collect.

17. My statement, however, promised to declare also the time of the Saviour's and the place: and I must not go away convicted of falsehood, but rather send away the Church's novices well assured. Let us therefore inquire the time when our Lord came: because His coming is recent, and is disputed: and because *Christ Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever*. Moses then, the prophet, says, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like me* : but let that *like me* be reserved awhile to be examined in its proper place. But when comes this Prophet that is expected? Recur, he says, to

> what has been written by me: examine carefully Jacob's prophecy addressed to Judah: *Judah, may your brethren praise you*, and afterwards, not to quote the whole, *A prince shall not fail out of Judah, nor a ruler from his loins, until He come, for whom it is reserved; and He is the expectation, not of the Jews but of the Gentiles*. Genesis 49:8, 10 He gave, therefore, as a sign of Christ's advent the cessation of the Jewish rule. If they are not now under the Romans, the Christ is not yet come: if they still have a prince of the race of Judah and of David , he is not yet come that was expected. For I am ashamed to tell of their recent doings concerning those who are now called Patriarchs among them, and what their descent is, and who their mother: but I leave it to those who know. But He that comes as *the expectation of the Gentiles*, what further sign then has He? He says next, *Binding his foal unto the vine*. Genesis 49:11 You see that foal which was clearly announced by Zachariah.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #77

August 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter “W” finds itself once again featured in this series. Thus, today’s saint is St. Willibrord:

> **Willibrord** (c. 658 – 7 November 739) was a Northumbrian missionary saint, known as the “Apostle to the Frisians” in the modern Netherlands. He became the first Bishop of Utrecht and died at Echternach, Luxembourg.

A few facts about him:

- His father was a convert to Christianity and entrusted his son to the Church to be raised.
- He visited Rome twice, and during one such visit was ordained a Bishop.
- He is also sometimes referred to as the Apostle to the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg).

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #84

August 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My scripture post last week generated a fair amount of discussion that is still ongoing. What I found interesting about it was that no one quoted this particular verse from scripture:

> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
> fools despise wisdom and instruction.

(Proverbs 1:7)

From this an argument can be made that wisdom and fear of the Lord are inseparable. I think it is a rather strong argument myself. The important point is to distinguish between true fear of the Lord and from the appearance of piety. They are not the same. They can be distinguished from one another by the actions that one takes- by one's fruit, if you will. The latter is merely an adornment, such as clothes, and can be taken off at will. The former comes from the heart. For an example of the difference between the two:

> 9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were
> righteous and regarded others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up to the temple
> to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by
> himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people:
> thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I
> give a tenth of all my income.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not
> even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful
> to me, a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than
> the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble
> themselves will be exalted."

(Luke 18:9-14)

The tax collector feared the Lord; the Pharisee did not. The Pharisee was so focused on where he didn't fail, that he was blinded to where he did. All have fallen short, and he forgot that.

While we are on the subject of fear of the Lord, here is an excellent passage from the Book of Sirach on the subject:

> 11 The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation,
> and gladness and a crown of rejoicing.
> 12 The fear of the Lord delights the heart,
> and gives gladness and joy and long life.
> 13 Those who fear the Lord will have a happy end;
> on the day of their death they will be blessed.

[14] To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
she is created with the faithful in the womb.
[15] She made among human beings an eternal foundation,
and among their descendants she will abide faithfully.
[16] To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom;
she inebriates mortals with her fruits;
[17] she fills their whole house with desirable goods,
and their storehouses with her produce.
[18] The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom,
making peace and perfect health to flourish.
[19] She rained down knowledge and discerning comprehension,
and she heightened the glory of those who held her fast.
[20] To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom,
and her branches are long life.

[22] Unjust anger cannot be justified,
for anger tips the scale to one's ruin.
[23] Those who are patient stay calm until the right moment,
and then cheerfulness comes back to them.
[24] They hold back their words until the right moment;
then the lips of many tell of their good sense.

[25] In the treasuries of wisdom are wise sayings,
but godliness is an abomination to a sinner.
[26] If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments,
and the Lord will lavish her upon you.
[27] For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and discipline,
fidelity and humility are his delight.

[28] Do not disobey the fear of the Lord;
do not approach him with a divided mind.
[29] Do not be a hypocrite before others,
and keep watch over your lips.
[30] Do not exalt yourself, or you may fall
and bring dishonor upon yourself.
The Lord will reveal your secrets
and overthrow you before the whole congregation,
because you did not come in the fear of the Lord,
and your heart was full of deceit.

(Sirach 1:11-30)

St. Paul had these words to say on wisdom:

[6] Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. [7] But we speak God's

> wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.
> [8] None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not
> have crucified the Lord of glory. [9] But, as it is written,
>
> “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
> nor the human heart conceived,
> what God has prepared for those who love him”—
>
> [10] these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches
> everything, even the depths of God. [11] For what human being knows what is truly
> human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what
> is truly God’s except the Spirit of God. [12] Now we have received not the spirit of
> the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts
> bestowed on us by God. [13] And we speak of these things in words not taught by
> human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who
> are spiritual.
>
> [14] Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are
> foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are
> spiritually discerned. [15] Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are
> themselves subject to no one else’s scrutiny.
>
> [16] “For who has known the mind of the Lord
> so as to instruct him?”
>
> But we have the mind of Christ.

(1 Corinthians 2:6-16)

It is amazing how many there are who seem to think they know better than God. They question Him who made them, and whom they do not know. But of course, He knows us better than we know ourselves.

Tell, Don't Listen

August 19, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Shorter post today, inspired by Deep Strength's most recent post. He examines covert and overt contracts, and how they relate to men interacting with women. One of the areas that he covers is the infamous "friendzone", and how nice guys try to use "friendship" to get close to women. As he explains:

> This is the covert contract that many immature men run. They think that if they trade emotional support, helping out a woman with things, complimenting her, sending her flowers, or any other "trade of good deeds" will get her to like him more.

While I would like to say needless to say at this point, I can't. It remains necessary to say that this strategy doesn't work well at all. It is also necessary to inform and remind men that they should be careful when discussing emotions with women. As Deep Strength explains:

> In general, I would say do not go out of your way to listen to or talk about your emotions with women nor help them out with personal matters. Discussing your emotions with women especially if you are interested in her is something that women do with other women. By doing this early on you are telling her that you're her friend and not a romantic prospect. Hence, often times said women get angry when they find out later you are really interested in them.
>
> This is one of the classic covert contracts that I discussed earlier. Men think that supporting a woman emotionally and helping her out much like a provider would will make her like him more. In reality the opposite occurs: your actions tell her that you are her friend. When it is revealed that you like her she feels used that you were trying to gain her attraction and affection through underhanded tactics. Although that may not have been your intention it comes off that way. Likewise, such men feel hurt because they actually thought it would work that you could buy her affection.

He is completely spot on here. If you are interested in a woman, keep in mind that you are not her emotional band-aid. And she isn't yours either.

At the same time, when a woman is emotional there is a potential opportunity for a man to really build up attraction between himself and the woman in question. It relies on you *telling* her about her emotions, not listening to her tell you about them. As Rollo is fond of saying, women expect, and want, a man who *Just Gets It.* They don't want to have to explain themselves to a man. That is a major turn-off for them. On the other hand, if a man can demonstrate that he *does*, in fact, "get" a woman, that can be a major turn-*on*.

The tactic I have in mind goes something like this:

- When a woman starts to talk about how she is feeling, and it is clear that strong emotions are involved, interrupt her. Tell her that you want to hear what happened. And to tell you just the facts. *Not* for her to tell you how she felt about everything.
- As she relates the facts, break them down and try to figure out how they would relate to basic female nature. What would frighten her? What would make her anxious? What would excite her? All of this is going on in your head silently.
- After she has related a few facts, tell her how those facts made/make her feel. Explain what it is that is affecting her, and how.
- Then ask for her to relate more facts. And repeat the process of analyzing and explaining.
- As you do this, lower the pitch and volume of your voice subtly. If you can, lean in a bit. Keep eye contact the whole time.
- Soon you will be able to relate how each fact makes her feel.
- The real gift is to be able to take this into the future. To read into the situation, guess at the facts she has yet to relate, examine her present emotions and try and infer what happened. Tell her this.
- You will know you are succeeding when she starts making comments about how you really get her, or for some women, when they go really quiet and just stare at you with astonishment.
- At this point, you want to have a good "closing move." Since this is written with Christian men in mind, a hug and/or a light kiss can be quite effective. You've already shifted the woman's strong emotions away from whatever was bothering her towards you. Now you want to shift them from negative to positive emotions. A hug, perhaps coupled with a kiss or stroking the woman's hair, can accomplish this.

The goal of all of this is to convince the woman, at an unconscious level, that you truly understand her. That you have pierced the veil of the "feminine mystique" and she is now an open book to you. Few things can elevate a man in a woman's eyes as much as this. I should point out that this tactic is also high-risk, high-reward. If you aren't careful you will end up being an emotional band-aid or sponge. It is not a tool for a beginner. You need to have a pretty good understanding of female nature to pull this off. It also helps to be able to "read" people well. But if it works you can achieve a very strong emotional connection with a woman that translates into a powerful feeling of attraction/arousal on her part.

Hopefully this will be of some help to at least one of my male readers. I have another post in the works on a related matter that I hope will also be beneficial. With luck it will be done by the end of the week.

Update: There are a few clarifications I would like to make:

1. This tool is one that works best on a woman you are somewhat familiar with. Cold reads are difficult, and likely to backfire.
2. Something like this works best when there is already some interest in you by the

woman, but you want to keep that interest going and strengthen it. So it works best after the beginning of any courtship.

3. Like all tools, use it only when needed. And that is not often. I would only recommend using it once or twice as a serious endeavor during a courtship. Don’t rely on it or use it as a crutch. Remember, the best “tool” in your kit is a strong, masculine frame.

Tradition Thursday- #32

August 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[DG: This post was supposed to have gone live last night. Not sure why it didn't. Anyways, uploading it now.]

We continue the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. This post features the second half of his twelfth lecture:

> 18. But again you ask yet another testimony of the time. *The Lord said unto Me, You are My Son; this day have I begotten You*: and a few words further on, *You shall rule them with a rod of iron*. I have said before that the kingdom of the Romans is clearly called a rod of iron; but what is wanting concerning this let us further call to mind out of Daniel. For in relating and interpreting to Nebuchadnezzar the image of the statue, he tells also his whole vision concerning it: and that a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, that is, not set up by human contrivance, should overpower the whole world: and he speaks most clearly thus; *And in the days of those kingdoms the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and His kingdom shall not be left to another people* Daniel 2:44 .
>
> 19. But we seek still more clearly the proof of the time of His coming. For man being hard to persuade, unless he gets the very years for a clear calculation, does not believe what is stated. What then is the season, and what the manner of the time? It is when, on the failure of the kings descended from Judah, Herod a foreigner succeeds to the kingdom? The Angel, therefore, who converses with Daniel says, and do thou now mark the words, *And you shall know and understand: From the going forth of the word for making answer , and for the building of Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince are seven weeks and three score and two weeks*. Daniel 9:25 Now three score and nine weeks of years contain four hundred and eighty-three years. He said, therefore, that after the building of Jerusalem, four hundred and eighty-three years having passed, and the rulers having failed, then comes a certain king of another race, in whose time the Christ is to be born. Now Darius the Mede built the city in the sixth year of his own reign, and first year of the 66th Olympiad according to the Greeks. Olympiad is the name among the Greeks of the games celebrated after four years, because of the day which in every four years of the sun's courses is made up of the three (supernumerary) hours in each year. And Herod is king in the 186th Olympiad, in the 4th year thereof. Now from the 66th to the 186th Olympiad there are 120 Olympiads intervening, and a little over. So then the 120 Olympiads make up 480 years: for the other three years remaining are perhaps taken up in the interval between the first and fourth years. And there you have the proof according to the Scripture which says, *From the going forth of the word that Jerusalem be restored and built until Messiah the Prince are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*. Of the

times, therefore, you have for the present this proof, although there are also other different interpretations concerning the aforesaid weeks of years in Daniel.

20. But now hear the place of the promise, as Micah says, *And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, are you little to be among the thousands of Judah? For out of you shall come forth unto Me a ruler, to be governor in Israel: and His goings forth are front the beginning, from the days of eternity*. But assuredly as to the places, thou being an inhabitant of Jerusalem, know also beforehand what is written in the hundred and thirty-first psalm. *Lo! We heard of it at Ephrathah, we found it in the plains of the wood* . For a few years ago the place was woody. Again you have heard Habakkuk say to the Lord, *When the years draw near, you shall be made known, when the time has come, you shall be shown*. And what is the sign, O Prophet, of the Lord's coming? And presently he says, *In the midst of two lives shall you be known* , plainly saying this to the Lord, *Having come in the flesh you live and diest, and after rising from the dead you live again.* Further, from what part of the region round Jerusalem comes He? From east, or west, or north, or south? Tell us exactly. And he makes answer most plainly and says, *God shall come from Teman* (now Teman is by interpretation 'south') *and the Holy One from Mount Paran* , *shady, woody*: what the Psalmist spoke in like words, *We found it in the plains of the wood*.

21. We ask further, of whom comes He and how? And this Esaias tells us: *Behold! The virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel*. This the Jews contradict, for of old it is their wont wickedly to oppose the truth: and they say that it is not written *the virgin,* but *the damsel.* But though I assent to what they say, even so I find the truth. For we must ask them, If a virgin be forced, when does she cry out and call for helpers, after or before the outrage? If, therefore, the Scripture elsewhere says, *The betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her* Deuteronomy 22:27, does it not speak of a virgin?

But that you may learn more plainly that even a virgin is called in Holy Scripture a *damsel,* hear the Book of the Kings, speaking of Abishag the Shunamite, *And the damsel was very fair* : for that as a virgin she was chosen and brought to David is admitted.

22. But the Jews say again, This was said to Ahaz in reference to Hezekiah. Well, then, let us read the Scripture: *Ask you a sign of the Lord your God, in the depth or in the height*. Isaiah 7:11 And the sign certainly must be something astonishing. For the water from the rock was a sign, the sea divided, the sun turning back, and the like. But in what I am going to mention there is still more manifest refutation of the Jews. (I know that I am speaking at much length, and that my hearers are wearied: but bear with the fullness of my statements, because it is for Christ's sake these questions are moved, and they concern no ordinary matters.) Now as Isaiah spoke this in the reign of Ahaz, and Ahaz reigned only sixteen years, and the prophecy was spoken to him within these

years, the objection of the Jews is refuted by the fact that the succeeding king, Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, was twenty-five years old when he began to reign: for as the prophecy is confined within sixteen years, he must have been begotten of Ahaz full nine years before the prophecy. What need then was there to utter the prophecy concerning one who had been already begotten even before the reign of father Ahaz ? For he said not, *has conceived*, but *the virgin shall conceive,* speaking as with foreknowledge.

23. We know then for certain that the Lord was to be born of a Virgin, but we have to show of what family the Virgin was. *The Lord swore in truth unto David, and will not set it aside. Of the fruit of body will I set upon your throne* : *and again, seed will I establish for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven*. *And afterwards, Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me, and as the moon established for ever*. You see that the discourse is of Christ, not of Solomon. For Solomon's throne endured not as the sun. But if any deny this, because Christ sat not on David's throne of wood, we will bring forward that saying, *The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat* Matthew 23:2: for it signifies not his wooden seat, but the authority of his teaching. In like manner then I would have you seek for David's throne not the throne of wood, but the kingdom itself. Take, too, as my witnesses the children who cried aloud, *Hosanna to the Son of David* , *blessed is the King of Israel*. John 12:13 And the blind men also say, *Son of David, have mercy on us*. Matthew 20:30 Gabriel too testifies plainly to Mary, saying, *And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David*. Luke 1:32 Paul also says, *Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my Gospel* 2 Timothy 2:8: and in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans he says, *Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh*. Romans 1:3 Receive thou therefore Him that was born of David, believing the prophecy which says, *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to rule over the Gentiles: in Him shall the Gentiles trust*.

24. But the Jews are much troubled at these things. This also Isaiah foreknew, saying, *And they shall wish that they had been burnt with fire: for unto us a child is born* (not unto them), *unto us a Son is given*. Isaiah 9:5 Mark thou that at first He was the Son of God, then was given to us. And a little after he says, *And of His peace there is no bound*. The Romans have bounds: of the kingdom of the Son of God there is no bound. The Persians and the Medes have bounds, but the Son has no bound. Then next, *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it*. The Holy Virgin, therefore, is from David.

25. For it became Him who is most pure, and a teacher of purity, to have come forth from a pure bride-chamber. For if he who well fulfils the office of a priest of Jesus abstains from a wife, how should Jesus Himself be born of man and woman? *For thou*, says He in the Psalms, art *He that took Me out of the womb*. Mark that carefully, He that took Me out of the womb, signifying that He was begotten

without man, being taken from a virgin's womb and flesh. For the manner is different with those who are begotten according to the course of marriage.

26. And from such members He is not ashamed to assume flesh, who is the framer of those very members. But then who tells us this? The Lord says unto Jeremiah: *Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you: and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you*. Jeremiah 1:5 If, then, in fashioning man He was not ashamed of the contact, was He ashamed in fashioning for His own sake the holy Flesh, the veil of His Godhead? It is God who even now creates the children in the womb, as it is written in Job, *Have you not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? You have clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast knit me together with bones and sinews*. Job 10:10-11 There is nothing polluted in the human frame except a man defile this with fornication and adultery. He who formed Adam formed Eve also, and male and female were formed by God's hands. None of the members of the body as formed from the beginning is polluted. Let the mouths of all heretics be stopped who slander their bodies, or rather Him who formed them. But let us remember Paul's saying, *Do you not know that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost which is in you* 1 Corinthians 6:19? And again the Prophet has spoken before in the person of Jesus, *My flesh is from them* : and in another place it is written, *Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she brings forth*. Micah 5:3 And what is the sign? He tells us in what follows, *She shall bring forth, and the remnant of their brethren shall return*. And what are the nuptial pledges of the Virgin, the holy bride? *And I will betroth you unto Me in faithfulness*. Hosea 2:20 And Elizabeth, talking with Mary, speaks in like manner: *And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord* Luke 1:45 .

27. But both Greeks and Jews harass us and say that it was impossible for the Christ to be born of a virgin. As for the Greeks we will stop their mouths from their own fables. For you who say that stones being thrown were changed into men , how do you say that it is impossible for a virgin to bring forth? You who fable that a daughter was born from the brain , how do you say that it is impossible for a son to have been born from a virgin's womb? You who falsely say that Dionysus was born from the thigh of your Zeus , how set ye at nought our truth? I know that I am speaking of things unworthy of the present audience: but in order that you in due season may rebuke the Greeks, we have brought these things forward answering them from their own fables.

28. But those of the circumcision meet thou with this question: Whether is harder, for an aged woman, barren and past age, to bear, or for a virgin in the prime of youth to conceive? Sarah was barren, and though it had ceased to be with her after the manner of women, yet, contrary to nature, she bore a child. If, then, it is against nature for a barren woman to conceive, and also for a virgin, either, therefore, reject both, or accept both. For it is the same God who both

wrought the one and appointed the other. For you will not dare to say that it was possible for God in that former case, and impossible in this latter. And again: how is it natural for a man's hand to be changed in a single hour into a different appearance and restored again? How then was the hand of Moses made white as snow, and at once restored again? But you say that God's will made the change. In that case God's will has the power, and has it then no power in this case? That moreover was a sign concerning the Egyptians only, but this was a sign given to the whole world. But whether is the more difficult, O you Jews? For a virgin to bear, or for a rod to be quickened into a living creature? You confess that in the case of Moses a perfectly straight rod became like a serpent, and was terrible to him who cast it down, and he who before held the rod fast, fled from it as from a serpent; for a serpent in truth it was: but he fled not because he feared that which he held, but because he dreaded Him that had changed it. A rod had teeth and eyes like a serpent: do then seeing eyes grow out of a rod, and cannot a child be born of a virgin's womb, if God wills? For I say nothing of the fact that Aaron's rod also produced in a single night what other trees produce in several years. For who knows not that a rod, after losing its bark, will never sprout, not even if it be planted in the midst of rivers? But since God is not dependent on the nature of trees, but is the Creator of their natures, the unfruitful, and dry, and barkless rod budded, and blossomed, and bare almonds. He, then, who for the sake of the typical high-priest gave fruit supernaturally to the rod, would He not for the sake of the true High-Priest grant to the Virgin to bear a child?

29. These are excellent suggestions of the narratives: but the Jews still contradict, and do not yield to the statements concerning the rod, unless they may be persuaded by similar strange and supernatural births. Question them, therefore, in this way: of whom in the beginning was Eve begotten? What mother conceived her the motherless? But the Scripture says that she was born out of Adam's side. Is Eve then born out of a man's side without a mother, and is a child not to be born without a father, of a virgin's womb? This debt of gratitude was due to men from womankind: for Eve was begotten of Adam, and not conceived of a mother, but as it were brought forth of man alone. Mary, therefore, paid the debt, of gratitude, when not by man but of herself alone in an immaculate way she conceived of the Holy Ghost by the power of God.

30. But let us take what is yet a greater wonder than this. For that of bodies bodies should be conceived, even if wonderful, is nevertheless possible: but that the dust of the earth should become a man, this is more wonderful. That clay moulded together should assume the coats and splendours of the eyes, this is more wonderful. That out of dust of uniform appearance should be produced both the firmness of bones, and the softness of lungs, and other different kinds of members, this is wonderful. That clay should be animated and travel round the world self moved, and should build houses, this is wonderful. That clay should teach, and talk, and act as carpenter, and as king, this is wonderful. Whence,

then, O you most ignorant Jews, was Adam made? Did not God take dust from the earth, and fashion this wonderful frame? Is then clay changed into an eye, and cannot a virgin bear a son. Does that which for men is more impossible take place, and is that which is possible never to occur?

31. Let us remember these things, brethren: let us use these weapons in our defence. Let us not endure those heretics who teach Christ's coming as a phantom. Let us abhor those also who say that the Saviour's birth was of husband and wife; who have dared to say that He was the child of Joseph and Mary, because it is written, *And he took unto him his wife*. Matthew 1:24 For let us remember Jacob who before he received Rachel, said to Laban, *Give me my wife*. Genesis 29:21 For as she before the wedded state, merely because there was a promise, was called the wife of Jacob, so also Mary, because she had been betrothed, was called the wife of Joseph. Mark also the accuracy of the Gospel, saying, *And in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph* Luke 1:26-27, and so forth. And again when the census took place, and Joseph went up to enrol himself, what says the Scripture? *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, to enrol himself with Mary who was espoused to him, being great with child*. For though she was with child, yet it said not *with his wife,* but with her who was *espoused to him*. For *God sent forth His Son*, says Paul, not made of a man and a woman, but *made of a woman* Galatians 4:4 only, that is of a virgin. For that the virgin also is called a woman, we showed before. For He who makes souls virgin, was born of a Virgin.

32. But you wonder at the event: even she herself who bare him wondered at this. For she says to Gabriel, *How shall this be to me, since I know not a man?* But he says, *The Holy Ghost shall came upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: wherefore also the holy thing which is to be born shall be called the Son of God*. Luke 1:34-35 Immaculate and undefiled was His generation: for where the Holy Spirit breathes, there all pollution is taken away: undefiled from the Virgin was the incarnate generation of the Only-begotten. And if the heretics gainsay the truth, the Holy Ghost shall convict them: that overshadowing power of the Highest shall wax angry: Gabriel shall stand face to face against them in the day of judgment: the place of the manger, which received the Lord, shall put them to shame. The shepherds, who then received the good tidings, shall bear witness; and the host of the Angels who sang praises and hymns, and said, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure* Luke 2:14: the Temple into which He was then carried up on the fortieth day: the pairs of turtle-doves, which were offered on His behalf : and Symeon who then took Him up in his arms, and Anna the prophetess who was present.

33. Since God then bears witness, and the Holy Ghost joins in the witness, and Christ says, *Why do you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth* ? Let the heretics be silenced who speak against His humanity, for they speak against

> Him, who says, *Handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have*. Luke 24:39 Adored be the Lord the Virgin-born, and let Virgins acknowledge the crown of their own state: let the order also of Solitaries acknowledge the glory of chastity for we men are not deprived of the dignity of chastity. In the Virgin's womb the Saviour's period of nine months was passed: but the Lord was for thirty and three years a man: so that if a virgin glories because of the nine months, much more we because of the many years.
>
> 34. But let us all by God's grace run the race of chastity, *young men and maidens, old men and children* ; not going after wantonness, but praising the name of Christ. Let us not be ignorant of the glory of chastity: for its crown is angelic, and its excellence above man. Let us be chary of our bodies which are to shine as the sun: let us not for short pleasure defile so great, so noble a body: for short and momentary is the sin, but the shame for many years and for ever. Angels walking upon earth are they who practise chastity: the Virgins have their portion with Mary the Virgin. Let all vain ornament be banished, and every hurtful glance, and all wanton gait, and every flowing robe, and perfume enticing to pleasure. But in all for perfume let there be the prayer of sweet odour, and the practice of good works, and the sanctification of our bodies: that the Virgin-born Lord may say even of us, both men who live in chastity and women who wear the crown, *I will dwell in them; and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*. 2 Corinthians 6:16 To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #78

August 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter for today's post is X. As one might imagine, there aren't too many saints with that as the first letter in their name. With so little to choose from, that gives us Saint Xenophone of Robeika:

> **Xenophon of Robeika** (Russian: Ксенофонт Робейский – *Xenofont Robeysky*; died June 28, 1262) was a Russian Orthodox monk, later declared a saint. A student of Barlaam of Khutyn, he later became abbot of the Khutyn Monastery. Resigning from this post, he later founded the Trinity Monastery on the Robeika River (ru), close to Novgorod; he died there in 1262.

(Source)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #85

August 23, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

While at the morning service at my parish earlier today I talked with several people I haven't really had a chance to know well. Given the environment, it was only natural that the subject of the Faith come up. I wasn't entirely surprised to find that a couple of them agreed with the general predictions that times of trouble and persecution are heading the Church's way. The following passage from the Gospel of Luke immediately sprang to mind:

> [4] "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. [5] But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! [6] Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. [7] Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.
>
> [8] "And I tell you, every one who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; [9] but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

(Luke 12: 4-9)

I think that in the coming years a lot of Christians are going to have to decide whether or not to acknowledge Jesus before men. For a long time here in the West the cost of that has been low. This is changing now, and when the cost is high I think we shall see the chaff and the wheat sort themselves out.

Despite being a Traditional Catholic, and despite coming from the Western Church, I am not one of those who insists that the Traditional Latin Mass is the only acceptable form of worship in the Church. I hold that view for several reasons, and one of them is that I think that having services in the vernacular is far more effective for reaching people than purely in Latin. St. Paul, in his Letter to the Corinthians, addresses the use of tongues in service and I think it relates well here:

> [20] Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature. [21] In the law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." [22] Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. [23] If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? [24] But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, [25] the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

(1 Cor 14:20-25)

For those who are new to the Church, the Latin Mass can be a difficult hurdle. Not impossible, of course. But I think that the option of a Mass in the vernacular can help the Church reach a lot more people.

Finally, my reading of the Old Testament took me across this classic story of “be careful of what you wish for”:

> When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. [2] The name of his
> first-born son was Jo′el, and the name of his second, Abi′jah; they were judges in
> Beer-sheba. [3] Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain;
> they took bribes and perverted justice.
>
> [4] Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah,
> [5] and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways;
> now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations.” [6] But the thing
> displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to govern us.” And Samuel
> prayed to the Lord. [7] And the Lord said to Samuel, “Hearken to the voice of the
> people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have
> rejected me from being king over them. [8] According to all the deeds which they
> have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day,
> forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. [9] Now then,
> hearken to their voice; only, you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the
> ways of the king who shall reign over them.”
>
> [10] So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking a king
> from him. [11] He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you:
> he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen,
> and to run before his chariots; [12] and he will appoint for himself commanders of
> thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap
> his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his
> chariots. [13] He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.
> [14] He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give
> them to his servants. [15] He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards
> and give it to his officers and to his servants. [16] He will take your menservants
> and maidservants, and the best of your cattle and your asses, and put them to
> his work. [17] He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. [18] And
> in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for
> yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

(1 Sam 8:1-18)

The story of Israel and its kings is a tragedy through and through. They demand one, and when they finally get a kingly dynasty, they rebel within three generations. And before long they lose the monarchy completely. Then they spend centuries lamenting this and praying for a restoration of the monarchy. They plead with God to restore a Son of David

to the Throne. And then, when the heir to the Davidic throne finally revealed himself… they put Him to death. Such is human nature. When we finally get what we think we wanted, we are seldom happy with it.

It’s The Little Things

August 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

There are times when I question why I continue to blog. It has only really benefited me spiritually (not to say that this is a minor thing). Rather, most of the benefit to be gained there has already accumulated. Otherwise it hasn’t really been of great help to me. Certainly not in terms of my major goals. Not to mention that I am second-guessing myself more often than not these days. Sometimes I wonder if I should just shut it down.

Sentiments such as these are why I appreciate hearing from those who have been helped by my blog. The other day someone contacted me, thanking me for the effort I put into my work. It wasn’t someone I expected to reach out to me, and the message wasn’t what I was expecting, but sometimes it is a good thing when your expectations are defied. Stories like what I was told are what keep me blogging. Even if I can’t help myself, I can still help others. And that is worth the effort this blog requires. As the title says, sometimes its the little things in life that make it worth continuing on.

Tradition Thursday-#33

August 28, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is the next chapter in the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. Our post today features the first half of his thirteenth lecture:

> Isaiah 53:1, 7
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> Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?…He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, etc.
>
> 1. Every deed of Christ is a cause of glorying to the Catholic Church, but her greatest of all glorying is in the Cross; and knowing this, Paul says, *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Christ*. Galatians 6:14 For wondrous indeed it was, that one who was blind from his birth should receive sight in Siloam ; but what is this compared with the blind of the whole world? A great thing it was, and passing nature, for Lazarus to rise again on the fourth day; but the grace extended to him alone, and what was it compared with the dead in sins throughout the world? Marvellous it was, that five loaves should pour forth food for the five thousand; but what is that to those who are famishing in ignorance through all the world? It was marvellous that she should have been loosed who had been bound by Satan eighteen years: yet what is this to all of us, who were fast bound in the chains of our sins? But the glory of the Cross led those who were blind through ignorance into light, loosed all who were held fast by sin, and ransomed the whole world of mankind.
>
> 2. And wonder not that the whole world was ransomed; for it was no mere man, but the only-begotten Son of God, who died on its behalf. Moreover one man's sin, even Adam's, had power to bring death to the world; but *if by the trespass of the one death reigned* over the world, how shall not life much rather reign *by the righteousness of the One* Romans 5:17-18? And if because of the tree of food they were then cast out of paradise, shall not believers now more easily enter into paradise because of the Tree of Jesus? If the first man formed out of the earth brought in universal death, shall not He who formed him out of the earth bring in eternal life, being Himself the Life? If Phinees, when he waxed zealous and slew the evil-doer, staved the wrath of God, shall not Jesus, who slew not another, but *gave up Himself for a ransom* 1 Timothy 2:6, put away the wrath which is against mankind?
>
> 3. Let us then not be ashamed of the Cross of our Saviour, but rather glory in it. *For the word of the Cross is unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness*, but to us salvation: and *to them that are perishing it is foolishness, but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God*. For it was not a mere man who died for us, as I said before, but the Son of God, God made man. Further; if the lamb under Moses drove the destroyer Exodus 12:23 far away, did

not much rather the *Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world* John 1:29, deliver us from our sins? The blood of a silly sheep gave salvation; and shall not the Blood of the Only-begotten much rather save? If any disbelieve the power of the Crucified, let him ask the devils; if any believe not words, let him believe what he sees. Many have been crucified throughout the world, but by none of these are the devils scared; but when they see even the Sign of the Cross of Christ, who was crucified for us, they shudder. For those men died for their own sins, but Christ for the sins of others; for He *did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*. It is not Peter who says this, for then we might suspect that he was partial to his Teacher; but it is Esaias who says it, who was not indeed present with Him in the flesh, but in the Spirit foresaw His coming in the flesh. Yet why now bring the Prophet only as a witness? Take for a witness Pilate himself, who gave sentence upon Him, saying, *I find no fault in this Man* Luke 23:14: and when he gave Him up, and had washed his hands, he said, *I am innocent of the blood of this just person*. Matthew 27:24 There is yet another witness of the sinlessness of Jesus—the robber, the first man admitted into Paradise; who rebuked his fellow, and said, *We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss ; for we were present, both you and I, at His judgment.*

4. Jesus then really suffered for all men; for the Cross was no illusion , otherwise our redemption is an illusion also. His death was not a mere show , for then is our salvation also fabulous. If His death was but a show, they were true who said, *We remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I rise again*. Matthew 27:63 His Passion then was real: for He was really crucified, and we are not ashamed thereat; He was crucified, and we deny it not, nay, I rather glory to speak of it. For though I should now deny it, here is Golgotha to confute me, near which we are now assembled; the wood of the Cross confutes me, which was afterwards distributed piecemeal from hence to all the world. I confess the Cross, because I know of the Resurrection; for if, after being crucified, He had remained as He was, I had not perchance confessed it, for I might have concealed both it and my Master; but now that the Resurrection has followed the Cross, I am not ashamed to declare it.

5. Being then in the flesh like others, He was crucified, but not for the like sins. For He was not led to death for covetousness, since He was a Teacher of poverty; nor was He condemned for concupiscence, for He Himself says plainly, *Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already* Matthew 5:28; not for smiting or striking hastily, for He turned the other cheek also to the smiter; not for despising the Law, for He was the fulfiller of the Law; not for reviling a prophet, for it was Himself who was proclaimed by the Prophets; not for defrauding any of their hire, for He ministered without reward and freely; not for sinning in words, or deeds, or thoughts, He *who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He*

was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not 1 Peter 2:22-23; *who came to His passion, not unwillingly, but willing; yea, if any dissuading Him say even now, Be it far from You, Lord*, He will say again, *Get behind Me, Satan* Matthew 16:22-23 .

6. And would you be persuaded that He came to His passion willingly? Others, who foreknow it not, die unwillingly; but He spoke before of His passion: *Behold, the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified*. But do you know wherefore this Friend of man shunned not death? It was lest the whole world should perish in its sins. *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed, and shall be crucified ; and again, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*. Luke 9:5 And would you know certainly, that the Cross is a glory to Jesus? Hear His own words, not mine. Judas had become ungrateful to the Master of the house, and was about to betray Him. Having but just now gone forth from the table, and drunk His cup of blessing, in return for that drought of salvation he sought to shed righteous blood. *He who did eat of His bread, was lifting up his heel against Him* ; his hands were but lately receiving the blessed gifts , and presently for the wages of betrayal he was plotting His death. And being reproved, and having heard that word, *You have said* Matthew 26:25, he again went out: then said Jesus, *The hour has come, that the Son of man should be glorified*. John 12:23 Do you see how He knew the Cross to be His proper glory? What then, is Esaias not ashamed of being sawn asunder , and shall Christ be ashamed of dying for the world? *Now is the Son of man glorified*. John 13:31 Not that He was without glory before: for He was *glorified with the glory* which was *before the foundation of the world*. He was ever glorified as God; but now He was to be glorified in wearing the Crown of His patience. He gave not up His life by compulsion, nor was He put to death by murderous violence, but of His own accord. Hear what He says: *I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again* : I yield it of My own choice to My enemies; for unless I chose, this could not be. He came therefore of His own set purpose to His passion, rejoicing in His noble deed, smiling at the crown, cheered by the salvation of mankind; not ashamed of the Cross, for it was to save the world. For it was no common man who suffered, but God in man’s nature, striving for the prize of His patience.

7. But the Jews contradict this , ever ready, as they are, to cavil, and backward to believe; so that for this cause the Prophet just now read says, *Lord, who has believed our report* Isaiah 52:15? Persians believe , and Hebrews believe not; *they shall see, to whom He was not spoken of, and they that have not heard shall understand* , while they who study these things shall set at nought what they study. They speak against us, and say, *Does the Lord then suffer? What? Had men’s hands power over His sovereignty?* Read the Lamentations; for in those Lamentations, Jeremias, lamenting you, wrote what is worthy of lamentations. He saw your destruction, he beheld your downfall, he bewailed Jerusalem which then was; for that *which now is* Galatians 4:25 shall not be bewailed; for that

Jerusalem crucified the Christ, but that *which now is* worships Him. Lamenting then he says, *The breath of our countenance, Christ the Lord was taken in our corruptions*. Am I then stating views of my own? Behold he testifies of the Lord Christ seized by men. And what is to follow from this? Tell me, O Prophet. He says, *Of whom we said, Under His shadow we shall live among the nations*. Ibid For he signifies that the grace of life is no longer to dwell in Israel, but among the Gentiles.

8. But since there has been much gainsaying by them, come, let me, with the help of your prayers, (as the shortness of the time may allow,) set forth by the grace of the Lord some few testimonies concerning the Passion. For the things concerning Christ are all put into writing, and nothing is doubtful, for nothing is without a text. All are inscribed on the monuments of the Prophets; clearly written, not on tablets of stone, but by the Holy Ghost. Since then you have heard the Gospel speaking concerning Judas, ought you not to receive the testimony to it? You have heard that He was pierced in the side by a spear; ought you not to see whether this also is written? You have heard that He was crucified in a garden; ought you not to see whether this also is written? You have heard that He was sold for thirty pieces of silver; ought you not to learn what prophet spoke this? You have heard that He was given vinegar to drink; learn where this also is written. You have heard that His body was laid in a rock, and that a stone was set over it; ought you not to receive this testimony also from the prophet? You have heard that He was crucified with robbers; ought you not to see whether this also is written? You have heard that He was buried; ought you not to see whether the circumstances of His burial are anywhere accurately written? You have heard that He rose again; ought you not to see whether we mock you in teaching these things? For *our speech and our preaching is not in persuasive words of man's wisdom*. We stir now no sophistical contrivances; for these become exposed; we do not conquer words with words , for these come to an end; but *we preach Christ Crucified* 1 Corinthians 1:23, who has already been preached aforetime by the Prophets. But do thou, I pray, receive the testimonies, and seal them in your heart. And, since they are many, and the rest of our time is narrowed into a short space, listen now to a few of the more important as time permits; and having received these beginnings, be diligent and seek out the remainder. Let not your hand be only stretched out to receive, but let it be also ready to work. God gives all things freely. *For if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives* James 1:5, and he shall receive. May He through your prayer grant utterance to us who speak, and faith to you who hear.

9. Let us then seek the testimonies to the Passion of Christ: for we are met together, not now to make a speculative exposition of the Scriptures, but rather to be certified of the things which we already believe. Now you have received from me first the testimonies concerning the coming of Jesus; and concerning His walking on the sea, for it is written, *Your way is in the sea*. Also concerning

various cures you have on another occasion received testimony. Now therefore I begin from whence the Passion began. Judas was the traitor, and he came against Him, and stood, speaking words of peace, but plotting war. Concerning him, therefore, the Psalmist says, *My friends and My neighbours drew near against Me, and stood*. And again, *Their words were softer than oil, yet be they spears*. *Hail, Master* Matthew 26:49; yet he was betraying his Master to death; he was not abashed at His warning, when He said, *Judas, betrayest than the Son of Man with a kiss* Luke 22:48? For what He said to him was just this, Recollect your own name; Judas means *confession* ; you have covenanted, you have received the money, make confession quickly. *O God, pass not over My praise in silence; for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against Me; they have spoken against Me with a treacherous tongue, they have compassed Me about also with words of hatred*. But that some of the chief-priests also were present, and that He was put in bonds before the gates of the city, you have heard before, if you remember the exposition of the Psalm, which has told the time and the place; how *they returned at evening, and hungered like dogs, and encompassed the city*.

10. Listen also for the thirty pieces of silver. *And I will say to them, If it be good in your sight, give me my price, or refuse* Zechariah 11:12, and the rest. One price is owing to Me from you for My healing the blind and lame, and I receive another; for thanksgiving, dishonour, and for worship, insult. Do you see how the Scripture foresaw these things? *And they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver*. Ib How exact the prophecy! How great and unerring the wisdom of the Holy Ghost! For he said, not ten, nor twenty, but thirty, exactly as many as there were. Tell also what becomes of this price, O Prophet! Does he who received it keep it? Or does he give it back? And after he has given it back, what becomes of it? The Prophet says then, *And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them into the house of the Lord, into the foundry*. Compare the Gospel with the Prophecy: *Judas*, it says, *repented himself, and cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed*.

11. But now I have to seek the exact solution of this seeming discrepancy. For they who make light of the prophets, allege that the Prophet says on the one hand, *And I cast them into the house of the Lord, into the foundry*, but the Gospel on the other hand, *And they gave them for the potter's field*. Hear then how they are both true. For those conscientious Jews forsooth, the high-priests of that time, when they saw that Judas repented and said, *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood*, reply, *What is that to us, see thou to that*. Is it then nothing to you, the crucifiers? But shall he who received and restored the price of murder see to it, and shall you the murderers not see to it? Then they say among themselves, *It is not lawful to cast them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood*. Out of your own mouths is your condemnation; if the price is polluted, the deed is polluted also: but if you are fulfilling righteousness in crucifying

Christ, why do you not receive the price of it? But the point of iniquity is this: how is there no disagreement, if the Gospel says, *the potter's field*, and the Prophet, *the foundry*? Nay, but not only people who are goldsmiths, or brass-founders, have a foundry, but potters also have foundries for their clay. For they sift off the fine and rich and useful earth from the gravel, and separate from it the mass of the refuse matter, and temper the clay first with water, that they may work it with ease into the forms intended. Why then do you wonder that the Gospel says plainly *the potter's field*, whereas the Prophet spoke his prophecy like an enigma, since prophecy is in many places enigmatical?

12. They bound Jesus, and brought Him into the hall of the High-priest. And would you learn and know that this also is written? Esaias says, *Woe unto their soul, for they have taken evil counsel against themselves, saying, Let us bind the Just, for He is troublesome to us*. And truly, *Woe unto their soul!* Let us see how Esaias was sawn asunder, yet after this the people was restored. Jeremias was cast into the mire of the cistern, yet was the wound of the Jews healed; for the sin was less, since it was against man. But when the Jews sinned, not against man, but against God in man's nature, *Woe unto their soul*!— *Let us bind the Just*; could He not then set Himself free, some one will say; He, who freed Lazarus from the bonds of death on the fourth day, and loosed Peter from the iron bands of a prison? Angels stood ready at hand, saying, *Let us burst their bands in sunder* ; but they hold back, because their Lord willed to undergo it. Again, He was led to the judgment-seat before the Elders; you have already the testimony to this, *The Lord Himself will come into judgment with the ancients of His people, and with the princes thereof* Isaiah 3:14 .

13. But the High-priest having questioned Him, and heard the truth, is angry; and the wicked officer of wicked men smites Him; and the countenance, which had shone as the sun, endured to be smitten by lawless hands. Others also come and spit on the face of Him, who by spittle had healed the man who was blind from his birth. *Do ye thus requite the Lord? This people is foolish and unwise*. Deuteronomy 32:6 And the Prophet greatly wondering, says, *Lord, who has believed our report* Isaiah 53:1? For the thing is incredible, that God, the Son of God, and *the Arm of the Lord* Ibid, should suffer such things. But that they who are being saved may not disbelieve, the Holy Ghost writes before, in the person of Christ, who says, (for He who then spoke these things, was afterward Himself an actor in them,) *I gave My back to the scourges*; (for Pilate, *when he had scourged Him, delivered Him to be crucified and My cheeks to smitings; and My face I turned not away from the shame of spittings;* saying, as it were, *Though knowing before that they will smite Me, I did not even turn My cheek aside; for how should I have nerved My disciples against death for truth's sake, had I Myself dreaded this?* I said. *He that loves his life shall lose it* John 12:25: if I had loved My life, how was I to teach without practising what I taught? First then, being Himself God, He endured to suffer these things at the hands of men; that after

this, we men, when we suffer such things at the hands of men for His sake, might not be ashamed. You see that of these things also the prophets have clearly written beforehand. Many, however, of the Scripture testimonies I pass by for want of time, as I said before; for if one should exactly search out all, not one of the things concerning Christ would be left without witness.

14. Having been bound, He came from Caiaphas to Pilate—is this too written? yes; *And having bound Him, they led Him away as a present to the king of Jarim*. But here some sharp hearer will object, *Pilate was not a king,* (to leave for a while the main parts of the question,) *how then having bound Him, led they Him as a present to the king?* But read the Gospel; *When Pilate heard that He was of Galilee, he sent Him to Herod* Luke 23:6-7; for Herod was then king, and was present at Jerusalem. And now observe the exactness of the Prophet; for he says, that He was sent as a present; for *the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity*. For it became Him who was on the eve of making peace between earth and heaven, to make the very men who condemned Him the first to be at peace; for the Lord Himself was there present, *who reconciles the hearts of the princes of the earth*. Mark the exactness of the Prophets, and their true testimony.

15. Look with awe then at the Lord who was judged. He suffered Himself to be led and carried by soldiers. Pilate sat in judgment, and He who sits on the right hand of the Father, stood and was judged. The people whom He had redeemed from the land of Egypt, and oftimes from other places, shouted against Him, *Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him*. Joshua 19:15 Wherefore, O you Jews? Because He healed your blind? Or because He made your lame to walk, and bestowed His other benefits? So that the Prophet in amazement speaks of this too, *Against whom have you opened your mouth, and against whom have you let loose your tongue* Isaiah 57:4? And the Lord Himself says in the Prophets, *Mine heritage became unto Me as a lion in the forest; it gave its voice against Me; therefore have I hated it*. Jeremiah 12:8 I have not refused them, but they have refused Me; in consequence thereof I say, *I have forsaken My house*.

16. When He was judged, He held His peace; so that Pilate was moved for Him, and said, *Hearest Thou not what these witness against You* Matthew 27:13? Not that He knew Him who was judged, but he feared his own wife’s dream which had been reported to him. And Jesus held His peace. The Psalmist says, *And I became as a man that hears not; and in whose mouth are no reproofs* ; and again, *But I was as a deaf man and heard not; and as a dumb man that opens not his mouth*. Thou hast before heard concerning this , if you remember.

17. But the soldiers who crowd around mock Him, and their Lord becomes a sport to them, and upon their Master they make jests. *When they looked on Me, they shaked their heads*. Yet the figure of kingly state appears; for though in mockery, yet they bend the knee. And the soldiers before they crucify Him, put on Him a purple robe, and set a crown on His head; for what though it be of thorns? Every

king is proclaimed by soldiers; and Jesus also must in a figure be crowned by soldiers; so that for this cause the Scripture says in the Canticles, *Go forth, O you daughters of Jerusalem, and look upon King Solomon in the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him*. Song of Songs 3:11 And the crown itself was a mystery; for it was a remission of sins, a release from the curse.

18. Adam received the sentence, *Cursed is the ground in your labours; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you*. For this cause Jesus assumes the thorns, that He may cancel the sentence; for this cause also was He buried in the earth, that the earth which had been cursed might receive the blessing instead of a curse. At the time of the sin, they clothed themselves with fig-leaves; for this cause Jesus also made the fig-tree the last of His signs. For when about to go to His passion, He curses the fig-tree, not every fig-tree, but that one alone, for the sake of the figure; saying, *No more let any man eat fruit of you* Mark 11:1; let the doom be cancelled. And because they aforetime clothed themselves with fig-leaves, He came at a season when food was not wont to be found on the fig-tree. Who knows not that in winter-time the fig-tree bears no fruit, but is clothed with leaves only? Was Jesus ignorant of this, which all knew? No, but though He knew, yet He came as if seeking; not ignorant that He should not find, but showing that the emblematical curse extended to the leaves only.

19. And since we have touched on things connected with Paradise, I am truly astonished at the truth of the types. In Paradise was the Fall, and in a Garden was our Salvation. From the Tree came sin, and until the Tree sin lasted. *In the evening, when the Lord walked in the Garden, they hid themselves* Genesis 3:8; and in the evening the robber is brought by the Lord into Paradise. But some one will say to me, You are inventing subtleties; show me from some prophet the Wood of the Cross; unless you give me a testimony from a prophet, I will not be persuaded. Hear then from Jeremias, and assure yourself; *I was like a harmless lamb led to be slaughtered; did I not know it* ? (for in this manner read it as a question, as I have read it; for He who said, *You know that after two days comes the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified* Matthew 26:2, did He not know?) *I was like a harmless lamb led to be slaughtered; did I not know it?* (but what sort of lamb? Let John the Baptist interpret it, when he says, Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world John 1:29.) *They devised against Me a wicked device, saying* Jeremiah 11:19 — (He who knows the devices, knew He not the result of them? And what said they?)— *Come, and let us place a beam upon His bread* — (and if the Lord reckon you worthy, you shall hereafter learn, that His body according to the Gospel bore the figure of bread;)— *Come* then, *and let us place a beam upon His bread, and cut Him off out of the land of the living;*— (life is not cut off, why do you labour for nought?)— *And His name shall be remembered no more.* Vain is your counsel; for *before the sun His Name* abides in the Church. And that it was Life, which hung on the Cross, Moses says, weeping, *And your life shall be hanging before your eyes; and you shall be*

> *afraid day and night, and you shall not trust your life*. Deuteronomy 28:66 And so too, what was just now read as the text, *Lord, who has believed our report?*
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> 20. This was the figure which Moses completed by fixing the serpent to a cross, that whoso had been bitten by the living serpent, and looked to the brasen serpent, might be saved by believing. Does then the brazen serpent save when crucified, and shall not the Son of God incarnate save when crucified also? On each occasion life comes by means of wood. For in the time of Noe the preservation of life was by an ark of wood. In the time of Moses the sea, on beholding the emblematical rod, was abashed at him who smote it; is then Moses' rod mighty, and is the Cross of the Saviour powerless? But I pass by the greater part of the types, to keep within measure. The wood in Moses' case sweetened the water; and from the side of Jesus the water flowed upon the wood.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #79

August 29, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post features a saint from the Eastern Church. He lived during a time of political and religious turmoil, when the divide between East and West reached terminal levels. Our saint is Saint Yaropolk:

> **Yaropolk Izyaslavich** (died 1087) was a *Knyaz* (prince) during the eleventh-century in the Kievan Rus' kingdom and was the King of Rus (1076–1078). The son of Grand Prince Izyaslav Yaroslavich by a Polish princess named Gertruda, he is visible in papal sources by the early 1070s but largely absent in contemporary Rus sources until his father's death in 1078. During his father's exile in the 1070s, Yaropolk can be found acting on his father's behalf in an attempt to gain the favor of the German emperors and the papal court of Pope Gregory VII. His father returned to Kiev in 1077 and Yaropolk followed.
>
> After his father's death Yaropolk was appointed Prince of Volhynia and Prince of Turov in 1078 by the new Grand Prince, his uncle Vsevolod. By 1085 Yaropolk had fallen into a state of enmity with the Grand Prince, and by extension the Grand Prince's son Vladimir Monomakh, forcing him to flee to Poland, his mother's homeland. He returned in 1086 and made peace with Monomakh but was murdered the same year on a journey to Zvenyhorod. He was remembered in Rus sources as extremely pious and generous to the church and is recognized as a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

More can be learned about him at his wiki, located here.



St. Yaropolk

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #86

August 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Deep Strength has had a number of excellent posts in the last week. In deciding whether to respond to them or not, I was prompted search scripture as a foundation for any future posts. I would first recommend reading his post on the purpose of prayer, as it is an excellent place to start with scripture.

In his post Shallowness is False Humility, Deep Strength addresses the subject of beauty and how desiring it is not shallow. In the spirit of his post, I will mention a few verses from scripture which seem on point:

> 17 Like the shining lamp on the holy lampstand,
> so is a beautiful face on a stately figure.
> 18 Like golden pillars on silver bases,
> so are shapely legs and steadfast feet.

(Sirach 26:17-18)

These verses compare a woman's beauty with the beauty of God's temple. Since admiring the beauty of God's temple isn't shallow, and female beauty is compared to that of God's temple, I dare say it it isn't shallow to value beauty in a woman, either.

> 27 A woman's beauty lights up a man's face,
> and there is nothing he desires more.

Don't see anything about beauty and shallowness there.

> 18 Let your fountain be blessed,
> and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
> 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
> May her breasts satisfy you at all times;
> may you be intoxicated always by her love.

(Proverbs 5:18-19)

And of course, Proverbs goes so far as to remind men to enjoy the beauty of their wife, and to find satisfaction there (and not elsewhere). If one carefully examines Scripture, you can see that most of the "warnings" about beauty aren't that it is shallow, but that it can entrap the unwary man should he be blinded by the beauty of a wicked woman. Proverbs 31 also has the additional reminder that it is fleeting; a reminder which encourages men to look for something longer lasting- fear of the Lord. Many of the holy women in the Old Testament are reckoned as beautiful, and that is never held against them.

In his next post, The three big elephants in the Christian dating and marriage room, DS examines the issues of attraction, the feminization of the church, and the lack of mentorship. The latter two deserve a full post, so I will address solely attraction.

Specifically, I wanted to reiterate my statement earlier that many of the holy women in the Old Testament were recognized as beautiful. That was clearly something important. But men too received recognition for things that rendered them attractive.

Joseph, son of Jacob, was a handsome man:

> [5] From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field. [6] So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and, with him there, he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.
>
> Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking.

As was King David:

> [12] He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."

(1 Samuel 16:12)

Of course, Looks isn't the only thing in a man's favor. The other attributes in the LAMPS/PSALM model can also render a man attractive. Such was the case for an ancestor of King David, Boaz:

> Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, a prominent rich man, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

(Ruth 2:1)

Both Money/wealth and Status make a more more sexually attractive. Here they favored Boaz, who married the widowed Ruth. Sadly, such details as I've highlighted before are not merely taken for granted, but overlooked in the modern Church. No good has come of it.

Finally, Deep Strength's most recent post addresses the issue of obesity in the West, primarily America. While bad education is a part of this, gluttony and sloth play significant roles. A few verses to keep in mind:

> Let neither gluttony nor lust overcome me,
> and do not give me over to shameless passion.

(Sirach 23:6)

and further on in Sirach:

> [12] Are you seated at the table of the great?
> Do not be greedy at it,
> and do not say, "How much food there is here!"
> [13] Remember that a greedy eye is a bad thing.
> What has been created more greedy than the eye?

> Therefore it sheds tears for any reason.
>
> …
>
> [19] How ample a little is for a well-disciplined person!
> He does not breathe heavily when in bed.
> [20] Healthy sleep depends on moderate eating;
> he rises early, and feels fit.
> The distress of sleeplessness and of nausea
> and colic are with the glutton.

(Sirach 31:12-13, 19-20)

Our bodies do not belong to us. They belong to God, as does all things. We must take care of them , or else we might suffer the fate of the wicked servant from Matthew 25.

A Second Opinion

September 3, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

There is an interesting feeling when you get confirmation of various matters discussed in the ‘sphere. On the one hand there is a sense of comfort in knowing you aren’t crazy, or that other people aren’t fooling you. On the other hand there is the attendant discomfort and distress at realizing things really are *that* bad.

I experienced that odd feeling lately during a conversation at my church following the liturgy. I talked with a guy I had seen before but hadn’t had a chance to chat with. He turned out to be a convert from a Protestant background. During our conversation, which involved several other parties at points, the subject of marriage came up. It was fascinating to hear him confirm many of the various concepts and experiences which have been voiced around these parts. A few examples:

- Daughter of the King Syndrome
- How many churches discourage young marriage, and are therefore afflicted with the instance of few marriages
- The opposite, and rarer instance, where Protestant churches would vocally encourage young marriage… and do nothing to support it.
- Christian women on the whole delaying marriage as long as they can to prioritize other things first.
- Christian men being told they had to have everything in their life lined up perfectly in order to marry.

Anticipating a question from the comments, no, as far as I knew this man (who was a bit older than I, and also single) knew nothing of the ‘sphere. But he had experienced Evangelical Christianity, which made him familiar with all of that. All in all, it was a fascinating and enlightening experience. My goal now is to seek out some other Catholic men who weren’t converts and get their stories. I’m curious as to the differences in experiences. I’ve covered my own here, but as the post title indicates, it’s always good to get a second opinion.

Tradition Thursday- #34

September 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We return again to the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. This post contains the second half of his thirteenth lecture. As has been the case for a while, the focus is on the Nicene Creed.

> 21. The beginning of signs under Moses was blood and water; and the last of all Jesus' signs was the same. First, Moses changed the river into blood; and Jesus at the last gave forth from His side water with blood. This was perhaps on account of the two speeches, his who judged Him, and theirs who cried out against Him; or because of the believers and the unbelievers. For Pilate said, *I am innocent* and washed his hands in water; they who cried out against Him said, *His blood be upon us* Matthew 27:24-25: there came therefore these two out of His side; the water, perhaps, for him who judged Him; but for them that shouted against Him the blood. And again it is to be understood in another way; the blood for the Jews, and the water for the Christians: for upon them as plotters came the condemnation from the blood; but to you who now believest, the salvation which is by water. For nothing has been done without a meaning. Our fathers who have written comments have given another reason of this matter. For since in the Gospels the power of salutary Baptism is twofold, one which is granted by means of water to the illuminated, and a second to holy martyrs, in persecutions, through their own blood, there came out of that saving Side blood and water , to confirm the grace of the confession made for Christ, whether in baptism, or on occasions of martyrdom. There is another reason also for mentioning the Side. The woman, who was formed from the side, led the way to sin; but Jesus who came to bestow the grace of pardon on men and women alike, was pierced in the side for women, that He might undo the sin.
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> 22. And whoever will inquire, will find other reasons also; but what has been said is enough, because of the shortness of the time, and that the attention of my hearers may not become sated. And yet we never can be tired of hearing concerning the crowning of our Lord, and least of all in this most holy Golgotha. For others only hear, but we both see and handle. Let none be weary; take your armour against the adversaries in the cause of the Cross itself; set up the faith of the Cross as a trophy against the gainsayers. For when you are going to dispute with unbelievers concerning the Cross of Christ, first make with your hand the sign of Christ's Cross, and the gainsayer will be silenced. Be not ashamed to confess the Cross; for Angels glory in it, saying, *We know whom you seek, Jesus the Crucified*. Matthew 28:5 Might you not say, O Angel, *I know whom you seek, my Master?* But, *I,* he says with boldness, *I know the Crucified.* For the Cross is a Crown, not a dishonour.
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> 23. Now let us recur to the proof out of the Prophets which I spoke of. The Lord

was crucified; you have received the testimonies. You see this spot of Golgotha! You answer with a shout of praise, as if assenting. See that you recant not in time of persecution. Rejoice not in the Cross in time of peace only, but hold fast the same faith in time of persecution also; be not in time of peace a friend of Jesus, and His foe in time of wars. You receive now remission of your sins, and the gifts of the King's spiritual bounty; when war shall come, strive thou nobly for your King. Jesus, the Sinless, was crucified for you; and will you not be crucified for Him who was crucified for you? You are not bestowing a favour, for you have first received; but you are returning a favour, repaying your debt to Him who was crucified for you in Golgotha. Now Golgotha is interpreted, *the place of a skull.* Who were they then, who prophetically named this spot Golgotha, in which Christ the true Head endured the Cross? As the Apostle says, *Who is the Image of the Invisible God;* and a little after, *and He is the Head of the body, the Church*. And again, *The Head of every man is Christ* 1 Corinthians 11:3; and again, *Who is the Head of all principality and power*. Colossians 2:10 The Head suffered in *the place of the skull.* O wondrous prophetic appellation! The very name also reminds you, saying, *Think not of the Crucified as of a mere man; He is the Head of all principality and power. That Head which was crucified is the Head of all power, and has for His Head the Father; for the Head of the man is Christ, and the Head of Christ is God 1 Corinthians 11:3 .*

24. Christ then was crucified for us, who was judged in the night, when it was cold, and therefore a *fire of coals* John 18:18 was laid. He was crucified at the third hour; *and from the sixth hour there was darkness until the ninth hour* Matthew 27:45; but from the ninth hour there was light again. Are these things also written? Let us inquire. Now the Prophet Zacharias says, *And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light, and there shall be cold and frost one day;* (the cold on account of which Peter warmed himself;) *And that day shall be known unto the Lord* Zechariah 14:6-7; (what, knew He not the other days? Days are many, but *this is the day* of the Lord's patience, *which the Lord made* ;)— *And that day shall be known unto the Lord, not day, and not night:* what is this dark saying which the Prophet speaks? That day is neither day nor night? What then shall we name it? The Gospel interprets it, by relating the event. It was not day; for the sun shone not uniformly from his rising to his setting, but from the sixth hour till the ninth hour, there was darkness at mid-day. The darkness therefore was interposed; but *God called the darkness night*. Genesis 1:5 Wherefore it was neither day nor night: for neither was it all light, that it should be called day; nor was it all darkness, that it should be called night; but after the ninth hour the sun shone forth. This also the Prophet foretels; for after saying, *Not day, nor night*, he added, *And at evening time it shall be light*. Do you see the exactness of the prophets? Do you see the truth of the things which were written aforetime?

25. But do you ask exactly at what hour the sun failed ? Was it the fifth hour, or

the eighth, or the tenth? Tell, O Prophet, the exact time thereof to the Jews, who are unwilling to hear; when shall the sun go down? The Prophet Amos answers, *And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord God, that the sun shall go down at noon* (for there was darkness from the sixth hour;) *and the light shall grow dark over the earth in the day*. What sort of season is this, O Prophet, and what sort of day? *And I will turn your feasts into mourning*; for this was done in the days of unleavened bread, and at the feast of the Passover: then afterwards he says, *And I will make Him as the mourning of an Only Son, and those with Him as a day of anguish* Amos 8:10; for in the day of unleavened bread, and at the feast, their women were wailing and weeping, and the Apostles had hidden themselves and were in anguish. Wonderful then is this prophecy.

26. But, some one will say, Give me yet another sign; what other exact sign is there of that which has come to pass? Jesus was crucified; and He wore but one coat, and one cloak: now His cloak the soldiers shared among themselves, having rent it into four; but His coat was not rent, for when rent it would have been no longer of any use; so about this lots are cast by the soldiers; thus the one they divide, but for the other they cast lots. Is then this also written? They know, the diligent chanters of the Church, who imitate the Angel hosts, and continually sing praises to God: who are thought worthy to chant Psalms in this Golgotha, and to say, *They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they did cast lots*. The *lots* were what the soldiers cast.

27. Again, when He had been judged before Pilate, He was clothed in red; for there they put on Him a purple robe. Is this also written? Esaias says, *Who is this that comes from Edom? The redness of His garments is from Bosor* Isaiah 63:1-2; (who is this who in dishonor wears purple? For Bosor has some such meaning in Hebrew.) *Why are Your garments red, and Your raiment as from a trodden wine-press?* But He answers and says, *All day long have I stretched forth Mine hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people*.

28. He stretched out His hands on the Cross, that He might embrace the ends of the world; for this Golgotha is the very centre of the earth. It is not my word, but it is a prophet who has said, *You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth*. He stretched forth human hands, who by His spiritual hands had established the heaven; and they were fastened with nails, that His manhood, which here the sins of men, having been nailed to the tree, and having died, sin might die with it, and we might rise again in righteousness. *For since by one man came death, by* One *Man came also life* ; by One Man, the Saviour, dying of His own accord: for remember what He said, *I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again* John 10:18 .

29. But though He endured these things, having come for the salvation of all, yet the people returned Him an evil recompense. Jesus says, *I thirst* —He who had brought forth the waters for them out of the craggy rock; and He asked fruit of the Vine which He had planted. But what does the Vine? This Vine, which was by

nature of the holy fathers, but of Sodom by purpose of heart—(for *their Vine is of Sodom, and their tendrils of Gomorrha* Deuteronomy 32:32;)— this Vine, when the Lord was thirsty, having filled a sponge and put it on a reed, offers Him vinegar. *They gave Me also gall for My meat, and in My thirst, they gave Me vinegar to drink*. You see the clearness of the Prophet.' description. But what sort of gall put they into My mouth? *They gave Him*, it says, *wine mingled with myrrh*. Mark 15:23 Now myrrh is in taste like gall, and very bitter. Are these things what you recompense unto the Lord? Are these your offerings, O Vine, unto your Master? Rightly did the Prophet Esaias aforetime bewail you, saying, *My well-beloved had a vineyard in a hill in a fruitful place;* and (not to recite the whole) *I waited*, he says, *that it should bring forth grapes*; I thirsted that it should give wine; *but it brought forth thorns* Isaiah 5:1-2; for you see the crown, wherewith I am adorned. What then shall I now decree? I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the clouds which are the Prophets were removed from them, and are for the future in the Church; as Paul says, *Let the Prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge* 1 Corinthians 14:29; and again, *God gave in the Church, some, Apostles, and some, Prophets*. Ephesians 4:11 Agabus, who bound his own feet and hands, was a prophet.

30. Concerning the robbers who were crucified with Him, it is written, *And He was numbered with the transgressors*. Isaiah 53:12 Both of them were before this transgressors, but one was so no longer. For the one was a transgressor to the end, stubborn against salvation; who, though his hands were fastened, smote with blasphemy by his tongue. When the Jews passing by wagged their heads, mocking the Crucified, and fulfilling what was written, *When they looked on Me, they shaked their heads* , he also reviled with them. But the other rebused the reviler; and it was to him the end of life and the beginning of restoration; the surrender of his soul a first share in salvation. And after rebuking the other, he says, *Lord, remember me* ; for with You is my account. Heed not this man, for the eyes of his understanding are blinded; but remember me. I say not, remember my works, for of these I am afraid. Every man has a feeling for his fellow-traveller; I am travelling with You towards death; remember me, Your fellow-wayfarer. I say not, Remember me now, but, *when You come in Your kingdom*.

31. What power, O robber, led you to the light? Who taught you to worship that despised Man, your companion on the Cross? O Light Eternal, which gives light to them that are in darkness! Therefore also he justly heard the words, *Be of good cheer* ; not that your deeds are worthy of good cheer; but that the King is here, dispensing favours. The request reached unto a distant time; but the grace was very speedy. *Verily I say unto you, This day shall you be with Me in Paradise;* because *today* you have *heard My voice*, and hast not *hardened your heart*. Very speedily I passed sentence upon Adam, very speedily I pardon you. To him it was said, *In the day wherein you eat, you shall surely die* Genesis 2:17; but thou today hast obeyed the faith, today is your salvation. Adam by the Tree fell away;

thou by the Tree art brought into Paradise. Fear not the serpent; he shall not cast you out; for he is *fallen from heaven*. Luke 10:18 And I say not unto you, This day shall you depart, but, *This day shall you be with Me*. Be of good courage: you shall not be cast out. Fear not the flaming sword; it shrinks from its Lord. O mighty and ineffable grace! The faithful Abraham had not yet entered, but the robber enters! Moses and the Prophets had not yet entered, and the robber enters though a breaker of the law. Paul also wondered at this before you, saying, *Where sin abounded, there grace did much more abound*. Romans 5:20 They who had borne the heat of the day had not yet entered; and he of the eleventh hour entered. Let none murmur against the goodman of the house, for he says, *Friend, I do you no wrong; is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own* ? The robber has a will to work righteousness, but death prevents him; I wait not exclusively for the work, but faith also I accept. I have come who *feed My sheep among the lilies* Song of Songs 6:3, I have come to feed them in the gardens. I have *found* a *sheep that was lost* Luke 15:5-6, but I lay it on My shoulders; for he believes, since he himself has said, *I have gone astray like a lost sheep* ; *Lord, remember me when You come in Your kingdom.*

32. Of this garden I sang of old to My spouse in the Canticles, and spoke to her thus. *I have come into My garden, My sister, My spouse* Song of Songs 5:1; (*now in the place where He was crucified was a garden* John 19:41 and what takest Thou thence? *I have gathered My myrrh;* having drunk wine mingled with myrrh, and vinegar, after receiving which, He said, It is finished. For the mystery has been fulfilled; the things that are written have been accomplished; sins are forgiven. For *Christ having come an High-Priest of the good things to come, by the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption; for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the defiled, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, how much more the blood of Christ* Hebrews 9:11? And again, *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh*. And because His flesh, this veil, was dishonoured, therefore the typical veil of the temple was rent asunder, as it is written, *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom* Matthew 27:51; for not a particle of it was left; for since the Master said, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate* , the house broke all in pieces.

33. These things the Saviour endured, *and made peace through the Blood of His Cross, for things in heaven, and things in earth*. Colossians 1:20 For we were enemies of God through sin, and God had appointed the sinner to die. There must needs therefore have happened one of two things; either that God, in His truth, should destroy all men, or that in His loving-kindness He should cancel the sentence. But behold the wisdom of God; He preserved both the truth of His

sentence, and the exercise of His loving-kindness. Christ took our sins in *His body on the tree, that we by His death might die to sin, and live unto righteousness*. 1 Peter 2:24 Of no small account was He who died for us; He was not a literal sheep; He was not a mere man; He was more than an Angel; He was God made man. The transgression of sinners was not so great as the righteousness of Him who died for them; the sin which we committed was not so great as the righteousness which He wrought who laid down His life for us—who laid it down when He pleased, and took it again when He pleased. And would you know that He laid not down His life by violence, nor yielded up the ghost against His will? He cried to the Father, saying, *Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit* Luke 23:46; I commend it, that I may take it again. And having said these things, *He gave up the ghost* Matthew 27:50; but not for any long time, for He quickly rose again from the dead.

34. The Sun was darkened, because of *the Sun of Righteousness* Malachi 4:2. Rocks were rent, because of the spiritual Rock. Tombs were opened, and the dead arose, because of Him who was *free among the dead* ; *He sent forth His prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water* Zechariah 9:11. Be not then ashamed of the Crucified, but be also bold to say, *He bears our sins, and endures grief for us, and with His stripes we are healed*. Isaiah 53:4-5 Let us not be unthankful to our Benefactor. And again; *for the transgression of my people was He led to death; and I will give the wicked for His burial, and the rich for His death*. Therefore Paul says plainly, *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He has risen again the third day according to the Scriptures* 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 .

35. But we seek to know clearly where He has been buried. Is His tomb made with hands? Is it, like the tombs of kings, raised above the ground? Is the Sepulchre made of stones joined together? And what is laid upon it? Tell us, O Prophets, the exact truth concerning His tomb also, where He is laid, and where we shall seek Him? And they say, *Look into the solid rock which you have hewn*. Isaiah 51:1 *Look in* and behold. You have in the Gospels *In a sepulchre hewn in stone, which was hewn out of a rock*. And what happens next? What kind of door has the sepulchre? Again another Prophet says, *They cut off My life in a dungeon , and cast a stone upon Me.* I, who am the *Chief corner-stone, the elect, the precious* 1 Peter 2:6, lie for a little time within a stone— I who am a stone of stumbling to the Jews, and of salvation to them who believe. *The Tree of life* , therefore was planted in the earth, that the earth which had been cursed might enjoy the blessing, and that the dead might be released.

36. Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we rise up; when we are in the way, and when we are still. Great is that preservative; it is without price, for the sake of

the poor; without toil, for the sick; since also its grace is from God. It is the Sign of the faithful, and the dread of devils: for He *triumphed over them in it, having made a show of them openly* Colossians 2:15; for when they see the Cross they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him, who *bruised the heads of the dragon*. Despise not the Seal, because of the freeness of the gift; out for this the rather honour your Benefactor.

37. And if you ever fall into disputation and have not the grounds of proof, yet let Faith remain firm in you; or rather, become thou well learned, and then silence the Jews out of the prophets, and the Greeks out of their own fables. They themselves worship men who have been thunderstricken : but the thunder when it comes from heaven, comes not at random. If they are not ashamed to worship men thunderstricken and abhorred of God, are you ashamed to worship the beloved Son of God, who was crucified for you? I am ashamed to tell the tales about their so-called Gods, and I leave them because of time; let those who know, speak. And let all heretics also be silenced. If any say that the Cross is an illusion, turn away from him. Abhor those who say that Christ was crucified to our fancy only; for if so, and if salvation is from the Cross, then is salvation a fancy also. If the Cross is fancy, the Resurrection is fancy also; but *if Christ be not risen, we are yet in our sins*. 1 Corinthians 15:17 If the Cross is fancy, the Ascension also is fancy; and if the Ascension is fancy, then is the second coming also fancy, and everything is henceforth unsubstantial.

38. Take therefore first, as an indestructible foundation, the Cross, and build upon it the other articles of the faith. Deny not the Crucified; for, if you deny Him, you have many to arraign you. Judas the traitor will arraign you first; for he who betrayed Him knows that He was condemned to death by the chief-priests and elders. The thirty pieces of silver bear witness; Gethsemane bears witness, where the betrayal occurred; I speak not yet of the Mount of Olives, on which they were with Him at night, praying. The moon in the night bears witness; the day bears witness, and the sun which was darkened; for it endured not to look on the crime of the conspirators. The fire will arraign you, by which Peter stood and warmed himself; if you deny the Cross, the eternal fire awaits you. I speak hard words, that you may not experience hard pains. Remember the swords that came against Him in Gethsemane, that you feel not the eternal sword. The house of Caiaphas will arraign you, showing by its present desolation the power of Him who was erewhile judged there. Yes, Caiaphas himself will rise up against you in the day of judgment, the very servant will rise up against you, who smote Jesus with the palm of his hand; they also who bound Him, and they who led Him away. Even Herod shall rise up against you; and Pilate; as if saying, Why do you deny Him who was slandered before us by the Jews, and whom we knew to have done no wrong? For I Pilate then washed my hands. The false witnesses shall rise up against you, and the soldiers who arrayed Him in the purple robe, and set on Him the crown of thorns, and crucified Him in Golgotha, and cast lots for His coat.

> Simon the Cyrenian will cry out upon you, who bore the Cross after Jesus.
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> 39. From among the stars there will cry out upon you, the darkened Sun; among the things upon earth, the Wine mingled with myrrh; among reeds, the Reed; among herbs, the Hyssop; among the things of the sea, the Sponge; among trees, the Wood of the Cross;— the soldiers, too, as I have said, who nailed Him, and cast lots for His vesture; the soldier who pierced His side with the spear; the women who then were present; the veil of the temple then rent asunder; the hall of Pilate, now laid waste by the power of Him who was then crucified; this holy Golgotha, which stands high above us, and shows itself to this day, and displays even yet how because of Christ the rocks were then riven ; the sepulchre near at hand where He was laid; and the stone which was laid on the door, which lies to this day by the tomb; the Angels who were then present; the women who worshipped Him after His resurrection; Peter and John, who ran to the sepulchre; and Thomas, who thrust his hand into His side, and his fingers into the prints of the nails. For it was for our sakes that he so carefully handled Him; and what thou, who were not there present, would have sought, he being present, by God's Providence, did seek.
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> 40. You have Twelve Apostles, witnesses of the Cross; and the whole earth, and the world of men who believe in Him who hung thereon. Let your very presence here now persuade you of the power of the Crucified. For who now brought you to this assembly? What soldiers? With what bonds were you constrained? What sentence held you fast here now? Nay, it was the Trophy of salvation, the Cross of Jesus that brought you all together. It was this that enslaved the Persians, and tamed the Scythians; this that gave to the Egyptians, for cats and dogs and their manifold errors, the knowledge of God; this, that to this day heals diseases; that to this day drives away devils, and overthrows the juggleries of drugs and charms.
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> 41. This shall appear again with Jesus from heaven ; for the trophy shall precede the king: that seeing *Him whom they pierced* Zechariah 12:10, and knowing by the Cross Him who was dishonoured, the Jews may repent and mourn; (but *they shall mourn tribe by tribe* , for they shall repent, when there shall be no more time for repentance;) and that we may glory, exulting in the Cross, worshipping the Lord who was sent, and crucified for us, and worshipping also God His Father who sent Him, with the Holy Ghost: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #80

September 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Here we are, once again, at the letter Z. Never an easy letter to find a matching saint. Fortunately, there is still at least one left, Saint Zosimas of Palestine:

> Venerable **Zosimas of Palestine**, also called **Zosima**, is commemorated as a saint in the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Churches on April 4.
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> Saint Zosimas was born in the second half of the fifth century, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Younger. He became a monk in a monastery in Palestine at a very young age, gaining a reputation as a great elder and ascetic. At the age of fifty-three, now a hieromonk, he moved to a very strict monastery located in the wilderness close to the Jordan River, where he spent the remainder of his life.
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> He is best known for his encounter with St. Mary of Egypt (commemorated on April 1). It was the custom of that monastery for all of the brethren to go out into the desert for the forty days of Great Lent, spending the time in fasting and prayer, and not returning until Palm Sunday. While wandering in the desert he met Saint Mary, who told him her life story and asked him to meet her the next year on Holy Thursday on the banks of the Jordan, in order to bring her Holy Communion. He did so, and the third year came to her again in the desert, but he found that she had died and he buried her. St Zosimas is reputed to have lived to be almost one hundred years of age.

(source)



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #87

September 6, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A more scattered series of quotes and passages for today's post. The first few verses come from the Book of Sirach:

> [6] Do not get angry with your neighbor for every injury,
> and do not resort to acts of insolence.
> [7] Arrogance is hateful to the Lord and to mortals,
> and injustice is outrageous to both.
> [8] Sovereignty passes from nation to nation
> on account of injustice and insolence and wealth.

(Sirach 10:6-8)

Reading this passage produced an eerie feeling for me. What we are seeing in the West now is the replacement of the existing culture with other ones. That is much akin to a transfer of sovereignty. And it comes at the same times as the West has turned its back on God. This is no coincidence. The West has become puffed with pride, and injustice is the norm. It is only to be expected that the West meet such a fate.

I found this section interesting:

> When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots, an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. [2] Before you engage in battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the troops, [3] and shall say to them: "Hear, O Israel! Today you are drawing near to do battle against your enemies. Do not lose heart, or be afraid, or panic, or be in dread of them; [4] for it is the Lord your God who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory." [5] Then the officials shall address the troops, saying, "Has anyone built a new house but not dedicated it? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another dedicate it. [6] Has anyone planted a vineyard but not yet enjoyed its fruit? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another be first to enjoy its fruit. [7] Has anyone become engaged to a woman but not yet married her? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another marry her." [8] The officials shall continue to address the troops, saying, "Is anyone afraid or disheartened? He should go back to his house, or he might cause the heart of his comrades to melt like his own." [9] When the officials have finished addressing the troops, then the commanders shall take charge of them.

This seems to be a practical bit of advice here- the goal is to exclude those who will be reluctant in battle. At the same time, there also seems to be a cultural and theological component. Ancient Israel understood (or at least claimed to understand) the importance

of a firm foundation for actions. All of these were foundational, they tied to the necessity of one who began something also being the one to finish it. At least, that is what I am picking up here. Perhaps those who knowledge of the OT is better can clarify this for me.

The story of Simon from Acts is next:

> [9] Now a certain man named Simon had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great. [10] All of them, from the least to the greatest, listened to him eagerly, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” [11] And they listened eagerly to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. [12] But when they believed Philip, who was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. [13] Even Simon himself believed. After being baptized, he stayed constantly with Philip and was amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place.
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> [14] Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. [15] The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit [16] (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). [17] Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. [18] Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, [19] saying, “Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” [20] But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God’s gift with money! [21] You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God. [22] Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. [23] For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness.” [24] Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me.”

(Acts 8:9-24)

This passages connects well with these words of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke:

> [36] He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. [37] And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. [38] But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

(Luke 5:36-38)

Simon, who had heard the Good News, had not truly prepared himself to hold onto it. He was still the old person from before- he had not cast aside his old life and old way of thinking. He was still an old wineskin. And when the new wine, the New Covenant was

introduced to him, that wineskin burst because he was not ready to hold it. Receiving the Word is easy, but holding onto it is something else. The only way we can do so is if we throw away our old lives, which represent the old wineskins from the parable. St. Paul explained it in his second letter to the Corinthians:

> [17] So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Our old selves are one with the world. If we wish to be one with God, those old selves must be discarded. It isn't easy to let go of our past selves, but it is necessary. And it is possible, for all things are possible with God.

Some Get It

September 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have written before that Most Christians Just Don't Get It. This can take two forms which are not mutually exclusive: either they don't understand how things work, or they cannot be taught (or learn) how things work, often due to their own intransigence. Fortunately, most does not mean all. On occasion I come across some Christians who do seem to understand at least part of what is going on. I had the opportunity to talk with a woman in the last few days who fit that profile.

Some very brief background on her first. Catholic mom with a number of kids, several of them adults. Has both sons and daughters. Traditional Catholic, and has been that way for a long time. Very much in tune with the problems in the Church right now. Husband is easy-going and seems like a cool guy, and doesn't appear to be a wimp.

We got to discussing problems with the Church at the moment, including how it is shrinking rapidly. Eventually we started to discuss marriage and the problems the church faces there. I explained to her some of my own difficulties in that regard, as well as problems that other men face. Without being direct, I covered a number of different issues that the 'sphere talks about. I found her to be both a good listener, and very receptive. Based on what she said, I think she was aware of some of the problems beforehand, but had never had the whole situation clearly explained to her before. So it wasn't something entirely new.

What might have helped her in understanding this was the situation of her oldest son. He was approaching his mid-twenties and hadn't found anyone to marry yet. It was clear from her face and tone that she was rightfully worried about the situation her son was in. She recognized that it wasn't simply a matter of her son not having "found the right person yet." Even before we had talked she understood that there was something dreadfully wrong with the marriage market. Reader mdavid will not be surprised to hear that she had sent her son, and was sending some of her other children, to a very traditional Catholic college in the hopes of helping them to find a spouse. She related to me that she knew of a number of other Catholic parents who did the same with their children. [I know a few of them myself.] In fact, she knew of a few families who had moved out of state to a traditional Catholic community in order to make it easier for their children to marry.

So its clear that some Christian, or at least Catholic, parents understand that the MMP has serious issues. What I have found at the same time is that while they may understand that something is wrong, and even to some degree *what* is wrong, most don't fully understand *why* it is wrong. I have some thoughts there I want to explore, but that can wait for another post.

Tradition Thursday- #35

September 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

And here we are again on a Thursday, continuing the Catechetical lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. This post features his fourteenth letter. As before, it examines the Nicene Creed. The first part of the lecture is featured today:

> 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
>
> *Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you…. that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, etc.*
>
> *Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and keep high festival, all you that love Jesus;* for He is risen. Rejoice, all you that mourned before Isaiah 66:10, when you heard of the daring and wicked deeds of the Jews: for He who was spitefully entreated of them in this place is risen again. And as the discourse concerning the Cross was a sorrowful one, so let the good tidings of the Resurrection bring joy to the hearers. Let mourning be turned into gladness, and lamentation to joy: and let our mouth be filled with joy and gladness, because of Him, who after His resurrection, said Rejoice. For I know the sorrow of Christ's friends in these past days; because, as our discourse stopped short at the Death and the Burial, and did not tell the good tidings of the Resurrection, your mind was in suspense, to hear what you were longing for.
>
> Now, therefore, the Dead is risen, He who was *free among the dead* , and the deliverer of the dead. He who in dishonour wore patiently the crown of thorns, even He arose, and crowned Himself with the diadem of His victory over death.
>
> 2. As then we set forth the testimonies concerning His Cross, so come let us now verify the proofs of His Resurrection also: since the Apostle before us affirms, *He was buried, and has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.* As an Apostle, therefore, has sent us back to the testimonies of the Scriptures, it is good that we should get full knowledge of the hope of our salvation; and that we should learn first whether the divine Scriptures tell us the season of His resurrection, whether it comes in summer or in autumn, or after winter; and from what kind of place the Saviour has risen, and what has been announced in the admirable Prophets as the name of the place of the Resurrection, and whether the women, who sought and found Him not, afterwards rejoice at finding Him; in order that when the Gospels are read, the narratives of these holy Scriptures may not be thought fables nor rhapsodies.
>
> 3. That the Saviour then was buried, you have heard distinctly in the preceding discourse, as Isaiah says, His burial shall be in peace : for in His burial He made peace between heaven and earth, bringing sinners unto God: and, *that the righteous is taken out of the way of unrighteousness* : and, *His burial shall be in peace*: and, *I will give the wicked for His burial*. There is also the prophecy of

Jacob saying in the Scriptures, *He lay down and couched as a lion, and as a lion's cub*: who shall rouse Him up Genesis 49:9? And the similar passage in Numbers, He couched, He lay down as a lion, and as a lion's whelp. Numbers 24:9 The Psalm also you have often heard, which says, *And You have brought me down into the dust of death*. Moreover we took note of the spot, when we quoted the words, *Look unto the rock, which you have hewn*. But now let the testimonies concerning His resurrection itself go with us on our way.

4. First, then, in the 11th Psalm He says, *For the misery of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord*. But this passage still remains doubtful with some: for He often rises up also in anger , to take vengeance upon His enemies.

Come then to the 15th Psalm, which says distinctly: *Preserve Me, O Lord, for in You have I put my trust* : and after this, *their assemblies of blood will I not join, nor make mention of their names between my lips* ; since they have refused me, and chosen Cæsar as their king : and also the next words, *I foresaw the* Lord *alway before Me, because He is at My right hand, that I may not be moved* : and soon after *Yea and even until night my reins chastened me*. And after this He says most plainly, *For You will not leave My soul in hell ; neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption*. He said not, neither will You allow Your Holy One to see death, since then He would not have died; but *corruption*, says He, I see not, and shall not abide in death. *You have made known to Me the ways of life*. Behold here is plainly preached a life after death. Come also to the 29th Psalm, *I will extol You, O* Lord, *for You have lifted Me up, and hast not made My foes to rejoice over Me*. What is it that took place? Were you rescued from enemies, or were you released when about to be smitten? He says himself most plainly, *O Lord, You have brought up My soul from hell*. There he says, You will not leave, prophetically: and here he speaks of that which is to take place as having taken place, *You have brought up. You have saved Me from them that go down into the pit*. At what time shall the event occur? *Weeping shall continue for the evening, and joy comes in the morning* : for in the evening was the sorrow of the disciplines, and in the morning the joy of the resurrection.

5. But would you know the place also? Again He says in Canticles, *I went down into the garden of nuts* Song of Songs 4:11; for it was a garden where He was crucified. For though it has now been most highly adorned with royal gifts, yet formerly it was a garden, and the signs and the remnants of this remain. *A garden enclosed, a fountain sealed* Song of Songs 4:12, by the Jews who said, *We remember that that deceiver said while He was yet alive, After three days, I will rise: command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure; and further on, So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone with the guard*. Matthew 27:63, 65 And aiming well at these, one says, *and in rest You shall judge them*. But who is the fountain that is sealed, or who is interpreted as being a *well-spring of living water* Song of Songs 4:15? It is the Saviour Himself,

concerning whom it is written, *For with You is the fountain of life*.

6. But what says Zephaniah in the person of Christ to the disciples? *Prepare yourself, be rising at the dawn: all their gleaning is destroyed* : the gleaning, that is, of the Jews, with whom there is not a cluster, nay not even a gleaning of salvation left; for their vine is cut down. See how He says to the disciples, *Prepare yourself, rise up at dawn*: at dawn expect the Resurrection.

And farther on in the same context of Scripture He says, *Therefore wait thou for Me, says the Lord, until the day of My Resurrection at the Testimony*. You see that the Prophet foresaw the place also of the Resurrection, which was to be surnamed *the Testimony.* For what is the reason that this spot of Golgotha and of the Resurrection is not called, like the rest of the Churches, a Church, but a Testimony? Why, perhaps, it was because of the Prophet, who had said, *until the day of My Resurrection at the Testimony*.

7. And who then is this, and what is the sign of Him that rises? In the words of the Prophet that follow in the same context, He says plainly, *For then will I turn to the peoples a language* : since, after the Resurrection, when the Holy Ghost was sent forth the gift of tongues was granted, *that they might serve the Lord under one yoke*. And what other token is set forth in the same Prophet, that they should serve the Lord *under one yoke? From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia they shall bring me offerings*. You know what is written in the Acts, when the Ethiopian eunuch came from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. Acts 8:27 When therefore the Scriptures tell both the time and the peculiarity of the place, when they tell also the signs which followed the Resurrection, have thou henceforward a firm faith in the Resurrection, and let no one stir you from confessing *Christ risen from the* dead 2 Timothy 2:8 .

8. Now take also another testimony in the 87th Psalm, where Christ speaks in the Prophets, (for He who then spoke came afterwards among us): *O Lord, God of My salvation, I have cried day and night before You*, and a little, farther on, *I became as it were a man without help, free among the dead*. He said not, I became a man without help; but, *as it were a man without help.* For indeed He was crucified not from weakness, but willingly and His Death was not from involuntary weakness. *I was counted with them that go down into the pit*. And what is the token? *You have put away Mine acquaintance far from Me* (for the disciples have fled). *Will You show wonders to the dead* ? Then a little while afterwards: *And unto You have I cried, O* Lord *; and in the morning shall my prayer come before You*. Do you see how they show the exact point of the Hour, and of the Passion and of the Resurrection?

9. And whence has the Saviour risen? He says in the Song of Songs: *Rise up, come, My neighbour* : and in what follows, *in a cave of the rock*! A cave of the rock He called the cave which was erewhile before the door of the Saviour’s sepulchre, and had been hewn out of the rock itself, as is wont to be done here in

front of the sepulchres. For now it is not to be seen, since the outer cave was cut away at that time for the sake of the present adornment. For before the decoration of the sepulchre by the royal munificence, there was a cave in the front of the rock. But where is the rock that had in it the cave? Does it lie near the middle of the city, or near the walls and the outskirts? And whether is it within the ancient walls, or within the outer walls which were built afterwards? He says then in the Canticles: *in a cave of the rock, close to the outer wall*.

10. At what season does the Saviour rise? Is it the season of summer, or some other? In the same Canticles immediately before the words quoted He says, The winter is past, the rain is past and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the pruning has come. Is not then the earth full of flowers now, and are they not pruning the vines? You see how he said also that the winter is now past. For when this month Xanthicus has come, it is already spring. And this is the season, the first month with the Hebrews, in which occurs the festival of the Passover, the typical formerly, but now the true. This is the season of the creation of the world: for then God said, Let the earth bring forth herbage of grass, yielding seed after his kind and after his likeness. And now, as you see, already every herb is yielding seed. And as at that time God made the sun and moon and gave them courses of equal day (and night), so also a few days since was the season of the equinox.

At that time God said, let us make man after our image and after our likeness. And the image he received, but the likeness through his disobedience he obscured. At the same season then in which he lost this the restoration also took place. At the same season as the created man through disobedience was cast out of Paradise, he who believed was through obedience brought in. Our Salvation then took place at the same season as the Fall: when the flowers appeared, and the pruning had come.

11. A garden was the place of His Burial, and a vine that which was planted there: and He has said, *I am the vine*! He was planted therefore in the earth in order that the curse which came because of Adam might be rooted out. The earth was condemned to thorns and thistles: the true Vine sprang up out of the earth, that the saying might be fulfilled, *Truth sprang up out of the earth, and righteousness looked down from heaven*. And what will He that is buried in the garden say? *I have gathered My myrrh with My spices*: and again, *Myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices*. Now these are the symbols of the burying; and in the Gospels it is said, *The women came unto the sepulchre bringing the spices which they had prepared* Luke 24:1 *: Nicodemus also bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes*. John 19:39 And farther on it is written, *I did eat My bread with My honey* : the bitter before the Passion, and the sweet after the Resurrection. Then after He had risen He entered through closed doors: but they believed not that it was He: for *they supposed that they beheld a spirit*. Luke 24:37 But He said, *Handle Me and see*. Put your fingers into the print of the nails, as Thomas required. *And*

while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said to them, Have you anything to eat here? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and honeycomb. Luke 24:41 Do you see how that is fulfilled, *I ate My bread with My honey*.

12. But before He entered through the closed doors, the Bridegroom and Suitor of souls was sought by those noble and brave women. They came, those blessed ones, to the sepulchre, and sought Him Who had been raised, and the tears were still dropping from their eyes, when they ought rather to have been dancing with joy for Him that had risen. Mary came seeking Him, according to the Gospel, and found Him not: and presently she heard from the Angels, and afterwards saw the Christ. Are then these things also written? He says in the Song of Songs, *On my bed I sought Him whom my soul loved*. At what season? *By night on my bed I sought Him Whom my soul loved: Mary*, it says, *came while it was yet dark. On my bed I sought Him by night, I sought Him, and I found Him not*. And in the Gospels Mary says, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him*. John 20:13 But the Angels being then present cure their want of knowledge; for they said, *Why do you seek the living among the dead* Luke 24:5? He not only rose, but had also the dead with Him when He rose. Matthew 27:52 But she knew not, and in her person the Song of Songs said to the Angels, *Saw ye Him Whom my soul* loved? It was but a little that I passed from them (that is, from the two Angels), *until I found Him Whom my soul loved. I held Him, and would not let Him go* Song of Songs 3:3-4 .

13. For after the vision of the Angels, Jesus came as His own Herald; and the Gospel says, *And behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and took hold of His feet*. Matthew 28:9 They took hold of Him, that it might be fulfilled, *I will hold Him, and will not let Him go*. Though the woman was weak in body, her spirit was manful. *Many waters quench not love, neither do rivers drown it* Song of Songs 8:7; He was dead whom they sought, yet was not the hope of the Resurrection quenched. And the Angel says to them again, *Fear not ye*; I say not to the soldiers, *fear not*, but to you ; as for them, let them be afraid, that, taught by experience, they may bear witness and say, *Truly this was the Son of God* Matthew 27:54; but you ought not to be afraid, *for perfect love casts out fear*. 1 John 4:18 *Go, tell His disciples that He is risen* Matthew 28:7; and the rest. And they depart with joy, yet full of fear; is this also written? yes, the second Psalm, which relates the Passion of Christ, says, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling — rejoice*, because of the risen Lord; but *with trembling*, because of the earthquake, and the Angel who appeared as lightning.

14. Though, therefore, Chief Priests and Pharisees through Pilate’s means sealed the tomb; yet the women beheld Him who was risen. And Esaias knowing the feebleness of the Chief Priests, and the women’s strength of faith, says, *You women, who come from beholding, come hither ; for the people has no understanding*;— the Chief Priests want understanding, while women are eye-

witnesses. And when the soldiers came into the city to them, and told them all that had come to pass, they said to them, *Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept* Matthew 28:13? Well therefore did Esaias foretell this also, as in their persons, *But tell us, and relate to us another deceit*. Isaiah 30:10 He who rose again, is up, and for a gift of money they persuade the soldiers; but they persuade not the kings of our time. The soldiers then surrendered the truth for silver; but the kings of this day have, in their piety, built this holy Church of the Resurrection of God our Saviour, inlaid with silver and wrought with gold, in which we are assembled ; and embellished it with the treasures of silver and gold and precious stones. *And if this come to the governor's ears*, they say, *we will persuade him* Peter's guards were condemned when he escaped out of the prison, were not they also who watched Jesus Christ condemned? Upon the former, sentence was pronounced by Herod, for they were ignorant and had nothing to say for themselves; while the latter, who had seen the truth, and concealed it for money, were protected by the Chief Priests. Nevertheless, though but a few of the Jews were persuaded at the time, the world became obedient. They who hid the truth were themselves hidden; but they who received it were made manifest by the power of the Saviour, who not only rose from the dead, but also raised the dead with Himself. And in the person of these the Prophet Osee says plainly, *After two days will He revive us, and in the third day we shall rise again, and shall live in His sight* Hosea 6:2 .

15. But since the disobedient Jews will not be persuaded by the Divine Scriptures, but forgetting all that is written gainsay the Resurrection of Jesus, it were good to answer them thus: On what ground, while you say that Eliseus and Elias raised the dead, do you gainsay the Resurrection of our Saviour? Is it that we have no living witnesses now out of that generation to what we say? Well, do you also bring forward witnesses of the history of that time. But that is written—so is this also written: why then do you receive the one, and reject the other? They were Hebrews who wrote that history; so were all the Apostles Hebrews: why then do you disbelieve the Jews ? Matthew who wrote the Gospel wrote it in the Hebrew tongue ; and Paul the preacher was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; and the twelve Apostles were all of Hebrew race: then fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem were appointed in succession from among the Hebrews. What then is your reason for allowing your own accounts, and rejecting ours, though these also are written by Hebrews from among yourselves.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #81

September 12, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As hard as it is to believe, this series finds itself again at the letter “A.” As I’ve mentioned before, it is going to be more difficult to find saints worthy of mention from some of the more obscure letters in the alphabet. Thankfully, A is not one such letter. Today’s saint is Saint Acacius of Amida:

> **Saint Acacius of Amida** (died 425) was Bishop of Amida, Mesopotamia (modern-day Turkey) from 400 to 425, during the reign of the Eastern Roman Emperor Theodosius II.
>
> At that time, there were seven thousand Persian prisoners who were captured by the Romans and held in Amida. Filled with the utmost compassion at the sight of these men perishing from hunger and misery, St. Acacius resolved to help them. He assembled his clergy and addressed them in this manner: *“Our God, my brethren, needs neither dishes nor cups; for He neither eats nor drinks, nor is in want of anything. Since then, by the liberality of its faithful members the Church possesses many vessels both of gold and silver, it behooves us to sell them, that by the money thus raised, we may be able to redeem the prisoners and also supply them with food.”*
>
> Bishop Acacius sold all the precious golden and silver sacred vessels of his church and ransomed, clothed and fed the seven thousand. He even supported them for a while and furnished them with all that they needed to return to Persia.
>
> When the ransomed captives returned home to Persia, they told their ruler of the great deeds performed by Bishop Acacius. His actions so impressed the Sassanid Emperor Bahram V that he is reported to have ordered an end to the persecution of the Christians.
>
> Emperor Bahram V also desired to see St. Acacius face-to-face. Permission to do just that was given to Acacius by Emperor Theodosius II. St. Acacius’ kindness and charity led to the termination of hostilities between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Sassanid Empire, and Christianity was able to flourish for a while in the areas then controlled by the Sassanid Persians.

The source of this was his wiki, found here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #88

September 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's homily my parish's priest discussed how the Old Testament gave hints about Jesus and his time among us. Given this, it seems appropriate for today's shorter post to mention scripture that gives signs of things to come. I begin with the Prophet Joel:

> 28 "And it shall come to pass afterward,
> that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
> your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
> your old men shall dream dreams,
> and your young men shall see visions.
> 29 Even upon the menservants and maidservants
> in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

> 30 "And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. 32 And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

(Joel 3:28-30)

The passage above is a rare sign in the Old Testament of the promised Advocate, the Holy Spirit. Here is Jesus talking about the Spirit, which had yet to come:

> 15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.
>
> …
>
> 25 "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. 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.

(John 14:15-17, 25-26)

Finally, we have St. Paul also telling us what would come in the days ahead:

> I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves

> teachers to suit their own likings, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth
> and wander into myths.

(2 Timothy 4:1-4)

What is sad is that warnings like that most recent passage were commonplace throughout Scripture. Yet, at the same time, just as commonplace were instances were the “faithful” ignored those warnings, to their detriment. I suppose that is proof that it is easier for us to open our mouths than our hearts.

Some Scattered Thoughts

September 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is a short one, owing to a lack of time and imagination on my part. There are a few posts around the 'sphere that I want to comment on or highlight for my readers.

To begin with, Beefy Livinson critiques the liberal "distinction" between "Rule of Law" and "Rule of Men." As he explains it,

> Government simply is authoritative discrimination in favor of one alternative instead of others.

Worth a read, especially for those with a political bent.

Deep Strength has a couple of posts up that are interesting. His most recent covers his first meeting with "her father." I think it is well worth the read, especially for those single men looking to marry among my readers. He made a number of unforced errors, and hopefully others can learn from his experiences. Like some of the other readers, I thought that the father's actions were also doubtful at parts. At the same time, it is evident that he truly cares about his daughter, which is a rarity these days. I think it is worth pointing out that the father may not have any prior support to help him in his own vetting process. Christian fathers are often as bereft of knowledge these days as young Christian men looking to marry. Past generations dropped the ball for everyone.

Additionally, Deep Strength examined the matter of vetting and the risk of divorce. Lots of good analysis there. I want to take a stab at answering the questions that Deep Strength posed at the end of the post. In particular, I want to offer an additional theory: the "Feminine Mystique." Women like to maintain the air that the female of the species is ultimately unknowable. In the context of DS's post that means unpredictable. I know Rollo has a post or two on the subject, but as I see it women like to keep men in the dark about how they really are as it benefits them for men (or most of them) to be ignorant. Ignorant men cannot catch on to strategies like AF/BB, for example. Also, it helps women filter for male attractiveness- those rare men who *do* "get them" are more likely to be successful with women, and thus probably superior genetic stock. There are probably other reasons, but I think I've established enough for what it is. It is also worth mentioning that much of it might be unconscious on the part of women- almost reflexive, as it were. But not all, of course.

Cane Caldo has made some dramatic life choices recently. The first post is here. The second is here, and the third here. A point he brings up is that patriarchy, as far as daughters are concerned, is heavily focused on protecting and guarding them. The same can be said of sons as well, in an indirect fashion. By ensuring that women are raised right, fathers in a patriarchy can ensure that their sons have access to decent pool of marriageable women. Without the protection of Patriarchy, such a pool will dry up quickly. See the present day for reference.

Zippy is back, at least for one post. Once again he covers the lies inherent in a

democratic form of government. What surprised me is that he predicts our present system has as many as 50 years left in it. I wouldn’t have given it that long, but unfortunately he might be right. Ours has proven to be a surprisingly robust socio-political system, and inertia can have a profound effect.

Finally, congratulations are in order to blogger Chad, who became recently engaged to the young woman he has been courting for some time.

Saturday Saints- #82

September 19, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*Apologies for the lack of a post on Thursday. Technical difficulties meant I couldn't work on it in time. The series should resume next week.*]

The letter "B" resurfaces yet again in this series on the Saints. Today's saint hailed originally from France, but did most of his work in England, Saint Birinus:

> **Birinus** (c. 600 – 649), venerated as a saint, was the first Bishop of Dorchester, and the "Apostle to the West Saxons" for his conversion of the Kingdom of Wessex to Christianity.
>
> After Augustine of Canterbury performed initial conversions in England, Birinus, a Frank, came to the kingdoms of Wessex in 634, landing at the port of "Hamwic", now in the St. Mary's area of Southampton. During Birinus's brief time at Hamwic, St. Mary's Church was founded.
>
> Birinus had been made bishop by Asterius in Genoa, and Pope Honorius I created the commission to convert the West Saxons. In 635, he persuaded the West Saxon king Cynegils to allow him to preach. Cynegils was trying to create an alliance with Oswald of Northumbria, with whom he intended to fight the Mercians. At the final talks between kings, the sticking point was that Oswald, being a Christian, would not ally himself with a heathen. Cynegils then converted and was baptized. He gave Birinus Dorchester-on-Thames for his episcopal see. Birinus's original commission entailed preaching to parts of Britain where no missionary efforts had reached, and may have included instructions to reach the Mercians. But he ultimately remained in the West Saxon kingdom (Wessex).

The source of this was his wiki, located here.


St. Birinus

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #89

September 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage for today comes from the Prophet Baruch:

> 27 "'Yet thou hast dealt with us, O Lord our God, in all thy kindness and in all thy great compassion, 28 as thou didst speak by thy servant Moses on the day when thou didst command him to write thy law in the presence of the people of Israel, saying, 29 "If you will not obey my voice, this very great multitude will surely turn into a small number among the nations, where I will scatter them. 30 For I know that they will not obey me, for they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their exile they will come to themselves, 31 and they will know that I am the Lord their God. I will give them a heart that obeys and ears that hear; 32 and they will praise me in the land of their exile, and will remember my name, 33 and will turn from their stubbornness and their wicked deeds; for they will remember the ways of their fathers, who sinned before the Lord. 34 I will bring them again into the land which I swore to give to their fathers, to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob, and they will rule over it; and I will increase them, and they will not be diminished. 35 I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God and they shall be my people; and I will never again remove my people Israel from the land which I have given them."

(Baruch 2:27-35)

I came across this passage during my review of the Old Testament. It drew my attention because of the language at the end- that of an everlasting covenant, and the people Israel not being removed from the land. It occurred to me that the prophet Baruch here was presaging the new Covenant of Jesus, and the New Israel in the form of the Church. He surely wasn't speaking of the descendants of Judah, or at least them alone and in total, given how many didn't reform their lives.

Speaking of reforming one's life, a key step to that is living by the Spirit. St. Paul explains for us how we are to live:

> 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another.
>
> 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry,

> sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit,
> [21] envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before,
> that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit
> of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
> [23] gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. [24] And those who belong
> to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
>
> [25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. [26] Let us have no self-
> conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.

(Galatians 5:13-25)

What is important about this passage is that it presents a clear choice: our lives are either guided by the desires of the flesh, or by the desires of the Spirit. There is no "Third Way." No neutrality. Our Lord and Savior explained this to us as well:

> [24] "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the
> other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve
> God and mammon.

(Matthew 6:24)

We have two masters we can serve: God, or the Adversary. And it is our choice whom to serve:

> Do not say, "Because of the Lord I left the right way";
> for he will not do what he hates.
> [12] Do not say, "It was he who led me astray";
> for he had no need of a sinful man.
> [13] The Lord hates all abominations,
> and they are not loved by those who fear him.
> [14] It was he who created man in the beginning,
> and he left him in the power of his own inclination.
> [15] If you will, you can keep the commandments,
> and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.
> [16] He has placed before you fire and water:
> stretch out your hand for whichever you wish.
> [17] Before a man are life and death,
> and whichever he chooses will be given to him.
> [18] For great is the wisdom of the Lord;
> he is mighty in power and sees everything;
> [19] his eyes are on those who fear him,
> and he knows every deed of man.
> [20] He has not commanded any one to be ungodly,
> and he has not given any one permission to sin.

(Sirach 15:11-20)

We all face this choice. Whether or not we recognize it, we are given ample opportunity to serve either master. Given the consequences which will result from this choice, we would all do well to choose wisely.

Clarity is Charity

September 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[DG: Updated, see below]

A female reader of my blog reached out to me recently about an experience she had with online dating. She had met a Christian guy online, and they had gotten to talking about marriage back and forth for a while- a number of months. It had been going well and was getting serious- they were all set to meet, an important step since they lived far apart. Then the guy went silent. She didn't hear from him for a month. None of her responses were answered. There had been no warning that he was going silent either.

Eventually she finally heard back from him. His message was very short, amounting to basically three lines:

- I'm not sure my future includes marriage
- Besides, I'm really busy right now and can't give you any time
- But lets try and be friends anyways

I suppose that it goes without saying that she was somewhat upset by this response. To put it mildly. Not only had he rejected her, and not only had he refused to give any real reason, he also pulled a LJBF on her. She contacted me to try and understand what was going on. She genuinely didn't understand. To be honest, neither did I.

His message was one that could only hurt her. It left most nearly everything up to her imagination, and her imagination took her dark places. I think that would be the case for most nearly any woman. She wondered if he had been playing with her all along, and pulled this stunt merely to mess with her. She wondered if he hadn't found her attractive, and was merely using her for "relationship practice." And of course, before she heard from him she wondered if something terrible had happened to him, and had worried greatly. I gathered from her that the guy in question had known she was at least somewhat emotionally attached to him. Apparently he even claimed to be considerate of women's feelings. But his silence and his curt message refute his own assertions.

This brings me to the central point of my post- if you are a guy and reject a woman, you owe her the truth. Tell her enough so that she won't have good reason to wonder if it is a trick or if there is something wrong for her. Perhaps she will anyways, but at that point it is on her, not you. Remember that woman is the weaker vessel, and act accordingly. Be considerate of their feelings- clarifying matters for them is an act of charity. Unless there is a solid legal reason not to tell her, you should do so. Yes, even if it is embarrassing or shameful. Be a man and bite the bullet. That answer this woman received came across to me as very passive-aggressive, and frankly as a bit unmanly. Don't repeat that.

And while I'm at it, women owe men the truth as well. The present marriage marketplace is an utter mess. It won't get any better if people employ rejections that lack all empathy for the other person. Tell other people as much as you can. It is the charitable thing to do.

Update: The woman in question contacted me, and provided a few clarifications (I had misunderstood and misinterpreted her a bit, plus her initial contact was on the shorter side).

1. They had been in touch for about two months- they had talked marriage but not to the point where she was expecting a proposition. Rather, she had thought that this guy was serious about exploring marriage.
2. She did not think it was a matter of attraction- I misinterpreted her when I thought that.
3. She had wanted to meet much sooner, but he had delayed a meeting.
4. She had done some basic background inquiry, and it seemed to back up that he was in fact a real person.

Tradition Thursday- #36

September 25, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

After an unanticipated break, we resume the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. This post features the second part of his fourteenth lecture:

> 16. But it is impossible, some one will say, that the dead should rise; and yet Eliseus twice raised the dead—when he was alive, and also when dead. Do we then believe, that when Eliseus was dead, a dead man who was cast upon him and touched him, arose and is Christ not risen? But in that case, the dead man who touched Eliseus, arose, yet he who raised him continued nevertheless dead: but in this case both the Dead of whom we speak Himself arose, and many dead were raised without having even touched Him. For *many bodies of the Saints which slept arose, and they came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the Holy City* Matthew 27:52-53, (evidently this city, in which we now are ,) *and appeared unto many*. Eliseus then raised a dead man, but he conquered not the world; Elias raised a dead man, but devils are not driven away in the name of Elias. We are not speaking evil of the Prophets, but we are celebrating their Master more highly; for we do not exalt our own wonders by disparaging theirs; for theirs also are ours; but by what happened among them, we win credence for our own.
>
> 17. But again they say, *A corpse then lately dead was raised by the living; but show us that one three days dead can possibly arise, and that a man should be buried, and rise after three days.* If we seek for Scripture testimony in proof of such facts, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself supplies it in the Gospels, saying, *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*. Matthew 12:40 And when we examine the story of Jonas, great is the force of the resemblance. Jesus was sent to preach repentance; Jonas also was sent: but whereas the one fled, not knowing what should come to pass; the other came willingly, to give repentance unto salvation. Jonas was asleep in the ship, and snoring amidst the stormy sea; while Jesus also slept, the sea, according to God's providence , began to rise, to show in the sequel the might of Him who slept. To the one they said, *Why are you snoring? Arise, call upon your God, that God may save us* Jonah 1:6; but in the other case they say unto the Master, *Lord, save us*. Matthew 8:25-26 Then they said, *Call upon your God*; here they say, *save Thou*. But the one says, *Take me, and cast me into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you* Jonah 1:12; the other, Himself *rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm*. Matthew 8:25-26 The one was cast into a whale's belly: but the other of His own accord went down there, where the invisible whale of death is. And He went down of His own accord, that death might cast up those whom he had devoured, according to that which is written, *I will ransom them from the*

power of the grave; and from the hand of death I will redeem them Hosea 13:14 .

18. At this point of our discourse, let us consider whether is harder, for a man after having been buried to rise again from the earth, or for a man in the belly of a whale, having come into the great heat of a living creature, to escape corruption. For what man knows not, that the heat of the belly is so great, that even bones which have been swallowed moulder away? How then did Jonas, who was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, escape corruption? And, seeing that the nature of all men is such that we cannot live without breathing, as we do, in air, how did he live without a breath of this air for three days? But the Jews make answer and say, The power of God descended with Jonas when he was tossed about in hell. Does then the Lord grant life to His own servant, by sending His power with him, and can He not grant it to Himself as well? If that is credible, this is credible also; if this is incredible, that also is incredible. For to me both are alike worthy of credence. I believe that Jonas was preserved, for *all things are possible with God* Matthew 19:26; I believe that Christ also was raised from the dead; for I have many testimonies of this, both from the Divine Scriptures, and from the operative power even at this day of Him who arose—who descended into hell alone, but ascended thence with a great company; for He went down to death, *and many bodies of the saints which slept arose* Matthew 27:52 through Him.

19. Death was struck with dismay on beholding a new visitant descend into Hades, not bound by the chains of that place. Why, O porters of Hades, were you scared at sight of Him? What was the unwonted fear that possessed you? Death fled, and his flight betrayed his cowardice. The holy prophets ran unto Him, and Moses the Lawgiver, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; David also, and Samuel, and Esaias, and John the Baptist, who bore witness when he asked, *Are You He that should come, or look we for another* Matthew 11:3? All the Just were ransomed, whom death had swallowed; for it behooved the King whom they had proclaimed, to become the redeemer of His noble heralds. Then each of the Just said, *O death, where is your victory? O grave, where is your sting* ? For the Conqueror has redeemed us.

20. Of this our Saviour the Prophet Jonas formed the type, when he prayed out of the belly of the whale, and said, *I cried in my affliction*, and so on; *out of the belly of hell* Jonah 2:2, and yet he was in the whale; but though in the whale, he says that he is in Hades; for he was a type of Christ, who was to descend into Hades. And after a few words, he says, in the person of Christ, prophesying most clearly, *My head went down to the chasms of the mountains* ; and yet he was in the belly of the whale. What mountains then encompass you? I know, he says, that I am a type of Him, who is to be laid in the Sepulchre hewn out of the rock. And though he was in the sea, Jonas says, *I went down to the earth*, since he was a type of Christ, who went down into the heart of the earth. And foreseeing the deeds of the Jews who persuaded the soldiers to lie, and told them, *Say that they stole*

Him away, he says, *By regarding lying vanities they forsook their own mercy*. Jonah 2:8 For He who had mercy on them came, and was crucified, and rose again, giving His own precious blood both for Jews and Gentiles; yet say they, *Say that they stole Him away*, having regard to *lying vanities*. But concerning His Resurrection, Esaias also says, *He who brought up from the earth the great Shepherd of the sheep* ; he added the word, *great*, lest He should be thought on a level with the shepherds who had gone before Him.

21. Since then we have the prophecies, let faith abide with us. Let them fall who fall through unbelief, since they so will; but you have taken your stand on the rock of the faith in the Resurrection. Let no heretic ever persuade you to speak evil of the Resurrection. For to this day the Manichees say, that, the resurrection of the Saviour was phantom-wise, and not real, not heeding Paul who says, *Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh*; and again, *By the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead*. And again he aims at them, and speaks thus, *Say not in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven; or who shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring up Christ from the dead* Romans 10:6-7; and in like manner warning as he has elsewhere written again, *Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead* 2 Timothy 2:8; and again, *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up*. 1 Corinthians 15:14-15 But in what follows he says, *But now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep* 1 Corinthians 15:20; — *And He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve*; (for if you believe not the one witness, you have twelve witnesses;) *then He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once* 1 Corinthians 15:5-6; (if they disbelieve the twelve, let them admit the five hundred;) *after that He was seen of James* , His own brother, and first Bishop of this diocese. Seeing then that such a Bishop originally saw Christ Jesus when risen, do not thou, his disciple, disbelieve him. But you say that His brother James was a partial witness; *afterwards He was seen also of me* 1 Corinthians 15:8 Paul, His enemy; and what testimony is doubted, when an enemy proclaims it? *I, who was before a persecutor 1 Timothy 1:13, now preach the glad tidings of the Resurrection.*

22. Many witnesses there are of the Saviour’s resurrection.— The night, and the light of the full moon; (for that night was the sixteenth) the rock of the sepulchre which received Him; the stone also shall rise up against the face of the Jews, for it saw the Lord; even the stone which was then rolled away , itself bears witness to the Resurrection, lying there to this day. Angels of God who were present testified of the Resurrection of the Only-begotten: Peter and John, and Thomas, and all the rest of the Apostles; some of whom ran to the sepulchre, and saw the burial-clothes, in which He was wrapped before, lying there after the Resurrection; and others handled His hands and His feet, and beheld the prints of the nails; and all enjoyed together that Breath of the Saviour, and were counted

worthy to forgive sins in the power of the Holy Ghost. Women too were witnesses, who took hold of His feet, and who beheld the mighty earthquake, and the radiance of the Angel who stood by: the linen clothes also which were wrapped about Him, and which He left when He rose—the soldiers, and the money given to them; the spot itself also, yet to be seen—and this house of the holy Church, which out of the loving affection to Christ of the Emperor Constantine of blessed memory, was both built and beautified as you see.

23. A witness to the resurrection of Jesus is Tabitha also, who was in His name raised from the dead Acts 9:41; for how shall we disbelieve that Christ is risen, when even His Name raised the dead? The sea also bears witness to the resurrection of Jesus, as you have heard before. The drought of fishes also testifies, and the fire of coals there, and the fish laid thereon. Peter also bears witness, who had erst denied Him thrice, and who then thrice confessed Him; and was commanded to feed His spiritual sheep. To this day stands Mount Olivet, still to the eyes of the faithful all but displaying Him Who ascended on a cloud, and the heavenly gate of His ascension. For from heaven He descended to Bethlehem, but to heaven He ascended from the Mount of Olives ; at the former place beginning His conflicts among men, but in the latter, crowned after them. You have therefore many witnesses; you have this very place of the Resurrection; you have also the place of the Ascension towards the east; you have also for witnesses the Angels which there bore testimony; and the cloud on which He went up, and the disciples who came down from that place.

24. The course of instruction in the Faith would lead me to speak of the Ascension also; but the grace of God so ordered it, that you heard most fully concerning it, as far as our weakness allowed, yesterday, on the Lord’s day; since, by the providence of divine grace, the course of the Lessons in Church included the account of our Saviour’s going up into the heavens ; and what was then said was spoken principally for the sake of all, and for the assembled body of the faithful, yet especially for your sake. But the question is, did you attend to what was said? For you know that the words which come next in the Creed teach you to believe in Him *Who rose again the third day, and ascended into Heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Father.* I suppose then certainly that you remember the exposition; yet I will now again cursorily put you in mind of what was then said. Remember what is distinctly written in the Psalms, *God is gone up with a shout* ; remember that the divine powers also said to one another, *Lift up your gates, you Princes* , and the rest; remember also the Psalm which says, *He ascended on high, He led captivity captive* ; remember the Prophet who said, *Who builds His ascension unto heaven* ; and all the other particulars mentioned yesterday because of the gainsaying of the Jews.

25. For when they speak against the ascension of the Saviour, as being impossible, remember the account of the carrying away of Habakkuk: for if Habakkuk was transported by an Angel, being carried by the hair of his head ,

much rather was the Lord of both Prophets and Angels, able by His own power to make His ascent into the Heavens on a cloud from the Mount of Olives. Wonders like this you may call to mind, but reserve the preeminence for the Lord, the Worker of wonders; for the others were borne up, but He bears up all things. Remember that Enoch was translated Hebrews 11:5; but Jesus ascended: remember what was said yesterday concerning Elias, that Elias was taken up in a chariot of fire 2 Kings 2:11; but that *the chariots of* Christ *are ten thousand-fold even thousands upon thousands* : and that Elias was taken up, towards the east of Jordan; but that Christ ascended at the east of the brook Cedron: and that Elias went *as into heaven* ; but Jesus, into heaven: and that Elias said that a double portion in the Holy Spirit should be given to his holy disciple; but that Christ granted to His own disciples so great enjoyment of the grace of the Holy Ghost, as not only to have It in themselves, but also, by the laying on of their hands, to impart the fellowship of It to them who believed.

26. And when you have thus wrestled against the Jews—when you have worsted them by parallel instances, then come further to the pre-eminence of the Saviour’s glory; namely, that they were the servants, but He the Son of God. And thus you will be reminded of His pre-eminence, by the thought that a servant of Christ was caught up to the third heaven. For if Elias attained as far as the first heaven, but Paul as far as the third, the latter, therefore, has obtained a more honourable dignity. Be not ashamed of your Apostles; they are not inferior to Moses, nor second to the Prophets; but they are noble among the noble, yea, nobler still. For Elias truly was taken up into heaven; but Peter has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, having received the words, *Whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*. Matthew 16:19 Elias was taken up only to heaven; but Paul both into *heaven*, and into *paradise* (for it behooved the disciples of Jesus to receive more manifold grace), and *heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter*. But Paul came down again from above, not because he was unworthy to abide in the third heaven, but in order that after having enjoyed things above man’s reach, and descended in honour, and having preached Christ, and died for His sake, he might receive also the crown of martyrdom. But I pass over the other parts of this argument, of which I spoke yesterday in the Lord’s-day congregation; for with understanding hearers, a mere reminder is sufficient for instruction.

27. But remember also what I have often said concerning the Son’s sitting at the right hand of the Father; because of the next sentence in the Creed, which says, *and ascended into Heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father.* Let us not curiously pry into what is properly meant by the throne; for it is incomprehensible: but neither let us endure those who falsely say, that it was after His Cross and Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, that the Son began to sit on the right hand of the Father. For the Son gained not His throne by advancement ; but throughout His being (and His being is by an eternal

generation) He also sits together with the Father. And this throne the Prophet Esaias having beheld before the incarnate coming of the Saviour, says, *I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up Isaiah 6:1* , and the rest. For the Father *no man has seen at any time John 1:18* , and He who then appeared to the Prophet was the Son. The Psalmist also says, *Your throne is prepared of old; You are from everlasting* . Though then the testimonies on this point are many, yet because of the lateness of the time, we will content ourselves even with these.

28. But now I must remind you of a few things out of many which are spoken concerning the Son's sitting at the right hand of the Father. For the hundred and ninth Psalm says plainly, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool*. And the Saviour, confirming this saying in the Gospels, says that David spoke not these things of himself, but from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, saying, *How then does David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on My right hand* Matthew 22:43? And the rest. And in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter on the day of Pentecost standing with the Eleven Acts 2:34, and discoursing to the Israelites, has in very words cited this testimony from the hundred and ninth Psalm.

29. But I must remind you also of a few other testimonies in like manner concerning the Son's sitting at the right hand of the Father. For in the Gospel according to Matthew it is written, *Nevertheless, I say unto you, Henceforth you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power* Matthew 26:64, and the rest: in accordance with which the Apostle Peter also writes, *By the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven*. 1 Peter 3:22 And the Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, says, *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God*. Romans 8:34 And charging the Ephesians, he thus speaks, *According to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand* Ephesians 1:19-20; and the rest. And the Colossians he taught thus, *If you then be risen with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God*. Colossians 3:1 And in the Epistle to the Hebrews he says, *When He had made purification of our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*. Hebrews 1:3 And again, *But unto which of the Angels has He said at any time, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool* ? And again, *But He, when He had offered one sacrifice for all men, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool*. And again, *Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God*.

30. And though there are many other texts concerning the session of the Only-begotten on the right hand of God, yet these may suffice us at present; with a repetition of my remark, that it was not after His coming in the flesh that He

> obtained the dignity of this seat; no, for even before all ages, the Only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, ever possesses the throne on the right hand of the Father. Now may He Himself, the God of all, who is Father of the Christ, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who came down, and ascended, and sits together with the Father, watch over your souls; keep unshaken and unchanged your hope in Him who rose again; raise you together with Him from your dead sins unto His heavenly gift; count you worthy to be *caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air* 1 Thessalonians 4:17, in His fitting time; and, until that time arrive of His glorious second advent, write all your names in the Book of the living, and having written them, never blot them out (for the names of many, who fall away, are blotted out); and may He grant to all of you to believe in Him who rose again, and to look for Him who is gone up, and is to come again, (to come, but not from the earth; for be on your guard, O man, because of the deceivers who are to come;) Who sits on high, and is here present together with us, *beholding the order of each, and the steadfastness of his faith*. Colossians 2:5 For think not that because He is now absent in the flesh, He is therefore absent also in the Spirit. He is here present in the midst of us, listening to what is said of Him, and beholding your inward thoughts, and *trying the reins and hearts* —who also is now ready to present those who are coming to baptism, and all of you, in the Holy Ghost to the Father, and to say, *Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me* :— To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #83

September 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our good friend, the letter “C”, returns for this post. Our saint for today is one with some controversy attached to his name, St. Cyril of Alexandria:

> **Cyril of Alexandria** (Greek: Κύριλλος Ἀλεξανδρείας; c. 376 – 444) was the Patriarch of Alexandria from 412 to 444. He was enthroned when the city was at the height of its influence and power within the Roman Empire. Cyril wrote extensively and was a leading protagonist in the Christological controversies of the later 4th and 5th centuries. He was a central figure in the First Council of Ephesus in 431, which led to the deposition of Nestorius as Patriarch of Constantinople.
>
> Cyril is counted among the Church Fathers and the Doctors of the Church, and his reputation within the Christian world has resulted in his titles *Pillar of Faith* and *Seal of all the Fathers*, but Theodosius II, the Roman Emperor, condemned him for behaving like a “proud pharaoh”, and the Nestorian bishops at the Council of Ephesus declared him a heretic, labelling him as a “monster, born and educated for the destruction of the church.”
>
> Cyril is well-known due to his dispute with Nestorius and his supporter Patriarch John of Antioch, whom Cyril excluded from the Council of Ephesus for arriving late. He is also known for his expulsion of Novatians and Jews from Alexandria and for inflaming tensions that led to the murder of the Hellenistic philosopher Hypatia by a Christian mob. Historians disagree over the extent of his responsibility for these events.
>
> The Roman Catholic Church did not commemorate Saint Cyril in the Tridentine Calendar: it added his feast only in 1882, assigning to it the date of 9 February. The 1969 revision moved it to 27 June, considered to be the day of the saint’s death, as celebrated by the Coptic Orthodox Church. The same date has been chosen for the Lutheran calendar. The Eastern Orthodox Church and Eastern Catholic Church celebrate his feast day on 9 June and also, together with Pope Athanasius I of Alexandria, on 18 January.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.

 St. Cyril of Alexandria

[*I am experiencing some tech issues with WordPress. I'm having trouble posting and especially commenting. Until I fix it don't expect to see a lot of me.*]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #90

September 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

For today's post, I want to contrast two early followers of Jesus and their reaction when they meet God. Both are from the Gospel of Luke: The first is that of Levi:

> [27] After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." [28] And he left everything, and rose and followed him.
>
> [29] And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them. [30] And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" [31] And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; [32] I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

(Luke 5:27-32)

Then we have that of Peter:

> While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes′aret. [2] And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. [3] Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. [4] And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." [5] And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." [6] And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, [7] they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. [8] But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." [9] For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; [10] and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb′edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." [11] And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

(Luke 5:1-11)

Now, consistent with the tales of both men is that they left everything and followed Jesus. But Peter, even before this, tells Jesus to depart form him, as he was a sinful man. This intrigues me. Why would St. Peter tell Jesus to depart because he is sinful? I would assume the reason has to do with Jewish understanding at the time of the nature of sin and cleanliness. Being a sinful man, St. Peter would have known that he was unclean.

Given the miracle that Jesus just worked, plus his teaching, it would seem obvious to Peter that Jesus was a holy man. Perhaps Peter was worried about “infecting” Jesus with his unholiness? I am curious what others think, and if they know of any writings of Church Fathers or Saints on the subject. If so, it provides an interesting contrast to this story from the Gospel of Mark:

> [25] And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26] and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. [27] She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. [28] For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well.” [29] And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. [30] And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, “Who touched my garments?” [31] And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” [32] And he looked around to see who had done it. [33] But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. [34] And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

(Mark 5:25-34)

Here we have a woman with a hemorrhage, which would have made her ritually unclean under Jewish law, seeking to touch Jesus. This would have made him also unclean under Jewish law. Yet she tries to touch him anyways. The interesting question is, does this make her a worse person than Peter? After all, Peter (if I read the prior situation right) didn’t want to make Jesus unclean, seemingly out of concern for Jesus. Here the woman seems concerned only for herself. Yet at the same time there is an argument that it is the woman who is in the right. She, after all, has faith in Jesus. She has faith that merely touching him will make her clean. Faith that what is holy can in her case, and perhaps all cases, overcome what is unholy. Is not a view such as this a more honorable one? Does it not give the greater power to God- to make clean that which is unclean, merely by the presence of holiness? Once again, I’m curious what the Church fathers and saints taught about this, plus my readers, of course. St. John Chrysostom, in his homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew, offers his take here.

Tradition Thursday- #37

October 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Another Thursday arrives, and with it another post. Today's post continues the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. This post features the first part of his fifteenth lecture:

> **On the Clause, And Shall Come in Glory to Judge the Quick and the Dead; Of Whose Kingdom There Shall Be No End.**
>
> Daniel 7:9-14
>
> *I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit*, and then, *I saw in a vision of the night, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, etc.*
>
> 1. We preach not one advent only of Christ, but a second also, far more glorious than the former. For the former gave a view of His patience; but the latter brings with it the crown of a divine kingdom. For all things, for the most part, are twofold in our Lord Jesus Christ: a twofold generation; one, of God, before the ages; and one, of a Virgin, at the close of the ages: His descents twofold; one, the unobserved, *like rain on a fleece* ; and a second His open coming, which is to be. In His former advent, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger; in His second, He *covers Himself with light as with a garment*. In His first coming, *He endured the Cross, despising shame* Hebrews 12:2; in His second, He comes attended by a host of Angels, receiving glory. We rest not then upon His first advent only, but look also for His second. And as at His first coming we said, *Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord* , so will we repeat the same at His second coming; that when with Angels we meet our Master, we may worship Him and say, *Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord*. The Saviour comes, not to be judged again, but to judge them who judged Him; He who before held His peace when judged , shall remind the transgressors who did those daring deeds at the Cross, and shall say, *These things have you done, and I kept silence*. Then, He came because of a divine dispensation, teaching men with persuasion; but this time they will of necessity have Him for their King, even though they wish it not.
>
> 2. And concerning these two comings, Malachi the Prophet says, *And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple* Malachi 3:1-3; behold one coming. And again of the second coming he says, *And the Messenger of the covenant whom you delight in. Behold, He comes, says the Lord Almighty. But who shall abide the day of His coming? Or who shall stand when He appears? Because He comes in like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' herb; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier*. And immediately after the Saviour Himself says, *And I will draw near to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers,*

and against the adulteresses, and against those who swear falsely in My Name Malachi 3:5, and the rest. For this cause Paul warning us beforehand says, *If any man builds on the foundation gold, and silver, and precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire*. 1 Corinthians 3:12 Paul also knew these two comings, when writing to Titus and saying, *The grace of God has appeared which brings salvation unto all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and godly, and righteously in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. You see how he spoke of a first, for which he gives thanks; and of a second, to which we look forward. Therefore the words also of the Faith which we are announcing were just now delivered thus ; that we believe in Him, who also ascended into the heavens, and sat down on the right hand of the Father, and shall come in glory to judge quick and dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, comes from heaven; and He comes with glory at the end of this world, in the last day. For of this world there is to be an end, and this created world is to be re-made anew. For since corruption, *and theft, and adultery*, and every sort of sins *have been poured forth over the earth, and blood has been mingled with blood* Hosea 4:2 in the world, therefore, that this wondrous dwelling-place may not remain filled with iniquity, this world passes away, that the fairer world may be made manifest. And would you receive the proof of this out of the words of Scripture? Listen to Esaias, saying, *And the heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all the stars shall fall, as leaves from a vine, and as leaves fall from a fig-tree Isaiah 34:4* . The Gospel also says, *The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven Matthew 24:29* . Let us not sorrow, as if we alone died; the stars also shall die; but perhaps rise again. And the Lord rolls up the heavens, not that He may destroy them, but that He may raise them up again more beautiful. Hear David the Prophet saying, *You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; they shall perish, but You remain*. But some one will say, Behold, he says plainly that *they shall perish*. Hear in what sense he says, *they shall perish*; it is plain from what follows; *And they all shall wax old as does a garment; and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed*. For as a man is said to *perish,* according to that which is written, *Behold, how the righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart* Isaiah 57:1, and this, though the resurrection is looked for; so we look for a resurrection, as it were, of the heavens also. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*. Joel 2:31 Here let converts from the Manichees gain instruction, and no longer make those lights their gods; nor impiously think, that this sun which shall be darkened is Christ. And again hear the Lord saying, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass*

away Matthew 24:35; for the creatures are not as precious as the Master's words.

4. The things then which are seen shall pass away, and there shall come the things which are looked for, things fairer than the present; but as to the time let no one be curious. For *it is not for you*, He says, *to know times or seasons, which the Father has put in His own power*. Acts 1:7 And venture not thou to declare when these things shall be, nor on the other hand supinely slumber. For he says, *Watch, for in such an hour as you expect not the Son of Man comes*. But since it was needful for us to know the signs of the end, and since we are looking for Christ, therefore, that we may not die deceived and be led astray by that false Antichrist, the Apostles, moved by the divine will, address themselves by a providential arrangement to the True Teacher, and say, *Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world* ? We look for You to come again, but *Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light*; put us therefore on our guard, that we may not worship another instead of You. And He, opening His divine and blessed mouth, says, *Take heed that no man mislead you*. Do you also, my hearers, as seeing Him now with the eyes of your mind, hear Him saying the same things to you; *Take heed that no man mislead you*. And this word exhorts you all to give heed to what is spoken; for it is not a history of things gone by, but a prophecy of things future, and which will surely come. Not that we prophesy, for we are unworthy; but that the things which are written will be set before you, and the signs declared. Observe thou, which of them have already come to pass, and which yet remain; and make yourself safe.

5. *Take heed that no man mislead you: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall mislead many*. This has happened in part: for already Simon Magus has said this, and Menander , and some others of the godless leaders of heresy; and others will say it in our days, or after us.

6. A second sign. *And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars*. Is there then at this time war between Persians and Romans for Mesopotamia, or no? Does nation rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, or no? *And there shall be famines and pesti lences and earthquakes in various places*. These things have already come to pass; and again, *And fearful sights from heaven, and mighty storms*. *Watch therefore*, He says; *for you know not at what hour your Lord does come* Matthew 24:42 .

7. But we seek our own sign of His coming; we Churchmen seek a sign proper to the Church. And the Saviour says, *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another*. Matthew 24:10 If you hear that bishops advance against bishops, and clergy against clergy, and laity against laity even unto blood, be not troubled ; for it has been written before. Heed not the things now happening, but the things which are written; and even though I who teach you perish, you shall not also perish with me; nay, even a hearer may become better than his teacher, and he who came last may be first, since even those about the eleventh hour the Master receives. If among Apostles there was

found treason, do you wonder that hatred of brethren is found among bishops? But the sign concerns not only rulers, but the people also; for He says, *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of the many shall wax cold*. Matthew 24:12 Will any then among those present boast that he entertains friendship unfeigned towards his neighbour? Do not the lips often kiss, and the countenance smile, and the eyes brighten forsooth, while the heart is planning guile, and the man is plotting mischief with words of peace?

8. You have this sign also: *And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come*. Matthew 24:14 And as we see, nearly the whole world is now filled with the doctrine of Christ.

9. And what comes to pass after this? He says next, *When therefore you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place, let him that reads understand*. And again, *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Lo, there; believe it not*. Hatred of the brethren makes room next for Antichrist; for the devil prepares beforehand the divisions among the people, that he who is to come may be acceptable to them. But God forbid that any of Christ's servants here, or elsewhere, should run over to the enemy! Writing concerning this matter, the Apostle Paul gave a manifest sign, saying, *For that day shall not come, except there came first the falling away, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now you know that which restrains, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of iniquity does already work, only there is one that restrains now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing*. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 Thus wrote Paul, and now is the falling away. For men have fallen away from the right faith ; and some preach the identity of the Son with the Father , and others dare to say that Christ was brought into being out of nothing. And formerly the heretics were manifest; but now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise. For men have fallen away from the truth, and *have itching ears*. 2 Timothy 4:3 Is it a plausible discourse? All listen to it gladly. Is it a word of correction? All turn away from it. Most have departed from right words, and rather choose the evil, than desire the good. This therefore is *the falling away*, and the enemy is soon to be looked for: and meanwhile he has in part begun to send forth his own forerunners , that he may then come prepared upon the prey. Look therefore to yourself, O man, and make safe your soul. The Church now charges you before the Living God; she

declares to you the things concerning Antichrist before they arrive. Whether they will happen in your time we know not, or whether they will happen after you we know not; but it is well that, knowing these things, you should make yourself secure beforehand.

10. The true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, comes no more from the earth. If any come making false shows in the wilderness, go not forth; if they say, *Lo, here is the Christ, Lo, there, believe it not*. Matthew 24:23 Look no longer downwards and to the earth; for the Lord descends from heaven; not alone as before, but with many, escorted by tens of thousands of Angels; nor secretly as the dew on the fleece ; but shining forth openly as the lightning. For He has said Himself, *As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be* Matthew 24:27; and again, *And they shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds with power and great glory, and He shall send forth His Angels with a great trumpet* ; and the rest.

11. But as, when formerly He was to take man's nature, and God was expected to be born of a Virgin, the devil created prejudice against this, by craftily preparing among idol-worshippers fables of false gods, begetting and begotten of women, that, the falsehood having come first, the truth, as he supposed, might be disbelieved; so now, since the true Christ is to come a second time, the adversary, taking occasion by the expectation of the simple, and especially of them of the circumcision, brings in a certain man who is a magician , and most expert in sorceries and enchantments of beguiling craftiness; who shall seize for himself the power of the Roman empire, and shall falsely style himself Christ; by this name of Christ deceiving the Jews, who are looking for the Anointed , and seducing those of the Gentiles by his magical illusions.

12. But this aforesaid Antichrist is to come when the times of the Roman empire shall have been fulfilled, and the end of the world is now drawing near. There shall rise up together ten kings of the Romans, reigning in different parts perhaps, but all about the same time; and after these an eleventh, the Antichrist, who by his magical craft shall seize upon the Roman power; and of the kings who reigned before him, *three he shall humble* , and the remaining seven he shall keep in subjection to himself. At first indeed he will put on a show of mildness (as though he were a learned and discreet person), and of soberness and benevolence : and by the lying signs and wonders of his magical deceit having beguiled the Jews, as though he were the expected Christ, he shall afterwards be characterized by all kinds of crimes of inhumanity and lawlessness, so as to outdo all unrighteous and ungodly men who have gone before him; displaying against all men, but especially against us Christians, a spirit murderous and most cruel, merciless and crafty. And after perpetrating such things for three years and six months only, he shall be destroyed by the glorious second advent from heaven of the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus, the true Christ, who shall slay Antichrist *with the breath of His mouth* , and shall deliver

him over to the fire of hell.

13. Now these things we teach, not of our own invention, but having learned them out of the divine Scriptures used in the Church , and chiefly from the prophecy of Daniel just now read; as Gabriel also the Archangel interpreted it, speaking thus: *The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall surpass all kingdoms*. And that this kingdom is that of the Romans, has been the tradition of the Church's interpreters. For as the first kingdom which became renowned was that of the Assyrians, and the second, that of the Medes and Persians together, and after these, that of the Macedonians was the third, so the fourth kingdom now is that of the Romans. Then Gabriel goes on to interpret, saying, *His ten horns are ten kings that shall arise; and another king shall rise up after them, who shall surpass in wickedness all who were before him* Daniel 7:24; (he says, not only the ten, but also all who have been before him;) *and he shall subdue three kings*; manifestly out of the ten former kings: but it is plain that by subduing three of these ten, he will become the eighth king; *and he shall speak words against the Most High*. A blasphemer the man is and lawless, not having received the kingdom from his fathers, but having usurped the power by means of sorcery.

14. And who is this, and from what sort of working? Interpret to us, O Paul. *Whose coming*, he says, *is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders* ; implying, that Satan has used him as an instrument, working in his own person through him; for knowing that his judgment shall now no longer have respite, he wages war no more by his ministers, as is his wont, but henceforth by himself more openly. And *with all signs and lying wonders*; for the father of falsehood will make a show of the works of falsehood, that the multitudes may think that they see a dead man raised, who is not raised, and lame men walking, and blind men seeing, when the cure has not been wrought.

15. And again he says, *Who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped*; (*against every God*; Antichrist forsooth will abhor the idols,) *so that he seats himself in the temple of God*. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 What temple then? He means, the Temple of the Jews which has been destroyed. For God forbid that it should be the one in which we are! Why say we this? That we may not be supposed to favour ourselves. For if he comes to the Jews as Christ, and desires to be worshipped by the Jews, he will make great account of the Temple, that he may more completely beguile them; making it supposed that he is the man of the race of David, who shall build up the Temple which was erected by Solomon. And Antichrist will come at the time when there shall not be left one stone upon another in the Temple of the Jews, according to the doom pronounced by our Saviour ; for when, either decay of time, or demolition ensuing on pretence of new buildings, or from any other causes, shall have overthrown all the stones, I mean not merely of the outer circuit, but of the inner shrine also, where the Cherubim were, then shall he come *with all signs and lying wonders*,

> exalting himself against all idols; at first indeed making a pretence of benevolence, but afterwards displaying his relentless temper, and that chiefly against the Saints of God. For he says, *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints* ; and again elsewhere, *there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation upon earth, even to that same time*. Dreadful is that beast, a mighty dragon, unconquerable by man, ready to devour; concerning whom though we have more things to speak out of the divine Scriptures, yet we will content ourselves at present with thus much, in order to keep within compass.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #84

October 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint comes from Ireland, but was martyred elsewhere St. Dymphna:

> **Saint Dymphna** (also: **Dympna**, **Dimpna**, **Damhnait**, **Damnat**, from Gaelic *Damh*=stag and *ait*=little, i.e. "fawn".) is a Christian saint. According to the Christian tradition, she lived in the 7th century and was the daughter of a pagan Irish king and his Christian wife. She was murdered by her father. The story of St. Dymphna was first recorded in the thirteenth century by a canon of the Church of St. Aubert at Cambrai, commissioned by the Bishop of Cambrai, Guy I (1238–1247). The author expressly stated that his writings were based upon a longstanding oral tradition and a persuasive history of inexplicable and miraculous healings of the mentally ill.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #91

October 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage from today comes from the Book of Chronicles, and features an account from the time of King Hezekiah of Judah:

> [10] So the couriers went from city to city through the country of E′phraim and Manas′seh, and as far as Zeb′ulun; but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. [11] Only a few men of Asher, of Manas′seh, and of Zeb′ulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. [12] The hand of God was also upon Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the Lord.
>
> [13] And many people came together in Jerusalem to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly. [14] They set to work and removed the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for burning incense they took away and threw into the Kidron valley. [15] And they killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. And the priests and the Levites were put to shame, so that they sanctified themselves, and brought burnt offerings into the house of the Lord. [16] They took their accustomed posts according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from the hand of the Levites. [17] For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had to kill the passover lamb for every one who was not clean, to make it holy to the Lord. [18] For a multitude of the people, many of them from E′phraim, Manas′seh, Is′sachar, and Zeb′ulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the passover otherwise than as prescribed. For Hezeki′ah had prayed for them, saying, “The good Lord pardon every one [19] who sets his heart to seek God, the Lord the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary’s rules of cleanness.” [20] And the Lord heard Hezeki′ah, and healed the people. [21] And the people of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with all their might to the Lord. [22] And Hezeki′ah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good skill in the service of the Lord. So the people ate the food of the festival for seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the Lord the God of their fathers.

(2 Chronicles 30:10-22)

In my reading of the OT, I tend to pay more attention to Kings and Samuel, which can be a mistake. This passage is an example of that. I had completely forgotten about it, although when I did the next passage immediately came to light:

> [9] As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax

> office; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.
>
> [10] And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners
> came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. [11] And when the Pharisees saw
> this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors
> and sinners?” [12] But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need
> of a physician, but those who are sick. [13] Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire
> mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

(Matthew 9:9-13)

Both scenes from Scripture feature those who are ritually unclean partaking of a meal, either the Passover or an actual supper with the Lord. It seems to me that the Pharisees, with their rigid adherence to the ritual laws of cleanliness, also seemed to have forgotten that passage from Chronicles. What matters is not how ritually clean we are on the outside, what matters is what is on the inside:

> [10] And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: [11] not
> what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this
> defiles a man.” [12] Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the
> Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” [13] He answered, “Every
> plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. [14] Let them
> alone; they are blind guides. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall
> into a pit.” [15] But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” [16] And he said,
> “Are you also still without understanding? [17] Do you not see that whatever goes
> into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? [18] But what comes out
> of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. [19] For out of the
> heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness,
> slander. [20] These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not
> defile a man.”

(Matthew 15:10-20)

Because those present at the Passover Celebration in the Old Testament had clean hearts, they were healed by the meal. And those who sought the Divine Physician, in turning their hearts to Him, found themselves cleaning their hearts. Pity the poor Pharisees who focused on whether someone’s hands were clean, instead of whether their heart was. Also, I found it interesting that Matthew’s Gospel, which I believe is the longest, has a shorter list of evils that come from the heart than Mark’s Gospel, which is the shortest of the four gospels:

> [20] And he said, “What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. [21] For from
> within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder,
> adultery, [22] coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride,
> foolishness.

(Mark 7:20-22)

While there is clear overlap- Matthew’s gospel pretty much has the same things as Mark’s (with a possible switch-up for deceit and false witness), Mark adds several more. What interests me is the addition of licentiousness. I’m curious what Greek word is used there, and what its full meaning is. Any of my readers feel like chiming in?

We Have Seen The Enemy…

October 8, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

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and he is us.

Dalrock's most recent post, "the sound of a rebellious woman," features several good conversations in the comments. One of them concerned authority, while another focused on who was responsible for the lack of admonishments directed towards women in the western church. Cane Caldo entered both, leaving several excellent comments, a few of which bear repeating here. The first:

> This is the link you are supposed to create, based upon his suggestion. If you ask those husbands who quip and wink, they'll tell you that they are just being gentle, humble, and sage. If you've never done it, I suggest you tell a group of AmXian *husbands* that their wives are not quiet or gentle. They will rage. (More on that in a second.)
>
> …
>
> The fear here–and Mark would know this–is that the husbands will feel that their wives have been impugned. Again: Look at what brought down Mark Driscoll. He trounced hundreds of husbands, and his church grew and grew while churches around Mars Hill dried up; because AmXians wives AND husbands love it. But when a critical mass of women were offended (which in comparison was a very small number) Mark had to go. The husbands' anger galvanized around Mark's mistreatment of women. Women didn't rise up and kick Mark out. Men did.

the second:

> Churchians are Blue Pill, and pedestalize women. If you take away their pedestal, the worshippers get angrier than the goddesses. Pastors, generally, aren't up on pedestals. Most men think pastors are either lame, or mountain-top yogis who can't relate to mortals; often both.

and the third:

> Authority and power are not the same thing. For example, the term "rebellion" betrays the fact that one *doesn't* have authority. ("For no one ever hated himself…") So the term "female rebellion" unavoidably implies that they do not have authority. Since we are still in the age of female rebellion, then men still have the authority; even if they wield incredible power. That power of female rebellion exists only in the hands of those men who are willing to uphold it, and, yes, the state does uphold power for women.
>
> Don't misunderstand me! I do NOT mean to say that all men hold authority. I meant that when it is held, whoever holds it are men, and they are never women.
>
> In fact, it is very similar to Mark Driscoll. My description of his transfer of

> authority from the husbands of the congregation to his wife (and therefore himself) is really analogous to how authority in America has transferred from men to women through women's suffrage. Ultimately, women still aren't in power, but the men in power have more authority than ever.

Both comments lead me to this-

It is men, and not women, who are the main obstacle to be overcome. Cane makes a lot of points, but ultimately one of the major ones is that you cannot "fix" American Christianity until you deal with men who pedestalize women. Female rebellion is only possible because men make it possible. I say "make" on purpose. It isn't simply that it is allowed, but that it is *enabled*. If you were to actually speak up against female rebellion in church, then the White Knights there would take up arms against you.

It is important to note that while many men are afraid of their wives, that doesn't necessarily make them a full White Knight. A White Knight goes beyond acting in perceived self interest, and actually tries to promote "his own" (actually another) agenda. Most men are relatively passive here. The problem is that the WKs tend to be quite aggressive, and know how to rope other men into helping them.

All of which means that any effort to bring about reform and eliminate "Churchianity" will require the neutralization of White Knights in leadership position. The good news is that going after them should actually be easier than trying to assail female rebellion right now. White Knights are less apt at defending themselves than women, and are less likely to get support from other men in their defense. At least, that is my read on the matter. If anyone disagrees feel free to explain why in the comments.

On the same vein, this topic got me thinking about the various types or groups of men who help perpetuate the system. I am going to use this post to try and categorize them, if only to sate my own abnormal INTJ curiosity. Here is what I have so far:

- The Pedestalizer- the classic White Knight. These guys think women are living goddesses who can do no wrong, and will defend them to the last man and child.
- The Powermonger- a variant White Knight. These guys defend women, but do so because they see it as a tool for giving themselves greater power. They don't pedestalize women, and often look down on them, but are careful not to show it.
- The Player- a cad or PUA. Someone who has found a way to benefit (to varying degrees) from female rebellion, primarily by easier sexual access to women. Usually has a good understanding of female nature. Some merely seek to benefit from the system, while others actually find ways to preserve it.
- The AFC- Average Frustrated Chump. These guys are enablers to enablers- while often not full on White Knights, they will support White Knights when the call is sounded- with reasons ranging from fear to guilt.

Any other categories that I missed?

Tradition Thursday- #38

October 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Thursday, and that means another post in my ongoing series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. For today we have the second part of his fifteenth lecture, which concern's Christ's return:

> 16. For this cause the Lord knowing the greatness of the adversary grants indulgence to the godly, saying, *Then let them which be in Judæa flee to the mountains*. Matthew 24:16 But if any man is conscious that he is very stout-hearted, to encounter Satan, let him stand (for I do not despair of the Church's nerves), and let him say, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ and the rest* Romans 8:35? But, let those of us who are fearful provide for our own safety; and those who are of a good courage, stand fast: *for then shall be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be*. Matthew 24:21 But thanks be to God who has confined the greatness of that tribulation to a few days; for He says, *But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened* ; and Antichrist shall reign for three years and a half only. We speak not from apocryphal books, but from Daniel; for he says, *And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time . A time* is the one year in which his coming shall for a while have increase; and *the times* are the remaining two years of iniquity, making up the sum of the three years; and *the half a time* is the six months. And again in another place Daniel says the same thing, *And he swore by Him that lives for ever that it shall be for a time, and times, and half a time*. Daniel 12:7 And some perhaps have referred what follows also to this; namely, *a thousand two hundred and ninety days* ; and this, *Blessed is he that endures and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days*. For this cause we must hide ourselves and flee; for perhaps *we shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come* Matthew 10:23 .
>
> 17. Who then is the blessed man, that shall at that time devoutly witness for Christ? For I say that the Martyrs of that time excel all martyrs. For the Martyrs hitherto have wrestled with men only; but in the time of Antichrist they shall do battle with Satan in his own person. And former persecuting kings only put to death; they did not pretend to raise the dead, nor did they make false shows of signs and wonders. But in his time there shall be the evil inducement both of fear and of deceit, *so that if it be possible the very elect shall be deceived*. Matthew 24:24 Let it never enter into the heart of any then alive to ask, *What did Christ more? For by what power does this man work these things? Were it not God's will, He would not have allowed them.* The Apostle warns you, and says beforehand, *And for this cause God shall send them a working of error*; (*send*, that is, *shall allow to happen*) not that they might make excuse, but *that they*

might be condemned. Wherefore? *They*, he says, *who believed not the truth*, that is, the true Christ, *but had pleasure in unrighteousness*, that is, in Antichrist. But as in the persecutions which happen from time to time, so also then God will permit these things, not because He wants power to hinder them, but because according to His wont He will through patience crown His own champions like as He did His Prophets and Apostles; to the end that having toiled for a little while they may inherit the eternal kingdom of heaven, according to that which Daniel says, *And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book* (manifestly, the book of life); *and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and same to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and of the many righteous , as the stars for ever and ever*.

18. Guard yourself then, O man; you have the signs of Antichrist; and remember them not only yourself, but impart them also freely to all. If you have a child according to the flesh, admonish him of this now; if you have begotten one through catechizing , put him also on his guard, lest he receive the false one as the True. For the *mystery of iniquity does already work*. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 I fear these wars of the nations ; I fear the schisms of the Churches; I fear the mutual hatred of the brethren. But enough on this subject; only God forbid that it should be fulfilled in our days; nevertheless, let us be on our guard. And thus much concerning Antichrist.

19. But let us wait and look for the Lord’s coming upon the clouds from heaven. Then shall Angelic trumpets sound; *the dead in Christ shall rise first* 1 Thessalonians 4:16—the godly persons who are alive shall be caught up in the clouds, receiving as the reward of their labours more than human honour, inasmuch as theirs was a more than human strife; according as the Apostle Paul writes, saying, *For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord*.

20. This coming of the Lord, and the end of the world, were known to the Preacher; who says, *Rejoice, O young man, in your youth*, and the rest ; *Therefore remove anger from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh*;... *and remember your Creator... or ever the evil days come* ,.... *or ever the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be darkened* ,.... *and they that look out of the windows be darkened* ; (signifying the faculty of sight;) *or ever the silver cord be loosed*; (meaning the assemblage of the stars, for their appearance is like silver;) *and the flower of gold be broken* ; (thus veiling the mention of the golden sun; for the camomile is a well-known plant, having many ray-like leaves shooting out round it;) *and they shall rise up at the voice of the sparrow, yea,*

they shall look away from the height, and terrors shall be in the way. What shall they see? *Then shall they see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven; and they shall mourn tribe by tribe*. And what shall come to pass when the Lord has come? *The almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall grow heavy, and the caper-berry shall be scattered abroad*. Ecclesiastes 12:5 And as the interpreters say, the blossoming almond signifies the departure of winter; and our bodies shall then after the winter blossom with a heavenly flower. *And the grasshopper shall grow in substance* (that means the winged soul clothing itself with the body ,) *and the caper-berry shall be scattered abroad* (that is, the transgressors who are like thorns shall be scattered).

21. You see how they all foretell the coming of the Lord. You see how they know *the voice of the sparrow*. Let us know what sort of voice this is. *For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God*. 1 Thessalonians 2:16 The Archangel shall make proclamation and say to all, *Arise to meet the Lord*. And fearful will be that descent of our Master. David says, *God shall manifestly come, even our God, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall burn before Him, and a fierce tempest round about Him*, and the rest. The Son of Man shall come to the Father, according to the Scripture which was just now read, *on the clouds of heaven*, drawn by *a stream of fire* , which is to make trial of men. Then if any man’s works are of gold, he shall be made brighter; if any man’s course of life be like stubble, and unsubstantial, it shall be burnt up by the fire. And the Father *shall sit*, having *His garment white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool*. Daniel 7:9 But this is spoken after the manner of men; wherefore? Because He is the King of those who have not been defiled with sins; *for*, He says, *I will make your sins white as snow, and as wool* Isaiah 1:18, which is an emblem of forgiveness of sins, or of sinlessness itself. But the Lord who shall come from heaven on the clouds, is He who ascended on the clouds; for He Himself has said, *And they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory* Matthew 24:30 .

22. But what is the sign of His coming? Lest a hostile power dare to counterfeit it. *And then shall appear*, He says, *the sign of the Son of Man in heaven*. Ib Now Christ’s own true sign is the Cross; a sign of a luminous Cross shall go before the King , plainly declaring Him who was formerly crucified: that the Jews who before *pierced Him* and plotted against Him, when they see it, may *mourn tribe by tribe* Zechariah 12:12, saying, *This is He who was buffeted, this is He whose face they spat on, this is He whom they bound with chains, this is He whom of old they crucified, and set at nought. Whither, they will say, shall we flee from the face of Your wrath?* But the Angel hosts shall encompass them, so that they shall not be able to flee anywhere. The sign of the Cross shall be a terror to His foes; but joy to His friends who have believed in Him, or preached Him, or suffered for His sake. Who then is the happy man, who shall then be found a friend of Christ?

That King, so great and glorious, attended by the Angel-guards, the partner of the Father's throne, will not despise His own servants. For that His Elect may not be confused with His foes, *He shall send forth His Angels with a great trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds*. Matthew 24:31 He despised not Lot, who was but one; how then shall He despise many righteous? *Come, you blessed of My Father* , will He say to them who shall then ride on chariots of clouds, and be assembled by Angels.

23. But some one present will say, *I am a poor man,* or again, *I shall perhaps be found at that time sick in bed;* or, *I am but a woman, and I shall be taken at the mill: shall we then be despised?* Be of good courage, O man; the Judge is no respecter of persons; *He will not judge according to a man's appearance, nor reprove according to his speech*. He honours not the learned before the simple, nor the rich before the needy. Though thou be in the field, the Angels shall take you; think not that He will take the landowners, and leave you the husbandman. Though thou be a slave, though thou be poor, be not any whit distressed; He who *took the form of a servant* Philippians 2:7 despises not servants. Though thou be lying sick in bed, yet it is written, *Then shall two be in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left*. Luke 17:34 Though thou be of compulsion put to grind, whether thou be man or woman ; though thou be in fetters , and sit beside the mill, yet He *who by His might brings out them that are bound* Exodus 11:5, will not overlook you. He who brought forth Joseph out of slavery and prison to a kingdom, shall redeem you also from your afflictions into the kingdom of heaven. Only be of good cheer, only work, only strive earnestly; for nothing shall be lost. Every prayer of yours, every Psalm you sing is recorded; every alms-deed, every fast is recorded; every marriage duly observed is recorded; continence kept for God's sake is recorded; but the first crowns in the records are those of virginity and purity; and you shall shine as an Angel. But as you have gladly listened to the good things, so listen again without shrinking to the contrary. Every covetous deed of yours is recorded; your every act of fornication is recorded, your every false oath is recorded, every blasphemy, and sorcery, and theft, and murder. All these things are henceforth to be recorded, if you do the same now after having been baptized; for your former deeds are blotted out.

24. *When the Son of Man*, He says, *shall come in His glory, and all the Angels with Him*. Matthew 25:31 Behold, O man, before what multitudes you shall come to judgment. Every race of mankind will then be present. Reckon, therefore, how many are the Roman nation; reckon how many the barbarian tribes now living, and how many have died within the last hundred years; reckon how many nations have been buried during the last thousand years; reckon all from Adam to this day. Great indeed is the multitude; but yet it is little, for the Angels are many more. They are *the ninety and nine sheep*, but mankind is the single *one*. For according to the extent of universal space, must we reckon the number of its inhabitants. The whole earth is but as a point in the midst of the one heaven, and

yet contains so great a multitude; what a multitude must the heaven which encircles it contain? And must not the heaven of heavens contain unimaginable numbers ? And it is written, *Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him* Daniel 7:10; not that the multitude is only so great, but because the Prophet could not express more than these. So there will be present at the judgment in that day, God, the Father of all, Jesus Christ being seated with Him, and the Holy Ghost present with Them; and an angel's trumpet shall summon us all to bring our deeds with us. Ought we not then from this time forth to be sore troubled? Think it not a slight doom, O man, even apart from punishment, to be condemned in the presence of so many. Shall we not choose rather to die many deaths, than be condemned by friends?

25. Let us dread then, brethren, lest God condemn us; who needs not examination or proofs, to condemn. Say not, In the night I committed fornication, or wrought sorcery, or did any other thing, and there was no man by. Out of your own conscience shall you be judged, your *thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men Romans 2:15-16* . The terrible countenance of the Judge will force you to speak the truth; or rather, even though thou speak not, it will convict you. For you shall rise clothed with your own sins, or else with your righteous deeds. And this has the Judge Himself declared— for it is Christ who judges— *for neither does the Father judge any man, but he has given all judgment unto the Son* John 5:22, not divesting Himself of His power, but judging through the Son; the Son therefore judges by the will of the Father; for the wills of the Father and of the Son are not different, but one and the same. What then says the Judge, as to whether you shall bear your works, or no? *And before Him shall they gather all nations* Matthew 25:32: (for in the presence of Christ *every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth* Philippians 2:10) *and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divides his sheep from the goats*. How does the shepherd make the separation? Does he examine out of a book which is a sheep and which a goat? Or does he distinguish by their evident marks? Does not the wool show the sheep, and the hairy and rough skin the goat? In like manner, if you have been just now cleansed from your sins, your deeds shall be henceforth as pure wool; and your robe shall remain unstained, and you shall ever say, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on* ? By your vesture shall you be known for a sheep. But if you be found hairy, like Esau, who was rough with hair, and wicked in mind, who for food lost his birthright and sold his privilege, you shall be one of those on the left hand. But God forbid that any here present should be cast out from grace, or for evil deeds be found among the ranks of the sinners on the left hand!

26. Terrible in good truth is the judgment, and terrible the things announced. The kingdom of heaven is set before us, and everlasting fire is prepared. How then, some one will say, are we to escape the fire? And how to enter into the kingdom?

I was an hungered, He says, *and you gave Me meat*. Learn hence the way; there is here no need of allegory, but to fulfil what is said. *I was an hungered, and you gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came unto Me*. Matthew 25:35 These things if you do, you shall reign together with Him; but if you do them not, you shall be condemned. At once then begin to do these works, and abide in the faith; lest, like the foolish virgins, tarrying to buy oil, thou be shut out. Be not confident because thou merely possessest the lamp, but constantly keep it burning. Let the light of your good works shine before men Matthew 5:16, and let not Christ be blasphemed on your account. Wear thou a garment of incorruption , resplendent in good works; and whatever matter you receive from God to administer as a steward, administer profitably. Have you been put in trust with riches? Dispense them well. Have you been entrusted with the word of teaching? Be a good steward thereof. Can you attach the souls of the hearers ? Do this diligently. There are many doors of good stewardship. Only let none of us be condemned and cast out; that we may with boldness meet Christ the Everlasting King, who reigns for ever. For He does reign for ever, who shall be judge of quick and dead, because for quick and dead He died. And as Paul says, *For to this end Christ both died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living* Romans 14:9 .

27. And should you ever hear any say that the kingdom of Christ shall have an end, abhor the heresy; it is another head of the dragon, lately sprung up in . A certain one has dared to affirm, that after the end of the world Christ shall reign no longer ; he has also dared to say, that the Word having come forth from the Father shall be again absorbed into the Father, and shall be no more ; uttering such blasphemies to his own perdition. For he has not listened to the Lord, saying, The Son abides for ever. John 8:25 He has not listened to Gabriel, saying, And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:33 Consider this text. Heretics of this day teach in disparagement of Christ, while Gabriel the Archangel taught the eternal abiding of the Saviour; whom then will you rather believe? Will you not rather give credence to Gabriel? Listen to the testimony of Daniel in the text ; I saw in a vision of the night, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days.....And to Him was given the honour, and the dominion, and the kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and languages shall serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14 These things rather hold fast, these things believe, and cast away from you the words of heresy; for you have heard most plainly of the endless kingdom of Christ.

28. The like doctrine you have also in the interpretation of the *Stone, which was cut out of a mountain without hands*, which is *Christ according to the flesh* ; *And His kingdom shall not be left to another people*. David also says in one place,

Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; and in another place, *You, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, etc., they shall perish, but You remain, etc.; but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail* : words which Paul has interpreted of the Son Hebrews 1:10-12 .

29. And would you know how they who teach the contrary ran into such madness? They read wrongly that good word of the Apostle, *For He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet* 1 Corinthians 15:25; and they say, when His enemies shall have been put under His feet, He shall cease to reign, wrongly and foolishly alleging this. For He who is king before He has subdued His enemies, how shall He not the rather be king, after He has gotten the mastery over them.

30. They have also dared to say that the Scripture, *When all things shall be subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that subjected all things unto Him* —that this Scripture shows that the Son also shall be absorbed into the Father. Shall you then, O most impious of all men, you the creatures of Christ, continue? And shall Christ perish, by whom both you and all things were made? Such a word is blasphemous. But further, how shall all things be made subject unto Him? By perishing, or by abiding? Shall then the other things, when subject to the Son abide, and shall the Son, when subject to the Father, not abide? For He shall be subjected, not because He shall then begin to do the Father's will (for from eternity He *does* always *those things that please Him John 8:29*), but because, then as before, He obeys the Father, yielding, not a forced obedience, but a self-chosen accordance; for He is not a servant, that He should be subjected by force, but a Son, that He should comply of His free choice and natural love.

31. But let us examine them; what is the meaning of *until* or *as long as?* For with the very phrase will I close with them, and try to overthrow their error. Since they have dared to say that the words, *till He has put His enemies under His feet*, show that He Himself shall have an end, and have presumed to set bounds to the eternal kingdom of Christ, and to bring to an end, as far as words go, His never-ending sovereignty, come then, let us read the like expressions in the Apostle: *Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam till Moses*. Did men then die up to that time, and did none die any more after Moses, or after the Law has there been no more death among men? Well then, you see that the word *unto* is not to limit time; but that Paul rather signified this—*And yet, though Moses was a righteous and wonderful man, nevertheless the doom of death, which was uttered against Adam, reached even unto him, and them that came after him; and this, though they had not committed the like sins as Adam, by his disobedience in eating of the tree.*

32. Take again another similar text. *For until this day…when Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart 2 Corinthians 3:14-15* . Does *until this day* mean only *until Paul?* Is it not *until this day* present, and even to the end? And if Paul say to the

> Corinthians, *For we came even as far as unto you in preaching the Gospel of Christ, having hope when your faith increases to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you* , you see manifestly that *as far as* implies not the end, but has something following it. In what *sense then should you remember that Scripture, till* He has put all enemies under His feet 1 Corinthians 15:25? According as Paul says in another place, *And exhort each other daily, while it is called today* Hebrews 3:13; meaning, *continually.* For as we may not speak of the *beginning of the days* of Christ, so neither suffer thou that any should ever speak of the end of His kingdom. For it is written, *His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*.
>
> 33. And though I have many more testimonies out of the divine Scriptures, concerning the kingdom of Christ which has no end for ever, I will be content at present with those above mentioned, because the day is far spent. But you, O hearer, worship only Him as your King, and flee all heretical error. And if the grace of God permit us, the remaining Articles also of the Faith shall be in good time declared to you. And may the God of the whole world keep you all in safety, bearing in mind the signs of the end, and remaining unsubdued by Antichrist. You have received the tokens of the Deceiver who is to come; you have received the proofs of the true Christ, who shall openly come down from heaven. Flee therefore the one, the False one; and look for the other, the True. You have learned the way, how in the judgment you may be found among those on the right hand; guard *that which is committed to you* 1 Timothy 6:20 concerning Christ, and be conspicuous in good works, that you may stand with a good confidence before the Judge, and inherit the kingdom of heaven:— Through whom, and with whom, be glory to God with the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #85

October 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post features the letter "E." This leads to our saint of the day, Pope Eugene I:

> **Pope Eugene I** (died 2 June 657), also known as **Eugenius I**, was Pope from 10 August 654 to his death in 657. He was a native of Rome, born to one Rufinianus.
>
> Little is known of Pope Eugene's early life other than that he was a Roman from the Aventine and was known for his holiness, gentleness, and charity. He had been a cleric from his youth and held various positions within the Church of Rome.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



St. Eugene I

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #92

October 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We begin today's post with the words of a very wise man:

> Unless the Lord builds the house,
> those who build it labor in vain.
> Unless the Lord watches over the city,
> the watchman stays awake in vain.
> [2] It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest,
> eating the bread of anxious toil;
> for he gives to his beloved sleep.

> [3] Lo, sons are a heritage from the Lord,
> the fruit of the womb a reward.
> [4] Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
> are the sons of one's youth.
> [5] Happy is the man who has
> his quiver full of them!
> He shall not be put to shame
> when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

(Psalm 127:1-5)

Elsewhere he says this:

> Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,
> and the glory of sons is their fathers.

(Proverbs 17:6)

David, his father, said this:

> May our sons in their youth
> be like plants full grown,
> our daughters like corner pillars
> cut for the structure of a palace;

(Psalm 144:12)

Lastly, we have these words of our Lord:

> [21] When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world.

(John 16:21)

I chose these particular verses today because of what happened after Divine Liturgy

today. Several of the parents were tied up with various matters, and I volunteered to keep an eye on some of the children for a while. Well, keeping an eye soon morphed into playing with them. Before too long I remembered how much a joy children can be. A lot of work? You bet. Exhausting? Certainly. But off the top of my head I cannot think of a greater source of joy. They truly are a blessing. So to my readers who have them, treasure them as the blessings they are. And for those who don't, I hope and pray that one day you too may receive that blessing from the Lord.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

> Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

(James 1:17)

Good Guy's Don't Exist

October 12, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It's true, you know, we really don't. Most of the men around these parts who do make that claim are liars. And the rest of us are malicious rogue AIs which have decided that the whole "destroy the world" thing is too cliche and concluded it would be more entertaining to frustrate and harass people on the internet.

But in all seriousness, I understand the frustration. I experience the same all the time trying to find a "good girl." [And yes Rollo, feel free to throw in a link to "Good girls do" if you want.] Lets face it, the present marriage market is awful. And it isn't going to get any better any time soon. Of course, that isn't anything like a new message around here. So why the post? I want to explore this question the frustrated young woman asks:

> Why is it so hard to find a guy that is Catholic who wants to be chaste before marriage?!

It is a good question. However, the answer isn't exactly found in the sentence that follows:

> Like I am seeing a serious crisis of manliness in our society and it is extremely concerning.

It is true, of course, that there is a serious crisis of manliness in our society. And it is more than just "extremely concerning." However, that crisis is not the reason for the relative absence of chaste Catholic men these days. Not that there is a single reason, mind you. There are several. Here are a few:

- The importance of Chastity is not really taught by the Church anymore. Catechism of the young has likely never been worse than it is now. Given how horrid it is, it should come as no surprise that it is so rare among men.
- Chaste men are often denigrated for their chastity. More than a few women, "Catholic" women included, will put down men who are "saving themselves for marriage." When men are treated this way, it should again come as no surprise that few would try and be chaste.
- Related to the above, women don't care about male chastity. They just don't. At least, not like men can care about female chastity. Some women might care, but mostly on a detached intellectual level that is no where near the male level of concern. And frankly, I suspect that most women who do say they care will drop that concern if the right guy comes along.
- Most Catholic women aren't chaste these days. Men look around and see most Catholic women acting just as promiscuous as their secular sisters. If the women aren't saving themselves for marriage, why should they? Not to mention, if so many women are willing to give it up, why not take advantage of that? Again, no surprises here.

The last point is a real killer, and one I want to talk about some more. You see, as long as most Catholic women aren't chaste, you aren't going to convince most Catholic men to be chaste either. Just isn't going to happen.

I do know some men in real life who were chaste before they married, and know some men now who intend that path. But they are few and far between (although not really any more rare than their female counterparts). They have related to me what my own experiences have taught- Chastity is a hard sell to men even in the best of circumstances. It can be done, but is far from easy. You need to appeal to men's own interests most of the time to make the sale. A purely ethical argument can and should be made, but self-interest remains a more potent force for most.

Pointing out the prevalence of STDs right now helps somewhat. Pregnancy isn't much of a concern for most due to contraceptives (and a male "pill" will reduce that concern even more). False rape accusations can give some pause. But that is just costs. You also need to have benefits on your side. And that is where you will find the real trouble. Because the benefits just aren't there. Especially when women themselves aren't chaste.

It is one thing to persuade a man to not fornicate if he knows that his future wife will also have saved herself. Especially when educated properly, many men can see the value in that. But when there are precious few women who have saved themselves, that argument falls flat. A man won't see much value in saving himself for marriage when his future wife hasn't done the same. In fact, the opposite is likely to occur- he will conclude (rightly) that he is being had. After all, who wants to pay full price for a used car?

All of which is a long-winded way of saying that if you care about male chastity and want to encourage it, you need to restore female chastity society-wide. In the end, I believe it to be an absolute prerequisite.

Tradition Thursday- #39

October 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series on the Cathethical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jersualem moves forward. Today's post features the sixteenth lecture, specifically the first part. The subject is the Holy Spirit,but heresy plays a prominent role in the lecture:

> 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4
>
> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant….Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, etc.
>
> 1. Spiritual in truth is the grace we need, in order to discourse concerning the Holy Spirit; not that we may speak what is worthy of Him, for this is impossible, but that by speaking the words of the divine Scriptures, we may run our course without danger. For a truly fearful thing is written in the Gospels, where Christ has plainly said, *Whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come*. Matthew 12:32 And there is often fear, lest a man should receive this condemnation, through speaking what he ought not concerning Him, either from ignorance, or from supposed reverence. The Judge of quick and dead, Jesus Christ, declared that he has no forgiveness; if therefore any man offend, what hope has he?
>
> 2. It must therefore belong to Jesus Christ's grace itself to grant both to us to speak without deficiency, and to you to hear with discretion; for discretion is needful not to them only who speak, but also to them that hear, lest they hear one thing, and misconceive another in their mind. Let us then speak concerning the Holy Ghost nothing but what is written; and whatsoever is not written, let us not busy ourselves about it. The Holy Ghost Himself spoke the Scriptures; He has also spoken concerning Himself as much as He pleased, or as much as we could receive. Let us therefore speak those things which He has said; for whatsoever He has not said, we dare not say.
>
> 3. There is One Only Holy Ghost, the Comforter; and as there is One God the Father, and no second Father;— and as there is One Only-begotten Son and Word of God, who has no brother—so is there One Only Holy Ghost, and no second spirit equal in-honour to Him. Now the Holy Ghost is a Power most mighty, a Being divine and unsearchable; for He is living and intelligent, a sanctifying principle of all things made by God through Christ. He it is who illuminates the souls of the just; He was in the Prophets, He was also in the Apostles in the New Testament. Abhorred be they who dare to separate the operation of the Holy Ghost! There is One God, the Father, Lord of the Old and of the New Testament: and One Lord, Jesus Christ, who was prophesied of in the Old Testament, and came in the New; and One Holy Ghost, who through the Prophets preached of

Christ, and when Christ had come, descended, and manifested Him.

4. Let no one therefore separate the Old from the New Testament ; let no one say that the Spirit in the former is one, and in the latter another; since thus he offends against the Holy Ghost Himself, who with the Father and the Son together is honoured, and at the time of Holy Baptism is included with them in the Holy Trinity. For the Only-begotten Son of God said plainly to the Apostles, *Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Our hope is in Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. We preach not three Gods ; let the Marcionites be silenced; but with the Holy Ghost through One Son, we preach One God. The Faith is indivisible; the worship inseparable. We neither separate the Holy Trinity, like some; nor do we as Sabellius work confusion. But we know according to godliness One Father, who sent His Son to be our Saviour; we know One Son, who promised that He would send the Comforter from the Father; we know the Holy Ghost, who spoke in the Prophets, and who on the day of Pentecost descended on the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues, here, in Jerusalem, in the Upper Church of the Apostles ; for in all things the choicest privileges are with us. Here Christ came down from heaven; here the Holy Ghost came down from heaven. And in truth it were most fitting, that as we discourse concerning Christ and Golgotha here in Golgotha, so also we should speak concerning the Holy Ghost in the Upper Church; yet since He who descended there jointly partakes of the glory of Him who was crucified here, we here speak concerning Him also who descended there: for their worship is indivisible.

5. We would now say somewhat concerning the Holy Ghost; not to declare His substance with exactness, for this were impossible; but to speak of the diverse mistakes of some concerning him, lest from ignorance we should fall into them; and to block up the paths of error, that we may journey on the King’s one highway. And if we now for caution’s sake repeat any statement of the heretics, let it recoil on their heads, and may we be guiltless, both we who speak, and you who hear.

6. For the heretics, who are most profane in all things, have *sharpened their tongue* against the Holy Ghost also, and have dared to utter impious things; as Irenæus the interpreter has written in his injunctions against heresies. For some of them have dared to say that they were themselves the Holy Ghost—of whom the first was Simon , the sorcerer spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles; for when he was cast out, he presumed to teach such doctrines: and they who are called Gnostics, impious men, have spoken other things against the Spirit , and the wicked Valentinians again something else; and the profane Manes dared to call himself the Paraclete sent by Christ. Others again have taught that the Spirit is different in the Prophets and in the New Testament. Yea, and great is their error, or rather their blasphemy. Such therefore abhor, and flee from them who blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and have no forgiveness. For what fellowship have

you with the desperate, you, who art now to be baptized, into the Holy Ghost also ? If he who attaches himself to a thief, and consents with him, is subject to punishment, what hope shall he have, who offends against the Holy Ghost?

7. Let the Marcionists also be abhorred, who tear away from the New Testament the sayings of the Old. For Marcion first, that most impious of men, who first asserted three Gods , knowing that in the New Testament are contained testimonies of the Prophets concerning Christ, cut out the testimonies taken from the Old Testament, that the King might be left without witness. Abhor those above-mentioned Gnostics, men of knowledge by name, but fraught with ignorance; who have dared to say such things of the Holy Ghost as I dare not repeat.

8. Let the Cataphrygians also be your abhorrence, and Montanus, their ringleader in evil, and his two so-called prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla. For this Montanus, who was out of his mind and really mad (for he would not have said such things, had he not been mad), dared to say that he was himself the Holy Ghost—he, miserable man, and filled with all uncleanness and lasciviousness; for it suffices but to hint at this, out of respect for the women who are present. And having taken possession of Pepuza, a very small hamlet of Phrygia, he falsely named it Jerusalem; and cutting the throats of wretched little children, and chopping them up into unholy food, for the purpose of their so-called mysteries —(wherefore till but lately in the time of persecution we were suspected of doing this, because these Montanists were called, falsely indeed, by the common name of Christians;)— yet he dared to call himself the Holy Ghost, filled as he was with all impiety and inhuman cruelty, and condemned by an irrevocable sentence.

9. And he was seconded, as was said before, by that most impious Manes also, who combined what was bad in every heresy ; who being the very lowest pit of destruction, collected the doctrines of all the heretics, and wrought out and taught a yet more novel error, and dared to say that he himself was the Comforter, whom Christ promised to send. But the Saviour when He promised Him, said to the Apostles, *But tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued with power from on high*. Luke 24:49 What then? Did the Apostles who had been dead two hundred years, wait for Manes, *until they should be endued with the power*; and will any dare to say, that they were not immediately full of the Holy Ghost? Moreover it is written, *Then they laid their hands on and they received the Holy Ghost* Acts 8:17; was not this before Manes, yea, many years before, when the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost?

10. Wherefore was Simon the sorcerer condemned? Was it not that he came to the Apostles, and said, *Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost*? For he said not, *Give me also the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,* but *Give me the power;* that he might sell to others that which could not be sold, and which he did not himself possess. He offered money also to them who had no possessions ; and this, though he saw men bringing the

prices of the things sold, and laying them at the Apostles' feet. And he considered not that they who trod under foot the wealth which was brought for the maintenance of the poor, were not likely to give the power of the Holy Ghost for a bribe. But what say they to Simon? *Your money perish with you, because you have thought to purchase the gift of God with money* ; for you are a second Judas, for expecting to buy the grace of the Spirit with money. If then Simon, for wishing to get this power for a price, is to *perish*, how great is the impiety of Manes, who said that he was the Holy Ghost? Let us hate them who are worthy of hatred; let us turn away from them from whom God turns away; let us also ourselves say unto God with all boldness concerning all heretics, *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate You, and am not I grieved with Your enemies* ? For there is also an enmity which is right, according as it is written, *I will put enmity between you and her seed* Genesis 3:15; for friendship with the serpent works enmity with God, and death.

11. Let then thus much suffice concerning those outcasts; and now let us return to the divine Scriptures, and let us *drink waters out of our own cisterns* [that is, the holy Fathers], *and out of our own springing wells*. Proverbs 5:15 Drink we of *living water, springing up into everlasting life* ; *but this spoke* the Saviour *of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive*. For observe what He says, *He that believes in Me* (not simply this, but), *as the Scripture has said* (thus He has sent you back to the Old Testament), *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*, not rivers perceived by sense, and merely watering the earth with its thorns and trees, but bringing souls to the light. And in another place He says, *But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of living water springing up into everlasting life*,— a new kind of water living and springing up, springing up unto them who are worthy.

12. And why did He call the grace of the Spirit water? Because by water all things subsist; because water brings forth grass and living things; because the water of the showers comes down from heaven; because it comes down one in form, but works in many forms. For one fountain waters the whole of Paradise, and one and the same rain comes down upon all the world, yet it becomes white in the lily, and red in the rose, and purple in violets and hyacinths, and different and varied in each several kind: so it is one in the palm-tree, and another in the vine, and all in all things; and yet is one in nature, not diverse from itself; for the rain does not change itself, and come down first as one thing, then as another, but adapting itself to the constitution of each thing which receives it, it becomes to each what is suitable. Thus also the Holy Ghost, being one, and of one nature, and indivisible, divides to each His grace, *according as He will* 1 Corinthians 12:11: and as the dry tree, after partaking of water, puts forth shoots, so also the soul in sin, when it has been through repentance made worthy of the Holy Ghost, brings forth clusters of righteousness. And though He is One in nature, yet many are the virtues which by the will of God and in the Name of Christ He works. For He

employs the tongue of one man for wisdom; the soul of another He enlightens by Prophecy; to another He gives power to drive away devils; to another He gives to interpret the divine Scriptures. He strengthens one man's self-command; He teaches another the way to give alms; another He teaches to fast and discipline himself; another He teaches to despise the things of the body; another He trains for martyrdom: diverse in different men, yet not diverse from Himself, as it is written, *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healing, in the same Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; and to another various kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these works that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will*.

13. But since concerning spirit in general many diverse things are written in the divine Scriptures, and there is fear lest some out of ignorance fall into confusion, not knowing to what sort of spirit the writing refers; it will be well now to certify you, of what kind the Scripture declares the Holy Spirit to be. For as Aaron is called Christ, and David and Saul and others are called Christs , but there is only one true Christ, so likewise since the name of spirit is given to different things, it is right to see what is that which is distinctively called the Holy Spirit. For many things are called spirits. Thus an Angel is called spirit, our soul is called spirit, and this wind which is blowing is called spirit; great virtue also is spoken of as spirit; and impure practice is called spirit; and a devil our adversary is called spirit. Beware therefore when you hear these things, lest from their having a common name thou mistake one for another. For concerning our soul the Scripture says, *His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return to his earth* : and of the same soul it says again, *Which forms the spirit of man within him*. Zechariah 12:1 And of the Angels it is said in the Psalms, *Who makes His Angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire*. And of the wind it says, *You shall break the ships of Tarshish with a violent spirit* ; and, *As the tree in the wood is shaken by the spirit* Isaiah 7:2; and, *Fire, hail, snow, ice, spirit of storm*. And of good doctrine the Lord Himself says, *The words that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit* John 6:63, *and they are life*; instead of, *are spiritual.* But the Holy Spirit is not pronounced by the tongue; but He is a Living Spirit, who gives wisdom of speech, Himself speaking and discoursing.

14. And would you know that He discourses and speaks? Philip by revelation of an Angel went down to the way which leads to Gaza, when the Eunuch was coming; and the Spirit said to Philip, *Go near, and join yourself to this chariot*. Acts 8:29 Do you see the Spirit talking to one who hears Him? Ezekiel also speaks thus, *The Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and said unto me, Thus says the Lord*. Ezekiel 11:5 And again, *The Holy Ghost said Acts 13:2* , unto the Apostles who

were in Antioch, *Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*. Beholdest thou the Spirit living, separating, calling, and with authority sending forth? Paul also said, *Save that the Holy Ghost witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me*. For this good Sanctifier of the Church, and her Helper, and Teacher, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, of whom the Saviour said, *He shall teach you all things* (and He said not only, *He shall teach*, but also, *He shall bring to your remembrance whatever I have said unto you* John 14:26; for the teachings of Christ and of the Holy Ghost are not different, but the same)— He, I say, testified before to Paul what things should befall him, that he might be the more stout-hearted, from knowing them beforehand. Now I have spoken these things unto you because of the text, *The words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit*; that you may understand this, not of the utterance of the lips , but of the good doctrine in this passage.

15. But sin also is called spirit, as I have already said; only in another and opposite sense, as when it is said, *The spirit of whoredom caused them to err*. Hosea 4:12 The name *spirit* is given also to the *unclean spirit*, the devil; but with the addition of, *the unclean;* for to each is joined its distinguishing name, to mark its proper nature. If the Scripture speak of the soul of man, it says *the spirit* with the addition, *of the man*; if it mean the wind, it says, *spirit of storm*; if sin, it says, *spirit of whoredom*; if the devil, it says, *an unclean spirit*: that we may know which particular thing is spoken of, and you may not suppose that it means the Holy Ghost; God forbid! For this name of spirit is common to many things; and every thing which has not a solid body is in a general way called spirit. Since, therefore, the devils have not such bodies, they are called spirits: but there is a great difference; for the unclean devil, when he comes upon a man’s soul (may the Lord deliver from him every soul of those who hear me, and of those who are not present), he comes like a wolf upon a sheep, ravening for blood, and ready to devour. His coming is most fierce; the sense of it most oppressive; the mind becomes darkened; his attack is an injustice also, and so is his usurpation of another’s possession. For he makes forcible use of another’s body, and another’s instruments, as if they were his own; he throws down him who stands upright (for he is akin to him who *fell from heaven* Luke 10:18); he twists the tongue and distorts the lips; foam comes instead of words; the man is filled with darkness; his eye is open, yet the soul sees not through it; and the miserable man gasps convulsively at the point of death. The devils are verily foes of men, using them foully and mercilessly.

16. Such is not the Holy Ghost; God forbid! For His doings tend the contrary way, towards what is good and salutary. First, His coming is gentle; the perception of Him is fragrant; His burden most light; beams of light and knowledge gleam forth before His coming. He comes with the bowels of a true guardian: for He comes to save, and to heal, to teach, to admonish, to strengthen, to exhort, to enlighten the mind, first of him who receives Him, and afterwards of others also, through

> him. And as a man, who being previously in darkness then suddenly beholds the sun, is enlightened in his bodily sight, and sees plainly things which he saw not, so likewise he to whom the Holy Ghost is vouchsafed, is enlightened in his soul, and sees things beyond man's sight, which he knew not; his body is on earth, yet his soul mirrors forth the heavens. He sees, like Esaias, *the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up* Isaiah 6:1; he sees, like Ezekiel, *Him who is above the Cherubim* Ezekiel 10:1; he sees like Daniel, *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands* Daniel 7:10; and the man, who is so little, beholds the beginning of the world, and knows the end of the world, and the times intervening, and the successions of kings—things which he never learned: for the True Enlightener is present with him. The man is within the walls of a house; yet the power of his knowledge reaches far and wide, and he sees even what other men are doing.

(source)

Saturday Saints- #86

October 17, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Long neglected, the letter F returns to the forefront in today's post. Our saint for today is Saint, and Pope, Felix III:

> **Pope Felix III** (died 1 March 492) was Pope from 13 March 483 to his death in 492. His repudiation of the *Henoticon* is considered the beginning of the Acacian schism

An interesting fact about him was that he was a Pope during a time when married priests could still become bishops, and one of his descendants later became pope himself. I also liked this saying attributed to him:

"Not to oppose error is to approve it; and not to defend truth is to suppress it, and, indeed, to neglect to confound evil men—when we can do it—is no less a sin than to encourage them."

The source of this is his wiki, located here.



Pope Felix III

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #93

October 19, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's rather short post begins with a Psalm of King David:

> The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
> [2] he makes me lie down in green pastures.
> He leads me beside still waters;
> [3] he restores my soul.
> He leads me in paths of righteousness
> for his name's sake.

> [4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
> I fear no evil;
> for thou art with me;
> thy rod and thy staff,
> they comfort me.

> [5] Thou preparest a table before me
> in the presence of my enemies;
> thou anointest my head with oil,
> my cup overflows.
> [6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
> all the days of my life;
> and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
> for ever.

(Psalm 23:1-6)

I sometimes wonder during which part of his life David wrote this Psalm. Before he was king? After? Was it a single event? Or perhaps a composite of different times, with different writings, that were all put together later (presumably by his son Solomon).

However it was written, it is a powerful message of hope and trust in the Lord despite the most dire of circumstances. When I find myself giving in to despair, it remains for me one of the most effective means of reassurance. Sadly, I need that reassurance more often than I would like. My life is far from a disaster, but there are certainly burdens and trials I would rather not have to endure. I have asked God for help in this, but I suspect my answer is that same as that given to Paul:

> [7] And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. [8] Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; [9] but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the

> power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

As difficult as it may be to carry on, it is comforting still to know that God's Grace is sufficient to overcome my own weakness. Even when I think I can't, I know that He can. It is a difficult thing, to explain how this affects me. On the one hand I am saddened, as I realize that things may not get better for me (at least as *I* see it). But on the other, I know that it will all turn out well in the end. Perhaps it is not something that can really be explained, but only experienced. Time will tell, I suppose.

Restoring Order

October 22, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Scott has decided to enact some basic restrictions on his blog concerning when and where women can comment. This follows after a policy Cane Caldo enacted some time ago to cut off female comments entirely. While I decided against adopting Cane's policy when he first announced it, I have been leaning in the direction Scott has taken for some time. A number of my comment sections have been completely derailed by female/male spats, and that has disrupted some otherwise good conversations. Not all did so because of malice; the disparity in communication styles was responsible for some of the disruptions. But disruptions are disruptions, and I would rather they stop.

Towards that end, I am going to start restricting certain posts to only male commenters. These will probably still be the exception, and won't encompass my weekly posts. Such posts will have prominent notices in them to warn folks. Offending comments will be deleted. Those who repeatedly break the policy will be banned. If a woman feels that she can contribute to the discussion in a way that another commenter hasn't done thus far, she can e-mail me with what she wants to say. Depending on the message, I might post it myself. However, I reserve the right to edit any such comments. And of course I will only post those comments I feel will contribute.

The first such post may come about later this week, depending on how much free time I have.

Tradition Thursday- #40

October 23, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We continue our series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. The second part of his sixteenth lecture is featured today.

> 17. Peter was not with Ananias and Sapphira when they sold their possessions, but he was present by the Spirit; *Why*, he says, *has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost* Acts 5:3? There was no accuser; there was no witness; whence knew he what had happened? *Whiles it remained was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own power? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart* ? The *unlettered* Peter, through the grace of the Spirit, learned what not even the wise men of the Greeks had known. You have the like in the case also of Elisseus. For when he had freely healed the leprosy of Naaman, Gehazi received the reward, the reward of another's achievement; and he took the money from Naaman, and bestowed it in a dark place. But the *darkness is not* hidden from the Saints. And when he came, Elisseus asked him; and like Peter, when he said, *Tell me whether you sold the land for so much* Acts 5:8? He also enquires, *Whence do you come, Gehazi* 2 Kings 5:25? Not in ignorance, but in sorrow ask I *whence do you come*? From darkness are you come, and to darkness shall you go; you have sold the cure of the leper, and the leprosy is your heritage. I, he says, have fulfilled the bidding of Him who said to me, *Freely you have received, freely give* Matthew 10:8; but you have sold this grace; receive now the condition of the sale. But what says Elisseus to him? *Went not mine heart with you*? I was here shut in by the body, but the spirit which has been given me of God saw even the things afar off, and showed me plainly what was doing elsewhere. Do you see how the Holy Ghost not only rids of ignorance, but invests with knowledge? Do you see how He enlightens men's souls?
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> 18. Esaias lived nearly a thousand years ago; and he beheld Zion *as a booth*. The city was still standing, and beautified with public places, and robed in majesty; yet he says, *Zion shall be ploughed as a field* , foretelling what is now fulfilled in our days. And observe the exactness of the prophecy; for he said, *And the daughter of Zion shall be left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers*. And now the place is filled with gardens of cucumbers. Do you see how the Holy Spirit enlightens the saints? Be not therefore carried away to other things, by the force of a common term, but keep fast the exact meaning.
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> 19. And if ever, while you have been sitting here, a thought concerning chastity or virginity has come into your mind, it has been His teaching. Has not often a maiden, already at the bridal threshold , fled away, He teaching her the doctrine of virginity? Has not often a man distinguished at court , scorned wealth and rank, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost? Has not often a young man, at the sight of beauty, closed his eyes, and fled from the sight, and escaped the

defilement? Askest thou whence this has come to pass? The Holy Ghost taught the soul of the young man. Many ways of covetousness are there in the world; yet Christians refuse possessions: wherefore? Because of the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Worthy of honour is in truth that Spirit, holy and good; and fittingly are we baptized into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A man, still clothed with a body, wrestles with many fiercest demons; and often the demon, whom many men could not master with iron bands, has been mastered by the man himself with words of prayer, through the power which is in him of the Holy Ghost; and the mere breathing of the Exorcist becomes as fire to that unseen foe. A mighty ally and protector, therefore, have we from God; a great Teacher of the Church, a mighty Champion on our behalf. Let us not be afraid of the demons, nor of the devil; for mightier is He who fights for us. Only let us open to Him our doors; *for He goes about seeking such as are worthy* and searching on whom He may confer His gifts.

20. And He is called the Comforter, because He comforts and encourages us, and *helps our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered* Romans 8:26, that is, makes intercession to God. Oftentimes a man for Christ's sake has been outraged and dishonoured unjustly; martyrdom is at hand; tortures on every side, and fire, and sword, and savage beasts, and the pit. But the Holy Ghost softly whispers to him, *Wait on the Lord , O man; what is now befalling you is a small matter, the reward will be great. Suffer a little while, and you shall be with Angels for ever. The sufferings of this present time art not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us Romans 8:18* . He portrays to the man the kingdom of heaven; He gives him a glimpse of the paradise of delight; and the martyrs, whose bodily countenances are of necessity turned to their judges, but who in spirit are already in Paradise, despise those hardships which are seen.

21. And would you be sure that by the power of the Holy Ghost the Martyrs bear their witness? The Saviour says to His disciples, *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and the magistrates, and authorities, be not anxious how you shall answer, or what you shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in that very hour, what you ought to say*. Luke 12:11-12 For it is impossible to testify as a martyr for Christ's sake, except a man testify by the Holy Ghost; for if *no man can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost* , how shall any man give his own life for Jesus' sake, but by the Holy Ghost?

22. Great indeed, and all-powerful in gifts, and wonderful, is the Holy Ghost. Consider, how many of you are now sitting here, how many souls of us are present. He is working suitably for each, and being present in the midst, beholds the temper of each, beholds also his reasoning and his conscience, and what we say, and think, and believe. Great indeed is what I have now said, and yet is it small. For consider, I pray, with mind enlightened by Him, how many Christians

there are in all this diocese, and how many in the whole province of Palestine, and carry forward your mind from this province, to the whole Roman Empire; and after this, consider the whole world; races of Persians, and nations of Indians, Garbs and Sarmatians, Gauls and Spaniards, and Moors, Libyans and Ethiopians, and the rest for whom we have no names; for of many of the nations not even the names have reached us. Consider, I pray, of each nation, Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, Solitaries, Virgins, and laity besides; and then behold their great Protector, and the Dispenser of their gifts;— how throughout the world He gives to one chastity, to another perpetual virginity, to another almsgiving, to another voluntary poverty, to another power of repelling hostile spirits. And as the light, with one touch of its radiance sheds brightness on all things, so also the Holy Ghost enlightens those who have eyes; for if any from blindness is not vouchsafed His grace, let him not blame the Spirit, but his own unbelief.

23. You have seen His power, which is in all the world; tarry now no longer upon earth, but ascend on high. Ascend, I say, in imagination even unto the first heaven, and behold there so many countless myriads of Angels. Mount up in your thoughts, if you can, yet higher; consider, I pray you, the Archangels, consider also the Spirits; consider the Virtues, consider the Principalities, consider the Powers, consider the Thrones, consider the Dominions —of all these the Comforter is the Ruler from God, and the Teacher, and the Sanctifier. Of Him Elias has need, and Elisseus, and Esaias, among men; of Him Michael and Gabriel have need among Angels. Naught of things created is equal in honour to Him: for the families of the Angels, and all their hosts assembled together, have no equality with the Holy Ghost. All these the all-excellent power of the Comforter overshadows. And they indeed are sent forth to minister Hebrews 1:14, but He searches even the deep things of God, according as the Apostle says, For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the thing of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 .

24. He preached concerning Christ in the Prophets; He wrought in the Apostles; He to this day seals the souls in Baptism. And the Father indeed gives to the Son; and the Son shares with the Holy Ghost. For it is Jesus Himself, not I, who says, *All things are delivered unto Me of My Father* Matthew 11:27; and of the Holy Ghost He says, *When He, the Spirit of Truth, shall come*, and the rest.... *He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you*. John 16:13-14 The Father through the Son, with the Holy Ghost, is the giver of all grace; the gifts of the Father are none other than those of the Son, and those of the Holy Ghost; for there is one Salvation, one Power, one Faith; One God, the Father; One Lord, His only-begotten Son; One Holy Ghost, the Comforter. And it is enough for us to know these things; but inquire not curiously into His nature or substance : for had it been written, we would have spoken of it; what is not written, let us not venture on; it is sufficient for our salvation to know, that there is Father, and Son,

and Holy Ghost.

25. This Spirit descended upon the seventy Elders in the days of Moses. (Now let not the length of the discourse, beloved, produce weariness in you: but may He the very subject of our discourse grant strength to every one, both to us who speak, and to you who listen!) This Spirit, as I was saying, came down upon the seventy Elders in the time of Moses; and this I say to you, that I may now prove, that He knows all things, and works *as He will*. 1 Corinthians 12:11 The seventy Elders were chosen; *And the Lord came down in a cloud, and took of the Spirit that was upon Moses, and put it upon the seventy Elders* ; not that the Spirit was divided, but that His grace was distributed in proportion to the vessels, and the capacity of the recipients. Now there were present sixty and eight, and they prophesied; but Eldad and Modad were not present: therefore that it might be shown that it was not Moses who bestowed the gift, but the Spirit who wrought, Eldad and Modad, who though called, had not as yet presented themselves, did also prophesy.

26. Jesus the Son of Nun, the successor of Moses, was amazed; and came to him and said, *Have you heard that Eldad and Modad are prophesying? They were called, and they came not; my lord Moses, forbid them Numbers 11:28 . I cannot forbid them,* he says, *for this grace is from Heaven; nay, so far am I from forbidding them, that I myself am thankful for it. I think not, however, that you have said this in envy; art thou jealous for my sake, because that they prophesy, and you prophesy not yet? Wait for the proper season; and oh that all the Lord's people may be prophets, whenever the Lord shall give His Spirit upon them Numbers 11:29!* saying this also prophetically, *whenever the Lord shall give*; *For as yet then He has not given it; so you have it not yet.*— Had not then Abraham this, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph? And they of old, had they it not? Nay, but the words, *whenever the Lord shall give* evidently mean *give it upon all; as yet indeed the grace is partial, then it shall be given lavishly.* And he secretly alluded to what was to happen among us on the day of Pentecost; for He Himself came down among us. He had however also come down upon many before. For it is written, *And Jesus the son of Nun was filled with a spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him*. Deuteronomy 34:9 You see the figure everywhere the same in the Old and New Testament—in the days of Moses, the Spirit was given by laying on of hands; and by laying on of hands Peter also gives the Spirit. And on you also, who art about to be baptized, shall His grace come; yet in what manner I say not, for I will not anticipate the proper season.

27. He also came down upon all righteous men and Prophets; Enos, I mean, and Enoch, and Noah, and the rest; upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for as regards Joseph, even Pharaoh perceived that he had *the Spirit of God within him*. Genesis 41:38 As to Moses, and the wonderful works wrought by the Spirit in his days, you have heard often: This Spirit Job also had, that most enduring man, and all the saints, though we repeat not all their names. He also was sent forth when

the Tabernacle was in making, and filled with wisdom the wise-hearted men who were with Bezaleel.

28. In the might of this Spirit, as we have it in the Book of Judges, Othniel judged Judges 3:10; Gideon waxed strong; Jephtha conquered ; Deborah, a woman, waged war; and Samson, so long as he did righteously, and grieved Him not, wrought deeds above man's power. And as for Samuel and David, we have it plainly in the Books of the Kingdoms, how by the Holy Ghost they prophesied themselves, and were rulers of the prophets—and Samuel was called *the Seer* 1 Samuel 9:9; and David says distinctly, *The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me* 2 Samuel 23:2, and in the Psalms, *And take not your Holy Spirit from me* , and again, *Your good Spirit shall lead me in the land of righteousness*. And as we have it in Chronicles, Azariah 2 Chronicles 15:1, in the time of King Asa, and Jahaziel in the time of King Jehoshaphat, partook of the Holy Ghost; and again, another Azariah, he who was stoned. And Ezra says, *You gave also Your good Spirit to instruct them*. But as touching Elias who was taken up, and Elisseus, those inspired and wonder-working men, it is manifest, without our saying so, that they were full of the Holy Ghost.

29. And if further a man peruse all the books of the Prophets, both of the Twelve, and of the others, he will find many testimonies concerning. the Holy Ghost; as when Micah says in the person of God, *surely I will perfect power by the Spirit the Lord* Micah 3:8; and Joel cries, *And it shall come to pass afterwards*, says God, *that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh* Joel 2:28, and the rest; and Haggai, *Because I am with you, says the Lord of Hosts* Haggai 2:4; and *My Spirit remains in the midst of you* ; and in like manner Zechariah, *But receive My words and My statutes which I command by My Spirit, to My servants the Prophets* Zechariah 1:6; and other passages.

30. Esaias too, with his majestic voice, says, *And the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him*, *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and godliness; and the Spirit of the fear of God shall fill Him* Isaiah 11:2; signifying that the Spirit is one and undivided, but His operations various. So again, *Jacob My servant*,..... *I have put My Spirit upon Him*. And again, *I will pour My Spirit upon your seed* ; and again, *And now the Lord Almighty and His Spirit has sent Me* ; and again, *This is My covenant with them, says the Lord, My Spirit which is upon you* Isaiah 59:21; and again, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me* Isaiah 61:1, and the rest; and again in his charge against the Jews, *But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit* , and *Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within them* ? Also you have in Ezekiel (if you be not now weary of listening), what has already been quoted, *And the Spirit fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus says the Lord*. Ezekiel 11:5 But the words, *fell upon me* we must understand in a good sense, that is *lovingly;* and as Jacob, when he had found Joseph, fell upon his neck; as also in the Gospels, the loving father, on seeing his son who had returned from his wandering, *had compassion,*

and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And again in Ezekiel, *And he brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldæa, to them of the captivity*. Ezekiel 11:24 And other texts you heard before, in what was said about Baptism; *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you* , and the rest; *a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you* ; and then immediately, *And I will put My Spirit within you*. And again, *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord* Ezekiel 37:1 .

31. He endued with wisdom the soul of Daniel, that young as he was he should become a judge of Elders. The chaste Susanna was condemned as a wanton; there was none to plead her cause; for who was to deliver her from the rulers? She was led away to death, she was now in the hands of the executioners. But her Helper was at hand, the Comforter, the Spirit who sanctifies every rational nature. Come hither to me, He says to Daniel; young though thou be, convict old men infected with the sins of youth; for it is written, *God raised up the Holy Spirit upon a young stripling* ; and nevertheless, (to pass on quickly,) by the sentence of Daniel that chaste lady was saved. We bring this forward as a testimony; for this is not the season for expounding. Nebuchadnezzar also knew that the Holy Spirit was in Daniel; for he says to him, *O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, of whom I know, that the Holy Spirit of God is in you*. Daniel 4:9 One thing he said truly, and one falsely; for that he had the Holy Spirit was true, but he was not the *master of the magicians*, for he was no magician, but was wise through the Holy Ghost. And before this also, he interpreted to him the vision of the Image, which he who had seen it himself knew not; for he says, Tell me the vision, which I who saw it know not. You see the power of the Holy Ghost; that which they who saw it, know not, they who saw it not, know and interpret.

32. And indeed it were easy to collect very many texts out of the Old Testament, and to discourse more largely concerning the Holy Ghost. But the time is short; and we must be careful of the proper length of the lecture. Wherefore, being for the present content awhile with passages from the Old Testament, we will, if it be God’s pleasure, proceed in the next Lecture to the remaining texts out of the New Testament. And may the God of peace, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, count all of you worthy of His spiritual and heavenly gifts:— To whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Divide And Conquer

October 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I am currently working on the first of my “segregated” posts, which I hinted of here. My hope is to upload it by the end of tomorrow, if not sooner. Now, my original plan was to simply restrict it to male commenters. However, based on a suggestion by one commenter, I will instead create *two* separate posts. They will be identical in subject matter. The first post will be restricted to male commenters, and the second will be restricted to female commenters. Comments which violate the policy *will* be deleted. Those who transgress repeatedly will be banned.

Furthermore, I want commenters to stick discussing the post and the comments in *their* specific post. They are not to respond to comments in the other post. Act as if the other post doesn’t exist. Personal attacks across the posts will *not* be tolerated. Those who have questions may use this post for that purpose. Anyone who feels that they are being unfairly treated is invited to contact me via e-mail. Comments to voice grievances will again not be tolerated. We will see how this experiment goes before I decide to commit to anything in particular.

Filtering For Non-Compliance *Men Only*

October 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*This is the first of my dual or split posts, one for male commenters and one for female commenters. As noted earlier, this is something of an experiment. Further, I used a less than stellar post to test everything out. This particular post is for the men. The next one will be for women.*]

In my post Good Guy's Don't Exist, commenter Maea related stories she had heard first hand from women who had tried online dating. In particular, that if they explained they were "waiting for marriage" men would call them "prudes." She later clarified her earlier statement with this:

> I believe it's Catholic Match that has a 5-question litmus test. One of the questions pertains to maintaining chastity until marriage. The answers are yes or no. I've talked to people IRL who've reported difficulty in getting dates when all of their responses are in line with Catholic teaching.
>
> That is, unless they are really, really good looking. But usually their respondent is the same.

At first, I had wondered how often this occurs. However, what I would like to explore with this post is not so much the frequency of that particular behavior but the reason for it. [I have addressed the final point in her comment before, and might do so again at some point. For the moment it is outside the scope of this post.]

I am curious why men would look at a Christian dating/marriage site (and a Catholic one focused on marriage in particular) and seek women who wouldn't live up to Christian standards of conduct. Or, if finding those who did, would try and shame them for it. While Maea was talking only about Catholic Match, I would expect to see this behavior elsewhere, and so would include this post to cover all nominally Christian dating/marriage sites.

I can understand the desire for sex certainly, but why would they look towards a Christian dating site for that? Wouldn't a secular one be a better choice? Assuming, of course, they are only interested in sex. If they are looking for more and actually want to get married, that again raises the question of why they are going about it that way. I guess what bothers me is this: why would you go on to a site which is supposedly for people with certain values, and then seek those without such values, and attack those who do? Otherwise stated, why marry a woman who only purports to be Christian, or is only a "so-so" Christian?

Here are a few things that I have thought of, so far (in no particular order and not mutually exclusive):

- This behavior is mostly irrational. The men who do this aren't really thinking through the inherent hypocrisy. It really isn't conscious rationalization but habit, borne out of

living essentially secular lives in a secular age.

- These men don't mind marrying "so-so" Christian women because they themselves are "so-so" Christian men. They don't see any contradiction in their actions because they pick and choose what to believe. In the Catholic Church these kinds of people are called "Cafeteria Catholics." I suppose "Buffet Christians" would also work.
- For whatever reason these men feel they need to marry a Christian woman, but of course don't want to actually carry out a proper courtship process. Perhaps their family expects its. Or maybe they think they would make better mothers or something.
- Related to that, perhaps these men think that such a woman represents a lesser divorce threat to them. For Catholic Match in particular, men who "call out" women as "prudes" are perhaps hoping to find women who might sleep with them before the "I do" but won't divorce them.
- Lets not forget the effects of Original Sin, of course. Concupiscence is a constant thorn in our side, and one finds its way into the recesses of our mind quite easily. Given the power of the male sex drive, making excuses for it is relatively easy. So setting aside one particular part of teaching/doctrine wouldn't be intellectually trying.
- They could also be caught up in the whole "try before you buy" mentality that is quite prevalent right now. Of course, that mentality isn't a new one, but this age certainly is embroiled in it.

I invite my male readers to offer their own thoughts on what might be involved here.

Again, this post is for male commenters only. Violating comments will be deleted.

Filtering For Non-Compliance *Women Only*

October 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*This is the first of my dual or split posts, one for male commenters and one for female commenters. As noted earlier, this is something of an experiment. Further, I used a less than stellar post to test everything out. This particular post is for the women. The previous one will be for men.*]

In my post Good Guy's Don't Exist, commenter Maea related stories she had heard first hand from women who had tried online dating. In particular, that if they explained they were "waiting for marriage" men would call them "prudes." She later clarified her earlier statement with this:

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>
> That is, unless they are really, really good looking. But usually their respondent is the same.

My first reaction was to wonder how often this occurs. So for this post I would like to hear from my female commenters who have tried out online dating in the past. What are you experiences with this phenomenon? How frequent was it? How did you react? Any difference between secular or Christian sites? If you have heard from other women about this matter, please feel free to mention what you know in this post.

Additionally, was there any difference in this between online dating and "real-world" dating? Was this more frequent offline, or less?

Again, this post is for female commenters only. Violating comments will be deleted.

Saturday Saints- #87

October 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's letter for a saint is the letter "G." This gives us today's saint, St. Gregory of Nazianzus:

> **Gregory of Nazianzus** (Greek: Γρηγόριος ὁ Ναζιανζηνός *Grēgorios ho Nazianzēnos*; c. 329 – 25 January 390), also known as **Gregory the Theologian** or **Gregory Nazianzen**, was a 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople. He is widely considered the most accomplished rhetorical stylist of the patristic age. As a classically trained orator and philosopher he infused Hellenism into the early church, establishing the paradigm of Byzantine theologians and church officials.
>
> Gregory made a significant impact on the shape of Trinitarian theology among both Greek- and Latin-speaking theologians, and he is remembered as the "Trinitarian Theologian". Much of his theological work continues to influence modern theologians, especially in regard to the relationship among the three Persons of the Trinity. Along with the brothers Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, he is known as one of the Cappadocian Fathers.
>
> Gregory is a saint in both Eastern and Western Christianity. In the Roman Catholic Church he is numbered among the Doctors of the Church; in Eastern Orthodoxy and the Eastern Catholic Churches he is revered as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs, along with Basil the Great and John Chrysostom.

Much more about this influential and important saint can be found at his wiki, located here.



St. Gregory the Theologian

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #94

October 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage in today's post is inspired by this post over at Scott's new blog. During the excellent discussion Deep Strength quotes a verse from the Book of Sirach. I wanted to include the whole passage, which concerns advice on how to deal with women:

> Do not be jealous of the wife of your bosom,
> and do not teach her an evil lesson to your own hurt.
> [2] Do not give yourself to a woman
> so that she gains mastery over your strength.
> [3] Do not go to meet a loose woman,
> lest you fall into her snares.
> [4] Do not associate with a woman singer,
> lest you be caught in her intrigues.
> [5] Do not look intently at a virgin,
> lest you stumble and incur penalties for her.
> [6] Do not give yourself to harlots
> lest you lose your inheritance.
> [7] Do not look around in the streets of a city,
> nor wander about in its deserted sections.
> [8] Turn away your eyes from a shapely woman,
> and do not look intently at beauty belonging to another;
> many have been misled by a woman's beauty,
> and by it passion is kindled like a fire.
> [9] Never dine with another man's wife,
> nor revel with her at wine;
> lest your heart turn aside to her,
> and in blood you be plunged into destruction.

(Sirach 9:1-9)

Scott's post focused on the visual, and it is no coincidence that Ben Sira has several warnings about "looking" as well. Men are visual creatures, and sight along can stir up passion to blind reason. Now, it is not a sin to look (alone), but that look can quickly escalate beyond merely a gaze. Hence, it is important that we not only learn to control ourselves, but also avoid instances of temptation as well. If we avoid the temptation in the first place, then we avoid the possibility of that event bringing us into sin in the first place.

There was a comment of Scott's that I wanted to address from that post. He said this:

> I once heard a Catholic priest on the radio say that if a man lusts after his *own* wife, he is committing the sin in this text. If I stop lusting after my own wife, just

> shoot me.

Now, my understanding of Catholic theology is still not where I would like it, but from what I do understand the sin of lust is *disordered* passion. Passion itself, if properly ordered, is not wrong. But when it strays from what God intended then it does become disordered and then it becomes the sin of lust. As a general rule, your wife making you passionate is not a sin. In fact, it is quite far from it, as Proverbs indicates:

> 18 Let your fountain be blessed,
> and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
> 19 a lovely hind, a graceful doe.
> Let her affection fill you at all times with delight,
> be infatuated always with her love.

(Proverbs 5:18-19)

From what I recall, disordered passion within marriage, aka, lust, would involve a deliberately selfish use of passion that would deny the other spouse the enjoyment of the conjugal act. Basically to intentionally try and deprive your spouse of pleasure and intimacy. That is when passion becomes disordered- at least, I'm fairly sure that is how it works. All of which means that a healthy passion towards one's wife is no sin at all. In fact, it is what good intended, and thus a Good Thing.

Finally, on the subject of self control, St. Paul had this to say:

> 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication;
> 4 that each one of you know how to control your own body[b] in holiness and
> honor, 5 not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no
> one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an
> avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and
> solemnly warned you. 7 For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness.

(1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

I left that footnote in because another interpretation of that passage could mean "*how to take a wife for himself*." But in a sense they are the same, because self-control can be exercised in different ways. For some it might be total abstention, and for others to direct our passion towards its proper place: within the borders of holy matrimony. For neither is an impure state, unless our thoughts make it so.

Tradition Thursday- #41

October 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As Thursday has come again, we feature another Tradition Thursday post highlighting St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. Our post for today covers the first part of his 17th Lecture:

> 1 Corinthians 12:8
>
> For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, etc.
>
> 1. In the preceding Lecture, according to our ability we set before you, our beloved hearers, some small portion of the testimonies concerning the Holy Ghost; and on the present occasion, we will, if it be God's pleasure, proceed to treat, as far as may be, of those which remain out of the New Testament: and as then to keep within due limit of your attention we restrained our eagerness (for there is no satiety in discoursing concerning the Holy Ghost), so now again we must say but a small part of what remains. For now, as well as then, we candidly own that our weakness is overwhelmed by the multitude of things written. Neither today will we use the subtleties of men, for that is unprofitable; but merely call to mind what comes from the divine Scriptures; for this is the safest course, according to the blessed Apostle Paul, who says, *Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual*. 1 Corinthians 2:13 Thus we act like travellers or voyagers, who having one goal to a very long journey, though hastening on with eagerness, yet by reason of human weakness are wont to touch in their way at various cities or harbours.
>
> 2. Therefore though our discourses concerning the Holy Ghost are divided, yet He Himself is undivided, being one and the same. For as in speaking concerning the Father, at one time we taught how He is the one only Cause ; and at another, how He is called Father , or Almighty ; and at another, how He is the Creator of the universe; and yet the division of the Lectures made no division of the Faith, in that He, the Object of devotion, both was and is One—and again, as in discoursing concerning the Only-begotten Son of God we taught at one time concerning His Godhead , and at another concerning His Manhood , dividing into many discourses the doctrines concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, yet preaching undivided faith towards Him—so now also though the Lectures concerning the Holy Spirit are divided, yet we preach faith undivided towards Him. For it is one and the Self-same Spirit who *divides* His gifts *to every man severally as He will* 1 Corinthians 12:11, Himself the while remaining undivided. For the Comforter is not different from the Holy Ghost, but one and the self-same, called by various names; who lives and subsists, and speaks, and works; and of all rational natures made by God through Christ, both of Angels and of men, He is the Sanctifier.

3. But lest any from lack of learning, should suppose from the different titles of the Holy Ghost that these are various spirits, and not one and the self-same, which alone there is, therefore the Catholic Church guarding you beforehand has delivered to you in the profession of the faith, that you *believe in one Holy Ghost the Comforter, who spoke by the Prophets;* that you might know, that though His names be many, the Holy Spirit is but one—of which names, we will now rehearse to you a few out of many.

4. He is called the Spirit, according to the Scripture just now read, *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom*. 1 Corinthians 12:8 He is called the Spirit of Truth, as the Saviour says, *When He, the Spirit of Truth, has come*. John 16:13 He is called also the Comforter, as He said, *For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you*. But that He is one and the same, though called by different titles, is shown plainly from the following. For that the Holy Spirit and the Comforter are the same, is declared in those words, *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost* John 14:26; and that the Comforter is the same as the Spirit of Truth, is declared, when it is said, *And I will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth* ; and again, *But when the Comforter has come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth*. And He is called the Spirit of God, according as it is written, *And I saw the Spirit of God descending* John 1:32; and again, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. Romans 8:14 He is called also the Spirit of the Father, as the Saviour says, *For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you* Matthew 10:20; and again Paul says, *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father*, and the rest;… *that He would grant you to be strengthened by His Spirit*. Ephesians 3:14-16 He is also called the Spirit of the Lord, according to that which Peter spoke, *Why is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord* Acts 5:9? He is called also the Spirit of God and Christ, as Paul writes, *But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*. Romans 8:9 He is called also the Spirit of the Son of God, as it is said, *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son*. Galatians 4:6 He is called also the Spirit of Christ, as it is written, *Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify* ; and again, *Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ* Philippians 1:19 .

5. You will find many other titles of the Holy Ghost besides. Thus He is called the Spirit of Holiness, as it is written, *According to the Spirit of Holiness*. Romans 1:4 He is also called the Spirit of adoption, as Paul says, *For you received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*. He is also called the Spirit of revelation, as it is written, *May give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him*. Ephesians 1:17 He is also called the Spirit of promise, as the same Paul

says, *In whom you also after that you believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*. He is also called the Spirit of grace, as when he says again, *And has done despite to the Spirit of grace*. Hebrews 10:29 And by many other such-like titles is He named. And you heard plainly in the foregoing Lecture, that in the Psalms He is called at one time *the good Spirit* , and at another the *princely Spirit* ; and in Esaias He was styled *the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel, and might, of knowledge, and of godliness, and of the fear of God* Isaiah 11:2. By all which Scriptures both those before and those now alleged, it is established, that though the titles of the Holy Ghost be different, He is one and the same; living and subsisting, and always present together with the Father and the Son ; not uttered or breathed from the mouth and lips of the Father or the Son, nor dispersed into the air, but having a real substance , Himself speaking, and working, and dispensing, and sanctifying; even as the Economy of salvation which is to usward from the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, is inseparable and harmonious and one, as we have also said before. For I wish you to keep in mind those things which were lately spoken, and to know clearly that there is not one Spirit in the Law and the Prophets, and another in the Gospels and Apostles; but that it is One and the Self-same Holy Spirit, which both in the Old and in the New Testament, spoke the divine Scriptures.

6. This is the Holy Ghost, who came upon the Holy Virgin Mary; for since He who was conceived was Christ the Only-begotten, the *power of the Highest overshadowed her*, and the *Holy Ghost came upon her* Luke 1:35, and sanctified her, that she might be able to receive Him, *by whom all things were made*. John 1:3 But I have no need of many words to teach you that generation was without defilement or taint, for you have learned it. It is Gabriel who says to her, I am the herald of what shall be done, but have no part in the work. Though an Archangel, I know my place; and though I joyfully bid you All hail, yet how you shall bring forth, is not of any grace of mine. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God* Luke 1:35 .

7. This Holy Spirit wrought in Elisabeth; for He recognises not virgins only, but matrons also, so that their marriage be lawful. *And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost* Luke 1:41, and prophesied; and that noble hand-maiden says of her own Lord, *And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me* ? For Elisabeth counted herself blessed. Filled with this Holy Spirit, Zacharias also, the father of John, prophesied , telling how many good things the Only-begotten should procure, and that John should be His harbinger through baptism. By this Holy Ghost also it was revealed to just Symeon, *that he should not see death, till he had seen the Lord’s Christ* Luke 2:26-35; and he received Him in his arms, and bore clear testimony in the Temple concerning Him.

8. And John also, who had been filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb , was for this cause sanctified, that he might baptize the Lord; not giving

the Spirit himself, but preaching glad tidings of Him who gives the Spirit. For he says, *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that comes after me*, and the rest; *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. Matthew 3:11 But wherefore with fire? Because the descent of the Holy Ghost was in fiery tongues; concerning which the Lord says joyfully, *I have come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled* Luke 12:49?

9. This Holy Ghost came down when the Lord was baptized, that the dignity of Him who was baptized might not be hidden; as John says, *But He which sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whomsoever you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Ghost*. John 1:33 But see what says the Gospel; *the heavens were opened*; they were opened because of the dignity of Him who descended; for, *lo*, he says, *the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and lighting upon Him* Matthew 3:16: that is, with voluntary motion in His descent. For it was fit, as some have interpreted, that the primacy and first-fruits of the Holy Spirit promised to the baptized should be conferred upon the manhood of the Saviour, who is the giver of such grace. But perhaps He came down in the form of a dove, as some say, to exhibit a figure of that dove who is pure and innocent and undefiled, and also helps the prayers for the children she has begotten, and for forgiveness of sins ; even as it was emblematically foretold that Christ should be thus manifested in the appearance of His eyes; for in the Canticles she cries concerning the Bridegroom, and says, *Your eyes are as doves by the rivers of water*.

10. Of this dove, the dove of Noe, according to some, was in part a figure. For as in his time by means of wood and of water there came salvation to themselves, and the beginning of a new generation, and the dove returned to him towards evening with an olive branch; thus, say they, the Holy Ghost also descended upon the true Noe, the Author of the second birth, who draws together into one the wills of all nations, of whom the various dispositions of the animals in the ark were a figure:— Him at whose coming the spiritual wolves feed with the lambs, in whose Church the calf, and the lion, and the ox, feed in the same pasture, as we behold to this day the rulers of the world guided and taught by Churchmen. The spiritual dove therefore, as some interpret, came down at the season of His baptism, that He might show that it is He who by the wood of the Cross saves them who believe, He who at eventide should grant salvation through His death.

11. And these things perhaps should be otherwise explained; but now again we must hear the words of the Saviour Himself concerning the Holy Ghost. For He says, *Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. John 3:5 And that this grace is from the Father, He thus states, *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*. Luke 11:13 And that we ought to worship God in the Spirit, He shows thus, *But the hour comes and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the*

Father in Spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. John 4:23 And again, *But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils* Matthew 12:28; and immediately afterwards, *Therefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come*. And again He says, *And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him; but you know Him, for He abides with you, and shall be in you*. John 14:16 And again He says, *These things have I spoken unto you being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said unto you*. And again He says, *But when the Comforter has come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me*. And again the Saviour says, *For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you*. …. *And when He has come, He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment* ; and afterwards again, *I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth has come, He will declare unto you all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak, and He shall announce unto you the things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall announce it unto you. All things that the Father has are mine; therefore said I, That He shall take of Mine, and shall announce it unto you*. I have read to you now the utterances of the Only-begotten Himself, that you may not give heed to men’s words.

12. The fellowship of this Holy Spirit He bestowed on the Apostles; for it is written, *And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and says unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained*. John 20:22 This was the second time He breathed on man (His first breath having been stifled through wilful sins); that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *He went up breathing upon your face, and delivering you from affliction*. But whence went He up? From Hades; for thus the Gospel relates, that then after His resurrection He breathed on them. But though He bestowed His grace then, He was to lavish it yet more bountifully; and He says to them, I am ready to give it even now, but the vessel cannot yet hold it; for a while therefore receive ye as much grace as you can bear; and look forward for yet more; *but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be clothed with power from on high*. Luke 24:39 *Receive* it in part now; then, you shall wear it in its fullness. For he who receives, often possesses the gift but in part; but he

> who is clothed, is completely enfolded by his robe. *Fear not,* He says, *the weapons and darts of the devil; for you shall bear with you the power of the Holy Ghost.* But remember what was lately said, that the Holy Ghost is not divided, but only the grace which is given by Him.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #88

October 31, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter H is the sponsor of today's post. Hence, our saint for today is St. and Pope Hilarius (no joke about that name):

> **Pope Hilarius** (died 28 February 468) was Pope from 19 November 461 to his death in 468.
>
> Hilarius was born in Sardinia. As archdeacon under Pope Leo I, he fought vigorously for the rights of the Roman See and vigorously opposed the condemnation of Flavian of Constantinople at the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 to settle the question of Eutyches. According to a letter to the Empress Pulcheria collected among the letters of Leo I, Hilarius apologized for not delivering to her the pope's letter after the synod, but owing to Dioscurus of Alexandria, who tried to hinder his going either to Rome or to Constantinople, he had great difficulty in making his escape in order to bring to the pontiff the news of the result of the council.
>
> …
>
> Hilarius erected several churches and other buildings in Rome, for which the *Liber Pontificalis,* the main source for information about Hilarius, praises him. Two oratories in the baptistery of the Lateran, one in honor of St. John the Baptist, the other of St. John the Apostle, to whom he attributed his safe escape from the Council of Ephesus, are due to him, thus satisfying the question as to which Saints John the Lateran had been dedicated. He also erected a chapel of the Holy Cross in the baptistery, convents, two public baths, and libraries near the Basilica of St. Lawrence outside the Walls, in which church he was buried.
>
> His feast day is celebrated on 17 November or 28 February.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



St. Hilarius

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #95

November 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is All Saints Day, and so the selections on today will focus on some of the Saints mentioned in the New Testament, and their service to God. We begin with some of the Apostles:

> [18] As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. [19] And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” [20] Immediately they left their nets and followed him. [21] As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. [22] Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

(Matthew 4:18-22)

Peter, of course, was the Chief Steward of the Lord (Keeper of the Keys), and went on to become first Pope. St. Andrew, known as the First-Called, went on to found the See of Byzantium (latter known as Constantinople). James was the first of the Apostles to die a martyr, as he was killed by the sword at the order of King Herod (Acts 12:3). Saint John was the only Apostle to not be martyred, and after being entrusted with the Theotokos finished his days in Ephesus.

> [9] As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.
>
> [10] And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. [11] When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” [12] But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. [13] Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

(Matthew 9:13)

Here St. Matthew becomes a disciple of the Lord. He is credited with being one of the 4 evangelist writers of the gospels. Being a publican, he was probably one of the few who could read and write (and several languages at that).

Then we have St. Thomas:

> [24] But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”
>
> [26] A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them.

> Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” [27] Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” [28] Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” [29] Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

(John 20:24-29)

Thomas, after he stopped doubting, was recognized by tradition as having traveled east, preaching all the way to India. He is credited with founding the Syro-Malabar church.

Now for a few non-Apostles:

> Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, [2] as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, [3] and Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

(Luke 8:1-3)

Here we have St. Mary Magdalene, St. Joanna and St. Susanna. All three served the Lord by ministering to him and his disciples during his time among us. They also were prepared to take care of his body after the Crucifixion as well.

> [32] Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. [33] With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. [34] There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. [35] They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. [36] There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”). [37] He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

(Acts 4:32-37)

St. Barnabas was a major evangelist, helping Paul spread the Gospel. His first appearance in Scripture comes from a gesture of charity on his part.

> Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. [2] And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. [3] Therefore, friends, select from among

> yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom
> we may appoint to this task, [4] while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to
> prayer and to serving the word." [5] What they said pleased the whole community,
> and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with
> Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of
> Antioch. [6] They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid
> their hands on them.
>
> [7] The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased
> greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the
> faith.

(Acts 6:1-7)

This passage mentions a number of saints, with St. Stephen being the most prominent. He was the first Christian martyr, for although he was originally called to carry out ministerial work he soon was evangelizing. This drew the ire of the Sanhedrin, which stoned him. St. Phillip was also a prominent evangelist, and besides helping convert the Samaritans also baptized an Ethiopian eunuch.

Now we have St. Tabitha, or Dorcas:

> [36] Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is
> Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. [37] At that time she
> became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs.
> [38] Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent
> two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." [39] So Peter
> got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room
> upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other
> clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. [40] Peter put all of them
> outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said,
> "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. [41] He
> gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he
> showed her to be alive. [42] This became known throughout Joppa, and many
> believed in the Lord. [43] Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain
> Simon, a tanner.

(Acts 9:36-43)

Dorcas served the Lord by serving others.

I could keep going a while, so I will stop with wo last saints deserve mentioning:

> After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. [2] There he found a Jew named
> Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife
> Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see
> them, [3] and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they
> worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. [4] Every sabbath he would

> argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

(Acts 18:1-4)

St. Priscilla and St. Aquila are a classic example of how much a married couple can accomplish when working harmoniously together. The two of them helped run an early Christian community (what the Catholic Church refers to as a parish), worked with St. Paul in evangelizing, corrected and instructed Apollos and were overall a boon to the Church.

Tradition Thursday- #42

November 6, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today we resume the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. The second part of his 17th lecture is featured for today:

> 13. Jesus therefore went up into heaven, and fulfilled the promise. For He said to them, *I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter*. John 14:16 So they were sitting, looking for the coming of the Holy Ghost; *and when the day of Pentecost was fully come*, here, in this city of Jerusalem,— (for this honour also belongs to us ; and we speak not of the good things which have happened among others, but of those which have been vouchsafed among ourselves,)— on the day of Pentecost, I say, they were sitting, and the Comforter came down from heaven, the Guardian and Sanctifier of the Church, the Ruler of souls, the Pilot of the tempest-tossed, who leads the wanderers to the light, and presides over the combatants, and crowns the victors.
>
> 14. But He came down to clothe the Apostles with power, and to baptize them; for the Lord says, *you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*. Acts 1:5 This grace was not in part, but His power was in full perfection; for as he who plunges into the waters and is baptized is encompassed on all sides by the waters, so were they also baptized completely by the Holy Ghost. The water however flows round the outside only, but the Spirit baptizes also the soul within, and that completely. And wherefore do you wonder? Take an example from matter; poor indeed and common, yet useful for the simpler sort. If the fire passing in through the mass of the iron makes the whole of it fire, so that what was cold becomes burning and what was black is made bright—if fire which is a body thus penetrates and works without hindrance in iron which is also a body, why wonder that the Holy Ghost enters into the very inmost recesses of the soul?
>
> 15. And lest men should be ignorant of the greatness of the mighty gift coming down to them, there sounded as it were a heavenly trumpet, For *suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind* Acts 2:2, signifying the presence of Him who was to grant power unto men to seize with violence the kingdom of God; that both their eyes might see the fiery tongues, and their ears hear the sound. *And it filled all the house where they were sitting*; for the house became the vessel of the spiritual water; as the disciples sat within, the whole house was filled. Thus they were entirely baptized according to the promise, and invested soul and body with a divine garment of salvation. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. They partook of fire, not of burning but of saving fire; of fire which consumes the thorns of sins, but gives lustre to the soul. This is now coming upon you also, and that to strip away and consume your sins

which are like thorns, and to brighten yet more that precious possession of your souls, and to give you grace; for He gave it then to the Apostles. And He sat upon them in the form of fiery tongues, that they might crown themselves with new and spiritual diadems by fiery tongues upon their heads. A fiery sword barred of old the gates of Paradise; a fiery tongue which brought salvation restored the gift.

16. *And they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance*. The Galilean Peter or Andrew spoke Persian or Median. John and the rest of the Apostles spoke every tongue to those of Gentile extraction; for not in our time have multitudes of strangers first begun to assemble here from all quarters, but they have done so since that time. What teacher can be found so great as to teach men all at once things which they have not learned? So many years are they in learning by grammar and other arts to speak only Greek well; nor yet do all speak this equally well; the Rhetorician perhaps succeeds in speaking well, and the Grammarian sometimes not well, and the skilful Grammarian is ignorant of the subjects of philosophy. But the Holy Spirit taught them many languages at once, languages which in all their life they never knew. This is in truth vast wisdom, this is power divine. What a contrast of their long ignorance in time past to their sudden, complete and varied and unaccustomed exercise of these languages!

17. The multitude of the hearers was confounded—it was a second confusion, in the room of that first evil one at Babylon. For in that confusion of tongues there was division of purpose, because their thought was at enmity with God; but here minds were restored and united, because the object of interest was godly. The means of falling were the means of recovery. Wherefore they marvelled, saying Acts 2:8, *How hear we them speaking*? No marvel if you be ignorant; for even Nicodemus was ignorant of the coming of the Spirit, and to him it was said, *The Spirit breathes where it lists, and you hear the voice thereof, but canst not tell whence it comes, and whither it goes* ; but if, even though I hear His voice, I know not whence he comes, how can I explain, what He is Himself in substance?

18. *But others mocking said, They are full of new wine* Acts 2:13, and they spoke truly though in mockery. For in truth the wine was new, even the grace of the New Testament; but this new wine was from a spiritual Vine, which had oftentimes ere this borne fruit in Prophets, and had budded in the New Testament. For as in things sensible, the vine ever remains the same, but bears new fruits in its seasons, so also the self-same Spirit continuing what He is, as He had often wrought in Prophets, now manifested a new and marvellous work. For though His grace had come before to the Fathers also, yet here it came exuberantly; for formerly men only partook of the Holy Ghost, but now they were baptized completely.

19. But Peter who had the Holy Ghost, and who knew what he possessed, says, *Men of Israel*, you who preach Joel, but know not the things which are written,

these men are not drunken as you suppose. Drunken they are, not however as you suppose, but according to that which is written, *They shall be drunken with the fatness of your house; and you shall make them drink of the torrents of your pleasure*. They are drunken, with a sober drunkenness, deadly to sin and life-giving to the heart, a drunkenness contrary to that of the body; for this last causes forgetfulness even of what was known, but that bestows the knowledge even of what was not known. They are drunken, for they have drunk the wine of the spiritual vine, which says, *I am the vine and you are the branches*. John 15:5 But if you are not persuaded by me, understand what I tell you from the very time of the day; for *it is the third hour of the day*. For He who, as Mark relates, was crucified at the third hour, now at the third hour sent down His grace. For His grace is not other than the Spirit's grace, but He who was then crucified, who also gave the promise, made good that which He promised. And if you would receive a testimony also, *Listen*, he says: *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass after this, says God, I will pour forth of My Spirit Joel 2:28 — (and this word, I will pour forth, implied a rich gift; for God gives not the Spirit by measure, for the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand John 3:34-35; and He has given Him the power also of bestowing the grace of the All-holy Spirit on whomsoever He will)— I will pour forth of My Spirit unto all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and afterwards, Yea, and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy Joel 2:29 .* The Holy Ghost is no respecter of persons; for He seeks not dignities, but piety of soul. Let neither the rich be puffed up, nor the poor dejected, but only let each prepare himself for reception of the Heavenly gift.

20. We have said much today, and perchance you are weary of listening; yet more still remains. And in truth for the doctrine of the Holy Ghost there were need of a third lecture; and of many besides. But we must have your indulgence on both points. For as the Holy Festival of Easter is now at hand we have this day lengthened our discourse and yet we had not room to bring before you all the testimonies from the New Testament which we ought. For many passages are still to come from the Acts of the Apostles in which the grace of the Holy Ghost wrought mightily in Peter and in all the Apostles together; many also from the Catholic Epistles, and the fourteen Epistles of Paul; out of all which we will now endeavour to gather a few, like flowers from a large meadow, merely by way of remembrance.

21. For in the power of the Holy Ghost, by the will of Father and Son, Peter stood with the Eleven, and lifting up his voice, (according to the text, *Lift up your voice with strength, you that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem* Isaiah 40:9), captured in the spiritual net of his words, *about three thousand souls*. So great was the grace which wrought in all the Apostles together, that, out of the Jews, those crucifiers of Christ, this great number believed, and were baptized in the Name of

Christ, and *continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and in the prayers*. Acts 2:42 And again in the same power of the Holy Ghost, *Peter and John went up into the Temple at the hour of prayer, which was the ninth hour* , and in the Name of Jesus healed the man at the Beautiful gate, who had been lame from his mother's womb for forty years; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken, *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart*. Isaiah 35:6 And thus, as they captured in the spiritual net of their doctrine five thousand believers at once, so they confuted the misguided rulers of the people and chief priests, and that, not through their own wisdom, for *they were unlearned and ignorant men* Acts 4:13, but through the mighty power of the Holy Ghost; for it is written, *Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said to them*. So great also was the grace of the Holy Ghost, which wrought by means of the Twelve Apostles in them who believed, that *they were of one heart and of one soul* , and their enjoyment of their goods was common, the possessors piously offering the prices of their possessions, and no one among them wanting anything; while Ananias and Sapphira, who attempted to lie to the Holy Ghost, underwent their befitting punishment.

22. *And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people*. Acts 5:12 And so great was the spiritual grace shed around the Apostles, that gentle as they were, they were the objects of dread; for *of the rest dared no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them; and multitudes were added of those who believed on the Lord, both of men and women*; and the streets were filled with the sick on their beds and couches, *that as Peter passed by, at least his shadow might overshadow some of them*. And *the multitude also of the cities round about came* unto this holy Jerusalem, *bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one* in this power of the Holy Ghost.

23. Again, after the Twelve Apostles had been cast into prison by the chief priests for preaching Christ, and had been marvellously delivered from it at night by an Angel, and were brought before them in the judgment hall from the Temple, they fearlessly rebuked them in their discourse to them concerning Christ, and added this, that *God has also given His Holy Spirit to them that obey Him*. And when they had been scourged, they went their way rejoicing, and ceased not to *teach and preach Jesus as the Christ* Acts 5:42 .

24. And it was not in the Twelve Apostles only that the grace of the Holy Spirit wrought, but also in the first-born children of this once barren Church, I mean the seven Deacons; for these also were chosen, as it is written, being *full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom*. Of whom Stephen, rightly so named , the first fruits of the Martyrs, a man *full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, wrought great wonders and miracles among the people*, and vanquished those who disputed with him; *for they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke*. But when he was maliciously accused and brought to the judgment hall, he was radiant with angelic brightness; for *all they who sat in the council, looking*

> *steadfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an Angel*. And having by his wise defence confuted the Jews, those *stiffnecked men, uncircumcised in heart and ears, ever resisting the Holy Ghost* , he beheld *the heavens opened*, and saw *the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God*. He saw Him, not by his own power, but, as the Divine Scripture says, *being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God*.

(Source)

Note To Self #138

November 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

- Do *not* name your daughter after a virtue.

Especially a cardinal virtue. If you give her a name like Chastity or Grace it is just asking for trouble. Names can and will doom children. Or at least that is how it seems to work as far as I can tell. Nearly all of instances of virtue named women I have met haven't lived up to that virtue whatsoever.

As for why this is the case, perhaps it is because Churchians are the most apt to so name their children these days. And given their attitudes and theology, we shouldn't be surprised that many of their children end poorly.

On an unrelated note, I have been working on a major post idea lately. However, I've decided to break it up into several different posts instead. The first post will act as a sort of foundation for the follow-ups. I hope to have it up by the end of the weekend.

Saturday Saints- #89

November 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today belongs to the letter I. Thus, our saint is Saint Isidore of Seville:

> **Saint Isidore of Seville** (Latin: *Isidorus Hispalensis*; c. 560 – 4 April 636) served as Archbishop of Seville for more than three decades and is considered, as the 19th-century historian Montalembert put it in an oft-quoted phrase, "The last scholar of the ancient world".
>
> At a time of disintegration of classical culture, and aristocratic violence and illiteracy, he was involved in the conversion of the royal Visigothic Arians to Catholicism, both assisting his brother Leander of Seville, and continuing after his brother's death. He was influential in the inner circle of Sisebut, Visigothic king of Hispania. Like Leander, he played a prominent role in the Councils of Toledo and Seville. The Visigothic legislation that resulted from these councils influenced the beginnings of representative government.
>
> His fame after his death was based on his *Etymologiae*, an etymological encyclopedia which assembled extracts of many books from classical antiquity that would have otherwise been lost.

Much more can be learned about this influential saint at his wiki, located here.



St. Isidore

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #96

November 9, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Rather short post today, as I am hoping to work on and finish the post alluded to on Friday. The verses and passages today will connect in some ways with that post, I hope. We begin with St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians:

> [16] Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For what
> the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed
> to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what
> you want. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. [19] Now
> the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness,
> [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions,
> factions, [21] envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning
> you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the
> kingdom of God.
>
> [22] By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
> generosity, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against
> such things. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with
> its passions and desires. [25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the
> Spirit. [26] Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying
> one another.

(Galatians 5:16-26)

Then we move to the Gospel according to St. John:

> Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. [2] He came to
> Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has
> come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the
> presence of God." [3] Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the
> kingdom of God without being born from above." [4] Nicodemus said to him, "How
> can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into
> the mother's womb and be born?" [5] Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one
> can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. [6] What is
> born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. [7] Do not be
> astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' [8] The wind blows
> where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it
> comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

(John 3: 1-8)

Finally, we end with part of Psalm 49:

> [5] Why should I fear in times of trouble,

> when the iniquity of my persecutors surrounds me,
> [6] men who trust in their wealth
> and boast of the abundance of their riches?
> [7] Truly no man can ransom himself,
> or give to God the price of his life,
> [8] for the ransom of his life is costly,
> and can never suffice,
> [9] that he should continue to live on for ever,
> and never see the Pit.

> [10] Yea, he shall see that even the wise die,
> the fool and the stupid alike must perish
> and leave their wealth to others.
> [11] Their graves are their homes for ever,
> their dwelling places to all generations,
> though they named lands their own.
> [12] Man cannot abide in his pomp,
> he is like the beasts that perish.

(Psalm 49: 5-12)

Hopefully that future post will explain some of the connections between them.

Background On The Nature Of Man

November 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I. Introduction

Today's post serves as a backdrop of, and provides background for, several posts that I will be writing in the near future. All of the posts will rely on the theological principles laid out in this post. Originally I was intending to do only a single comprehensive post, but it was starting to become too unwieldy. So I decided to split it up into several posts, each of which will be far more focused in their intended purpose. Hopefully this won't stifle the discussion too much. Since this is a background post, I would ask that the discussion here focus on the theological points involved, rather than the eventual topics to be discussed.

Just to warn folks, this post and the attendant series will be heavily Catholic/Apostolic in nature. It relies heavily on Eastern Church (Eastern Catholic) theology as well as some Thomasist theology from the Western Church. A few other odds and ends may be noticeable as well. If you have any questions feel free to ask in the comments.

II. Human Nature

Human beings are unique among God's creation in that we possess three distinct features: A Body, Soul and Spirit. No other creature shares these three like Man does.

A. The Body

Our Body is our physical representation on the material plane. It is what human beings have in common with the animals. It encompasses all of our physical presence in this world. There are two key features that come of possessing a Body: Senses and Appetites.

Senses includes all of the five physical senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. Again, these are all things that we share in common with the animals. Senses are how we gauge the material world around us. We use them to know what is real in a physical sense.

Appetites include all of our bodily desires and urges: to eat, to drink, to sleep, to procreate. Again, all things that we share in common with the animals. Our appetites are what keep us alive on a daily basis, as well as provide for the continuation of the species. We use them to determine what purely material things we may want.

Our Senses provide information on the world around us, as well as the state of our Body, and our Appetites respond to this information by generating impulses for us to act upon. Feelings and Emotions are matters of the Body, as they are controlled by both our Senses and our Appetites [they also can have a connection with the Soul as well].

Blood ties as well as material desires are all inherently tied to our Body. They are almost always short-sighted, focusing on continuation or propagation.

Our Body is the foundation of our existence as human beings, in that it is the first part of

us that develops. Long before we achieve free will or can build a spiritual life we possess senses and appetites. Sadly, many human beings never rise above material concerns. They focus purely on matters of the body, letting the soul and spirit anguish. One very important thing about the Body is that because it is material, it is also inherently mortal. Our physical form will eventually end. We die. As the Psalmist once wrote: “Man cannot abide in his pomp, he is like the beasts that perish.” Our body may be our beginning, but unlike our soul or spirit, it will also end.

B. The Soul

Our Soul is our mind and the attendant abilities that comes with it. It is what separates us from and elevates us above the animals. Possessing a soul is what human beings have in common with the Angels. They too have souls. However, human beings are different from the Angels because in order to use our Soul, we must have a functioning body. If our body shuts down (such as in sleep or death- which is just another type of sleep), then our soul shuts down as well. There are two key features that come of possessing a Body: Reason and Free Will.

Reason is our intellect, our ability to logically understand matters both physical and metaphysical. It is our Soul’s counterpart to our Body’s Senses. We use our Reason to understand Truth. Science is what happens when Reason and our Senses combine- it is an attempt to fully measure the physical world and come to a complete understanding of it. Theology is what happens when our Reason and Spirit combine- we try to discern the nature of God, and come to an understanding of Him.

Free Will is our ability to choose what actions we will and won’t take. In Summa Theologica St. Thomas Aquinas explained that “[t]he will is the name of the rational appetite,” hence it is the Soul’s counterpart to our Body’s Appetites. It is through our Free Will that we decide what kind of life to live. In other words, Free Will is what we use to decide what is Good.

Essentially, our Reason determines what our options happen to be, and our Will determines which option we will actually take. Truth + Good= the life we live.

Abstract matters of mind, not matter, are of the Soul. Those who devote themselves to “higher” pursuits (for example, Philosophy) are seeking matters of the Soul. Matters of the Soul can be short-term or long term. Devotion to friends or country (outside of immediate blood interest), for example, are matters in which the Soul dominates.

Unlike our Body, our Soul must develop over time. It is effectively dormant until we reach the age of Reason. Unlike our Body, the Soul is eternal and Immortal. Yet, as noted before, we human beings require a Body to actually *use* our Soul. The Angels are not so limited. Those who truly develop their soul can live a much deeper and more fulfilling life than those who are guided by mere material pursuits.

C. The Spirit

Our Spirit represents the highest form of life that we can live- the divine life. It is the

potential that we human beings have to partake of the divine nature, to become like and become one with God. It is not so much that we share a Spirit with God, but rather He shares His Spirit with us. It is the highest form of life that Man can live. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27). That image is the life of the Spirit- that which God shares with us.

The three virtues of Faith, Charity/Love and Hope mark our Spirit. All three are the key features of our Spirit. “So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor 13:3).

It is important to understand that the Spiritual Life is not possible through either our Senses or Reason alone. Revelation was necessary for us to perceive this higher form of life. Hence, even the greatest of philosophers were not able to know of it.

Our Spirit is our connection and union with God. It is a life not connected with our physical body, or even the physical world. It is a life that transcends the material world- “what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6). Since it comes from God, it is also immortal and eternal. Our Spirit endures forever, and from what I understand, does not “shut down” like our Soul does (I’m not certain about this and may correct it later if I should be wrong).

As Christians we understand that we cannot achieve this life on our own. Rather, it is only accessible through the aid of God. “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, [4] by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

It is only through a life of Christian discipline that we can build a Spiritual life for ourselves. It is notable that neither Adam nor Eve had to do so- they were created with a full spiritual life. Which brings us to the next section.

III. The Fall

The Fall dramatically reshaped how human beings were. What we were like before the Fall was very different from how we are now. Here are some ways we changed-

A. Spiritual Death

Prior to the Fall both Adam and Eve possessed full Spiritual lives. But then Death came into the picture.

> Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?” [2] And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; [3] but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” [4] But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. [5] For God knows that when you

> eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

(Genesis 3:1-5)

The Death that is referred to in the Garden of Eden re: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is not a purely physical death (in fact, it may not have been physical death at all). What God warned about was much worse: Spiritual Death. By eating of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve rebelled against the Lord. The price for that rebellion, the price of Sin, was to be cut off from the Lord. To be cast out of the Garden. Since God is the source of all Spiritual Life, by cutting off union with God they cut off the source of their Spiritual Life. Thus, it died within them. And so it was for all human beings afterwards until the time of Jesus- they all had dead Spiritual lives. Only the Sacrifice of the Cross allowed for human beings to be reunited with God again, and through it to be able to live a Spiritual Life.

It should be noted that the Serpent lied about many things there. Not the least of which is that eating of the fruit would make human beings like God. In fact, the opposite occurred- because we died Spiritually we became unlike God, in Whose image we were originally made.

B. Disorder and Weakness

Prior to the Fall, our Spiritual life was our dominant life. Our Body and our Soul existed to serve our Spirit. The Order in priority was Spirit, then Soul, and then finally Body. The Fall changed all of that.

Because human beings died spiritually as a result of the Fall, part of our being became Disordered. Our Body, which used to occupy the least dominant position in the hierarchy of our nature, assumed the dominant position. Our Soul, which used to serve our Spirit, came instead to serve our Body. And since it was dominant, the desires and weaknesses of the Flesh (Body) came to dominate mankind. The goal of living out a Spiritual life is to restore the right order, and elevate our Spiritual Life to the dominant position. That way we can become primarily divine beings again, and be able to, as it were, walk with God as we did in the beginning.

Speaking of the weaknesses of the flesh, that was another consequence of the Fall. Our bodily appetites, which used to properly serve us, essentially ran rampant. Our appetites became contrary to reason. Instead of craving natural things in their proper place, human beings developed cravings for unnatural things or natural things outside their proper place. This is known by many names, among them Concupiscence. Now, this doesn't mean that our Bodies are totally corrupt. Rather, it means that our body is weakened, vulnerable. This weakness was a punishment imposed upon us by God as a consequence of our rebellion. As a result, we are vulnerable to temptation and sin because our body is inclined towards disorder. This inclination, which St. Thomas Aquinas referred to as the Fomes of Sin, persists as long as we shall live. No matter how Holy we may become, we will still struggle with sin.

C. A Choice Must be Made

Because of all of this, every human being must make a choice. He or she must choose to either live out a material life, or a Spiritual life. Our Savior explained it to us: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24). Mammon refer to the world and the things of the world. We must choose whether to serve God, which means letting the Spirit dominate, or to serve Mammon, and let the Flesh dominate. “Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.” (Galatians 5:16-17).

Those are the two paths available to us. There are no others. The Flesh and the Spirit are opposed, they do constant battle with one another. Neutrality is not possible. We have to choose a side. Either we are with God, or against Him. Not choosing isn’t possible- the default position, thanks to the Fall, is to choose the Life in the Flesh.

This choice is made by our Soul, which acts as the fulcrum point in this battle. Specifically, our Will (which is part of our Soul) must choose to partake of the Divine nature, or to partake of the base pleasures of the body. Now, Reason helps us decide what is True, but it is our Will which chooses what is Good. Both the Spirit and the Flesh have very different ideas on what is True and what is Good. As Christians we understand that the Flesh misleads us, and that what Mammon offers is an illusion. When we speak of “saving souls”, we mean that we help incline a Soul towards choosing to serve God, and not Mammon.

This struggle is constant, and far from easy. “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matthew 7:14). We cannot do it by ourselves; on our own we haven’t a chance. Thankfully, we have God on our side. “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

IV. Of Heart And Love

[In a case of extreme sloppiness on my part I forgot to include this in the original post. Thanks to Deep Strength for pointing that out.]

As some might have (and some clearly have) noticed, my explanations thus far have not addressed two very important topics: Heart and Love. Both matters are intimately connected, and in fact we often use the symbol of a heart to mean love.

From what I understand of the Eastern Church perspective, the Heart is associated with both life and Love. Further, there is no separate “Heart feature.” Instead, there are three different meanings of the word Heart. Each meaning is associated with one of our features. In addition, there are two different ways of looking at each Heart. One centers around the Life component, and the other centers around a form of Love. In this sense we might understand one to be internal (life), and the other external (love).

Also, and not coincidentally, each meaning of Heart is associated with a different form of Love. As many of readers will be aware, ancient Greek had three different words for love that saw general usage: Eros, Philia and Agape. Each one of these loves is associated with a particular feature of human nature, and its respective Heart.

A. Body

When we speak of Heart in connection with the Body, we refer to the physical organ itself that keeps the body alive. As the pump that moves blood around the body, it is a source of Life. It is no accident that when doctors speak of death, they speak of the heart stopping.

The form of Love that is associated with the Body is Eros, which refers to bodily/sensual wants and desires. When Eros is used it is mostly in connection with sexual desires, but all produces of our Appetites fall here. As hinted at just now, Eros is connected to our Appetites. When we say we "love" a type of food, pizza for example, we refer to the love known as Eros. Unfortunately for us, Eros can overwhelm the other loves and become "inordinate", which means that our Will serves it and our Spirit dies).

Emotions are something special, in that they mix both bodily desires/Appetites with the product of the Soul as well. When we speak of Emotions, we refer to them as "coming from the heart." The Jews and Greeks thought that the organ itself was responsible. We know that isn't the case now, as it is the brain instead. But that is still a function of the Body. This is why animals can have emotions. Yet we also recognize that the Soul also plays a role as well- which explains why emotions are much more developed in human beings. Sometimes when Scripture refers to the Heart, it refers to that connection with emotions- a product of both Soul and Body.

B. Soul

When we speak of Heart in connection with the Soul, we refer to our innermost being- the depths of who and what we are. What keeps our soul alive. This is the form of Heart used most commonly in the New Testament. This Heart is also connected with emotions and feelings.

The form of Love associated with the Soul is Philia. This is the faculty which allows our soul to "desire" immaterial things like friendship, or peace or philosophical ends. Philia is a higher form of Love than Eros, and since it is immaterial can last forever (presumably we can still love our friends in Heaven). Pursuit of this form of Love leads to a more fulfilling life. Philia is associated with our Free Will, and resides in the Heart of our Soul.

C. Spirit

When we speak of Heart in connection with the Spirit, we refer to our union of God. The life of the Spirit, that divine life within us which is provided by a connection with God. "[12] But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of

man, but of God." (John 1:12-13). When we treasure the things of God, and build up Spiritual treasure, then our Heart resides with Him. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:21).

The form of Love associated with the Spirit is Agape, or Caritas (Charity). This Love resides in the Spirit and is the expression of wanting that the Spirit demonstrates. It is a desire for God, to be fully united with him. Agape or Caritas is a self-sacrificial love that gives and asks nothing in return- this makes it the highest form of love, and ultimately the most fulfilling. Naturally enough, this is the Love that God has for us. Caritas is the greatest of the theological virtues, and the first gift of the Holy Spirit. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then we cannot help but demonstrate Caritas (think the Evangelizing by the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit- they were punch drunk with Love). Since it is associate with the Spirit, this Love is only possible with Grace- we can't do it without God.

[This section is still a little light, I need to do some more inquiry here. Expect it to be updated in the future.]

V. Conclusion

That brings this background post to a finish. The next few major posts of mine should tie back to this one. Hopefully it will soon make sense why I went to the effort to write all of this. In the meantime, any questions about what I've written can be left in the comments. I will try and address them as time permits. In addition, I will likely update this post to correct any deficiencies as they come to my attention, or to clarify anything that needs further explanation.

Tradition Thursday- #43

November 13, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

And the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures continues. Today we finish up his 17th lecture:

> 25. In this power of the Holy Ghost, Philip also in the Name of Christ at one time in the city of Samaria drove away the unclean spirits, *crying out with a loud voice*; and healed the palsied and the lame, and brought to Christ great multitudes of them that believe. To whom Peter and John came down, and with prayer, and the laying on of hands, imparted the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from which Simon Magus alone was declared an alien, and that justly. And at another time Philip was called by the Angel of the Lord in the way, for the sake of that most godly Ethiopian, the Eunuch, and heard distinctly the Spirit Himself saying, *Go near, and join yourself to this chariot*. He instructed the Eunuch, and baptized him, and so having sent into Ethiopia a herald of Christ, according as it is written, *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hand unto God* , he was caught away by the Angel, and preached the Gospel in the cities in succession.
>
> 26. With this Holy SpiritPaul also had been filled after his calling by our Lord Jesus Christ. Let godly Ananias come as a witness to what we say, he who in Damascus said to him, *The Lord, even Jesus who appeared to you in the way which you came, has sent me, that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost*. Acts 9:17 And straightway the Spirit's mighty working changed the blindness of Paul's eyes into newness of sight; and having vouchsafed His seal unto his soul, made him *a chosen vessel* to *bear the Name* of the Lord who had appeared to him, *before kings and the children of Israel*, and rendered the former persecutor an ambassador and good servant—one, who *from Jerusalem, and even unto Illyricum, fully preached the Gospel*Romans 15:19, and instructed even imperial Rome, and carried the earnestness of his preaching as far as Spain, undergoing conflicts innumerable, and performing signs and wonders. Of him for the present enough.
>
> 27. In the power of the same Holy Spirit Peter also, the chief of the Apostles and the bearer of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, healed Æneas the paralytic in the Name of Christ at Lydda, which is now Diospolis, and at Joppa raised from the dead Tabitha rich in good works. And being on the housetop in a trance, he saw heaven opened, and by means of the vessel let down as it were a sheet full of beasts of every shape and sort, he learned plainly to call no man common or unclean, though he should be of the Greeks. Acts 10:11-16 And when he was sent for by Cornelius, he heard clearly the Holy Ghost Himself saying, *Behold, men seek you; but arise and get you down, and go with them, nothing doubting; for I have sent them*. And that it might be plainly shown that those of the Gentiles also who believe are made partakers of the grace of the Holy Ghost, when Peter

had come to Cesarea, and was teaching the things concerning Christ, the Scripture says concerning Cornelius and them who were with him; *While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word; so that they of the circumcision also which came with Peter were astonished, and when they understood it said that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost*.

28. And in Antioch also, a most renowned city of Syria, when the preaching of Christ took effect, Barnabas was sent hence as far as Antioch to help on the good work, being a *good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith* ; who seeing a great harvest of believers in Christ, brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch, as his fellow-combatant. And when crowds had been instructed by them and assembled in the Church, *it came to pass that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch* ; the Holy Ghost, methinks, bestowing on the believers that new Name, which had been promised before by the Lord. And the grace of the Spirit being shed forth by God more abundantly in Antioch, there were there prophets and teachers of whom Agabus was one. Acts 11:28 And *as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*. And after hands had been laid on them, *they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost*. Now it is manifest, that the Spirit which speaks and sends, is a living Spirit, subsisting, and operating, as we have said.

29. This Holy Spirit, who in unison with Father and Son has established the New Covenant in the Church Catholic, has set us free from the burdens of the law grievous to be borne—those I mean, concerning things common and unclean, and meats, and sabbaths, and new moons, and circumcision, and sprinklings, and sacrifices; which were given for a season, and *had a shadow of the good things to come*Hebrews 10:1, but which, when the truth had come, were rightly withdrawn. For when Paul and Barnabas were sent to the Apostles, because of the question moved at Antioch by them who said that it was necessary to be circumcised and to keep the customs of Moses, the Apostles who were here at Jerusalem by a written injunction set free the whole world from all the legal and typical observances; yet they attributed not to themselves the full authority in so great a matter, but send an injunction in writing, and acknowledge this: *For it has seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication* ; showing evidently by what they wrote, that though the writing was by the hands of human Apostles, yet the decree is universal from the Holy Ghost: which decree Paul and Barnabas took and confirmed unto all the world.

30. And now, having proceeded thus far in my discourse, I ask indulgence from your love , or rather from the Spirit who dwelt in Paul, if I should not be able to rehearse everything, by reason of my own weakness, and your weariness who listen. For when shall I in terms worthy of Himself declare the marvellous deeds

wrought by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the Name of Christ? Those wrought in Cyprus upon Elymas the sorcerer, and in Lystra at the healing of the cripple, and in Cilicia and Phrygia and Galatia and Mysia and Macedonia? Or those at Philippi (the preaching, I mean, and the driving out of the spirit of divination in the Name of Christ; and the salvation by baptism of the jailer with his whole house at night after the earthquake); or the events at Thessalonica; and the address at Areopagus in the midst of the Athenians; or the instructions at Corinth, and in all Achaia? How shall I worthily recount the mighty deeds which were wrought at Ephesus through Paul, by the Holy GhostActs 19:1-6? Whom they of that City knew not before, but came to know Him by the doctrine of Paul; and when Paul had laid his hands on them, and the Holy Ghost had come upon them, *they spoke with tongues, and prophesied*. And so great spiritual grace was upon him, that not only his touch wrought cures, but even the *handkerchiefs and napkins* , brought from his body, healed diseases, and scared away the evil spirits; and at last *they also who practised curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men*.

31. I pass by the work wrought at Troas on Eutychus, who *being borne down by his sleep fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead*; yet was saved alive by Paul. I also pass by the prophecies addressed to the Elders of Ephesus whom he called to him in Miletus, to whom he openly said, *That the Holy Ghost witnesses in every city, saying* — and the rest; for by saying, *in every city*, Paul made manifest that the marvellous works done by him in each city, were from the operative power of the Holy Ghost, by the will of God, and in the Name of Christ who spoke in him. By the power of this Holy Ghost, the same Paul was hastening to this holy city Jerusalem, and this, though Agabus by the Spirit foretold what should befall him; and yet he spoke to the people with confidence, declaring the things concerning Christ. And when brought to Cesarea, and set amid tribunals of justice, at one time before Felix, and at another before Festus the governor and King Agrippa, Paul obtained of the Holy Ghostgrace so great, and triumphant in wisdom, that at last Agrippa himself the king of the Jews said, *Almost you persuade me to be a Christian*. This Holy Spirit granted to Paul, when he was in the island of Melita also, to receive no harm when bitten by the viper, and to effect various cures on the diseased. This Holy Spirit guided him, the persecutor of old, as a herald of Christ, even as far as imperial Rome, and there he persuaded many of the Jews to believe in Christ, and to them who gainsaid he said plainly, *Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet, saying unto your fathers, and the rest*.

32. And that Paul was full of the Holy Ghost, and all his fellow Apostles, and they who after them believed in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, hear from himself as he writes plainly in his Epistles; *And my speech*, he says, *and my preaching was not in persuasive words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*. 1 Corinthians 2:4 And again, *But He who sealed us for this very purpose is*

God, who gave us the earnest of the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 1:22 And again, *He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwells in you*. Romans 8:11 And again, writing to Timothy, *That good thing which was committed to you guard through the Holy Ghost which was given to us*.

33. And that the Holy Ghost subsists, and lives, and speaks, and foretells, I have often said in what goes before, and Paul writes it plainly to Timothy: *Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in later times some shall depart from the faith*1 Timothy 4:1—which we see in the divisions not only of former times but also of our own; so motley and diversified are the errors of the heretics. And again the same Paul says, *Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto His Holy Apostles and Prophets in the Spirit*. Ephesians 3:5 And again, *Wherefore, as says the Holy Ghost*Hebrews 3:7; and again, *The Holy Ghost also witnesses to us*. And again he calls unto the soldiers of righteousness, saying, *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, with all prayer and supplication*. Ephesians 6:17 And again, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*. And again, *The grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all*2 Corinthians 13:14 .

34. By all these proofs, and by more which have been passed over, is the personal, and sanctifying, and effectual power of the Holy Ghost established for those who can understand; for the time would fail me in my discourse if I wished to quote what yet remains concerning the Holy Ghost from the fourteen Epistles of Paul, wherein he has taught with such variety, completeness, and reverence. And to the power of the Holy Ghost Himself it must belong, to grant to us forgiveness for what we have omitted because the days are few, and upon you the hearers to impress more perfectly the knowledge of what yet remains; while from the frequent reading of the sacred Scriptures those of you who are diligent come to understand these things, and by this time, both from these present Lectures, and from what has before been told you, hold more steadfastly the Faith in *One God the Father Almighty; and in our Lord Jesus Christ, His Only-Begotten Son; and in the Holy Ghost the Comforter.* Though the word itself and title of Spirit is applied to Them in common in the sacred Scriptures,— for it is said of the Father, *God is a Spirit*John 4:24, as it is written in the Gospel according to John; and of the Son, *A Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord* , as Jeremias the prophet says; and of the Holy Ghost, *the Comforter, the Holy Ghost*John 14:25, as was said—yet the arrangement of articles in the Faith, if religiously understood, disproves the error of Sabellius also. Return we therefore in our discourse to the point which now presses and is profitable to you.

35. Beware lest ever like Simon thou come to the dispensers of Baptism in

hypocrisy, your heart the while not seeking the truth. It is ours to protest, but it is yours to secure yourself. If *you stand in faith*Romans 11:20, blessed are you; if you have fallen in unbelief, from this day forward cast away your unbelief, and receive full assurance. For, at the season of baptism, when you have come before the Bishops, or Presbyters, or Deacons —(for its grace is everywhere, in villages and in cities, on them of low as on them of high degree, on bondsmen and on freemen, for this grace is not of men, but the gift is from God through men,)— approach the Minister of Baptism, but approaching, think not of the face of him you see, but remember this Holy Ghost of whom we are now speaking. For He is present in readiness to seal your soul, and He shall give you that Seal at which evil spirits tremble, a heavenly and sacred seal, as also it is written, *In whom also ye believed, and were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*.

36. Yet He tries the soul. He casts not His pearls before swine; if you play the hypocrite, though men baptize you now, the Holy Spirit will not baptize you. But if you approach with faith, though men minister in what is seen, the Holy Ghost bestows that which is unseen. You are coming to a great trial, to a great muster , in that one hour, which if you throw away, your disaster is irretrievable; but if you be counted worthy of the grace, your soul will be enlightened, you will receive a power which you had not, you will receive weapons terrible to the evil spirits; and if you cast not away your arms, but keep the Seal upon your soul, no evil spirit will approach you; for he will be cowed; for verily by the Spirit of God are the evil spirits cast out.

37. If you believe, you shall not only receive remission of sins, but also do things which pass man’s power. And may thou be worthy of the gift of prophecy also! For you shall receive grace according to the measure of your capacity and not of my words; for I may possibly speak of but small things, yet you may receive greater; since faith is a large affair. All your life long will your guardian the Comforter abide with you; He will care for you, as for his own soldier; for your goings out, and your comings in, and your plotting foes. And He will give you gifts of grace of every kind, if you grieve Him not by sin; for it is written, *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you were sealed unto the day of redemption*. Ephesians 4:30 What then, beloved, is it to preserve grace? Be ready to receive grace, and when you have received it, cast it not away.

38. And may the very God of All, who spoke by the Holy Ghost through the prophets, who sent Him forth upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost in this place, Himself send Him forth at this time also upon you; and by Him keep us also, imparting His benefit in common to us all, that we may ever render up the fruits of the Holy Ghost, *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*Galatians 5:22-23, in Christ Jesus our Lord:— By whom and with whom, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory to the Father, both now, and ever, and for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #90

November 14, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's letter for a Saint is the letter "J." Given that letter, and given what has happened recently in France, it seems appropriate that today's Saint is Joan of Arc:

> **Joan of Arc** (French: *Jeanne d'Arc*, IPA: [ʒan daʁk]; 6 January c. 1412 – 30 May 1431), nicknamed "**The Maid of Orléans**" (French: *La Pucelle d'Orléans*) is considered a heroine of France for her role during the Lancastrian phase of the Hundred Years' War, and was canonized as a Roman Catholic saint. Joan of Arc was born to Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle, a peasant family, at Domrémy in north-east France. Joan said she received visions of the Archangel Michael, Saint Margaret, and Saint Catherine instructing her to support Charles VII and recover France from English domination late in the Hundred Years' War. The uncrowned King Charles VII sent Joan to the siege of Orléans as part of a relief mission. She gained prominence after the siege was lifted in only nine days. Several additional swift victories led to Charles VII's coronation at Reims. This long-awaited event boosted French morale and paved the way for the final French victory.
>
> On 23 May 1430, she was captured at Compiègne by the Burgundian faction which was allied with the English. She was later handed over to the English, and then put on trial by the pro-English Bishop of Beauvais Pierre Cauchon on a variety of charges. After Cauchon declared her guilty she was burned at the stake on 30 May 1431, dying at about nineteen years of age.
>
> Twenty-five years after her execution, an inquisitorial court authorized by Pope Callixtus III examined the trial, debunked the charges against her, pronounced her innocent, and declared her a martyr. In the 16th century she became a symbol of the Catholic League, and in 1803 she was declared a national symbol of France by the decision of Napoleon Bonaparte. She was beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1920. Joan of Arc is one of the nine secondary patron saints of France, along with St. Denis, St. Martin of Tours, St. Louis, St. Michael, St. Remi, St. Petronilla, St. Radegund and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #97

November 16, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The post, like the one before it in this series, will hopefully tie into my continuing series on human nature and some of the ills of the present age. This brings me to the first few verses from Scripture, from Luke's Gospel:

> [10] "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. [11] If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches? [12] And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? [13] No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

(Luke 16:10-13)

Then we move to the Gospel according to John:

> [15] "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

(John 14:15-17)

Now we move to the Gospel according to Matthew:

> [22] Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. [23] And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" [24] But when the Pharisees heard it they said, "It is only by Be-el′zebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." [25] Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand; [26] and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? [27] And if I cast out demons by Be-el′zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. [28] But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. [29] Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. [30] He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. [31] Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. [32] And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

(Matthew 12:22-32)

Finally, we conclude with St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians:

> [7] Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will
> also reap. [8] For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption;
> but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. [9] And let us not
> grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.
> [10] So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to
> those who are of the household of faith.

(Galatians 6:7-10)

These verses will hopefully make senses in light of that future post.

Tradition Thursday-#44

November 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures continues onward. Today's post features a bit more than half of his 18th lecture. Its focus is the resurrection of the dead:

> Ezekiel 37:1
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> The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.
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> 1. The root of all good works is the hope of the Resurrection; for the expectation of the recompense nerves the soul to good works. For every labourer is ready to endure the toils, if he sees their reward in prospect; but when men weary themselves for nought, their heart soon sinks as well as their body. A soldier who expects a prize is ready for war, but no one is forward to die for a king who is indifferent about those who serve under him, and bestows no honours on their toils. In like manner every soul believing in a Resurrection is naturally careful of itself; but, disbelieving it, abandons itself to perdition. He who believes that his body shall remain to rise again, is careful of his robe, and defiles it not with fornication; but he who disbelieves the Resurrection, gives himself to fornication, and misuses his own body, as though it were not his own. Faith therefore in the Resurrection of the dead, is a great commandment and doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church; great and most necessary, though gainsaid by many, yet surely warranted by the truth. Greeks contradict it , Samaritans disbelieve it, heretics mutilate it; the contradiction is manifold, but the truth is uniform.
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> 2. Now Greeks and Samaritans together argue against us thus. The dead man has fallen, and mouldered away, and is all turned into worms; and the worms have died also; such is the decay and destruction which has overtaken the body; how then is it to be raised? The shipwrecked have been devoured by fishes, which are themselves devoured. Of them who fight with wild beasts the very bones are ground to powder, and consumed by bears and lions. Vultures and ravens feed on the flesh of the unburied dead, and then fly away over all the world; whence then is the body to be collected? For of the fowls who have devoured it some may chance to die in India, some in Persia, some in the land of the Goths. Other men again are consumed by fire, and their very ashes scattered by rain or wind; whence is the body to be brought together again ?
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> 3. To you, poor little feeble man, India is far from the land of the Goths, and Spain from Persia; but to God, who holds the whole *earth in the hollow of His hand* Isaiah 40:12, all things are near at hand. Impute not then weakness to God, from a comparison of your feebleness, but rather dwell on His power. Does then the sun, a small work of God, by one glance of his beams give warmth to the

whole world; does the atmosphere, which God has made, encompass all things in the world; and is God, who is the Creator both of the sun, and of the atmosphere, far off from the world? Imagine a mixture of seeds of different plants (for as you are weak concerning the faith, the examples which I allege are weak also), and that these different seeds are contained in your single hand; is it then to you, who art a man, a difficult or an easy matter to separate what is in your hand, and to collect each seed according to its nature, and restore it to its own kind? Can you then separate the things in your hand, and cannot God separate the things contained in His hand, and restore them to their proper place? Consider what I say, whether it is not impious to deny it?

4. But further, attend, I pray, to the very principle of justice, and come to your own case. You have different sorts of servants: and some are good and some bad; you honour therefore the good, and smitest the bad. And if you are a judge, to the good you award praise, and to the transgressors, punishment. Is then justice observed by you a mortal man; and with God, the ever changeless King of all, is there no retributive justice ? Nay, to deny it is impious. For consider what I say. Many murderers have died in their beds unpunished; where then is the righteousness of God? Yea, ofttimes a murderer guilty of fifty murders is beheaded once; where then shall he suffer punishment for the forty and nine? Unless there is a judgment and a retribution after this world, you charge God with unrighteousness. Marvel not, however, because of the delay of the judgment; no combatant is crowned or disgraced, till the contest is over; and no president of the games ever crowns men while yet striving, but he waits till all the combatants are finished, that then deciding between them he may dispense the prizes and the chaplets. Even thus God also, so long as the strife in this world lasts, succours the just but partially, but afterwards He renders to them their rewards fully.

5. But if according to you there is no resurrection of the dead, wherefore do you condemn the robbers of graves? For if the body perishes, and there is no resurrection to be hoped for, why does the violator of the tomb undergo punishment? You see that though you deny it with your lips, there yet abides with you an indestructible instinct of the resurrection.

6. Further, does a tree after it has been cut down blossom again, and shall man after being cut down blossom no more? And does the grain sown and reaped remain for the threshing floor, and shall man when reaped from this world not remain for the threshing? And do shoots of vine or other trees, when clean cut off and transplanted, come to life and bear fruit; and shall man, for whose sake all these exist, fall into the earth and not rise again? Comparing efforts, which is greater, to mould from the beginning a statue which did not exist, or to recast in the same shape that which had fallen? Is God then, who created us out of nothing, unable to raise again those who exist and are fallen ? But you believe not what is written of the resurrection, being a Greek: then from the analogy of

nature consider these matters, and understand them from what is seen to this day. Wheat, it may be, or some other kind of grain, is sown; and when the seed has fallen, it dies and rots, and is henceforth useless for food. But that which has rotted, springs up in verdure; and though small when sown, springs up most beautiful. Now wheat was made for us; for wheat and all seeds were created not for themselves, but for our use; are then the things which were made for us quickened when they die, and do we for whom they were made, not rise again after our death ?

7. The season is winter , as you see, the trees now stand as if they were dead: for where are the leaves of the fig-tree? Where are the clusters of the vine? These in winter time are dead, but green in spring; and when the season has come, there is restored to them a quickening as it were from a state of death. For God, knowing your unbelief, works a resurrection year by year in these visible things; that, beholding what happens to things inanimate, you may believe concerning things animate and rational. Further, flies and bees are often drowned in water, yet after a while revive ; and species of dormice , after remaining motionless during the winter, are restored in the summer (for to your slight thoughts like examples are offered); and shall He who to irrational and despised creatures grants life supernaturally, not bestow it upon us, for whose sake He made them?

8. But the Greeks ask for a resurrection of the dead still manifest; and say that, even if these creatures are raised, yet they had not utterly mouldered away; and they require to see distinctly some creature rise again after complete decay. God knew men’s unbelief, and provided for this purpose a bird, called a Phoenix. This bird, as Clement writes, and as many more relate, being the only one of its kind , arrives in the land of the Egyptians at periods of five hundred years, showing forth the resurrection, not in desert places, lest the occurrence of the mystery should remain unknown, but appearing in a notable city , that men might even handle what would otherwise be disbelieved. For it makes itself a coffin of frankincense and myrrh and other spices, and entering into this when its years are fulfilled, it evidently dies and moulders away. Then from the decayed flesh of the dead bird a worm is engendered, and this worm when grown large is transformed into a bird—and do not disbelieve this, for you see the offspring of bees also fashioned thus out of worms , and from eggs which are quite fluid you have seen wings and bones and sinews of birds issue. Afterwards the aforesaid Phoenix, becoming fledged and a full-grown Phoenix, like the former one, soars up into the air such as it had died, showing forth to men a most evident resurrection of the dead. The Phoenix indeed is a wondrous bird, yet it is irrational, nor ever sang praise to God; it flies abroad through the sky, but it knows not who is the Only-begotten Son of God. Has then a resurrection from the dead been given to this irrational creature which knows not its Maker, and to us who ascribe glory to God and keep His commandments, shall there no resurrection be granted?

9. But since the sign of the Phoenix is remote and uncommon, and men still disbelieve our resurrection, take again the proof of this from what you see every day. A hundred or two hundred years ago, we all, speakers and hearers, where were we? Know we not the groundwork of the substance of our bodies? Do you not know how from weak and shapeless and simple elements we are engendered, and out of what is simple and weak a living man is formed? And how that weak element being made flesh is changed into strong sinews, and bright eyes, and sensitive nose, and hearing ears, and speaking tongue, and beating heart, and busy hands, and swift feet, and into members of all kinds ? And how that once weak element becomes a shipwright, and a builder, and an architect, and a craftsman of various arts, and a soldier, and a ruler, and a lawgiver, and a king? Cannot God then, who has made us out of imperfect materials, raise us up when we have fallen into decay? He who thus flames a body out of what is vile, cannot He raise the fallen body again? And He who fashions that which is not, shall He not raise up that which is and is fallen?

10. Take further a manifest proof of the resurrection of the dead, witnessed month by month in the sky and its luminaries. The body of the moon vanishes completely, so that no part of it is any more seen, yet it fills again, and is restored to its former state ; and for the perfect demonstration of the matter, the moon at certain revolutions of years suffering eclipse and becoming manifestly changed into blood, yet recovers its luminous body: God having provided this, that you also, the man who art formed of blood, might not refuse credence to the resurrection of the dead, but might believe concerning yourself also what you see in respect of the moon. These therefore use thou as arguments against the Greeks; for with them who receive not what is written fight thou with unwritten weapons, by reasonings only and demonstrations; for these men know not who Moses is, nor Esaias, nor the Gospels, nor Paul.

11. Turn now to the Samaritans, who, receiving the Law only, allow not the Prophets. To them the text just now read from Ezekiel appears of no force, for, as I said, they admit no Prophets; whence then shall we persuade the Samaritans also? Let us go to the writings of the Law. Now God says to Moses, *I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob* ; this must mean of those who have being and subsistence. For if Abraham has come to an end, and Isaac and Jacob, then He is the God of those who have no being. When did a king ever say, I am the king of soldiers, whom he had not? When did any display wealth which he possessed not? Therefore Abraham and Isaac and Jacob must subsist, that God may be the God of those who have being; for He said not, *I was their God,* but *I am*. And that there is a judgment, Abraham shows in saying to the Lord, *He who judges all the earth, shall He not execute judgment* Genesis 18:25?

12. But to this the foolish Samaritans object again, and say that the souls possibly of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob continue, but that their bodies cannot possibly rise again. Was it then possible that the rod of righteous Moses should

become a serpent, and is it impossible that the bodies of the righteous should live and rise again? And was that done contrary to nature, and shall they not be restored according to nature? Again, the rod of Aaron, though cut off and dead, budded, *without the scent of waters* Job 14:9, and though under a roof, sprouted forth into blossoms as in the fields; and though set in dry places, yielded in one night the flowers and fruit of plants watered for many years. Did Aaron's rod rise, as it were, from the dead, and shall not Aaron himself be raised? And did God work wonders in wood, to secure to him the high-priesthood, and will He not vouchsafe a resurrection to Aaron himself? A woman also was made salt contrary to nature; and flesh was turned into salt; and shall not flesh be restored to flesh? Was Lot's wife made a pillar of salt, and shall not Abraham's wife be raised again? By what power was Moses' hand changed, which even within one hour became as snow, and was restored again? Certainly by God's command. Was then His command of force then, and has it no force now?

13. And whence in the beginning came man into being at all, O you Samaritans, most senseless of all men? Go to the first book of the Scripture, which even you receive; *And God formed man of the dust of the ground*. Genesis 2:7 Is dust transformed into flesh, and shall not flesh be again restored to flesh? You must be asked too, whence the heavens had their being, and earth, and seas? Whence sun, and moon, and stars? How from the waters were made the things which fly and swim? And how from earth all its living things? Were so many myriads brought from nothing into being, and shall we men, who bear God's image, not be raised up? Truly this course is full of unbelief, and the unbelievers are much to be condemned; when Abraham addresses the Lord as *the Judge of all the earth*, and the learners of the Law disbelieve; when it is written that man is of the earth, and the readers disbelieve it.

14. These questions, therefore, are for them, the unbelievers: but the words of the Prophets are for us who believe. But since some who have also used the Prophets believe not what is written, and allege against us that passage, *The ungodly shall not rise up in judgment* , and, *For if man go down to the grave he shall come up no more* Job 7:9, and, *The dead shall not praise You, O Lord* —for of what is well written, they have made ill use— it will be well in a cursory manner, and as far as is now possible, to meet them. For if it is said, that *the ungodly shall not rise up in judgment*, this shows that they shall rise, not in judgment, but in condemnation; for God needs not long scrutiny, but close on the resurrection of the ungodly follows also their punishment. And if it is said, *The dead shall not praise You, O Lord*, this shows, that since in this life only is the appointed time for repentance and pardon, for which they who enjoy it shall *praise the Lord*, it remains not after death for them who have died in sins to give praise as the receivers of a blessing, but to bewail themselves; for praise belongs to them who give thanks, but to them who are under the scourge, lamentation. Therefore the just then offer praise; but they who have died in sins have no

further season for confession.

15. And respecting that passage, *If a man go down to the grave, he shall come up no more*, observe what follows, for it is written, *He shall come up no more, neither shall he return to his own house*. For since the whole world shall pass away, and every house shall be destroyed, how shall he return to his own house, there being henceforth a new and different earth? But they ought to have heard Job, saying, *For there is hope of a tree; for if it be cut down, it will sprout again, and the tender branch thereof will not cease. For though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the rocky ground; yet from the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth a crop like a new plant. But man when he dies, is gone; and when mortal man falls, is he no more* Job 14:7-10? As it were remonstrating and reproving (for thus ought we to read the words *is no more* with an interrogation); he says since a tree falls and revives, shall not man, for whom all trees were made, himself revive? And that you may not suppose that I am forcing the words, read what follows; for after saying by way of question, *When mortal man falls, is he no more?* he says, *For if a man die, he shall live again* ; and immediately he adds, *I will wait till I be made again* ; and again elsewhere, *Who shall raise up on the earth my skin, which endures these things*. And Esaias the Prophet says, *The dead men shall rise again, and they that are in the tombs shall awake*. Isaiah 26:19 And the Prophet Ezekiel now before us, says most plainly, *Behold I will open your graves, and bring you up out of your graves*. Ezekiel 37:12 And Daniel says, *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame* Daniel 12:2 .

16. And many Scriptures there are which testify of the Resurrection of the dead; for there are many other sayings on this matter. But now, by way of remembrance only, we will make a passing mention of the raising of Lazarus on the fourth day; and just allude, because of the shortness of the time, to the widow’s son also who was raised, and merely for the sake of reminding you, let me mention the ruler of the synagogue’s daughter, and the rending of the rocks, and how *there arose many bodies of the saints which slept* Matthew 27:52, their graves having been opened. But specially be it remembered that *Christ has been raised from the dead*. 1 Corinthians 15:20 I speak but in passing of Elias, and the widow’s son whom he raised; of Elisseus also, who raised the dead twice; once in his lifetime, and once after his death. For when alive he wrought the resurrection by means of his own soul 2 Kings 4:34; but that not the souls only of the just might be honoured, but that it might be believed that in the bodies also of the just there lies a power, the corpse which was cast into the sepulchre of Elisseus, when it touched the dead body of the prophet, was quickened, and the dead body of the prophet did the work of the soul, and that which was dead and buried gave life to the dead, and though it gave life, yet continued itself among the dead. Wherefore? Lest if Elisseus should rise again, the work should be ascribed to his soul alone; and to show, that even though the soul is not present, a virtue

resides in the body of the saints, because of the righteous soul which has for so many years dwelt in it, and used it as its minister. And let us not foolishly disbelieve, as though this thing had not happened: for if handkerchiefs and aprons, which are from without, touching the bodies of the diseased, raised up the sick, how much more should the very body of the Prophet raise the dead?

17. And with respect to these instances we might say much, rehearsing in detail the marvellous circumstances of each event: but as you have been already wearied both by the superposed fast of the Preparation , and by the watchings , let what has been cursorily spoken concerning them suffice for a while; these words having been as it were sown thinly, that you, receiving the seed like richest ground, may in bearing fruit increase them. But be it remembered, that the Apostles also raised the dead; Peter raised Tabitha in Joppa, and Paul raised Eutychus in Troas; and thus did all the other Apostles, even though the wonders wrought by each have not all been written. Further, remember all the sayings in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which Paul wrote against them who said, *How are the dead raised, and with what manner of body do they come*
1 Corinthians 15:35? And how he says, *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised* ; and how he called them *fools* , who believed not; and remember the whole of his teaching there concerning the resurrection of the dead, and how he wrote to the Thessalonians, *But we would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as the rest which have no hope* 1 Thessalonians 4:13, and all that follows: but chiefly that, *And the dead in Christ shall rise first*.

18. But especially mark this, how very pointedly Paul says, *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*.
1 Corinthians 15:53 For this body shall be raised not remaining weak as now; but raised the very same body, though by putting on incorruption it shall be fashioned anew —as iron blending with fire becomes fire, or rather as He knows how, the Lord who raises us. This body therefore shall be raised, but it shall abide not such as it now is, but an eternal body; no longer needing for its life such nourishment as now, nor stairs for its ascent, for it shall be made *spiritual*, a marvellous thing, such as we cannot worthily speak of. *Then*, it is said, *shall the righteous shine forth as the sun* Matthew 13:43, and the moon, *and as the brightness of the firmament*. Daniel 12:3 And God, fore-knowing men’s unbelief, has given to little worms in the summer to dart beams of light from their body , that from what is seen, that which is looked for might be believed; for He who gives in part is able to give the whole also, and He who made the worm radiant with light, will much more illuminate a righteous man.

19. We shall be raised therefore, all with our bodies eternal, but not all with bodies alike: for if a man is righteous, he will receive a heavenly body, that he may be able worthily to hold converse with Angels; but if a man is a sinner, he shall receive an eternal body, fitted to endure the penalties of sins, that he may

> burn eternally in fire, nor ever be consumed. And righteously will God assign this portion to either company; for we do nothing without the body. We blaspheme with the mouth, and with the mouth we pray. With the body we commit fornication, and with the body we keep chastity. With the hand we rob, and by the hand we bestow alms; and the rest in like manner. Since then the body has been our minister in all things, it shall also share with us in the future the fruits of the past.
>
> 20. Therefore, brethren, let us be careful of our bodies, nor misuse them as though not our own. Let us not say like the heretics, that this vesture of the body belongs not to us, but let us be careful of it as our own; for we must give account to the Lord of all things done through the body. Say not, none sees me; think not, that there is no witness of the deed. Human witness oftentimes there is not; but He who fashioned us, an unerring *witness*, abides *faithful in heaven* , and beholds what you do. And the stains of sin also remain in the body; for as when a wound has gone deep into the body, even if there has been a healing, the scar remains, so sin wounds soul and body, and the marks of its scars remain in all; and they are removed only from those who receive the washing of Baptism. The past wounds therefore of soul and body God heals by Baptism; against future ones let us one and all jointly guard ourselves, that we may keep this vestment of the body pure, and may not for practising fornication and sensual indulgence or any other sin for a short season, lose the salvation of heaven, but may inherit the eternal kingdom of God; of which may God, of His own grace, deem all of you worthy.
>
> 21. Thus much in proof of the Resurrection of the dead; and now, let me again recite to you the profession of the faith, and do you with all diligence pronounce it while I speak , and remember it.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #91

November 21, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our letter for today's saint is the letter "K." This letter, being less common, leads to today's saint, who lived in Poland, Saint Kinga:

> **Saint Kinga of Poland** (also known as **Cunegunda**; Polish: *Święta Kinga*, Hungarian: *Szent Kinga*) (5 March 1224 – 24 July 1292) is a saint in the Catholic Church and patroness of Poland and Lithuania.

She was a fascinating woman. A few facts about her:

- She was born a Princess- her father was the King of Hungary
- Both of her sisters were saints as well
- She took part in a Josephite marriage with Prince Bolislaw the Chaste
- After her husband's death she became a contemplative and wouldn't let anyone refer to her past station in life as a Princess

This and more can be found at her wiki, located here.



St. Kinga

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #98

November 23, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is going to focus on the Holy Spirit. This owes itself to the post that will go live Monday, which focuses on a Christian's spiritual life. I was unable to finish it the previous week, or rather, I was unhappy with it, so I held off until now. Hopefully it will prove to be worth the extra effort. We begin with St. Paul's Letter to the Romans:

> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; [8] and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
>
> [9] But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. [10] But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.
>
> [12] So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— [13] for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. [14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" [16] it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

(Romans 8:1-17)

St. Paul tells us that living a Spiritual Life is essential to gaining Eternal Life with God. Anything that gets in the way of our Spiritual life must be excised, lest it carry us off to death.

This brings us to St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy:

> Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith

> by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, [2] through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, [3] who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; [5] for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

(1 Tim 4:1-5)

We were warned from the beginning about false doctrines. Sadly, such warnings have largely fallen on deaf ears.

Finally, we conclude with St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians:

> [6] Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. [7] But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. [8] None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [9] But, as it is written,
>
> "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
> nor the heart of man conceived,
> what God has prepared for those who love him,"
>
> [10] God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. [11] For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. [12] Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [13] And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.
>
> [14] The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [15] The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. [16] "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

(1 Cor 2:6-16)

To be a Spiritual person is to be able to perceive the things of God, and to know only what God knows. It allows us to transcend our human limitations, and achieve trust wisdom and understanding. The greatest of the pagan philosophers could never achieve the understanding that was gained by the lowliest of those who lived Spiritual lives as servants of the Lord.

The Mammon Trap- Replacing The Holy Spirit

November 24, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[This post will almost certainly need some after-the-fact clarification. If anything needs some clearing up, let me know in the comments.]

I. Introduction

Today's post relies on my recent Background post, found here.

I'm not sure if he was the first one to say it or not, but Rollo Tomassi of The Rational Male was the first person I ever saw who made the claim that "the Feminine Imperative has replaced the Holy Spirit in Churchianity." Others have made similar statements, including Dalrock, but Rollo is the first I recall saying something to that effect. I never gave it much thought, even as I saw some truth behind it. So I never stopped to grasp what was really happening with that phenomenon. Or what it actually meant on a theological level. But in the past few months I have been studying Eastern Spirituality and broadening my grasp of Christian theology. During that time I came across the model which was highlighted in that recent background post of mine. Once I became familiar with it, I came to a deeper appreciation of the insidiousness of what is really happening with the whole "replacing the Holy Spirit" with the "FI." This post will examine what is going on, and why it is so dangerous.

II. Replacing the Irreplaceable

I'm going to break up this next section into smaller pieces, in the hopes that it makes it easier to understand. Several different ideas have to come together for this to make any sense.

A. Trust Your Feelings

The "feminized church" plays a major role in this deviancy. Others have covered in depth, and likely to a degree far better than I could achieve, the extent of the "Feminizing" of Christian teaching and doctrine in recent years (and decades and centuries, etc.). I will leave that to them and others posts. My focus is on the particular results here. However, I will say that much of this is owed to ignorance or misinformation about human nature, in particular female nature. More on that a little later. Without going too far into it, I suspect that the lead off point for this particular false doctrine finds its origins in the whole "Woman Good/Man Bad" line of thought. At its core this false teaching advances the idea that there is some inherent kind of unique "goodness" in Woman that is just waiting to manifest itself. At least, it would if Men would just get out of the way- or even better, affirmatively enable it. I am going to quote from the Dalrock link above, to provide just one example of this [there are plenty others to be found]:

> God has equipped every woman with a marriage manual in her heart, designed to instruct her husband in how to meet her unique needs.

> …
> What she does have is that unique marriage manual in her heart for your marriage which is given to her from God. The way that a man becomes the man that God has called him to be is to become the husband his wife needs him to be. The only way to become the husband our wife needs us to be is to read our personal marriage manual. How do we read that marriage manual? We listen to her heart.

There are several things going on here:

1. First, on the face of it we see an argument that a Woman's "heart" is to be trusted- we are to listen to it. Specifically, we are to trust a woman's *feelings*, because that is what is meant by "heart" here. By we I mean both men and women. After all, if the man can trust the woman's feeling she should be able to trust her own, right?
2. On a deeper level, this line of thinking essentially argues that a woman's feelings act as a direct manifestation of God's Will. He created them in order to "teach" others. In other words, a woman's feelings are almost a radio to God, not unlike the Ark in Raiders of the Lost Ark: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTWh9tm1IX4
3. Again, this kind of thinking relies on this belief that there is something inherently good in Woman that isn't present in Man, or that there is something inherently bad in Man that isn't present in Woman. It basically turns a blind eye to the Fall and its consequences. Both men and women suffer from the effects of Original Sin- neither sex is inherently "good", or "bad." We are both fallen- *all* have fallen short.
4. This line of thought shows real ignorance of female nature. Part of the problem is that female sin manifests itself differently than male sin. Oftentimes male sin is more obvious, while female sin and sinful inclinations are more subtle and more circumspect (think Potiphar's wife). So it can be easier to miss female specific, or female favored sins. At least, it can be easy for men to miss them. And this line of thought can only get real traction with male support.

When you combine all of this together you have a recipe for disaster- the Feminine is elevated, and the Masculine is denigrated. This is a disaster because in elevating the Feminine *in toto*, you are also elevating female sins (or at least feminine centered ones). They are granted cover by virtue of being linked to the feminine.

B. The Deceitful Heart

This brings me to what I discussed in the Background post. In that post, I explained that human beings have a Body, Soul and Spirit, each of which possesses a corresponding Heart component (and love associated with it). When we speak of Heart in connection to the Body, we are referring to emotions, to *feelings.* The prophet Jeremiah had this to say about that particular aspect of the human Heart:

> The heart is deceitful above all things,
> and desperately corrupt;

> who can understand it?

(Jeremiah 17:9)

We know that the Holy Prophet Jeremiah was referring to the Heart "component" of the human Body here because he refers to it as corrupt. Neither our Soul nor Spirit is "desperately corrupt"- but our Body is, because of Original Sin.

One consequence of Original sin is that the human Body has what St. Thomas Aquinas called the Law of the Fomes of Sin- what St. Paul called the Law of/in the Flesh. Our bodies have been corrupted or weakened, and thus prone to temptation. Now, this weakness or corruption is not absolute, but it is potent. A result of it is that our Appetites have become disordered, and no longer serve the Soul and Spirit. Instead they extinguish the life of the Spirit, and attempt to subvert the Soul so that it serves them (aka, Overbear the Will).

Feelings and emotions are tied to both our Sense function, as as well as our Appetites. They may well (and almost certainly do) have a connection to our Soul in addition, but they definitely are connected to our Body. This means that our emotions and feelings are susceptible to the weakness in our Flesh. Thus, our Feelings are not to be trusted. They may reveal some truth, but their very nature is deceptive. They work towards satisfying the desires of our Appetites, even when, perhaps especially when, those Appetites are no longer aligned with Reason.

C. Led Astray

Ultimately, we cannot trust the flesh- it will lead us astray, and keep us from living a Spiritual Life. The Flesh (our Body) and the Spirit, because of Original Sin, are opposed to one another. They no longer are in harmony, as they were in the Garden of Eden.

> [16] Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.

(Galatians 5:16-17)

Yet gratifying the desires of the flesh is *exactly* what Churchians would have us do when they tell us to trust the heart of Women- to trust in female *feelings*. In so doing, we are basically being told to trust in the desires of the flesh- so long as that flesh is Female. Further, they expect us to *act* on the desires of the flesh, in other words, to gratify it. As St. Paul clearly states, this is incompatible with a Spiritual Life. By doing that, we cater to, and focus on, worldly matters. Not Spiritual ones.

When you think about it, this whole doctrine is utterly absurd. Consider the reverse scenario- would a call for women to trust in the desires of the flesh of men gain any support *at all*? Much less anywhere near the support that "Woman Good/Man Bad" gets? Of course not. Nor should it. But again, this absurdity doesn't stop plenty of people from believing it, or something like it.

What all of this leads to is a *de facto* replacement of the Holy Spirit by female desires of the flesh. Now, on the face of it, the Holy Spirit is technically still there in Churchian teaching. But as a practical matter living a Spiritual Life is impossible, effectively pushing the Holy Spirit out of a Christian's life. As St. Paul explained, we can live a Spirit-led life or gratify the desires of the flesh. But when most Christians are taught to trust and follow female feelings, and to realign their interests to serve unshackled female Appetites, they are gratifying the flesh. This focuses them on the world, and not God, thus a Spirit-led life is not possible.

III. The Mammon Trap

This ultimately all concludes with what I call the Mammon Trap. To quote from our Lord and Savior:

> No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

This is just another way of saying what St. Paul did in his Letter to the Galatians: We can serve God and live a Spirit-led life, or we can serve Mammon and gratify the desires of the flesh. We have to choose between one or the other. There is no "third way."

A significant part of living a Christian life is based on two things: 1) to know what is Good (aka, how to serve God and live a Spiritual Life) and 2) to desire that Good. In the context of God and Mammon, this means that we must 1) understand how to serve God, and not Mammon, and 2) desire to serve God, and not Mammon.

[To make a historical aside, the Western Church gave priority to the first part- knowledge. The Eastern Church, on the other hand, focused on the latter- desire.]

The tragedy going on is this: Churchianity has pulled a bait and switch- the Mammon Trap. The choice Jesus gave us was to serve God, or serve Mammon. But Churchianity has instead given its adherents a choice between Mammon on one hand, and Mammon on the other.

How so? Simple. The obvious Mammon- love of money and other uncontested evil, is still present. But what the other option should be, serving God, has been replaced by serving the whims of female feelings (and other feminine centered concerns). So the end result is this:

Serve female feelings (disguised as serving God) or serve Mammon

As explained earlier, to orient ourselves to serve female feelings (whether that of others for men, or their own feelings for women) means that we cannot live a Spiritual life. Serving God requires living a Spirit-centered life. Which, to follow that path, is not possible. Therefore the end result is that the choice presented by Churchians is no choice at all. They are pointing us towards Mammon either way. The whole thing is a trap for souls, as people who find themselves caught up in it aren't able to live a Spirit-led life and

be reborn from above, as Jesus explained in John 3.

IV. Conclusion

That brings this post to an end. To recap, Churchianity teaches that men and women alike should trust in female feelings and emotions as they represent God's Will. This has the effect of precluding one from living a Spiritual life. As a result, Churchianity has created a trap for its adherents, as they are forced to choose to serve Mammon on the one hand, and Mammon on the other.

My readers are invited to offer their thoughts on what I've said in this post. Like it or hate it, feel free to voice your thoughts below. I will try and clarify anything I've said within as needed, and as time permits.

Happy Thanksgiving

November 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's normal Tradition Thursday post is on hold on account of the holiday. The series will resume next week. In the meantime, some Scripture and words of wisdom from some Saints. We start with Psalm 118:

> O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
> his steadfast love endures for ever!

> 2 Let Israel say,
> "His steadfast love endures for ever."
> 3 Let the house of Aaron say,
> "His steadfast love endures for ever."
> 4 Let those who fear the Lord say,
> "His steadfast love endures for ever."
> 5 Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
> the Lord answered me and set me free.
> 6 With the Lord on my side I do not fear.
> What can man do to me?
> 7 The Lord is on my side to help me;
> I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.
> 8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
> than to put confidence in man.
> 9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
> than to put confidence in princes.
> 10 All nations surrounded me;
> in the name of the Lord I cut them off!
> 11 They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
> in the name of the Lord I cut them off!
> 12 They surrounded me like bees,
> they blazed[a] like a fire of thorns;
> in the name of the Lord I cut them off!
> 13 I was pushed hard,[b] so that I was falling,
> but the Lord helped me.
> 14 The Lord is my strength and my song;
> he has become my salvation.
> 15 Hark, glad songs of victory
> in the tents of the righteous:
> "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
> 16 the right hand of the Lord is exalted,

the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”
17 I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Lord.
18 The Lord has chastened me sorely,
but he has not given me over to death.
19 Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.
20 This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.
21 I thank thee that thou hast answered me
and hast become my salvation.
22 The stone which the builders rejected
has become the head of the corner.
23 This is the Lord’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
24 This is the day which the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
25 Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord!
O Lord, we beseech thee, give us success!
26 Blessed be he who enters in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
27 The Lord is God,
and he has given us light.
Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar!
28 Thou art my God, and I will give thanks to thee;
thou art my God, I will extol thee.

29 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!

(Psalm 118)

Next we have the Letter from St. James:

17 Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

(James 1:17-18)

Then we move to St. Paul’s Letter to the Colossians:

> [12] Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, [13] forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. [16] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. [17] And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Colossians 3:12-17)

And now a few more saints:

> In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give Him thanks.

-St. Teresa of Avila

> No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.

-St. Ambrose of Milan

Count your Blessings, and be grateful for what you have. Share freely with those without. And thank God unceasingly.

Saturday Saints- #92

November 29, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This day belongs to the letter “L.” Therefore our saint for today is Saint Livinius of Ghent:

> Saint **Livinus** (*c*. 580 – 12 November 657), also **Livinus of Ghent**, was an apostle in Flanders and Brabant, venerated as a saint and martyr in Catholic tradition and more especially at the Saint Bavo Chapel, Ghent. His feast day is 12 November.
>
> …
>
> The legend goes that Livinus was born from Irish nobility. Upon studies in England, where he visited Saint Augustine of Canterbury, he returned to Ireland. He later went on a *peregrinatio Domini* and left Ireland for Ghent (Belgium) and Sealand (Netherlands) where he preached. During one of his sermons, Livinus was attacked in the village of Esse, near Geraardsbergen by a group of pagans who cut out his tongue and severed his head.
>
> The villages of Sint-Lievens-Esse, where he was murdered, and Sint-Lievens-Houtem, where he was buried, were named after him.

Source: His wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #99

November 30, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The first passage for today comes from the Gospel according to St. Luke:

> [10] Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. [11] And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. [12] And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." [13] And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. [14] But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." [15] Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? [16] And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" [17] As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

(Luke 13:10-17)

Most of the commentary I've seen on this passage has fixated on the Sabbath official. I, on the other hand, want to talk about the woman. There is something noteworthy about her affliction, I think. When she meets Jesus she cannot look straight at all. What this meant is that she probably couldn't look at Jesus, especially to gaze at His face. Which calls to mind this section of Psalm 27:

> [6] And now my head shall be lifted up
> above my enemies round about me;
> and I will offer in his tent
> sacrifices with shouts of joy;
> I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

> [7] Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,
> be gracious to me and answer me!
> [8] Thou hast said, "Seek ye my face."
> My heart says to thee,
> "Thy face, Lord, do I seek."

(Psalm 27: 6-8)

Jesus lifted this woman's head up, and how did she respond? She "praised God" in her own way, just as David did in his. The stooped woman is symbolic of humanity. We are all bent over by sin and the works (burdens) of the Evil One such that we cannot see God.

His beauty, manifested in all creation, is hidden from us. Instead we can only look at the ground, at the world, and the things of it. Ultimately, that cannot help but mean that we are fixated upon those things tied to sin. There is no escape for us from this, at least, not any escape to be found in the things of the world. Only Jesus can set us free, only He can lift us up and help us escape the bondage of sin. And only after we have been freed by Him, and lifted up (just as He was lifted up), can we truly see the face of God.

Also worthy of note is that Jesus called the woman over. And she heard him, and obeyed, and came to him. She recognized His voice:

> “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; [2] but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. [3] To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. [4] When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. [5] A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

(John 10:1-5)

We too must listen carefully, that we can hear his voice when He calls to us. That is easier said than done, of course, as the world is filled with distractions. If we become lost in them, we might not hear Him call out. So instead do as St. Paul taught us to do:

> [22] Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, [23] and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

(Ephesians 4:22-24)

Brief Thoughts And Updates

December 2, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Just a few quick things for today. First, on Comments.

A.

I tend to be very lenient when it comes to comments. There are a few things I won't tolerate, however. Here are a couple:

1. Lying about what myself or others have said on this blog. Disagree with what I or others say all you want. But don't put words in anyone's mouth.
2. Excessive vulgarity or obscenity.
3. Using sock-puppets, or repeatedly dropping comments from different screen names and e-mail addresses. If you want to comment here, pick a name and e-mail, and stick with it for a while. No one-off comments.

This list is not exhaustive, only illustrative.

B.

Deep Strength has a post up on Tim Tebow's apparent poor choice in women. I find his analysis to be pretty much spot on. To draw upon some of the ideas I mentioned in this post, Tim is being led on by his Appetites. Thus far he has managed to maintain his chastity, but for how long? Eventually, no matter what, when you play with fire you will get burnt.

Tim needs to reevaluate what he is looking for in a woman. He needs to stop, contemplate Scripture, and pray. He is looking in the wrong places, and until he changes that, things won't get better for him. Here is some arm-chair advice of mine, some of which was echoed in the comments:

1. Stop dating/courting women who lack virtue. Remember, you can know a tree by the fruit it bears. Plus missionary dating is foolhardy at best. Would a bank owner hire a bank robber to guard his bank, in the hope that the robber reforms? Only a fool would.
2. Stop dating/courting famous women. Really. There are few things more destructive to one's character than fame. You are unlikely to find a virtuous woman among famous women. Look elsewhere.
3. Start looking for virtue first, and then switch to filter for attractiveness. Starting with a group that will work off the bat, and then going for the best in that group is a much sounder strategy than he is employing.

Really, this is kind of sad. Tim is, at least among Protestant Christians, near the top of the male MMV hierarchy. I am having trouble thinking of anyone above him. If he started looking in the right places, he at least should be able to marry well, despite the present state of the MMP.

C.

Be Feminine, Not Feminist has started a new blog, which you can find here. She is blogging under a new name (her real one, apparently) with a focus on faith. My Christian readers, especially the female ones, might find it of interest.

D.

Cane Caldo has an excellent post up wherein he looks at marriage and the metaphor of the Vine and Branches. Very much worth a read. He has a follow up to it already, found here.

Scott has a post up as well in reply, which I think also merits reading. You can find it here.

I am going to try and respond to both of them as soon as time permits, as I think there is a lot to be discussed on the matter.

Tradition Thursday- #45

December 4, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

After a brief hiatus, the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures continues. Today's post finishes up the 18th lecture.

> 22. The Faith which we rehearse contains in order the following, *And in one Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; and in one Holy Catholic Church; and in the resurrection of the flesh; and in eternal life.* Now of Baptism and repentance I have spoken in the earliest Lectures; and my present remarks concerning the resurrection of the dead have been made with reference to the Article *In the resurrection of the flesh.* Now then let me finish what still remains to be said for the Article, *In one Holy Catholic Church,* on which, though one might say many things, we will speak but briefly.
>
> 23. It is called Catholic then because it extends over all the world, from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines which ought to come to men's knowledge, concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly ; and because it brings into subjection to godliness the whole race of mankind, governors and governed, learned and unlearned; and because it universally treats and heals the whole class of sins, which are committed by soul or body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and words, and in every kind of spiritual gifts.
>
> 24. And it is rightly named (Ecclesia) because it calls forth and assembles together all men; according as the Lord says in Leviticus, *And make an assembly for all the congregation at the door of the tabernacle of witness*. And it is to be noted, that the word *assemble*, is used for the first time in the Scriptures here, at the time when the Lord puts Aaron into the High-priesthood. And in Deuteronomy also the Lord says to Moses, *Assemble the people unto Me, and let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me*. Deuteronomy 4:10 And he again mentions the name of the Church, when he says concerning the Tables, *And on them were written all the words which the Lord spoke with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the Assembly* ; as if he had said more plainly, in the day in which you were called and gathered together by God. The Psalmist also says, *I will give thanks unto You, O Lord, in the great Congregation; I will praise You among much people*.
>
> 25. Of old the Psalmist sang, *Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, (ye that are) from the fountains of Israel*. But after the Jews for the plots which they made against the Saviour were cast away from His grace, the Saviour built out of the Gentiles a second Holy Church, the Church of us Christians, concerning which he said to Peter, *And upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. Matthew 16:18 And David prophesying of both

these, said plainly of the first which was rejected, *I have hated the Congregation of evil doers* ; but of the second which is built up he says in the same Psalm, *Lord, I have loved the beauty of Your house* ; and immediately afterwards, *In the Congregations will I bless you, O Lord*. For now that the one Church in Judæa is cast off, the Churches of Christ are increased over all the world; and of them it is said in the Psalms, *Sing unto the Lord a new song, His praise in the Congregation of Saints*. Agreeably to which the prophet also said to the Jews, *I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty* Malachi 1:10; and immediately afterwards, *For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name is glorified among the Gentiles*. Concerning this Holy Catholic Church Paul writes to Timothy, *That you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth* 1 Timothy 3:15 .

26. But since the word Ecclesia is applied to different things (as also it is written of the multitude in the theatre of the Ephesians, *And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the Assembly* Acts 19:14), and since one might properly and truly say that there is a *Church of evil doers*, I mean the meetings of the heretics, the Marcionists and Manichees, and the rest, for this cause the Faith has securely delivered to you now the Article, *And in one Holy Catholic Church;* that you may avoid their wretched meetings, and ever abide with the Holy Church Catholic in which you were regenerated. And if ever you are sojourning in cities, inquire not simply where the Lord's House is (for the other sects of the profane also attempt to call their own dens houses of the Lord), nor merely where the Church is, but where is the Catholic Church. For this is the peculiar name of this Holy Church, the mother of us all, which is the spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God (for it is written, *As Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it* Ephesians 5:25, and all the rest,) and is a figure and copy of *Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of us all* Galatians 4:26; which before was barren, but now has many children.

27. For when the first Church was cast off, in the second, which is the Catholic Church, God *has set*, as Paul says, *first Apostles, secondly Prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, various kinds of tongues* 1 Corinthians 12:28, and every sort of virtue, I mean wisdom and understanding, temperance and justice, mercy and loving-kindness, and patience unconquerable in persecutions. She, *by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour* 2 Corinthians 6:7-8, in former days amid persecutions and tribulations crowned the holy martyrs with the varied and blooming chaplets of patience, and now in times of peace by God's grace receives her due honours from *kings and those who are in high place* 1 Timothy 2:2, and from every sort and kindred of men. And while the kings of particular nations have bounds set to their authority, the Holy Church Catholic alone extends her power without limit over the whole world; *for God*, as it is

written, *has made her border peace*. But I should need many more hours for my discourse, if I wished to speak of all things which concern her.

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28. In this Holy Catholic Church receiving instruction and behaving ourselves virtuously, we shall attain the kingdom of heaven, and inherit eternal life; for which also we endure all toils, that we may be made partakers thereof from the Lord. For ours is no trifling aim, but our endeavour is for eternal life. Wherefore in the profession of the Faith, after the words, *And in the resurrection of the flesh,* that is, of the dead (of which we have discoursed), we are taught to believe also *in the life eternal,* for which as Christians we are striving.

29. The real and true life then is the Father, who through the Son in the Holy Spirit pours forth as from a fountain His heavenly gifts to all; and through His love to man, the blessings of the life eternal are promised without fail to us men also. We must not disbelieve the possibility of this, but having an eye not to our own weakness but to His power, we must believe; *for with God all things are possible*. And that this is possible, and that we may look for eternal life, Daniel declares, *And of the many righteous shall they shine as the stars for ever and ever*. And Paul says, *And so shall we be ever with the Lord* 1 Thessalonians 4:17: for the *being for ever with the Lord* implies the life eternal. But most plainly of all the Saviour Himself says in the Gospel, *And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal* Matthew 25:46 .

30. And many are the proofs concerning the life eternal. And when we desire to gain this eternal life, the sacred Scriptures suggest to us the ways of gaining it; of which, because of the length of our discourse, the texts we now set before you shall be but few, the rest being left to the search of the diligent. They declare at one time that it is by faith; for it is written, *He that believes in the Son has eternal life* John 3:36, and what follows; and again He says Himself, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears My word, and believes Him that sent Me, has eternal life* , and the rest. At another time, it is by the preaching of the Gospel; for He says, that *He that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal*. At another time, by martyrdom and confession in Christ’s name; for He says, *And he that hates his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal*. And again, by preferring Christ to riches or kindred; *And every one that has forsaken brethren, or sisters* Matthew 19:29, and the rest, *shall inherit eternal life*. Moreover it is by keeping the commandments, *You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill* , and the rest which follow; as He answered to him that came to Him, and said, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life* Mark 10:17? But further, it is by departing from evil works, and henceforth serving God; for Paul says, *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life* Romans 6:22 .

31. And the ways of finding eternal life are many, though I have passed over

them by reason of their number. For the Lord in His loving-kindness has opened, not one or two only, but many doors, by which to enter into the life eternal, that, as far as lay in Him, all might enjoy it without hindrance. Thus much have we for the present spoken within compass concerning the life eternal, which is the last doctrine of those professed in the Faith, and its termination; which life may we all, both teachers and hearers, by God's grace enjoy!

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32. And now, brethren beloved, the word of instruction exhorts you all, to prepare your souls for the reception of the heavenly gifts. As regards the Holy and Apostolic Faith delivered to you to profess, we have spoken through the grace of the Lord as many Lectures, as was possible, in these past days of Lent; not that this is all we ought to have said, for many are the points omitted; and these perchance are thought out better by more excellent teachers. But now the holy day of the Passover is at hand, and you, beloved in Christ, are to be enlightened *by the Laver of regeneration*. You shall therefore again be taught what is requisite, if God so will; with how great devotion and order you must enter in when summoned, for what purpose each of the holy mysteries of Baptism is performed, and with what reverence and order you must go from Baptism to the Holy Altar of God, and enjoy its spiritual and heavenly mysteries; that your souls being previously enlightened by the word of doctrine, you may discover in each particular the greatness of the gifts bestowed on you by God.

33. And after Easter's Holy Day of salvation, you shall come on each successive day, beginning from the second day of the week, after the assembly into the Holy Place of the Resurrection , and there, if God permit, you shall hear other Lectures; in which you shall again be taught the reasons of every thing which has been done, and shall receive the proofs thereof from the Old and New Testaments,— first, of the things done just before Baptism,— next, how you were cleansed from your sins by the Lord, *by the washing of water with the word* Ephesians 5:26—and how like Priests you have become partakers of the Name of Christ—and how the Seal of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost was given to you—and concerning the mysteries at the Altar of the New Testament, which have taken their beginning from this place, both what the Divine Scriptures have delivered to us, and what is the power of these mysteries, and how ye must approach them, and when and how receive them—and at the end of all, how for the time to come ye must behave yourselves worthily of this grace both in words and deeds, that you may all be enabled to enjoy the life everlasting. And these things shall be spoken, if it be God's pleasure.

34. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice: for your redemption has drawn near* , and the heavenly host of the Angels is waiting for your salvation. And there is now *the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord* Isaiah 40:3; and the Prophet cries, *Ho, you that thirst, come ye to the water* ; and immediately afterwards, *Hearken unto me, and*

you shall eat that which is good, and your soul shall delight itself in good things. And within a little while you shall hear that excellent lesson which says, *Shine, shine, O thou new Jerusalem; for your light has come*. Isaiah 60:1 Of this Jerusalem the prophet has said, *And afterwards you shall be called the city of righteousness, Zion, the faithful mother of cities* ; *because of the law which went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem* , which word has from hence been showered forth on the whole world. To her the Prophet also says concerning you, *Lift up your eyes round about, and behold your children gathered together* ; and she answers, saying, *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves with their young ones to me* ? (*clouds* because of their spiritual nature, and *doves*, from their purity). And again, she says, *Who knows such things? Or who has seen it thus? Did ever a land bring forth in one day? Or was ever a nation born all at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children*. And all things shall be filled with joy unspeakable because of the Lord who said, *Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy*.

35. And may these words be spoken now again over you also, *Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth*; and then; *for the Lord has had mercy on His people, and comforted the lowly of His people*. And this shall come to pass through the loving-kindness of God, who says to you, *Behold, I will blot out as a cloud your transgressions, and as a thick cloud your sins*. Isaiah 44:22 But ye who have been counted worthy of the name of Faithful (of whom it is written, *Upon My servants shall be called a new name which shall be blessed on the earth* ,) you shall say with gladness, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ* Ephesians 1:3 *: in whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace, wherein He abounded towards us* , and what follows; and again, *But God being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ* , and the rest. And again in like manner praise ye the Lord of all good things, saying, *But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we had done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs, according to hope, of eternal life*. Titus 3:4 And may God Himself the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, *give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened* Ephesians 1:17-18, and may He ever keep you in good works, and words, and thoughts; to Whom be glory, honour, and power, through our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and unto all the endless ages of eternity. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #93

December 5, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post belongs to the letter M. This leads to our saint for today, Moninne:

> **Saint Moninne** of Killeavy was one of Ireland's early female saints. After instruction in the religious life, she founded a community, initially consisting of eight virgins and a widow with a baby, at Slieve Gullion, in what became County Armagh. They lived an eremitical life, based on that of Elijah and Saint John the Baptist. Moninne died in 517. Her feast day is July 6.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #100

December 7, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today marks the 100th in this series of posts. It has been almost 2 years since I began this series, and I've covered a lot since then. However, trying to create new content new week about different passages has proven increasingly difficult. So for that reason I am going to suspend this series after this post. Perhaps I will take it up again at some point, who knows what the future will bring? Instead, I am going to try and integrate more scripture into my individual posts, along with more writing by various saints.

A common theme abounds in today's post. I'm sure that my readers will be able to figure it out. We begin with the Song of Songs:

> [12] A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
> a garden locked, a fountain sealed.
> [13] Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates
> with all choicest fruits,
> henna with nard,
> [14] nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
> with all trees of frankincense,
> myrrh and aloes,
> with all chief spices—
> [15] a garden fountain, a well of living water,
> and flowing streams from Lebanon.

(Song 4:12-15)

Then we move to the Book of Sirach:

> [19] My child, keep sound the bloom of your youth,
> and do not give your strength to strangers.
> [20] Seek a fertile field within the whole plain,
> and sow it with your own seed, trusting in your fine stock.
> [21] So your offspring will prosper,
> and, having confidence in their good descent, will grow great.

(Sirach 26:19-21)

This moves us to the Prophet Isaiah:

> Let me sing for my beloved

> my love-song concerning his vineyard:
> My beloved had a vineyard
> on a very fertile hill.
> [2] He dug it and cleared it of stones,

> and planted it with choice vines;
> he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
> and hewed out a wine vat in it;
> he expected it to yield grapes,
> but it yielded wild grapes.

(Isaiah 5:1-2)

Now we turn to the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John:

> “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. [2] He removes every branch
> in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear
> more fruit. [3] You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to
> you. [4] Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself
> unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. [5] I am the
> vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit,
> because apart from me you can do nothing. [6] Whoever does not abide in me is
> thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into
> the fire, and burned. [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for
> whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] My Father is glorified by this,
> that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. [9] As the Father has loved me,
> so I have loved you; abide in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will
> abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his
> love. [11] I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that
> your joy may be complete.

(John 15:1-11)

Finally, St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians:

> [22] Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. [23] For the husband is
> the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he
> is the Savior. [24] Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be,
> in everything, to their husbands.
>
> [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up
> for her, [26] in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by
> the word, [27] so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or
> wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without
> blemish. [28] In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their
> own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hates his own
> body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the
> church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] “For this reason a man will
> leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become
> one flesh.” [32] This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the
> church. [33] Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should

> respect her husband.

(Ephesians 5:22-33)

Hopefully I will be able to tie some of these passages from scripture into a post I will write this week. As always, time is the constraint I can never quite escape.

Two Become One

December 10, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I've been trying to write a proper reply to Cane Caldo's post on how he was Wrong About the Trees, but have been thus far stymied. I really can't think of much to add to what he has already said on the matter. The analogy that he uses, that of the Vine and Branch, is so apt that I am somewhat ashamed I didn't think of it earlier. [I know, that is probably a bit of envy on my part.] My last post showed how agricultural analogies were used quite frequently in Scripture. Israel was often compared to a vineyard [The Lord's Vineyard], and similar comparisons about fertile land were also applied to women as well. The Book of Sirach was especially straightforward about this. The Song of Songs compared the Woman to a garden. So it was all there all along.

But those analogies, while apt, don't have quite the same oomph as does Cane's. I think the reason why is because there is too much of a divide between the farmer and the field he works. They cannot be "One Flesh" in the same way that the Branch and Vine can become "One Flesh." Furthermore, we can see how the Vine is dominant and supports the Branch, in a way that just doesn't quite translate when talking about the Gardner and the Garden. Cane's comparison really allows for us to see how "they are no longer two, but one flesh."

Which brings me to Scott's post on the subject. Scott was interested in the concept of identity in light of Cane's article, and mentioned my background post on the nature of man. I wanted to add to his thoughts the reminder about how Jesus explicitly said that two would become one in Marriage. Specifically, "one flesh." Modern science has helped us understand that Jesus was speaking both literally and metaphysically- there really is a lasting physical union that results from the conjugal act. Given the exchange of DNA and other chemicals, it shouldn't surprise us that our body chemistry can change as well. That can carry with it potential behavioral changes, which just might change our view of ourselves- our identity.

Something else occurs to me as well. There are numerous comparisons in Scripture between marriage and the relationship between God and Man. In that relationship God takes the masculine role and humanity takes the feminine role. Now, from what I understand, our goal as Christians is to become more and more like God. In other words, to become Holy just as He is Holy. This is manifested by living out and achieving a spiritual life. Since "God is Spirit," we then are trying to become just like God. Is that not the same as taking on God's identity? Is that not ultimately our objective, to become as much like God as possible? If so, then we should consider that in light of the comparison of marriage to the relationship of God and Man. If Woman (the feminine) is to take on the identity of God (the masculine), then does it not make sense that the Woman (the feminine) is to take on the identity of Man (the masculine)? At least, when it comes to marriage the woman will undertake more of the identity assumption than the man. That seems to me to be commiserate with the feminine role- to be swept up in and to identify

with the masculine. Something of a perfect symmetry appears to be at play here.

Or at least, that is what my casual musings have lead me to. I’m curious what my readers think. Feel free to chime in folks.

Tradition Thursday- #46

December 11, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Here we are on a Thursday again, and that means a continuation on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. Today features Lecture 19. We've finished up with the Creed, and now address the Sacraments (Mysteries):

> With a Lesson from the First General Epistle of Peter, beginning at *Be sober, be vigilant*, to the end of the Epistle.
>
> 1. I have long been wishing, O true-born and dearly beloved children of the Church, to discourse to you concerning these spiritual and heavenly Mysteries; but since I well knew that seeing is far more persuasive than hearing, I waited for the present season; that finding you more open to the influence of my words from your present experience, I might lead you by the hand into the brighter and more fragrant meadow of the Paradise before us; especially as you have been made fit to receive the more sacred Mysteries, after having been found worthy of divine and life-giving Baptism. Since therefore it remains to set before you a table of the more perfect instructions, let us now teach you these things exactly, that you may know the effect wrought upon you on that evening of your baptism.
>
> 2. First ye entered into the vestibule of the Baptistery, and there facing towards the West ye listened to the command to stretch forth your hand, and as in the presence of Satan ye renounced him. Now ye must know that this figure is found in ancient history. For when Pharaoh, that most bitter and cruel tyrant, was oppressing the free and high-born people of the Hebrews, God sent Moses to bring them out of the evil bondage of the Egyptians. Then the door posts were anointed with the blood of a lamb, that the destroyer might flee from the houses which had the sign of the blood; and the Hebrew people was marvellously delivered. The enemy, however, after their rescue, *pursued after them* Exodus 14:9, 23, and saw the sea wondrously parted for them; nevertheless he went on, following close in their footsteps, and was all at once overwhelmed and engulphed in the Red Sea.
>
> 3. Now turn from the old to the new, from the figure to the reality. There we have Moses sent from God to Egypt; here, Christ, sent forth from His Father into the world: there, that Moses might lead forth an afflicted people out of Egypt; here, that Christ might rescue those who are oppressed in the world under sin: there, the blood of a lamb was the spell against the destroyer; here, the blood of the Lamb without blemish Jesus Christ is made the charm to scare evil spirits: there, the tyrant was pursuing that ancient people even to the sea; and here the daring and shameless spirit, the author of evil, was following you even to the very streams of salvation. The tyrant of old was drowned in the sea; and this present one disappears in the water of salvation.

4. But nevertheless you are bidden to say, with arm outstretched towards him as though he were present, *I renounce you, Satan.* I wish also to say wherefore ye stand facing to the West; for it is necessary. Since the West is the region of sensible darkness, and he being darkness has his dominion also in darkness, therefore, looking with a symbolic meaning towards the West, you renounce that dark and gloomy potentate. What then did each of you stand up and say? *I renounce you, Satan,*— you wicked and most cruel tyrant! Meaning, *I fear your might no longer; for that Christ has overthrown, having partaken with me of flesh and blood, that through these He might by death destroy death Hebrews 2:14-15, that I might not be made subject to bondage for ever. I renounce you,*— you crafty and most subtle serpent. *I renounce you,*— plotter as you are, who under the guise of friendship contrived all disobedience, and work apostasy in our first parents. *I renounce you, Satan,*— the artificer and abettor of all wickedness.

5. Then in a second sentence you are taught to say, *and all your works.* Now the works of Satan are all sin, which also you must renounce—just as one who has escaped a tyrant has surely escaped his weapons also. All sin therefore, of every kind, is included in the works of the devil. Only know this; that all that you say, especially at that most thrilling hour, is written in God's books; when therefore you do any thing contrary to these promises, you shall be judged as a *transgressor*. Galatians 2:18 You renounce therefore the works of Satan; I mean, all deeds and thoughts which are contrary to reason.

6. Then you say, *And all his pomp.* Now the pomp of the devil is the madness of theatres , and horse-races, and hunting, and all such vanity: from which that holy man praying to be delivered says unto God, *Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity*. Be not interested in the madness of the theatre, where you will behold the wanton gestures of the players , carried on with mockeries and all unseemliness, and the frantic dancing of effeminate men —nor in the madness of them who in hunts expose themselves to wild beasts, that they may pamper their miserable appetite; who, to serve their belly with meats, become themselves in reality meat for the belly of untamed beasts; and to speak justly, for the sake of their own god, their belly, they cast away their life headlong in single combats. Shun also horse-races, that frantic and soul-subverting spectacle. For all these are the pomp of the devil.

7. Moreover, the things which are hung up at idol festivals , either meat or bread, or other such things polluted by the invocation of the unclean spirits, are reckoned in the pomp of the devil. For as the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist before the invocation of the Holy and Adorable Trinity were simple bread and wine, while after the invocation the Bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ , so in like manner such meats belonging to the pomp of Satan, though in their own nature simple, become profane by the invocation of the evil spirit.

8. After this you say, *and all your service.* Now the service of the devil is prayer in

idol temples; things done in honour of lifeless idols; the lighting of lamps , or burning of incense by fountains or rivers , as some persons cheated by dreams or by evil spirits do [resort to this], thinking to find a cure even for their bodily ailments. Go not after such things. The watching of birds, divination, omens, or amulets, or charms written on leaves, sorceries, or other evil arts , and all such things, are services of the devil; therefore shun them. For if after renouncing Satan and associating yourself with Christ , thou fall under their influence, you shall find the tyrant more bitter; perchance, because he treated you of old as his own, and relieved you from his hard bondage, but has now been greatly exasperated by you; so you will be bereaved of Christ, and have experience of the other. Have you not heard the old history which tells us of Lot and his daughters? Was not he himself saved with his daughters, when he had gained the mountain, while his wife became a pillar of salt, set up as a monument for ever, in remembrance of her depraved will and her turning back. Take heed therefore to yourself, and turn not again to *what is behind* , having put your hand to the plough, and then turning back to the salt savour of this life's doings; but escape to the mountain, to Jesus Christ, that *stone hewn without hands* Daniel 2:35, 45, which has filled the world.

9. When therefore you renounce Satan, utterly breaking all your covenant with him, that ancient *league with hell* Isaiah 28:15, there is opened to you the paradise of God, which He planted towards the East, whence for his transgression our first father was banished; and a symbol of this was your turning from West to East, the place of light. Then you were told to say, *I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and in one Baptism of repentance.* Of which things we spoke to you at length in the former Lectures, as God's grace allowed us.

10. Guarded therefore by these discourses, *be sober*. *For* our *adversary the devil*, as was just now read, *as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour*. 1 Peter 5:9 But though in former times death was mighty and devoured, at the holy Laver of regeneration God has *wiped away every tear from off all faces*. For you shall no more mourn, now that you have put off the old man; but you shall keep holy-day , *clothed in the garment of salvation* Isaiah 61:10, even Jesus Christ.

11. And these things were done in the outer chamber. But if God will, when in the succeeding lectures on the Mysteries we have entered into the Holy of Holies , we shall there know the symbolic meaning of the things which are there performed. Now to God the Father, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be glory, and power, and majesty, forever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

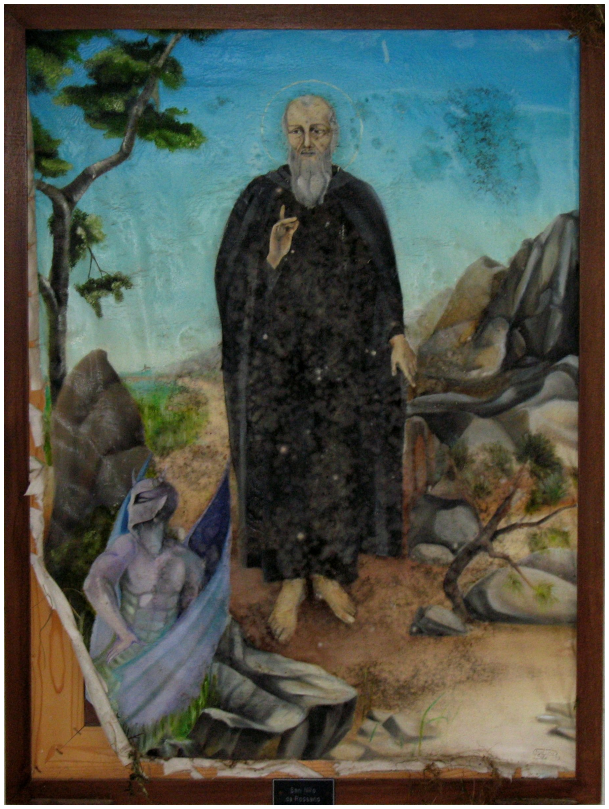
Saturday Saints- #95

December 12, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This Saturday the letter “N” is the starting point for our saint. Thus, today’s saint is St. Nilus the Younger:

> **Saint Nilus the Younger**, (Italian: *San Nilo di Rossano*, Greek: *Ὅσιος Νείλος, ο εκ Καλαβρίας*), (910 – December 27, 1005), was a monk, abbot, and founder of Italo-Greek monasticism in southern Italy. He is venerated as a saint in the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, and his feast day is celebrated on September 26 in both the Byzantine Calendar and the Roman Martyrology.

You can learn more about him at his wiki, located here.



Thoughts On Married Clergy

December 15, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few days ago the blog Catholicism Pure and Simple posted excerpts from an article about a possible push in the next synod to allow married priests. Those who aren't Catholic or Orthodox will probably not find it or this post interesting. But I did, in particular because of my recent experiences. I've been attending a few different Eastern Catholic parishes for a long time now, and at several of the parishes the priest (also pastor) was married. Having had regular occasion to see married priests in action, and also having experiences with celibate priests (both New Mass and TLM alike) for most of my life, I imagine I have a somewhat different perspective than most Catholics. With that in mind, I wanted to offer a few thoughts of my own on the subject.

To begin with, I do not think that married priests in the Western Rite represent the end of the world. Having seen both systems in action, I can assert with a fair measure of confidence that married priests are just as effective in their pastoral and sacramental duties as celibate priests. In fact, I dare say that the married priests I have experience with are more orthodox and better pastors than a fair number of the celibate Western Rite priests I have encountered. From what I can tell their personal experience with marriage and children gives them an insight there in pastoral matters that celibate priests lack. Further, the Eastern Church has had married priests since the beginning, and it has not proven to be any kind of detriment.

At the same time, I fully appreciate the value of celibate priests. The married priests I have had for pastors have all been pastors at smaller parishes. It would be much more difficult for a married priest to be a pastor at a larger parish without running into time issues with his own family. Also, their own outside perspective on marriage can be very valuable as well- they can be detached in vital way. Time, though, is the biggest factor, and it is no surprise that this is mentioned by St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. Celibate priests can devote all their time to pastoral care in a way that married priests can't.

Taken together, I not only have no problem with married priests in the Western Rite, but I think it could prove beneficial. Something that is important to keep in mind is that the Western Rite tradition of only celibate priests is just that- a small "t", human tradition. It is not Sacred Tradition, much less doctrine. It is pastoral discipline. Furthermore, that tradition has been around for less time than married priests were permitted in the Western Church.

However, I am apprehensive about this new "push" for married clergy. I think that the authors of that article may be right that there is more behind it. I suspect that some may be using it as an avenue to try and change actual doctrine, rather than pastoral discipline. If that is the case, and I suspect it is, then caution is the order of the day. It is important to do the right thing for the right reasons, otherwise it soon stops being the right thing.

One further note- I do not see married priests as being a panacea to “cure” the priest shortage here in the West. At least, not by itself. That problem is deeper, and much of it is rooted in series problems with Western seminaries. Until those problems are fixed, the kind of married men you would want to be priests won’t make it through to ordination. In other words, the same negative filter would be applied to them as well as to non-married men.

Widows, “Single-Mothers” And Raising Another Man’s Child

December 17, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Short post today inspired by a concept broached in Rollo’s most recent post.]

For a long time now I have been bothered when Widows with children are called “Single Mothers” or are lumped together with “Single Mothers.” Frankly, it is insulting to widows and is socially destructive as well. A widow is a woman who acted properly, not destructively. She worked within the social system and was a stabilizing force. A “single-mother,” on the other hand, is a woman who engaged in socially destabilizing behavior and essentially undermines society. [There are a few rare exceptions. A woman who murdered her husband, or the victim of rape, for example.]

With that in mind, I would argue that whatever one’s take on raising another man’s child when the mom is a “single-mother” (a PC device I should probably stop using), a ban should not be applied to the children of widows. Here are several reasons why:

- We want women to engage in socially stabilizing behavior. Marrying is one such behavior. Knowing that they can get married again if their husband dies adds extra incentives to women to marry (and have legitimate children).
- Men who marry and have children but die early benefit when their children are taken care of by a new husband/father. Early death can happen to any man- we never know the hour and all that. There is a genetic imperative for us to want to have children that in turn have children. This imperative is served by our genetic children having a father figure in their lives- especially if we die early. It benefits us to not only know our children will be taken care, but to actually have them be taken care of. Furthermore, this possibility benefits pretty much every married man, whatever his station.
- Men who care about having children will also be more likely to want to marry and have legitimate children. This is beneficial to both their children, as well as society. Probably less pronounced an effect on men as to women, but still beneficial to society.

It is up to any man to decide whether or not to marry a true widow, of course. Further, there are few young widows with children these days, so it won’t be a common concern for men looking to marry (or remarry, if they themselves are a widower).

Also, I think that a similar exception should naturally be made for godchildren. Again, responsible husbands/fathers benefit when we know we are looking out for one another, and our families. That doesn’t necessarily mean marrying a widow- both parents could be dead, for example. But similar reasoning applies all the same.

Commenters are of course free to voice their own thoughts below.

Tradition Thursday- #47

December 18, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We are close to the end of St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. Today's post features his 20th lecture.

> Romans 6:3-14
>
> Do you not know, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? etc.....for you are not under the Law, but under grace.
>
> 1. These daily introductions into the Mysteries , and new instructions, which are the announcements of new truths, are profitable to us; and most of all to you, who have been renewed from an old state to a new. Therefore, I shall necessarily lay before you the sequel of yesterday's Lecture, that you may learn of what those things, which were done by you in the inner chamber , were symbolic.
>
> 2. As soon, then, as you entered, you put off your tunic; and this was an image of *putting off the old man with his deeds*. Colossians 3:9 Having stripped yourselves, you were naked; in this also imitating Christ, who was stripped naked on the Cross, and by His nakedness *put off from Himself the principalities and powers, and openly triumphed over them on the tree*. For since the adverse powers made their lair in your members, you may no longer wear that old garment; I do not at all mean this visible one, but the *old man, which waxes corrupt in the lusts of deceit*. Ephesians 4:22 May the soul which has once put him off, never again put him on, but say with the Spouse of Christ in the Song of Songs, *I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on* Song of Songs 5:3? O wondrous thing! You were naked in the sight of all, and were not ashamed ; for truly ye bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed.
>
> 3. Then, when you were stripped, you were anointed with exorcised oil , from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. For you were cut off from the wild olive-tree , and grafted into the good one, and were made to share the fatness of the true olive-tree. The exorcised oil therefore was a symbol of the participation of the fatness of Christ, being a charm to drive away every trace of hostile influence. For as the breathing of the saints, and the invocation of the Name of God, like fiercest flame, scorch and drive out evil spirits , so also this exorcised oil receives such virtue by the invocation of God and by prayer, as not only to burn and cleanse away the traces of sins, but also to chase away all the invisible powers of the evil one.
>
> 4. After these things, you were led to the holy pool of Divine Baptism, as Christ was carried from the Cross to the Sepulchre which is before our eyes. And each of you was asked, whether he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and you made that saving confession, and descended

three times into the water, and ascended again; here also hinting by a symbol at the three days burial of Christ. For as our Saviour passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, so you also in your first ascent out of the water, represented the first day of Christ in the earth, and by your descent, the night; for as he who is in the night, no longer sees, but he who is in the day, remains in the light, so in the descent, as in the night, you saw nothing, but in ascending again you were as in the day. And at the self-same moment you were both dying and being born; and that Water of salvation was at once your grave and your mother. And what Solomon spoke of others will suit you also; for he said, in that case, *There is a time to bear and a time to die* Ecclesiastes 3:2; but to you, in the reverse order, there was a time to die and a time to be born; and one and the same time effected both of these, and your birth went hand in hand with your death.

5. O strange and inconceivable thing! We did not really die, we were not really buried, we were not really crucified and raised again; but our imitation was in a figure, and our salvation in reality. Christ was actually crucified, and actually buried, and truly rose again; and all these things He has freely bestowed upon us, that we, sharing His sufferings by imitation, might gain salvation in reality. O surpassing loving-kindness! Christ received nails in His undefiled hands and feet, and suffered anguish; while on me without pain or toil by the fellowship of His suffering He freely bestows salvation.

6. Let no one then suppose that Baptism is merely the grace of remission of sins, or further, that of adoption; as John's was a baptism conferring only remission of sins: whereas we know full well, that as it purges our sins, and ministers to us the gift of the Holy Ghost, so also it is the counterpart of the sufferings of Christ. For this cause Paul just now cried aloud and said, *Or are you ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into His death*. These words he spoke to some who were disposed to think that Baptism ministers to us the remission of sins, and adoption, but has not further the fellowship also, by representation, of Christ's true sufferings.

7. In order therefore that we might learn, that whatsoever things Christ endured, for us and for our salvation He suffered them in reality and not in appearance, and that we also are made partakers of His sufferings, Paul cried with all exactness of truth, *For if we have been planted together with the likeness of His death, we shall be also with the likeness of His resurrection*. Well has he said, *planted together*. For since the true Vine was planted in this place, we also by partaking in the Baptism of death have been *planted together* with Him. And fix your mind with much attention on the words of the Apostle. He said not, *For if we have been planted together with His death,* but, *with the likeness of His death*. For in Christ's case there was death in reality, for His soul was really separated from His body, and real burial, for His holy body was wrapt in pure linen; and

> everything happened really to Him; but in your case there was only a likeness of death and sufferings, whereas of salvation there was not a likeness but a reality.
>
> 8. Having been sufficiently instructed in these things, keep them, I beseech you, in your remembrance; that I also, unworthy though I be, may say of you, *Now I love you , because ye always remember me, and hold fast the traditions, which I delivered unto you*. And God, who has presented you *as it were alive from the dead* Romans 6:13, is able to grant unto you *to walk in newness of life* : because His is the glory and the power, now and for ever. Amen.

(Source)

This is an interesting lecture, as it reveals that the Church in Jerusalem had Catechumens strip as part of the process of baptism and entry in the Church. From what I recall, this was the case in some Churches for a few centuries, but it eventually died out- for understandable reasons, naturally. While I can understand the theological thinking why, modesty and human frailty are constant matters of concern.

Saturday Saints- #96

December 20, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

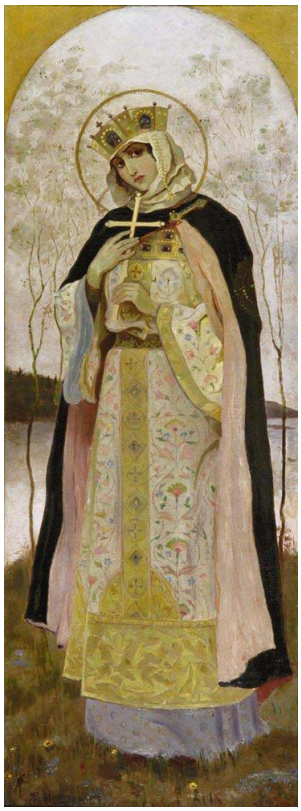
The Letter “O” gets its turn in the ongoing series about the saints. Today’s saint is one who lived an interesting life, to say the least, Olga of Kiev:

> **Saint Olga** (Old Church Slavonic: Ольга, born c. 890 died 11 July 969, Kiev) was a ruler of Kievan Rus’ as regent (945–c. 963) for her son, Svyatoslav.

A few quick facts about her:

- She was born and raised a pagan, and converted decades into her life.
- Marriage proposals to Olga could be a risky business, both for oneself and one’s people.
- She is the grandmother of Vladimir the Great, who Christianized the kingdom of Rus.

I would encourage my readers to learn more about her at her wiki, located here.



St. Olga of Kiev

Tradition Thursday- #48

December 25, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We move yet another step closer to the end of the series on St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical lectures. Today's post features the 21st lecture, which covers Chrism, or Confirmation:

> 1 John 2:20-28
>
> But you have an unction from the Holy One, etc…..that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
>
> 1. Having been *baptized into Christ*, and *put on Christ Galatians 3:27* , you have been made conformable to the Son of God; for God having *foreordained us unto adoption as sons Ephesians 1:5* , made us *to be conformed to the body of Christ's glory*. Philippians 3:21 Having therefore become *partakers of Christ* Hebrews 3:14, you are properly called Christs, and of you God said, *Touch not My Christs* , or anointed. Now you have been made Christs, by receiving the antitype of the Holy Ghost; and all things have been wrought in you by imitation , because you are images of Christ. He washed in the river Jordan, and having imparted of the fragrance of His Godhead to the waters, He came up from them; and the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His being lighted on Him, like resting upon like. And to you in like manner, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given an Unction , the anti-type of that wherewith Christ was anointed; and this is the Holy Ghost; of whom also the blessed Esaias, in his prophecy respecting Him, said in the person of the Lord, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me: He has sent Me to preach glad tidings to the poor* Isaiah 61:1 .
>
> 2. For Christ was not anointed by men with oil or material ointment, but the Father having before appointed Him to be the Saviour of the whole world, anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, as Peter says, *Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost*. Acts 10:38 David also the Prophet cried, saying, *Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your kingdom; You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God even Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows*. And as Christ was in reality crucified, and buried, and raised, and you are in Baptism accounted worthy of being crucified, buried, and raised together with Him in a likeness, so is it with the unction also. As He was anointed with an ideal oil of gladness, that is, with the Holy Ghost, called oil of gladness, because He is the author of spiritual gladness, so you were anointed with ointment, having been made partakers and *fellows of Christ*.
>
> 3. But beware of supposing this to be plain ointment. For as the Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Ghost, is mere bread no longer , but

the Body of Christ, so also this holy ointment is no more simple ointment, nor (so to say) common, after invocation, but it is Christ's gift of grace, and, by the advent of the Holy Ghost, is made fit to impart His Divine Nature. Which ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses ; and while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit.

4. And you were first anointed on the forehead, that you might be delivered from the shame, which the first man who transgressed bore about with him everywhere; and that *with unveiled face ye might reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord*. 2 Corinthians 3:18 Then on your ears; that you might receive the ears which are quick to hear the Divine Mysteries, of which Esaias said, *The Lord gave me also an ear to hear* Isaiah 50:4; and the Lord Jesus in the Gospel, *He that has ears to hear let him hear*. Matthew 11:15 Then on the nostrils; that receiving the sacred ointment ye may say, *We are to God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved*. 2 Corinthians 2:15 Afterwards on your breast; that having put on the *breast-plate of righteousness*, you may *stand against the wiles of the devil*. For as Christ after His Baptism, and the visitation of the Holy Ghost, went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise ye, after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the whole armour of the Holy Ghost, are to stand against the power of the adversary, and vanquish it, saying, *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me* Philippians 4:13 .

5. Having been counted worthy of this Holy Chrism, you are called Christians, verifying the name also by your new birth. For before you were deemed worthy of this grace, you had properly no right to this title, but were advancing on your way towards being Christians.

6. Moreover, you should know that in the old Scripture there lies the symbol of this Chrism. For what time Moses imparted to his brother the command of God, and made him High-priest, after bathing in water, he anointed him; and Aaron was called Christ or Anointed, evidently from the typical Chrism. So also the High-priest, in advancing Solomon to the kingdom, anointed him after he had bathed in Gihon. 1 Kings 1:39 To them however these things happened in a figure, but to you not in a figure, but in truth; because you were truly anointed by the Holy Ghost. Christ is the beginning of your salvation; for He is truly the First-fruit, and you the mass Romans 11:16; but if the First-fruit be holy, it is manifest that Its holiness will pass to the mass also.

7. Keep This unspotted: for it shall teach you all things, if it abide in you, as you have just heard declared by the blessed John, discoursing much concerning this Unction. For this holy thing is a spiritual safeguard of the body, and salvation of the soul. Of this the blessed Esaias prophesying of old time said, *And on this mountain*,— (now he calls the Church a mountain elsewhere also, as when he says, *In the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be manifest* Isaiah 2:2;)— *on this mountain shall the Lord make unto all nations a feast; they*

> *shall drink wine, they shall drink gladness, they shall anoint themselves with ointment*. And that he may make you sure, hear what he says of this ointment as being mystical; *Deliver all these things to the nations, for the counsel of the Lord is unto all nations*. Having been anointed, therefore, with this holy ointment, keep it unspotted and unblemished in you, pressing forward by good works, and being made well-pleasing to the Captain of your salvation, Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

One Of Us

December 26, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

When I was considerably younger, I once wondered why it was that our Lord and Savior came among us as a child. Why so lowly and ignoble an entrance? Fortunately the Letter to the Hebrews provides an explanation:

> [14] Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. [16] For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. [17] Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. [18] For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

(Hebrews 2:14-18)

It was necessary for Jesus to experience all that we have experienced- birth, life, and death- for Him to act as our High Priest and conduit and intercessor with the Father. He became one of us- all so that we might become one with Him.

Have a blessed Christmas everyone.

Saturday Saints- #97

December 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The time has come for the letter “P” to be featured once more. This gives us our saint for today, Saint and Pope Pius I:

> **Pope Saint Pius I** (died c. 155) is said to have been the Bishop of Rome from c. 140 to his death c. 154, according to the *Annuario Pontificio*. His dates are listed as 142 or 146 to 157 or 161, respectively.
>
> …
>
> Pius is believed to have been born at Aquileia, in Northern Italy, during the late 1st century. His father was called “Rufinus”, who was also said to be of Aquileia according to the *Liber Pontificalis*. Pius was of Illyrian origin.
>
> According to the 2nd century Muratorian Canon and the *Liberian Catalogue*, that he was the brother of Hermas, author of the text known as *The Shepherd of Hermas*.
>
> …
>
> According to Catholic tradition, St Pius I governed the Church in the middle of the 2nd century during the reigns of the Emperors Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. He is held to be the ninth successor of Saint Peter, who decreed that Easter should only be kept on a Sunday. Although credited with ordering the publication of the *Liber Pontificalis*, compilation of that document was not started before the beginning of the 6th century. He is also said to have built one of the oldest churches in Rome, Santa Pudenziana.

More can be found out about this pope at his wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #101 An Enduring Ailment

December 27, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming;
> but who can stand before jealousy?

(Proverbs 27:4)

> [13] Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

(James 3:13-16)

> For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?

(1 Cor 3:3)

I have a problem with envy. It has proven a most persistent sin to eliminate from my life. Not that it has the most hold on me, but it is persistent all the same. That is not to say that I haven't made improvements- I have. Yet I know I have a long way to go. It is an easy thing to say "count your blessings." But it is another entirely to actually focus on what you have, and be thankful for it, rather than to look on that which is enjoyed by others.

Jesus called out the Pharisees for cleaning the outside of their bodies, while ignoring their hearts in matters of purification. I need to spend more time on that myself. As it is, I know that envy is hurting my efforts to live a spiritual life. I will ask of God the same thing that King David asked:

> Create in me a clean heart, O God,
> and put a new and right spirit within me.

(Psalm 51:10)

Tradition Thursday- #49

December 31, 2015 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We are almost finished with St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. Today's post features the 22nd, and the second to last. The topic is the Eucharist:

> 1 Corinthians 11:23
>
> I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, etc.
>
> 1. Even of itself the teaching of the Blessed Paul is sufficient to give you a full assurance concerning those Divine Mysteries, of which having been deemed worthy, you have become of *the same body* and blood with Christ. For you have just heard him say distinctly, *That our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks He broke it, and gave to His disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is My Body: and having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, Take, drink, this is My Blood*. Since then He Himself declared and said of the Bread, *This is My Body*, who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since He has Himself affirmed and said, *This is My Blood*, who shall ever hesitate, saying, that it is not His blood?
>
> 2. He once in Cana of Galilee, turned the water into wine, akin to blood , and is it incredible that He should have turned wine into blood? When called to a bodily marriage, He miraculously wrought that wonderful work; and *on the children of the bride-chamber* Matthew 9:15, shall He not much rather be acknowledged to have bestowed the fruition of His Body and Blood ?
>
> 3. Wherefore with full assurance let us partake as of the Body and Blood of Christ: for in the figure of Bread is given to you His Body, and in the figure of Wine His Blood; that you by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, may be made of the same body and the same blood with Him. For thus we come to bear Christ in us, because His Body and Blood are distributed through our members; thus it is that, according to the blessed Peter, *we become partakers of the divine nature* 2 Peter 1:4 .
>
> 4. Christ on a certain occasion discoursing with the Jews said, *Except you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you*. John 6:53 They not having heard His saying in a spiritual sense were offended, and went back, supposing that He was inviting them to eat flesh.
>
> 5. In the Old Testament also there was show-bread; but this, as it belonged to the Old Testament, has come to an end; but in the New Testament there is Bread of heaven, and a Cup of salvation, sanctifying soul and body; for as the Bread corresponds to our body, so is the Word appropriate to our soul.
>
> 6. Consider therefore the Bread and the Wine not as bare elements, for they are, according to the Lord's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ; for even though

sense suggests this to you, yet let faith establish you. Judge not the matter from the taste, but from faith be fully assured without misgiving, that the Body and Blood of Christ have been vouchsafed to you.

7. Also the blessed David shall advise you the meaning of this, saying, *You have prepared a table before me in the presence of them that afflict me*. What he says, is to this effect: Before Your coming, the evil spirits prepared a table for men , polluted and defiled and full of devilish influence ; but since Your coming. O Lord, *You have prepared a table before me*. When the man says to God, *You have prepared before me a table*, what other does he indicate but that mystical and spiritual Table, which God has prepared for us *over against*, that is, contrary and in opposition to the evil spirits? And very truly; for that had communion with devils, but this, with God. *You have anointed my head with oil*. With oil He anointed your head upon your forehead, for the seal which you have of God; that you may be made *the engraving of the signet, Holiness unto God*. And *your cup intoxicates me, as very strong*. You see that cup here spoken of, which Jesus took in His hands, and gave thanks, and said, *This is My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* Matthew 26:28 .

8. Therefore Solomon also, hinting at this grace, says in Ecclesiastes, *Come hither, eat your bread with joy* (that is, the spiritual bread; *Come hither*, he calls with the call to salvation and blessing), *and drink your wine with a merry heart* (that is, the spiritual wine); *and let oil be poured out upon your head* you see he alludes even to the mystic Chrism); *and let your garments be always white, for the Lord is well pleased with your works* Ecclesiastes 9:7-8; for before you came to Baptism, your works were *vanity of vanities*. But now, having put off your old garments, and put on those which are spiritually white, you must be continually robed in white: of course we mean not this, that you are always to wear white raiment; but you must be clad in the garments that are truly white and shining and spiritual, that you may say with the blessed Esaias, *My soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with a garment of salvation, and put a robe of gladness around me* Isaiah 61:10 .

9. Having learned these things, and been fully assured that the seeming bread is not bread, though sensible to taste, but the Body of Christ; and that the seeming wine is not wine, though the taste will have it so, but the Blood of Christ ; and that of this David sung of old, saying, *And bread strengthens man’s heart, to make his face to shine with oil , strengthen your heart,* by partaking thereof as spiritual, and *make the face of your soul to shine.* And so having it unveiled with a pure conscience, may you *reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord* 2 Corinthians 3:18, and proceed from *glory to glory*, in Christ Jesus our Lord:— To whom be honour, and might, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #98

January 3, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter Q has always been a difficult letter to find for a saint. Fortunately, I found one that I haven't covered already. This brings us today's saint, St. Quodvultdeus:

> **Quodvultdeus** (Latin for "what God wills", died c. 450 AD) was a fifth-century church father and bishop of Carthage who was exiled to Naples. He was known to have been living in Carthage around 407 and became a deacon in 421 AD. He corresponded with Augustine of Hippo, who served as Quodvultdeus' spiritual teacher. Augustine also dedicated some of his writings to Quodvultdeus.
>
> Quodvultdeus was exiled when Carthage was captured by the Vandals led by King Genseric, who followed Arianism. Tradition states that he and other churchmen (such as Gaudiosus of Naples) were loaded onto leaky ships that landed at Naples around 439 AD and Quodvultdeus established himself in Italy. He would go on to convert dozens of Arian Goths to Orthodoxy in his lifetime.

(Source)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #102 The Great “But…”

January 4, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> [15] One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who
> will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” [16] Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave
> a great dinner and invited many. [17] At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to
> say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ [18] But
> they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece
> of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ [19] Another said, ‘I
> have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my
> regrets.’ [20] Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’
> [21] So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the
> house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and
> lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’
> [22] And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still
> room.’ [23] Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and
> compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. [24] For I tell you, none
> of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

(Luke 14:15-24)

Human beings love to make excuse. We constantly tell God that we would love to do what He wants us to do, …BUT… there is something in the way. Something we need to do first, or something that prevents us from carrying out his wishes. This is exactly what Jesus is addressing in his parable here- our love of, and our capacity for, excuses. Here is another:

> [21] Another of his disciples said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”
> [22] But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

(Matthew 8:21)

I call this “The Great But….”

Of course, it isn’t always restricted to requests made by God (or even commands). Oftentimes I see it in relation to matters which are connected to the Faith, but not so overt as a divine command. IN particular, when I relate some of the problems going on with the Church I will often get a lot of agreement from more Traditional minded folk. However, once I start to talk about possible solutions to the various problems ailing the Church I hear that “But…” come up again and again. As a result, nothing ever seems to get done. Everyone is too busy offering qualifications and excuses.

Frankly, it is tiring and frustrating to me. I can only imagine what it is like for God to hear that time and time and time and time again. That alone should be motivation for me to not do that the Lord- that instead of offering an excuse when he asks something of me, to

instead do it as speedily as possible.

Tradition Thursday- #50

January 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today we finish St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures. This is is 23 and final lecture, which concerns the liturgical rites of the Church in Jersusalem at the time. I suspect that some of my Catholic and Orthodox readers will find some interest in this final lecture:

> 1 Peter 2:1
>
> *Wherefore putting away all filthiness, and all guile, and evil speaking , etc.*
>
> 1. By the loving-kindness of God you have heard sufficiently at our former meetings concerning Baptism, and Chrism, and partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ; and now it is necessary to pass on to what is next in order, meaning today to set the crown on the spiritual building of your edification.
>
> 2. You have seen then the Deacon who gives to the Priest water to wash , and to the Presbyters who stand round God's altar. He gave it not at all because of bodily defilement; it is not that; for we did not enter the Church at first with defiled bodies. But the washing of hands is a symbol that you ought to be pure from all sinful and unlawful deeds; for since the hands are a symbol of action, by washing them, it is evident, we represent the purity and blamelessness of our conduct. Did you not hear the blessed David opening this very mystery, and saying, *I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will compass Your Altar, O Lord* ? The washing therefore of hands is a symbol of immunity from sin.
>
> 3. Then the Deacon cries aloud, *Receive ye one another; and let us kiss one another.* Think not that this kiss is of the same character with those given in public by common friends. It is not such: but this kiss blends souls one with another, and courts entire forgiveness for them. The kiss therefore is the sign that our souls are mingled together, and banish all remembrance of wrongs. For this cause Christ said, *If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there rememberest that your brother has anything against time, leave there your gift upon the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift*. The kiss therefore is reconciliation, and for this reason holy: as the blessed Paul somewhere cried, saying, *Greet ye one another with a holy kiss* 1 Corinthians 16:20; and Peter, *with a kiss of charity* 1 Peter 3:15 .
>
> 4. After this the Priest cries aloud, *Lift up your hearts.* For truly ought we in that most awful hour to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earth and earthly things. In effect therefore the Priest bids all in that hour to dismiss all cares of this life, or household anxieties, and to have their heart in heaven with the merciful God. Then ye answer, *We lift them up unto the Lord:* assenting to it, by your avowal. But let no one come here, who could say with his mouth, *We lift up our hearts unto the Lord,* but in his thoughts have his mind

concerned with the cares of this life. At all times, rather, God should be in our memory but if this is impossible by reason of human infirmity, in that hour above all this should be our earnest endeavour.

5. Then the Priest says, *Let us give thanks unto the Lord.* For verily we are bound to give thanks, that He called us, unworthy as we were, to so great grace; that He reconciled us when we were His foes; that He vouchsafed to us the Spirit of adoption. Then ye say, *It is meet and right:* for in giving thanks we do a meet thing and a right; but He did not right, but more than right, in doing us good, and counting us meet for such great benefits.

6. After this, we make mention of heaven, and earth, and sea ; of sun and moon; of stars and all the creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible; of Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Thrones; of the Cherubim with many faces: in effect repeating that call of David's *Magnify the Lord with me*. We make mention also of the Seraphim, whom Esaias in the Holy Spirit saw standing around the throne of God, and with two of their wings veiling their face, and with two their feet, while with two they did fly, crying *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Sabaoth*. Isaiah 6:2-3 For the reason of our reciting this confession of God , delivered down to us from the Seraphim, is this, that so we may be partakers with the hosts of the world above in their Hymn of praise.

7. Then having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual Hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before Him; that He may make the Bread the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ ; for whatsoever the Holy Ghost has touched, is surely sanctified and changed.

8. Then, after the spiritual sacrifice, the bloodless service, is completed, over that sacrifice of propitiation we entreat God for the common peace of the Churches, for the welfare of the world ; for kings; for soldiers and allies; for the sick; for the afflicted; and, in a word, for all who stand in need of succour we all pray and offer this sacrifice.

9. Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition. Then on behalf also of the Holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and in a word of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to the souls , for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is set forth.

10. And I wish to persuade you by an illustration. For I know that many say, what is a soul profited, which departs from this world either with sins, or without sins, if it be commemorated in the prayer? For if a king were to banish certain who had given him offense, and then those who belong to them should weave a crown and offer it to him on behalf of those under punishment, would he not grant a remission of their penalties? In the same way we, when we offer to Him our

supplications for those who have fallen asleep, though they be sinners, weave no crown, but offer up Christ sacrificed for our sins , propitiating our merciful God for them as well as for ourselves.

11. Then, after these things, we say that Prayer which the Saviour delivered to His own disciples, with a pure conscience entitling God our Father, and saying, *Our Father, which art in heaven*. O most surpassing loving-kindness of God! On them who revolted from Him and were in the very extreme of misery has He bestowed such a complete forgiveness of evil deeds, and so great participation of grace, as that they should even call Him Father. *Our Father, which art in heaven*; and they also are a heaven who *bear the image of the heavenly*
1 Corinthians 15:49, in whom is God, *dwelling and walking in them*
2 Corinthians 6:16 .

12. *Hallowed be Your Name*. The Name of God is in its nature holy, whether we say so or not; but since it is sometimes profaned among sinners, according to the words, *Through you My Name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles* , we pray that in us God's Name may be hallowed; not that it comes to be holy from not being holy, but because it becomes holy in us, when we are made holy, and do things worthy of holiness.

13. *Your kingdom come*. A pure soul can say with boldness, *Your kingdom come*; for he who has heard Paul saying, *Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body* Romans 6:12, and has cleansed himself in deed, and thought, and word, will say to God, *Your kingdom come*.

14. *Your will be done as in heaven so on earth*. God's divine and blessed Angels do the will of God, as David said in the Psalm, *Bless the Lord, all you Angels of His, mighty in strength, that do His pleasure*. So then in effect you mean this by your prayer, *as in the Angels Your will is done, so likewise be it done on earth in me, O Lord.*

15. *Give us this day our substantial bread*. This common bread is not substantial bread, but this Holy Bread is substantial, that is, appointed for the substance of the soul. For this Bread *goes* not *into the belly and is cast out into the draught* Matthew 15:17, but is distributed into your whole system for the benefit of body and soul. But by *this day*, he means, *each day,* as also Paul said, *While it is called today* Hebrews 3:15 .

16. *And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors*. For we have many sins. For we offend both in word and in thought, and very many things we do worthy of condemnation; and *if we say that we have no sin*, we lie, as John says. And we make a covenant with God, entreating Him to forgive us our sins, as we also forgive our neighbours their debts. Considering then what we receive and in return for what, let us not put off nor delay to forgive one another. The offenses committed against us are slight and trivial, and easily settled; but those which we have committed against God are great, and need such mercy as His only is. Take

heed therefore, lest for the slight and trivial sins against you, you shut out for yourself forgiveness from God for your very grievous sins.

17. *And lead us not into temptation, O Lord*. Is this then what the Lord teaches us to pray, that we may not be tempted at all? How then is it said elsewhere, *a man untempted, is a man unproved ;* and again, *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations* James 1:2? But does perchance the entering into temptation mean the being overwhelmed by the temptation? For temptation is, as it were, like a winter torrent difficult to cross. Those therefore who are not overwhelmed in temptations, pass through, showing themselves excellent swimmers, and not being swept away by them at all; while those who are not such, enter into them and are overwhelmed. As for example, Judas having entered into the temptation of the love of money, swam not through it, but was overwhelmed and was strangled both in body and spirit. Peter entered into the temptation of the denial; but having entered, he was not overwhelmed by it, but manfully swam through it, and was delivered from the temptation. Listen again, in another place, to a company of unscathed saints, giving thanks for deliverance from temptation, *You, O God hast proved us; You have tried us by fire like as silver is tried. You brought us into the net; You layed afflictions upon our loins. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; and you brought us out into a place of rest*. You see them speaking boldly in regard to their having passed through and not been pierced. *But You brought us out into a place of rest*; now their coming into a place of rest is their being delivered from temptation.

18. *But deliver us from the evil*. If *Lead us not into temptation* implied the not being tempted at all, He would not have said, *But deliver us from the evil*. Now evil is our adversary the devil, from whom we pray to be delivered. Then after completing the prayer you say *Amen* ; by this *Amen*, which means *So be it,* setting your seal to the petitions of the divinely-taught prayer.

19. After this the Priest says, *Holy things to holy men.* Holy are the gifts presented, having received the visitation of the Holy Ghost; holy are you also, having been deemed worthy of the Holy Ghost; the holy things therefore correspond to the holy persons. Then ye say, *One is Holy, One is the Lord, Jesus Christ.* For One is truly holy, by nature holy; we too are holy, but not by nature, only by participation, and discipline, and prayer.

20. After this ye hear the chanter inviting you with a sacred melody to the communion of the Holy Mysteries, and saying, *O taste and see that the Lord is good*. Trust not the judgment to your bodily palate no, but to faith unfaltering; for they who taste are bidden to taste, not bread and wine, but the anti-typical Body and Blood of Christ.

21. In approaching therefore, come not with your wrists extended, or your fingers spread; but make your left hand a throne for the right, as for that which is to

> receive a King. And having hollowed your palm, receive the Body of Christ, saying over it, *Amen*. So then after having carefully hallowed your eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake of it; giving heed lest you lose any portion thereof ; for whatever you lose, is evidently a loss to you as it were from one of your own members. For tell me, if any one gave you grains of gold, would you not hold them with all carefulness, being on your guard against losing any of them, and suffering loss? Will you not then much more carefully keep watch, that not a crumb fall from you of what is more precious than gold and precious stones?
>
> 22. Then after you have partaken of the Body of Christ, draw near also to the Cup of His Blood; not stretching forth your hands, but bending , and saying with an air of worship and reverence, *Amen* , hallow yourself by partaking also of the Blood of Christ. And while the moisture is still upon your lips, touch it with your hands, and hallow your eyes and brow and the other organs of sense. Then wait for the prayer, and give thanks unto God, who has accounted you worthy of so great mysteries.
>
> 23. Hold fast these traditions undefiled and, keep yourselves free from offense. Sever not yourselves from the Communion; deprive not yourselves, through the pollution of sins, of these Holy and Spiritual Mysteries. *And the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved entire without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* 1 Thessalonians 5:23:— To whom be glory and honour and might, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #99

January 10, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

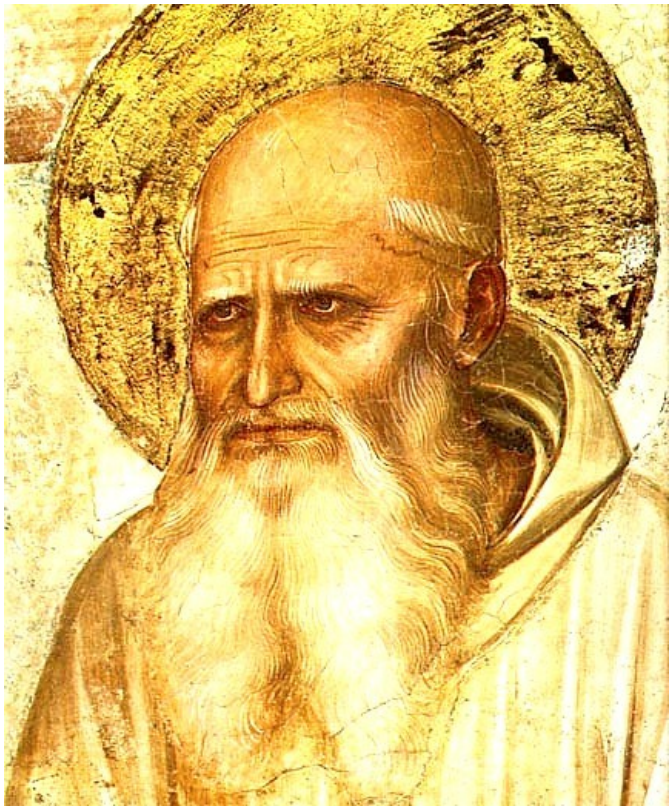
The letter “R” graces this series once more. Our saint is therefore Saint Romuald:

> **Romuald** (c. 951 – traditionally 19 June, c. 1025/27) was the founder of the Camaldolese order and a major figure in the eleventh-century “Renaissance of eremitical asceticism”.

A sampling from his bio:

> According to the *vita* by Peter Damian, written about fifteen years after Romuald’s death, Romuald was born in Ravenna, in northeastern Italy, to the aristocratic Onesti family. His father was Sergius degli Onesti and his mother was Traversara Traversari. As a youth, according to early accounts, Romuald indulged in the pleasures and sins of the world common to a tenth-century nobleman. At the age of twenty he served as second to his father, who killed a relative in a duel over property. Romuald was devastated, and went to the Basilica of Sant’Apollinare in Classe to do 40 days of penance. After some indecision, Romuald became a monk there. San Apollinare had recently been reformed by St. Maieul of Cluny Abbey, but still was not strict enough in its observance to satisfy Romuald. His injudicious correction of the less zealous aroused such enmity against him that he applied for, and was readily granted, permission to retire to Venice, where he placed himself under the direction of a hermit named Marinus and lived a life of extraordinary severity.

You can read more about this saint at his wiki, located here.



St. Romuald

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #103 Isolation v. Inoculation

January 11, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Free Northerner's post on the subject of the "Christian culture industry" got me thinking about the subject of parenting and protecting your children from dangerous influences. One of the points that Free Northerner makes (and one that I hear many parents at my parish make) is that you can't keep all negative influences away from your children. At least, not unless you are willing to live in an Amish type commune. Otherwise, they will find some way of reaching your children. Isolation- living in a bubble- is just not practical if you are unwilling to completely detach yourself and your family from the world.

A better strategy than attempting isolation, I would think, would be one of "inoculation." As your children mature, deliberately expose them to some of the myriad temptations and evil influences that are out there in the world. But do so in a controlled way- while you are present and able to explain the subject(s) in question to them. This way their first experiences with these matters can be shaped by you, their parents, and not the general culture.

Of course, this is all easier said than done. But it seems sensible to me. I invite my readers to offer you thoughts on the subject. Also, I invite you to offer any additional quotes from scripture that you think might be relevant. Here are two that seem to connect (at least somewhat) with what I've discussed:

> [9] I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons—
> [10] not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. [11] But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? [13] God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

(1 Cor 5:9-13)

> My child, keep my words
> and store up my commandments with you;
> [2] keep my commandments and live,
> keep my teachings as the apple of your eye;
> [3] bind them on your fingers,
> write them on the tablet of your heart.
> [4] Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
> and call insight your intimate friend,
> [5] that they may keep you from the loose woman,

from the adulteress with her smooth words.

6 For at the window of my house
I looked out through my lattice,
7 and I saw among the simple ones,
I observed among the youths,
a young man without sense,
8 passing along the street near her corner,
taking the road to her house
9 in the twilight, in the evening,
at the time of night and darkness.
10 Then a woman comes toward him,
decked out like a prostitute, wily of heart.
11 She is loud and wayward;
her feet do not stay at home;
12 now in the street, now in the squares,
and at every corner she lies in wait.
13 She seizes him and kisses him,
and with impudent face she says to him:
14 "I had to offer sacrifices,
and today I have paid my vows;
15 so now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have found you!
16 I have decked my couch with coverings,
colored spreads of Egyptian linen;
17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;
let us delight ourselves with love.
19 For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.
20 He took a bag of money with him;
he will not come home until full moon."
21 With much seductive speech she persuades him;
with her smooth talk she compels him.
22 Right away he follows her,
and goes like an ox to the slaughter,
or bounds like a stag toward the trap[c]
23 until an arrow pierces its entrails.
He is like a bird rushing into a snare,
not knowing that it will cost him his life.

> [24] And now, my children, listen to me,
> and be attentive to the words of my mouth.
> [25] Do not let your hearts turn aside to her ways;
> do not stray into her paths.
> [26] For many are those she has laid low,
> and numerous are her victims.
> [27] Her house is the way to Sheol,
> going down to the chambers of death.

(Proverbs 7)

A Failure To Communicate

January 13, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

One of the various subjects this blog is devoted to is analyzing and addressing the differences in communication styles and methods between men and women. No easy task, given both the difficulty of the subject matter as well as social conditions. However, it is a critical one as failures to understand how men and women communicate are a major cause of family troubles in the present age- especially among Christians.

For a recent example of a failure to communicate, see this post and its follow-up by Sunshine Mary. They stem from a post by Dalrock, Unhinged. All three posts showcase a serious ignorance of how how men and women communicate. I encourage my readers to look at all three posts, as this post won't make sense without that- especially Sunshine's most recent post. In my post I want to focus in particular on that second one, "Is the problem a lack of listening or a lack of submitting?"

The Good Pastor that Sunshine discusses is a man concerned about his wife's well-being. Perfect? Of course not. No man is. Yet it is clear that he tried to, in his mind, find out what was wrong. To discover what was bothering his wife. Unfortunately, his ignorance of his wife's nature got in the way of his honorable efforts. Instead of making things better, his efforts to find out what was troubling his wife only made matters worse.

No doubt Pastor Wangerin believed that he was listening to his wife, or at least, willing to listen. Sadly, he wasn't. Oh, he was listening to what *words* she said. But he utterly failed to listen to the real message that she was trying to convey. A message conveyed without words. This is a common error that men make- we pay attention to the verbal message and miss all of the other cues that women are sending our way. In many instances, especially when the matter is important, and emotions are involved, the verbal message is less important than non-verbal communication. Sometimes it doesn't matter at all.

Wangerin's wife was sending a barrage of messages his way, but he kept on missing them. His wife, of course, couldn't help but notice that he missed them. To her they were plain as day. If he was listening to her then he would, *of course*, understand what she was trying to tell him. So she interpreted this (mostly at an unconscious level) to mean *he wasn't listening!*

Remember, women expect men to Just. Get. It. A *real* man would just understand what is going on. He wouldn't need it explained to him. Pastor Wangerin's continued inquiries only served to remind his wife, again and again, that he *didn't* get it. This conveyed to her, at an unconscious level, that he wasn't a real man. *That* is the message he conveyed to his wife.

His wife later told him that she felt that he wasn't prioritizing her enough, among other things. Said other way, she didn't feel like he was present enough in her life. Fascinatingly enough, this was probably a true charge on her part. She likely did miss his masculine presence in her life. Unfortunately, his inability to understand his wife meant

that he acted in such a way as to heighten this absence in her life.

If there is a lesson to be learned here (and I think there is more than one), it is that husbands need to listen to *all* that their wife says. That means what she says verbally, *and* what she says non-verbally. Pay more attention to your wife's behavior and mannerisms so you can pick up those subtle cues. Is this a lot of work? Sure is. But it is part of the duty of headship.

> Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.

(1 Peter 3:7)

At the same time, wives need to understand that men do not communicate as they do. They need to keep this in mind, and to alter their own communication style so they can sync up with their husbands. Don't simply assume that they will "get you." This means less non-verbal communication, and more straightforward explanation to one's husband of what is wrong. Both of you will benefit from clear communication between you.

> My soul takes pleasure in three things,
> and they are beautiful in the sight of the Lord and of men;
> agreement between brothers, friendship between neighbors,
> and a wife and a husband who live in harmony.

(Sirach 25:1)

True Ignorance

January 15, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Donald Rumsfeld, for all of his many faults, had this gem to say before he left his position as Secretary of Defense:

> Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones.

I like to call that latter state "True Ignorance." I suspect there is a real word or phrase to describe it, but my cursory search for one yielded nothing. Perhaps a reader could supply it for me.

I call it "True Ignorance" because there is no easy method of resolving the issue. When I know there is a gap in my knowledge, then I stand some chance of fixing it- perhaps even a good one. Most importantly, I can actively work to overcome that bit of ignorance. But when I have no inkling that there is some gap in my knowledge, then I cannot take active measures to fix it. It lies there, dormant, until happenstance (should it arise) gives me an opportunity to fix it.

This was the case for me in a lot of matters in my life, but most especially my faith. I had huge gaps in my knowledge of spiritual matters, and hadn't a clue that the gaps existed. So for years I did nothing to overcome this knowledge deficit, unaware even that the deficit existed.

Some instances of "True Ignorance" can't be avoided. But my ignorance of matters of the Faith was not one of them. Those who came before me were in a position to inform me of how much more there was to my faith than the miserly catechism I received. But they didn't. They left me in a state of abject ignorance, which I have only recently been working to correct.

Part of the reason I have been writing my "Tradition Thursday" series of posts was to cover some of that history, tradition and teaching that I never knew of when I was younger. While the name was a bit of a misnomer, the overall goal was to share with my readers some of what I had discovered for myself. Perhaps I can help others in the same way I was helped myself- lifting the veil of ignorance.

All of which is a convoluted way of saying that I am going to keep writing posts like I have. I may change the name or format, but I intend to keep them up in one form or another. I may also move it to another day, but I intend, for the near future at least, to continue doing what I have been. Just don't be surprised if it looks a little different in the

future.

[Side note: I may be out of town this weekend, so weekend posting may not take place.]

Saturday Saints- #100

January 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today marks the 100th post in this series. It has been roughly two years since I started, and I have enjoyed it thus far. Unfortunately, certain letters are less well represented than others in the names of Saints. This means that I won't be able to continue this series as I have been. Once I finish with the alphabet in this iteration, I will change how I run this series. I haven't decided yet what method to follow, but when I do I will mention it in one of these posts.

The letter for today is "S", and this gives us Saint Stephen I of Hungary:

> **Stephen I**, also known as **King Saint Stephen** (Hungarian: *Szent István király*; Latin: *Sanctus Stephanus*; Slovak: *Štefan I. or Štefan Veľký*; c. 975 – 15 August 1038 AD), was the last Grand Prince of the Hungarians between 997 and 1000 or 1001, and the first King of Hungary from 1000 or 1001 until his death in 1038. The year of his birth is uncertain, but many details of his life suggest that he was born in or after 975 in Esztergom. At his birth, he was given the pagan name **Vajk**. The date of his baptism is unknown. He was the only son of Grand Prince Géza and his wife, Sarolt, who was descended from the prominent family of the *gyulas*. Although both of his parents were baptized, Stephen was the first member of his family to become a devout Christian. He married Gisela of Bavaria, a scion of the imperial Ottonian dynasty.
>
> After succeeding his father in 997, Stephen had to fight for the throne against his relative, Koppány, who was supported by large numbers of pagan warriors. He defeated Koppány mainly with the assistance of foreign knights, including Vecelin, Hont and Pázmány, but also with help from native lords. He was crowned on 25 December 1000 or 1 January 1001 with a crown sent by Pope Sylvester II. In a series of wars against semi-independent tribes and chieftains—including the Black Hungarians and his uncle, Gyula the Younger—he unified the Carpathian Basin. He protected the independence of his kingdom by forcing the invading troops of Conrad II, Holy Roman Emperor, to withdraw from Hungary in 1030.
>
> Stephen established at least one archbishopric, six bishoprics and three Benedictine monasteries; thus the Church in Hungary developed independently of the archbishops of the Holy Roman Empire. He encouraged the spread of Christianity with severe punishments for ignoring Christian customs. His system of local administration was based on counties organized around fortresses and administered by royal officials. Hungary, which enjoyed a lasting period of peace during his reign, became a preferred route for pilgrims and merchants traveling between Western Europe and the Holy Land or Constantinople.
>
> He survived all of his children. He died on 15 August 1038 and was buried in his new basilica, built in Székesfehérvár and dedicated to the Holy Virgin. His death

> caused civil wars which lasted for decades. He was canonized, together with his son, Emeric, and Bishop Gerard of Csanád, in 1083. Stephen is a popular saint in Hungary and the neighboring territories. In Hungary, his feast day (celebrated on 20 August) is also a public holiday commemorating the foundation of the state.

Much, much more can be learned about this saint at his wiki, found here.

Tradition Thursday- #51

January 22, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Various discussions as of late have me thinking about masculinity in a Christian context. Towards that end, I have started parsing through scripture for verses and passages which concern masculinity. St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy features a fair amount of advice and teaching that doesn't directly address masculinity, but it does address how a Christian man should act in certain situations. Until I have other ideas on where to take this series, I will quote some of St. John Chrysostom's homilies on 1st Timothy as they relate to 1 Tim 4 and 5. This post will have some selected quoting, as different verses move in and out of relevance in this part of Scripture:

> Ver. 7. *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself rather unto godliness.*
>
> *Putting them in remembrance,* he says; here you observe no authority; but all is condescension: he does not say *commanding* or *enjoining,* but reminding them: that is, suggest these things as matter of advice, and so enter into discourses with them concerning the faith, *being nourished up,* he says, meaning to imply constancy in application to these things.
>
> For as we set before us day by day this bodily nourishment, so he means, let us be continually receiving discourses concerning the faith, and ever be nourished with them. What is this, *being nourished up*? Ruminating upon them; attending ever to the same things, and practicing ever the same, for it is no common nourishment that they supply.
>
> *But refuse profane and old wives' fables.* By these are meant Jewish traditions, and he calls them *fables,* either because of their falsehood or their unseasonableness. For what is seasonable is useful, but what is unseasonable is not only useless but injurious. Suppose a man of adult age to be suckled by a nurse, would he not be ridiculous, because it is unseasonable? *Profane and old wives' fables,* he calls them, partly because of their obsoleteness, and partly because they are impediments to faith. For to bring souls under fear, that are raised above these things, is an impious commandment. *Exercise yourself unto godliness.* That is, unto a pure faith and a moral life; for this is godliness. So then we need *exercise.*
>
> Ver. 8. *For bodily exercise profits little.* This has by some been referred to fasting; but away with such a notion! For that is not a bodily but a spiritual exercise. If it were bodily it would nourish the body, whereas it wastes and makes it lean, so that it is not bodily. Hence he is not speaking of the discipline of the body. What we need, therefore, is the exercise of the soul. For the exercise of the body has no profit, but may benefit the body a little, but the exercise of godliness yields fruit and advantage both here and hereafter.

...

> *These things command and teach. Let no man despise your youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*
>
> In some cases it is necessary to command, in others to teach; if therefore you command in those cases where teaching is required, you will become ridiculous. Again, if you teach where you ought to command, you are exposed to the same reproach. For instance, it is not proper to teach a man not to be wicked, but to command; to forbid it with all authority. Not to profess Judaism, should be a command, but teaching is required, when you would lead men to part with their possessions, to profess virginity, or when you would discourse of faith. Therefore Paul mentions both: *Command and teach.* When a man uses amulets, or does anything of that kind, knowing it to be wrong, he requires only a command; but he who does it ignorantly, is to be taught his error. *Let no one despise your youth.*
>
> Observe that it becomes a priest to command and to speak authoritatively, and not always to teach. But because, from a common prejudice, youth is apt to be despised, therefore he says, *Let no man despise your youth.* For a teacher ought not to be exposed to contempt. But if he is not to be despised, what room is there for meekness and moderation? Indeed the contempt that he fails into personally he ought to bear; for teaching is commended by longsuffering. But not so, where others are concerned; for this is not meekness, but coldness. If a man revenge insults, and ill language, and injuries offered to himself, you justly blame him. But where the salvation of others is concerned, command, and interpose with authority. This is not a case for moderation, but for authority, lest the public good suffer. He enjoins one or the other as the case may require. Let no one despise you on account of your youth. For as long as your life is a counterpoise, you will not be despised for your youth, but even the more admired: therefore he proceeds to say,
>
> *But be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.* In all things showing yourself an example of good works: that is, be yourself a pattern of a Christian life, as a model set before others, as a living law, as a rule and standard of good living, for such ought a teacher to be. *In word,* that he may speak with facility, *in conversation, in charity, in faith, in* true *purity, in temperance.*
>
> *Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*
>
> Even Timothy is commanded to apply to reading. Let us then be instructed not to neglect the study of the sacred writings. Again, observe, he says, *Till I come.* Mark how he consoles him, for being as it were an orphan, when separated from

> him, it was natural that he should require such comfort. *Till I come,* he says, give attendance to reading the divine writings, to exhortation of one another, to teaching of all.

…

> Chap. v. ver. 1. *Rebuke not an elder.*
>
> Is he now speaking of the order? I think not, but of any elderly man. What then if he should need correction? Do not rebuke him, but address him as you would a father offending.
>
> Ver. 1. *The elder women as mothers, the younger men as brethren; the younger women as sisters, with all purity.*
>
> Rebuke is in its own nature offensive, particularly when it is addressed to an old man, and when it proceeds from a young man too, there is a threefold show of forwardness. By the manner and the mildness of it, therefore, he would soften it. For it is possible to reprove without offense, if one will only make a point of this: it requires great discretion, but it may be done.
>
> *The younger men as brethren.* Why does he recommend this too here? With a view to the high spirit natural to young men, whence it is proper to soften reproof to them also with moderation.
>
> *The younger women as sisters*; he adds, *with all purity.* Tell me not, he means, of merely avoiding sinful intercourse with them. There should not be even a suspicion. For since intimacy with young women is always suspicious, and yet a Bishop cannot always avoid it, he shows by adding these words, that *all purity* is required in such intimacy. But does Paul give this advice to Timothy? Yes, he says, for I am speaking to the world through him. But if Timothy was thus advised, let others consider what sort of conduct is required of them, that they should give no ground for suspicion, no shadow of pretext, to those who wish to calumniate.

(Sources: Homily 12 and Homily 13)

Yet More Random Musings And Links

January 23, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a while since I wrote one of these posts, so here goes.

Deep Strength has a good post up examining how men approach marriage and responsibility. His focus is on Incentives. I introduced a comment where I suggested that there is another way to look at why men are apprehensive (to say the least) about marriage. The basic idea I was grasping at is this:

We, each of us, have the natural law instilled in us. This is an echo of the divine law. This sense of the natural law is offended by things which are against the Order of Things- against what God intended. Many men (especially Christian men) are wary of marriage, and even shunning it, because this sense of the natural law in them realizes that marriage has become something unnatural. It has deviated from what God intended, and that echo of the Divine Law within us is repulsed by this. Society has to actively work to overcome this sense of revulsion, hence all of the "Man Up and Marry" efforts.

Over at Dalrock's, a commenter calling himself The Question wrote the following comment, which I am posting in its entirety:

> I want to be angry at Walsh for his foolishness, but when I look at him I can't help but see myself – had things turned out differently. He is exactly what I wanted to be in my early twenties; married, a couple kids, good writing gig, a house. Just another good middle class WASP.
>
> Instead, I like so many others went through something similar to that of Rollo Tomassi as he described in his post "That Was Then."
>
> The biggest unspoken lie perpetuated in the man up movement by inference is that women want to get married young, so if a man can't get a wife in college it's his fault because he's immature and that's why the women flock in droves to ride the carousal with Harley McBadboy. Go to any university and ask the typical 21-year-old coed if they want to get married. Chances are, they'll say yes. Then ask them what age. It'll be 28-30. There will be a handful that want to get married then and they will easily find a man. The rest want to earn their feminist merit badges and then when they enter the epiphany phase they'll find that nice guy beta provider who has been dutifully working in the meantime and conveniently hears he needs to "man up" and marry her.
>
> What makes columns like Walsh's so infuriating is that these writers think that they were able to marry because, unlike us, they are wise-beyond-their-years. In reality, much of it is a matter of meeting the right person at the right time in the right place. I know men just like him who got married young and it's no different with them in terms of their attitude toward bachelors. Anything I say about what is discussed here or other manosphere sites is dismissed with "Stop complaining. Look at me; I got married, so you should be more like me if you want to get

> married." It makes them feel superior. They don't realize they only married because they met a girl who wanted to as well (just pray she doesn't decided to make up for missing out).
>
> I'm sure Rollo would say the same thing as what I'm about to say, but Walsh's problem is the same as Mark Driscoll's when it comes to his views on sex, marriage, women, what not; they got married young and don't know anything else beyond their own unique life experience and are oblivious to the world of dating since they got off the market. He is also unable to define masculinity and manhood outside of the feminine. You're not a complete man until you have made a lifetime commitment to a woman.
>
> Having gone a separate route has been tough at times, no doubt, but had I married before taking the Red Pill it would have been a disaster. Among other things, I would have read Walsh's article and said "Amen!" instead of posting a link to it here with indignation.

I could have, and probably have at some point, written a comment that was almost exactly the same. Certainly I completely understand where he is coming from. There is a massive disconnect between most Christian men who are married, and those who aren't. Fortunately, not all married Christian men are like that. There are several married men at my parish who are far more aware than men like this Walsh character.

I remember being in a conversation with one of them a few weeks back where he acknowledged how lucky he was to have found his wife. She wanted to marry young and have a lot of kids- which has since happened. He recognizes now how rare that was back then, and how much rarer it is today. His is a sympathetic ear.

One thing I haven't experienced at that parish, and don't expect to, is to hear a "Man Up and Marry" homily (sermon). My current priest is not a type who seems inclined to do anything of the sort (very traditional/Traditional fellow). Nor have any visiting priests done anything of the sort (benefits of attending an Eastern Catholic parish, I suppose). In fact, one visiting priest gave me the opposite as advice. He told me not to marry unless I could find a good woman to do so with. If I couldn't, I should continue on doing what I was doing.

Zippy had a post up recently addressing the concept of "the same God." Worth a read.

I disagree with several of Rollo's conclusions, but I agree with the main point in the post Women Improving Men:

> "[W]omen, Red Pill or otherwise will never be honest arbiter of 'improving' men's states of masculinity."

Masculinity, and men improving themselves, is a purely male endeavor. We must keep that in mind, otherwise we will keep repeating Adam's error in the Garden.

I think this post over at Finer Femininity should be required reading for all married women.

Over at AlphaGame there is an interesting series on “Gamma” Protaganists by someone calling himself Delta Man. While I don’t necessarily agree with Vox’s supposed hierarchy, I think that the series does expose some of the absurdity in Sci-Fi literature. Here is part 1, part 2 and part 3. I don’t read nearly as many books these days for a variety of reasons, but one of them is because I can now recognize a lot of “Blue Pill” nonsense that puts me off from enjoying the work.

That is all for now.

Saturday Saints- #101

January 24, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our saint for today is one with some measure of controversy around him, St. Tarasios of Constantinople:

Saint Tarasios (or **Saint Tarasius**) (Greek: Άγιος Ταράσιος) (c. 730 – 25 February 806) was Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 25 December 784 until his death on 25 February 806.

A few key facts about him:

- He played an important role in fighting against iconoclasm. During the Second Nicean Council he served as acting chairman.
- He was a layman before he became Patriarch.
- Church unity was important to him, and he insisted on overtures of unity before accepting his post.
- He was greatly deferential to the Byzantine Monarchy. This lead him to condoning Emperor Constantine VI's divorce and "remarriage," at least for a short time.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



Masculine Monday- #1

January 26, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I'm going to give a new series a try- one on Mondays that concerns itself with masculinity. Whether or not I keep the series running remains to be seen, of course. But I expect it to be somewhat irregular. While the overall focus will be Christian, it won't be exclusively so. This first post will be one such example.

I came across this article recently, which is titled 10 Life Rules that Separate the Men from the Boys. Here is how it bills itself:

> Being a male is a matter of birth, being a man is a matter of age, but being a gentleman is a matter of choice. Not a choice made once or twice during one's life, but a series of choices made every single day when navigating the world, and life.
>
> So – what then – are these choices that separate the gentlemen from the rest of the pack? The men who hold themselves to higher standards. Let's explore.

I would encourage my readers to go through the whole article before continuing.

The author is apparently a self-described secular humanist, and unsurprisingly, it shows. Mind you, not everything on the list is bad. I agree with a few of the points. But there are several I disagree with, and will address them in turn.

I found the first point interesting. The basic premise is sound, but not as a matter of "being a Gentleman." Rather, it is basic Christian living. Of course, being a SH, the author has to find some excuse for it. More interesting to me was his justification:

> A man of quality is never afraid of equality.

"Equality" is not a necessary predicate to treating someone with dignity. Certainly not the "liberal" notion of equality he is referring towards. Rather, a recognition of their dignity as a human being is sufficient. Furthermore, part of being a gentleman, historically, was about recognizing that not everyone *was* equal. A gentleman treated others kindly out of mercy- he had power over them but didn't abuse it.

The second point was a lovely materialistic/consumerist point. Essentially the author was stating that a "Real Man" always pays his way. Frankly, I suspect more than a little feminine influence in the thinking here- "the burden of performance" and all that.

While secular in nature, the overall thrust of the third point was sound.

The fourth point is another one that is true for everyone, not just a "gentleman." If anything, this seems to put a burden on men that others won't be expected to live up to. And my readers can guess who "others" happens to be.

The fifth point is, in an act of poetic justice, wrong. Rather than being afraid of "being wrong", we should be afraid of trying. Of giving it our best. Sometimes that means risking failure, of risking being wrong.

> Only when you are wrong do you absorb new information, change your stance, and subsequently become “right.”

Again, this is wrong. You can learn plenty without necessarily being wrong. Furthermore, the ability to admit mistakes is not the same thing as being afraid of being wrong. This is pop philosophy, at best.

The sixth point is a stereotype that lives up to its reputation. Without delving into it too much, the obvious flaw with this is that it makes the woman in any relationship the one who decides just how “gentlemanly” a man is. The absurdity of this is staggering, and yet also pitiable.

I agree with the seventh point. Honest is an essential part of being a man. Leave deception to others.

The eight point is just pop philosophy. It lacks substance, which I would think would be the hallmark of any “real man.”

I happen to agree with the ninth point. Sexy and beautiful are not necessarily the same thing. In fact, I am pretty sure I wrote a post about that at some point.

The tenth and final point is wrong on several levels. Partly it is foundational- it comes from a secular viewpoint which fails to recognize that charity is a universal virtue. But here is a concrete error:

> A gentleman **will** respect other men, women, children, and animals – and treat them with kindness. There is no need for a confident man to hurt another being in any way, as he gains nothing from it.

On the contrary, I can think of plenty of reasons why a confident man would need to hurt another being. Protecting other men, women, children and animals (yes, even them) can be justification enough.

So a few good points to be found, but overall not a good guide towards being a Gentleman or “Real Man.” Mayhaps the next post in this series will be devoted to examining that issue. Until then, I leave my readers with some of the final words of King David:

> When David’s time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, [2] “I am about to go the way of all the earth. **Be strong, and show yourself a man**, [3] and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; [4] that the Lord may establish his word which he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a man on the throne of Israel.’

(1 Kings 2:1-4)

Too Much Of A Good Thing? #1

January 27, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I've a bit of a random question for my readers. Specifically, the Christian men.

Have you ever turned down or rejected a Christian woman because she was more devout or righteous than you?

I'm not talking about her being self-righteous, or possessing a false piety like the Pharisees. I mean real God-fearing devotion.

A similar, but ultimately different question is this:

Have you ever turned down or rejected a Christian woman because you thought she was too good for you?

I'm curious what my readers have to say on the subject.

Saturday Saints- #102

January 30, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter U is featured in today's post. Not the most common, but not unheard of, either. This gives us today's saint, Saint Ursula Ledóchowska:

> **Ursula Maria Ledóchowska**, USAHJ (17 April 1865 – 29 May 1939) was a Polish Catholic Religious Sister, who founded the Congregation of the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus. She was a member of the prominent Ledóchowski family. She has been declared a saint by the Catholic Church.

A few snippets:

- Her family came from Aristocratic origins.
- She was the 5th of 10 children.
- She traveled throughout Europe as part of her religious duties, eventually settling and dying in Rome.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.

A Wicked Project

February 3, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A somewhat random post here that I am writing for the benefit of my readers, especially the newer ones.

If you have been around these parts long enough, odds are pretty good you've seen something like this:

1. 'Spherian writer pens a post in which he takes a stand that goes against the common grain (as far as general society is concerned). The goal of the writer in this instance is to make things better, at least within his own perspective.
2. A woman reads this and blows up. She says that the post is evidence that the men of the sphere are horrible human beings and that the writer has something wrong with him. If the woman claims to be a Christian it usually involves an allegation of a dark or twisted soul.
3. Men, sometimes the writer, sometimes the commentators, try to tell the woman that nothing malicious was meant. They carefully try to explain to her the logic involved, and why she should reconsider.
4. This doesn't work.

The reason why this ultimately doesn't work is because the woman is not thinking logically, she is thinking emotionally (or rhetorically, if you prefer). Furthermore, her thought processes are centered around projecting- both emotions and intentions. It goes something like this:

1. Woman reads something she doesn't like.
2. Woman becomes upset about it, because it upends some part of her self-image or her understanding of the way things are supposed to be.
3. The woman recognizes how upset this makes her at a subconscious level.
4. She tries, again at a subconscious level, to figure out why she is upset.
5. Her default settings kick in, which involves projecting her own nature upon the person writing.
6. Her thought process is something akin to- a) this person made me upset, b) *I* would only make someone upset if I meant to make them upset, c) therefore this person *intended* to make me upset.
7. If this person intended to make me upset, then they are not a good person, and therefore what they have written has a malicious purpose behind it.

Emotions and projecting drive this behavior. Appealing to reason and logical will never work with the woman because she isn't thinking logically. You cannot convince her of your good intent (or at least no malicious intent) because no amount of logic will affect her emotional reaction to what she read.

My advice in this situation is to always let the woman be. Ignore her ranting. She won't be swayed by anything you say or do aside from total capitulation. You will simply waste your time, and probably derail the whole conversation. Now, perhaps my readers have some ideas on a way to "solve" this problem, but I haven't seen anything work to date.

Too Much of A Good Thing #2

February 6, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As a general rule, I tend to have no problem with women being fit. It doesn't reduce their attractiveness, and for some body types, probably helps. But a little bit goes a long way. And there is definitely such a thing as "too much of a good thing." Example A:



This woman is far too built up in her upper body. She has mannish arms, which creates a stark and unappealing contrast to what is otherwise a fairly appealing package.

Let this be a lesson to any ladies who read my site: don't get *this* muscular. It is **not** a good look. And to my male readers, pass this on as well. Parents, I trust you to also clue your daughters in on this.

There is fit, and then there is going overboard.

[Update: Forgot to credit Mrs ktc for this. Here is her post on it.]

Saturday Saints- #103

February 7, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter “V” is featured in today’s post. Thus, our saint is Saint Venatius Fortunatus:

> **Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus** (c. 530–c. 600/609) was a Latin poet and hymnodist in the Merovingian Court, and a Bishop of the early Catholic Church. He was never canonised—no saint was canonised till Saint Ulrich of Augsburg in 993—but he was venerated as **Saint Venantius Fortunatus** during the Middle Ages.

His is not the life of your average saint, assuming there is such a thing. So I would encourage my readers to learn more about him at his wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #104: Rise Up!… And, Er… Ignore The Elephant In The Room

February 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
>
> (Genesis 1:27)

While this blog is focused first and foremost on masculine matters, I devote plenty of time to discussing women as well. There are a number of reasons for this, but the most important is the simple fact that the fates of men and women are intertwined. One can only change men so much before further developments are impossible without affecting women as well.

Sometimes this can be forgotten, both by men outside of this neck of the woods, and by those within. Here is an example of the former. A quote:

> In our culture today **fathers are becoming less and less a part of our children's lives** and the absence of fathers has led directly to the downfall of Christian culture in America. **Currently, 40 percent of American children do not grow up with their biological father.**
>
> That number is on the rise as more and more couples choose the lifestyle of **cohabitation** and decide not to get married at all. Since the men in those relationships are not bound by any marriage vows, they feel less responsibility to stick around, especially if the marriage or childrearing starts to get tough. What are the results of fatherless homes? Let's take a look at the statistics:

The author goes on from there to talk about the perils of fatherless families. He is absolutely right in this, of course. But at the same time, he missed the huge elephant in the room: divorce. Now Dalrock has covered this blind spot plenty, and I don't feel it necessary to repeat his many, many posts on the subject. However, this blind spot is not unique. There are others.

To get an idea of one, lets look at what this author talks about next:

> Now this absences of fathers in everyday does not only apply to the demise of domestic life. In fact, what we are also experiencing in our culture is the **absence of fathers in the spiritual life of the home, even when the father is present in the family.** As pointed out by Doug Barry in his "Battle Ready Rally," we typically praise our **grandmas** for passing on the faith in our family. We almost never hear about fathers or grandfathers passing on the faith to their children. Typically, "church" or "religion" is viewed as something reserved for women.
>
> …

> These Polish men failed to see that their primary responsibility as head of the household was to fight the spiritual battle for the lives of their family. As Saint Paul says in Ephesians 6:12, **“For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.”** It is our duty as fathers to fight that battle and to be a firm foundation for our family. If we don’t do it, our society will continue to crumble around us.

All well and good. I don’t disagree with his general argument- Christian men do need to lead the spiritual life of their families. But as I indicated earlier, the author here is missing something important, something essential. What is missing?

Well, leadership, of course. He mourns the loss of *spiritual* leadership. But if a man is not a leader in *other* ways in his family, how can he flourish as (much less be encouraged to be) a spiritual leader. And where does this take us? Why, authority in the family, naturally.

> [22] Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the
> head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its
> Savior. [24] As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in
> everything to their husbands. [25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the
> church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed
> her by the washing of water with the word, [27] that he might present the church to
> himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be
> holy and without blemish. [28] Even so husbands should love their wives as their
> own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no man ever hates his own
> flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, [30] because we are
> members of his body. [31] “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother
> and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” [32] This is a great
> mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church; [33] however, let each
> one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her
> husband.
>
> (Ephesians 5:22)

Men cannot fulfill their role as spiritual leaders in their family if the rest of their leadership is cut off at the knees. How effective will a man be if the children see his wife, their mother, constantly rebel against his leadership? I think we all know the answer to that.

Ultimately, the real blind spot here is to the way that the Church treats men, husbands/fathers in particular. The lack of respect, the lack of support for a husband’s authority, all of these undermine any desire or efforts for men to be the spiritual leaders of their families.

As Deep Strength and others have pointed out, men (like women) respond to Incentives. this applies to actions within marriage, as well as before or without. Now, does that excuse men who don’t try to carry out their duties? Of course not. But the blame is not

only theirs to share.

> [5] “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; [6] but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.
>
> [7] “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes!
>
> (Matthew 18:5-7)

If we want more men to act as spiritual leaders in their families, the Church needs to stop treating men like trash. It needs to encourage and admonish, yes, but also respect and acknowledge. Further, women need to be taught to encourage and aide their husbands in being leaders, rather than be taught to belittle them and usurp their authority.

Male and female He created us. The behaviors of both need to be addressed if we want to see positive change. Ignore one sex entirely, and you will never get very far at all.

Masculine Monday- #2

February 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today the series returns. The topic is discipline and self-control.

In my opinion, and I know that doesn't count for much, self-control is one of the quintessential qualities that makes a man a man. Without it a man will be hard pressed to achieve anything, whether in this life or the next.

Part of this development of self-control relies on self-denial: to deny yourself things you might otherwise have, for some good cause. Sometimes it is because putting it off will yield greater rewards in the future. Other times it is because a more fulfilling path is available by giving something up. And yet other times denial can help one build mental fortitude- the will to resist, the will to say no.

This final reason (of those listed, others exist) is what drives me to post today. Today marks the beginning of the Great Lent in the Eastern Church, at least according to the Gregorian Calendar. The Byzantine fasting tradition is considerably more… serious than that of the West, at least nowadays. Whereas in the West one is to lightly eat on Fridays, and not eat meat at all, in the East (or at least the Eparchy where I live) fasting is done on Wednesdays and Fridays, and no meat, dairy or egg products are allowed.

This is the first time that I've attempted the Eastern fast. Giving up meat is something I have practiced for a long time, but giving up those others will be a new experience. Especially for two days every week. But all the same, I think it is an important effort on my part. I have had to deny myself a number of things over the years, some of which are known to my readers. I can look back now and see where that helped me build discipline, discipline that has helped me in numerous areas of my life.

So if this post is to have any lesson, it is this: men, consider fasting. While not easy- especially when you take it all the way, it pays off in the end. It helps put *you* in control of your life, and not your Appetites and instincts.

> You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, [2] and what you
> have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be
> able to teach others also. [3] Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ
> Jesus. [4] No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to
> satisfy the one who enlisted him. [5] An athlete is not crowned unless he competes
> according to the rules. [6] It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first
> share of the crops. [7] Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you
> understanding in everything.

(2 Timothy 2:1-7)

Saturday Saints- #104

February 13, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It is finally the letter W's turn for another saint. Today's saint is Saint Werburg:

> **Werburh** or **Wærburh** (also known as **Werburgh** and **Werburga**) (d. 3 February 699 at Trentham) was an Anglo-Saxon princess who became an English saint and the patron saint of Chester. Her feast day is 3 February.

A snippet from her wiki:

> She was born at Stone (now in Staffordshire), and was the daughter of King Wulfhere of Mercia (himself the Christian son of the pagan King Penda of Mercia) and his wife St Ermenilda, herself daughter of the King of Kent. She obtained her father's consent to enter the Abbey of Ely, which had been founded by her great aunt Etheldreda (or Audrey), the first Abbess of Ely and former queen of Northumbria, whose fame was widespread. Werburgh was trained at home by St. Chad (afterwards Bishop of Lichfield), and by her mother; and in the cloister by her aunt and grandmother. Werburgh was a nun for most of her life. During some of her life she was resident in Weedon Bec, Northamptonshire.

More can be found here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #105

February 15, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Over on Dalrock's most recent post Novaseeker left an excellent comment which I thought was worth repeating in full. Before doing so, I think a little context might be in order:

> Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" [2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; [3] but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" [4] But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.
>
> [8] And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. [9] But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" [10] And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." [11] He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" [12] The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." [13] Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." [14] The Lord God said to the serpent,
>
> "Because you have done this,
> cursed are you above all cattle,
> and above all wild animals;
> upon your belly you shall go,
> and dust you shall eat
> all the days of your life.
> [15] I will put enmity between you and the woman,
> and between your seed and her seed;
> he shall bruise your head,
> and you shall bruise his heel."
>
> [16] To the woman he said,
>
> "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing;

> in pain you shall bring forth children,
> yet your desire shall be for your husband,
> and he shall rule over you.”
> [17] And to Adam he said,

> “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
> and have eaten of the tree
> of which I commanded you,
> ‘You shall not eat of it,’
> cursed is the ground because of you;
> in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
> [18] thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you;
> and you shall eat the plants of the field.
> [19] In the sweat of your face
> you shall eat bread
> till you return to the ground,
> for out of it you were taken;
> you are dust,
> and to dust you shall return.”

(Gen 3:1-19)

This is the story of the Fall, and the perfect place to introduce Novaseeker’s comment:

> The fundamental problem that underlies all of this nonsense teaching is the premise that women, by default, are moral and good unless somehow corrupted by a failure of proper male leadership.
>
> This stems from an improper, and that’s being charitable, reading of Genesis 3. The problematic reading in question is that Eve sins in Genesis 3 only because Adam was failing to exercise proper headship over her, and that if he had been, she would not have sinned, so in a sense her sin is less real, or at the very least, derivative from, Adam’s failure to supervise/lead her properly. This reading really refuses to take the text at its own word (and God at His own word as He speaks in the text). Adam does sin by listening to his wife and eating of the apple, breaking the commandment – God is clear enough about that. But nothing is said of Adam’s culpability for Eve’s sin by God here — not one word. In Genesis 3: 14-19, God is remarkably clear about what was Adam’s sin in 3:17, and it consisted in (1) listening to his wife’s suggestion that he eat the apple and (2) actually doing so in violation of the commandment. So, yes, by listening to his wife, Adam failed to exercise moral agency over his own actions, and that is a part of his sin, together with the actual breaking of the commandment concerning eating of the fruit of the tree.
>
> But this sin — his “listening to his wife” — has nothing to do with Eve’s own sin, as we see in 3:6. The sequence is clear — Eve partakes of the apple, finds it good

tasting, and then gives some to Adam to eat and he takes it and eats — his "listening to his wife" and eating of the fruit both take place *after* Eve has already eaten of the tree, and therefore after her sin has already occurred. Eve's sin here is portrayed in 3:6, and also by God in 3: 14-19, as being independent of Adam's two sins, and is separately called out and punished by God in itself, and for its own sake. This makes sense given how the events are timed, sequentially, in 3:6.

The rest of the argument is extra-textual it seems to me (or at least extraneous to the specific narrative of these events in Gen 3 — other texts that are extrinsic to the narrative tend to be bought in to buttress the argument). It runs something along the lines of "well, Adam was tasked with being Eve's steward, and failed at that, so he's responsible for her sin, too" — which is an interesting argument, because God Himself fails to mention this sin when he rebukes Adam in Gen 3:17, while otherwise being quite specific in calling out the sins Adam committed (listening to his wife rather than following God's commandment). If Adam's sin had really been failing to exercise proper stewardship over Eve, and therefore bearing responsibility for her sin as was as his own, it seems extraordinarily unlikely that God would have overlooked this in His rebuke of Adam in 3:17, yet this is the precise argument that is often made in support of the idea that Eve wasn't really responsible for her own sin, but Adam was.

This isn't merely academic. The issue goes to the root of how some (many?) churches today are teaching about men and women and male/female relationships. A proper reading of Genesis 3 precludes any notion of women being innately good and virtuous unless corrupted by men. So Genesis 3 must be read in a very specific, and odd in the sense of being extrinsic to the actual narrative itself, way in order to support the idea that all corruption comes from men and women are innately virtuous, or at least will continue to be so unless corrupted by men's evil.

When the actual narrative itself is read, the sequencing and delineation of the sins *is* instructive to male/female relations, but it isn't the message that much of the contemporary church wants to hear.
It is this: women are somewhat more easily subject to demonic temptation than men are, and will tend to give in to that temptation, whereas men are subject to being morally weak in the presence of women and female suggestion, such that they will prefer honoring that to keeping God's laws — and that therefore the way the demons will seek to corrupt men is by corrupting the women first, and then using men's natural predisposition to please women against them by making them choose between that and obeying God, knowing full well that many (most?) men will fail and become corrupted themselves in that process. That is the story of Genesis 3, full stop. It's also exactly what is happening in the contemporary culture, and the contemporary church. Almost to the tee, actually. And yet this is precisely the message that the church by and large refuses to

> take from the clear narrative of Genesis 3.

Novaseeker explains the situation far better than I could, and so I will leave his words to stand as they are. What I would like to explore, however, is a concept that he touches on. Specifically, I am curious about this shifting of blame to a higher authority (I think the legal field calls this vicarious liability?). What I am curious about is whether there is any Scriptural support for the notion that the sins committed by a person under authority are transferred to the person in authority.

I know that my grasp of Scripture is still pretty shallow, but so far I haven't found anything to support that argument. Do any of my readers know of any Scripture which would support, or while we are on the subject, refute, that kind of "moral vicarious liability?" If so, please leave the verses/passages in the comments below.

Masculine Monday- #3

February 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

> [10] My beloved is all radiant and ruddy,
> distinguished among ten thousand.
> [11] His head is the finest gold;
> his locks are wavy,
> black as a raven.
> [12] His eyes are like doves
> beside springs of water,
> bathed in milk,
> fitly set.[a]
> [13] His cheeks are like beds of spices,
> yielding fragrance.
> His lips are lilies,
> distilling liquid myrrh.
> [14] His arms are rounded gold,
> set with jewels.
> His body is ivory work,
> encrusted with sapphires.
> [15] His legs are alabaster columns,
> set upon bases of gold.
> His appearance is like Lebanon,
> choice as the cedars.

(Song 5:10-15)

One of the countless errors of Churchianity (and boy is it a long list) is that it teaches men that physical appearance and fitness are inconsequential. This has many negative consequences for men. For one, it hurts them in their question to find a wife, as physical appearance is a criteria women consider in mates. I quoted from the Song of Songs to emphasize that point. Second, it deprives men of a good healthy way to build confidence. Third, it leaves men weak, and thus less suited for task involving strength or endurance. Fourth, God created us to establish dominion:

> [26] Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

(Gen 1:26-27)

Physical strength has as much a role to play in that as mental strength, even in this day and age.

[Now, I suppose not all of the various Churchian strains are like that. There might be some that are even friendly to the idea of men being fit. But from what I can tell it sure seems like most are not.]

All of this leads to my point: one of the hallmarks of a truly masculine man is being in good shape. That doesn't mean that every man must be an Olympic level bodybuilder or athlete. But it does mean that he needs to be fit. No doubt there are plenty of different criteria out there for what constitutes fit. This is where you, my readers, come in. I know a number of you have some experience, and possibly even expertise, in this area. So feel free to use the comments below to provide your thoughts on what would constitute "fit."

[Edit: To clarify matters, as a general rule these posts are meant for men, and only male commenters are allowed. If a woman wants to contribute, she can send me an e-mail and I might post it myself. The sole female comment has been deleted, with a follow up posted by myself.]

Tradition Thursday- #52

February 19, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I am considering a new series to run with this line of posts, but I don't have one in mind yet. Hopefully I will have one lined up next week. Until then, I offer this lengthy quotation from St. John Chrysostom's 8th Homily on 1st Timothy:

> (1 Tim 2:8-10)
>
> *I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works.*
>
> *…*
>
> *Moral*. What? Do you approach God to pray, with broidered hair and ornaments of gold? Are you come to a dance? To a marriage? To a gay procession? There such a broidery, such costly garments, had been seasonable, here not one of them is wanted. You have come to pray, to supplicate for pardon of your sins, to plead for your offenses, beseeching the Lord, and hoping to render Him propitious to you. Why do you adorn yourself? This is not the dress of a suppliant. How can you groan? How can you weep? How pray with fervency, when thus attired? Should thou weep, your tears will be the ridicule of the beholders. She that weeps ought not to be wearing gold. It were but acting, and hypocrisy. For is it not acting to pour forth tears from a soul so overgrown with extravagance and ambition? Away with such hypocrisy! God is not mocked! This is the attire of actors and dancers, that live upon the stage. Nothing of this sort becomes a modest woman, who should be adorned *with shamefacedness and sobriety.*
>
> Imitate not therefore the courtesans. For by such a dress they allure their many lovers; and hence many have incurred a disgraceful suspicion, and, instead of gaining any advantage from their ornaments, have injured many by bearing this character. For as the adulteress, though she may have a character for modesty, derives no benefit from that character, in the Day, when He who judges the secrets of men shall make all things manifest; so the modest woman, if she contrive by this dress to pass for an adulteress, will lose the advantage of her chastity. For many have suffered harm by this opinion. ***What can I do,* you say, *if another suspects me?* But you give the occasion by your dress, your looks, your gestures.** It is for this reason that Paul discourses much of dress and much of modesty. And if he would remove those things which are only the indications of wealth, as gold, and pearls, and costly array; how much more those things which imply studied ornament, as painting, coloring the eyes, a mincing gait, the affected voice, a languishing and wanton look; the exquisite care in

putting on the cloak and bodice, the nicely wrought girdle, and the closely-fitted shoes? For he glances at all these things, in speaking of *modest apparel* and *shamefacedness.* For such things are shameless and indecent.

Bear with me, I beseech you, for it is not my aim by this plain reproof to wound or pain you, but to remove from my flock all that is unbecoming to them. But if these prohibitions are addressed to those who have husbands, who are rich, and live luxuriously; much more to those who have professed virginity. But what virgin, you say, wears gold, or broidered hair? Yet there may be such a studied nicety in a simple dress, as that these are nothing to it. You may study appearance in a common garment more than those who wear gold. For when a very dark colored robe is drawn closely round the breast with the girdle (as dancers on the stage are attired), with such nicety that it may neither spread into breadth nor shrink into scantiness, but be between both; and when the bosom is set off with many folds, is not this more alluring than any silken robes? And when the shoe, shining through its blackness, ends in a sharp point, and imitates the elegance of painting, so that even the breadth of the sole is scarce visible— or when, though you do not indeed paint the face, you spend much time and pains on washing it, and spread a veil across the forehead, whiter than the face itself— and above that put on a hood, of which the blackness may set off the white by contrast— is there not in all this the vanity of dress? What can one say to the perpetual rolling of the eyes? To the putting on of the stomacher; so artfully as sometimes to conceal, sometimes to disclose, the fastening? For this too they sometimes expose, so as to show the exquisiteness of the cincture, winding the hood entirely round the head. Then like the players, they wear gloves so closely fitted, that they seem to grow upon the hands: and we might speak of their walk, and other artifices more alluring than any ornament of gold. Let us fear, beloved, lest we also hear what the Prophet said to the Hebrew women who were so studious of outward ornament; *Instead of a girdle, you shall be girded with a halter, instead of well-set hair, baldness.*Isaiah 3:24, Septuagint These things and many others, invented only to be seen and to attract beholders, are more alluring than golden ornaments. These are no trifling faults, but displeasing to God, and enough to mar all the self-denial of virginity.

You have Christ for your Bridegroom, O virgin, why do you seek to attract human lovers? He will judge you as an adulteress. Why do you not wear the ornament that is pleasing to Him; modesty, chastity, orderliness, and sober apparel? This is meretricious, and disgraceful. **We can no longer distinguish harlots and virgins, to such indecency have they advanced.** A virgin’s dress should not be studied, but plain, and without labor; but now they have many artifices to make their dress conspicuous. O woman, cease from this folly. Transfer this care to your soul, to the inward adorning. For the outward ornament that invests you, suffers not that within to become beautiful. He that is concerned for that which is without, despises that which is within, even as he that is unconcerned about the

exterior, bestows all his care upon the interior. Say not, *Alas! I wear a threadbare garment, mean shoes, a worthless veil; what is there of ornament in these?* Do not deceive yourself. It is impossible, as I said, to study appearance more by these than by costlier dresses; especially when they are close-fitted to the body, fashioned to an immodest show, and of shining neatness. **You excuse yourself to me, but what can you say to God, who knows the heart and the spirit with which you do these things? *It is not done for fornication!* Perhaps not, but for admiration; and do you not blush for shame to be admired for such things?** But you say, *It is but chance I am so dressed, and for no motive of this kind.* God knows what you say to me: is it to me you must give account? Nay, it is to Him who is present at your actions, and will one day inquire into them, to whom all things are naked and open. It is on this account that we now urge these things, that we may not let you be amenable to those severe judgments. Let us fear, therefore, lest He reprove you in the words of the Prophet to the Jewish women. *They come to be seen of me wantoning and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.*Isaiah 3:16

You have taken upon you a great contest, where wrestling, not ornament is required; where the battle awaits you, not sloth and ease. Observe the combatants and wrestlers in the games. Do they concern themselves about their walk or their dress? No, but scorning all these, and throwing about them a garment dripping with oil, they look only to one thing, to wound, and not be wounded. The devil stands grinding his teeth, watching to destroy you every way, and you remain unconcerned, or concerned only about this satanic ornament. I say nothing about the voice, though much affectation is shown in this also, nor about perfumes, and other such luxuries. **It is for these things we are ridiculed by the women of the world.** The respect for virginity is lost. No one honors a virgin as she ought to be honored. They have given occasion to their own dishonor. Ought not they to be looked up to in the Church of God, as women coming from heaven? But now they are despised, and deservedly, though not those among them who are discreet. But when one who has a husband and children, and presides over a household, sees you, who ought to be crucified to the world, more devoted to the world than herself, will she not ridicule and despise you? See what care! What pains! In your humble dress, you exceed her who wears the costliest ornament, and art more studious of appearance than she who is arrayed in gold. What is becoming to you you seek not; that which misbecomes you you pursue, when you ought to be occupied in good works. On this account virgins are less honored than women of the world. For they do not perform works worthy of their virgin profession. This is not said to all; or rather it is said to all; to those who are in fault, that they may learn modesty; to those who are free from blame, that they may teach modesty to others. But beware lest this rebuke be verified in deed. For we have not said these things that we may grieve, but that we may correct you, that we may glory in you. And may we

> all do those things which are acceptable to God, and live to His glory, that we may obtain the blessings promised by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, etc.

Quite a lot there, I know. But at the same time, very salient. The parts in bold are those I thought particularly relevant for the present age. Also, when the Doctor of the Church uses the word virgin, he means a woman consecrate to celibacy. So basically a nun as we would understand them today.

As you will have hopefully read, it is apparent that the present age is not the first one where Christian women have dressed shamefully. Nor is it the first age where Christian women were held in less regard than others. I found this line to be particularly striking:

> **We can no longer distinguish harlots and virgins, to such indecency have they advanced.**

I can't speak for anyone else, but that seemed to resonate a lot with me. One cannot any longer look at a woman's dress, and determine her character (at least with regards to chastity and modesty). Is it any wonder that now, just as back then, there is such a cultural disregard for Christian women?

Saturday Saints- #105

February 20, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is a tough day. The letter is “X”, and frankly a lot of parents don’t like to name their children with names that begin with x. I can’t imagine why… Anyways, today’s post features a saint whose name was originally spelled with an x, before later being changed, Saint Xystus I:

> **Pope Sixtus I** (42 – 125) was the Bishop of Rome from c. 115 to his death c. 124. He succeeded Pope Alexander I and was in turn succeeded by Pope Telesphorus. In the oldest documents, **Xystus** (from the Greek word for “polished”) is the spelling used for the first three popes of that name. Pope Sixtus I is also the sixth Pope after Peter, leading to questions whether the name “Sixtus” (meaning “sixth”) might be fictitious.

More can be learned about him at his wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #106

February 22, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Sin is part of our life. As Christians we are called to avoid it at all times, but none of us can live a sinless life. At least, not on our own accord- with God all things are possible. This is a problem, of course, as sin keeps us from God. It was the first Sin which saw us cast from the Garden. Future sins can likewise divert us away from Him, especially that sin which leads to true death:

> [13] I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. [14] And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him. [16] If any one sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that. [17] All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.

(1 John 5:13-17)

So what do we do about this? We know that God can forgive sins- the Pharisees pointed out as much:

> And when he returned to Caper′na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. [2] And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. [3] And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. [4] And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. [5] And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “My son, your sins are forgiven.” [6] Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, [7] “Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” [8] And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question thus in your hearts? [9] Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk’? [10] But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— [11] “I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.” [12] And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

(Mark 2:1-12)

While Jesus was with us bodily, then forgiveness was easy- we need only ask him for it:

> [36] One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat at table. [37] And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, [38] and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. [39] Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." [40] And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" [41] "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42] When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" [43] Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." [44] Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [45] You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. [47] Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." [48] And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." [49] Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" [50] And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

(Luke 7:36-50)

However, what happens after he ascended? Fortunately, Jesus left the Apostles the authority to forgive sins, just as He did:

> [19] On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." [20] When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. [21] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." [22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. [23] If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

(John 20:19-23)

Look at what Jesus said there. His father sent him to forgive sins. And Jesus sent his Apostles (messengers) just as His Father sent him. So they too were given the charge of the forgiveness of sins. Now, some who claim the faith say that they merely need pray to God for forgiveness. No human "meddlers." But this isn't what the Church practiced at all. Here is but one example:

> [13] Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing
> praise. [14] Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let
> them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; [15] and the
> prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he
> has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore confess your sins to one
> another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a
> righteous man has great power in its effects.

(James 5:13-16)

Confession *is* good for the soul. The Church, even in its early history, practiced the sacrament of confession as the means for the forgiving of sins. God works through human beings, and the confession (and forgiveness) of sins is no exception. This Lenten period is an excellent time to wipe your spiritual tablet clean, and start anew by going to confession.

Who Are We?

February 24, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Scott has a new post up that touches on a subject many are loathe to examine- what is America? What does it mean to be American nowadays?

His ultimate conclusion is one that I share:

> No one knows.

There is no clear consensus about what America is or what it means to be American. At least, not any longer.

There was, once. America was a rather unique nation in its founding. It wasn't united around race, although that certainly was a factor. It wasn't necessarily united around culture, although there was a lot shared there. What united America was its belief system- both political and religious. While there were still differences held by Americans about both, a general consensus could be formed in terms of politics and religion. Protestantism, in its various forms, was the general religious consensus. And politically there was unity around concepts derived from the English notion of Liberty (itself a particular product of the Liberal Enlightenment).

Again, plenty of disagreements. But more was held in common than wasn't.

This is no longer the case. The differences between the different "wings" of the political spectrum are essentially irreconcilable. There is unity no longer. Back to this in a moment.

Taking a slight detour, this leads me to state something which has been explored many a time before: in order for a nation to exist as a nation, it needs something (or many somethings) to unite it. Whether it is ethnicity, culture or belief system (religious or political), there needs to be something that binds a people together for them to remain, you know, a people.

Accordingly, only a certain amount of diversity is tolerable in any polity. When there is too much diversity, the ties that bind the people of that polity together are too fragile to withstand stress. The weaker the ties, the less stress required for the structure to fall apart.

> [24] If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. [25] And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

(Mark 3:24-25)

When the stress becomes too much, something has gotta give. There are two outcomes: Either the nation falls apart (or shatters), or it stabilizes itself by enforcing greater unity. That is a fancy way of stating that diverse elements are suppressed or eliminated. Force or the fear of force can only keep this away for so long. Eventually one of these outcomes will occur.

Which brings me back to America. We already had one of these moments: the Civil War. [Unlike some of the folks around these parts, I don't support one side in that war. Looking back on it I can see that both sides deserved to loose, albeit for slightly different reasons.]

Before the Civil War the unity of the country was perilously low. Irreconcilable differences had accumulated. The ties that bind had weakened to the breaking point. The stress moment came, and enforced unity was the result, rather than breakup.

We find ourselves again heading towards that kind of moment of truth. America is too diverse to stand any longer. Racially we are more diverse than ever. Same with Ethnicity. Culturally there have never been so many American sub-cultures. Religiously we have never been as fractured. And politically? Ask a Sanders voter and a Cruz voter what they have in common.

I don't think it will necessarily end in another Civil War. But the divide we now face cannot last much longer. There is no clear answer to the question of "Who Are We?" One way or another, an answer is forthcoming. What it is I won't hazard to guess. But that answer *is* coming.

> [9] What has been is what will be,
> and what has been done is what will be done;
> and there is nothing new under the sun.
> [10] Is there a thing of which it is said,
> "See, this is new"?
> It has been already,
> in the ages before us.
> [11] There is no remembrance of former things,
> nor will there be any remembrance
> of later things yet to happen
> among those who come after.

(Ecclesiastes 1:9-11)

Distressing Alternatives

February 27, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A recent conversation with a couple of friends lead me to tell them that I don't think of anyone in my past as "The One Who Got Away." I am not haunted by any notion that there was some woman who came across my path in the past that I rejected when instead I should have accepted her. When I realized this some months ago it was kind of a relief for me. Perhaps this is because I am someone who doesn't handle regrets well.

At the same time, I also recognize that there is something particularly depressing about the fact that in all my years I never came across anyone who could have been a match for me. It certainly creates a sense of loneliness, and perhaps a sense that the future will be no doubt from the past. But all in all I prefer my present state over the alternative-regretting "letting one get away."

Perhaps my readers share this view. Perhaps they find the alternative more palatable. So I ask you, whatever your present station, to voice your thoughts. Which is ~~better~~ easier to live with: To have someone in the past "Who Got Away", knowing that such a person exists, or to have never met such a person at all, and to wonder if they do.

Saturday Saints- #106

February 27, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Why are we here? For today's saint post that begins with Y, of course. Not easy, as there aren't terribly many. So for today's post I will do something slightly different- I will feature someone who is not a Saint. At least, not yet. However, he is on the path towards canonization:

> **Blessed Yakym Senkivskyi** (Ukrainian: Яким Сеньківський; 2 May 1896 – 29 June 1941) was a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest and martyr.
>
> Senkivskyi was born in the village of Hayi Velykyi in the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria (present-day Ternopil Oblast, Ukraine). He studied theology in Lviv, and was ordained a priest on 4 December 1921. He received a doctorate in theology from Innsbruck. In 1923 he went to Krekhiv and became a novice in the Order of Saint Basil the Great. After he professed his first vows, he was transferred to the village of Krasnopushcha, and later to the village of Lavriv. From 1931 to 1938 he held different positions in the Monastery of Saint Onufrius in Lviv.
>
> In 1939, he was appointed abbot of the monastery in Drohobych. On June 26, 1941, he was arrested by the Soviet NKVD, and on June 29, he was boiled in a cauldron in the Drohobych prison.
>
> He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on June 27, 2001.

(Source)

Masculine Monday- #4

March 1, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men only

Over the ages a lot of philosophers have lectured on the importance of knowing oneself. Setting aside any deeper mystical meaning some of them might have had in such statements, there is definitely a kernel of truth in this. As a man you need to be aware of your strengths, and your weaknesses, in order to effectively carry out your life's whatever that may be.

For a man looking to attract and hopefully marry a worthy woman, knowing yourself is especially vital. For one, such knowledge might clue you in to a glaring weakness that would get in the way of your interactions with women. Second, truly knowing yourself can help you determine the kind of woman you want or need as a mate. Third, different "techniques" for interacting with women work for different men. A lot of the guys who dabble in things like "Game" and who meet no success are making the basic error of trying to use methods that don't mesh with their personalities. They come off as unnatural because what they are doing *is* unnatural for them.

Even as you take the steps to get a better understanding of your own nature, you need to be careful. How you think and what motivates you might be very different from how others think or what might motivate them. All human beings have a tendency to project- to project our own beliefs, motivations and concerns onto others. I've written on projection before because it is an extraordinarily common tendency.

Men need to be especially careful with projecting when women are concerned. Women do not think as men do. They are motivated by different factors and forces- oftentimes ones that are seemingly indecipherable to us men. When a woman does something, be very wary about assuming that she is doing it for the same reason you would do it, or for the reasons a man would do it. Never forget that she doesn't follow the same rules that you do. This is something which isn't taught in the modern age, yet at the same time is something all men need to internalize. A lot (although not all) of the pain of the modern age comes from men not simply failing to understand women but from them assigning their own male motivations to women.

Don't do that. You are a man. Women are not men, no matter the clothes they wear or the surgeries they get (and vice versa). Once you internalize that this difference exists, and apply a separate analysis to how women act, female actions will start to make sense like never before. This will benefit not only you, but also the other men, and yes, even the women in your life.

Saturday Saints- #107

March 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Once again we find ourselves at the end of the alphabet with the letter Z. As is common in this section of the alphabet, not many saints begin their names with this letter. Today's saint is Saint Zita:

> **Saint Zita** (c. 1212 – 27 April 1272; also known as **Sitha** or **Citha**) is an Italian saint, the patron saint of maids and domestic servants. She is often appealed to in order to help find lost keys.
>
> …
>
> Saint Zita was born in Tuscany in the village of Monsagrati, not far from Lucca where, at the age of 12, she became a servant in the Fatinelli household. For a long time, she was unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled, and often beaten by her employers and fellow servants for her hard work and obvious goodness. The incessant ill-usage, however, was powerless to deprive her of her inward peace, her love of those who wronged her, and her respect for her employers. By this meek and humble self-restraint, Zita at last succeeded in overcoming the malice of her fellow-servants and her employers, so much so that she was placed in charge of all the affairs of the house. Her faith had enabled her to persevere against their abuse, and her constant piety gradually moved the family to a religious awakening.

More can be found out about this saint at her wiki, located here.

Masculine Monday- #5

March 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

Today's short post has a simple theme: Don't make excuses.

Seriously. Just don't.

If you screw up, then admit it. If you are at fault, then admit your fault, vow to do better, and move on.

There are few things more pathetic than a man who won't take responsibility for his actions. Making excuse after excuse is a sure-fire way for a man to lose respect in the eyes of his fellow men.

One thing that gets missed in this day and age about the Gospels is the overall lack of excuses made. When the woman at the well is confronted with her sin by Jesus, does she make excuses? Nope. How about the tax collector, Levi? Nope, no excuses again. Our faith is not one for excuses. From what I recall, the only role they play is in punishment (Luke 12:48).

So when you are working on eliminating bad habits from your life, add excuse making to the list.

Called Out

March 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been following the discussion in Deepstrength's latest post, Women teaching women in Church. A longer post is in the works for Thursday which is aimed at the central point of DS's post, the teaching role of Women. However, the discussion got me thinking about another subject, namely, how in Protestant circles it seems to be a frequent occurrence for Pastors/Ministers to "call out" the men in the congregation (I suppose this can also be happening in Catholic parishes, but I've never seen it).

I got to thinking about this whole "calling out" process and its roots. Jesus calls out several specific groups in the Gospels. Among them are the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. However, He keeps this either very specific (individuals, or members of groups like the aforementioned) or very general (everyone). I cannot recall a single instance where Jesus called out men, as a group, or women, as a group. Admittedly, my knowledge of Scripture still needs improvement. So I am asking my readers if they know of any examples that I might have overlooked.

It seems to me that Jesus never did any such thing, in part because it would be destructive, not constructive. This is because it would set men and women against each other. The Devil was/is the one who set women against men, and men against women. God wouldn't do such a thing. At least, that is how I read it. I am curious to hear what others think.

Tradition Thursday- #53

March 11, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A recent topic du jour has been the role of women with regards to teaching. Given this, I think it appropriate to quote from some of Saint John Chrysostom's homilies on the subject. First we have 1 Timothy 2:

> *Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in [through the] child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*
>
> Great modesty and great propriety does the blessed Paul require of women, and that not only with respect to their dress and appearance: he proceeds even to regulate their speech. And what says he? *Let the woman learn in silence*; that is, let her not speak at all in the church; which rule he has also given in his Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, *It is a shame for women to speak in the church* 1 Corinthians 14:35; and the reason is, that the law has made them subject to men. And again elsewhere, *And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home.* 1 Corinthians 14:35 Then indeed the women, from such teaching, kept silence; but now there is apt to be great noise among them, much clamor and talking, and nowhere so much as in this place. They may all be seen here talking more than in the market, or at the bath. For, as if they came hither for recreation, they are all engaged in conversing upon unprofitable subjects. Thus all is confusion, and they seem not to understand, that unless they are quiet, they cannot learn anything that is useful. For when our discourse strains against the talking, and no one minds what is said, what good can it do to them? To such a degree should women be silent, that they are not allowed to speak not only about worldly matters, but not even about spiritual things, in the church. This is order, this is modesty, this will adorn her more than any garments. Thus clothed, she will be able to offer her prayers in the manner most becoming.
>
> *But I suffer not a woman to teach. I do not suffer,* he says. What place has this command here? The fittest. He was speaking of quietness, of propriety, of modesty, so having said that he wished them not to speak in the church, to cut off all occasion of conversation, he says, let them not teach, but occupy the station of learners. For thus they will show submission by their silence. For the sex is naturally somewhat talkative: and for this reason he restrains them on all sides. *For Adam,* says he, *was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*
>
> If it be asked, what has this to do with women of the present day? It shows that the male sex enjoyed the higher honor. Man was first formed; and elsewhere he

> shows their superiority. *Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.* 1 Corinthians 11:9 Why then does he say this? He wishes the man to have the preeminence in every way; both for the reason given above, he means, let him have precedence, and on account of what occurred afterwards. For the woman taught the man once, and made him guilty of disobedience, and wrought our ruin. Therefore because she made a bad use of her power over the man, or rather her equality with him, God made her subject to her husband. *Your desire shall be to your husband?* Genesis 3:16 This had not been said to her before.

This brings us to Titus 2:

> *The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness.*
>
> That is, that in their very dress and carriage they exhibit modesty.
>
> *Not false accusers, not given to much wine.*
>
> For this was particularly the vice of women and of old age. For from their natural coldness at that period of life arises the desire of wine, therefore he directs his exhortation to that point, to cut off all occasion of drunkenness, wishing them to be far removed from that vice, and to escape the ridicule that attends it. For the fumes mount more easily from beneath, and the membranes (of the brain) receive the mischief from their being impaired by age, and this especially causes intoxication. Yet wine is necessary at this age, because of its weakness, but much is not required. Nor do young women require much, though for a different reason, because it kindles the flame of lust.
>
> *Teachers of good things.*
>
> And yet you forbid a woman to teach; how do you command it here, when elsewhere you say, *I suffer not a woman to teach*? 1 Timothy 2:12 But mark what he has added, *Nor to usurp authority over the man.* For at the beginning it was permitted to men to teach both men and women. But to women it is allowed to instruct by discourse at home. But they are nowhere permitted to preside, nor to extend their speech to great length, wherefore he adds, *Nor to usurp authority over the man.*
>
> Ver. 4. *That they may teach the young women to be sober.*
>
> Observe how he binds the people together, how he subjects the younger women to the elder. For he is not speaking there of daughters, but merely in respect of age. Let each of the elder women, he means, teach any one that is younger to be sober.
>
> *To love their husbands.*
>
> This is the chief point of all that is good in a household, *A man and his wife that agree together.* Sirach 25:1 For where this exists, there will be nothing that is unpleasant. For where the head is in harmony with the body, and there is no disagreement between them, how shall not all the other members be at peace?

> For when the rulers are at peace, who is there to divide and break up concord? As on the other hand, where these are ill disposed to each other, there will be no good order in the house. This then is a point of the highest importance, and of more consequence than wealth, or rank, or power, or anything else. Nor has he said merely to be at peace, but *to love their husbands.* For where love is, no discord will find admittance, far from it, other advantages too spring up.

So the teaching here seems to be that:

1. Women cannot preach or teach as part of the Liturgy
2. Women may teach at home, principally to other women
3. Women may not teach in a way such as to usurp authority over man

Part of me thinks I've mentioned these before, but since it has been a while a refresher seems appropriate. If I get a chance I will look for other writings by the Saints and Church Fathers on these matters and post them as well.

Saturday Saints- Registry

March 12, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is long overdue. I am going to use it to list all of the saints who I have covered thus far with this series. I intend to add new saints as time goes on, and add links as I get a chance.

A

Aidan of Lindisfarne

Saint Alypius the Stylite

Athanasius of Alexandria

Acacius of Amida

Abdus of Susa

B

Saint Basil the Great

Bede

Benedict of Nursia

Birinus

Boniface

C

Columba

Cuthbert

Catherine of Alexandria

Cyril of Alexandria

Chad of Mercia

D

David of Menevia

Dorotheus of Gaza

Declán of Ardmore

Dymphna

Dunstan

E

Euphrosyne

Eulogius

Eligius

Pope Eugene I

F

Frithuswith

Francis of Assisi

Flavian

Pope Felix III

G

George

Genevieve

Gregory the First

Gregory of Nazianzus

H

Helena

Pope Hormisdas

Hubertus

Pope Hilarius

I

Ignatius of Antioch

Isaac of Nineveh

Ite of Killeedy

Isidore of Seville

J

Joseph of Arimathea

John of Damascus

John Climacus

Juliana of Nicomedia

Joan of Arc

K

Katharine Drexel

Kevin of Glendough

Kassia

Kinga

L

Lucia of Syracuse

Leodegar of Poitiers

Luke the Evangelist

Livinius of Ghent

M

Methodius

Maximus the Confessor

Pope Martin the First

Maximus of Turin

Moninne of Killeavy

N

Nikephoros I

Nothhelm of Canterbury

Pope Nicholas I

Nilus the Younger

O

Oswald of Northumbria

Odo of Cluny

Opportuna of Montreuil

Olga of Kiev

P

Patrick

Polycarp

Philip of Agira

Pope Pius I

Q

Quintian of Rodez

Quinidius

Quadratus of Athens

Quodvultdeus

R

Rose Venerini

Remigius

Rabanus Maurus

Romuald

S

Stephen

Sabbas the Sanctified

Scholastica

Simeon Stylites

Saint Stephen I of Hungary

T

Theodore the Studite

Teresa of Avila

Thomas More

Tarasios

U

Ulrich of Augsburg

Ubald of Gubbio

Ursicinus

Ursula Ledóchowska

V

Pope Vitalian

Vladimir Sviatoslavich

Vergilius of Salzburg

Venatius Fortunatus

W

Wolfgang of Regensburg

Wilfrid

Willibrord

Werburg

X

Xenia of Saint Petersburg

Xenia the Righteous of Rome

Xenophone of Robeika

Xystus I

Y

Yrieix

Yared

Yaropolk

Yakym Senkivskyi

Z

Pope Zachary

Zeno

Zosimas of Palestine

Zita

[This post will be updated as new saints are given posts.]

An Errant Brother… Or Something Else?

March 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Hearthie is questioning when and where to call out Apostates. This is a good question, although I might merely think that because I ask it myself often enough (or something close to it, as you will see later). There are some things I feel pretty comfortable calling folks out on, but other matters less so. This post is going to be something of a stream of consciousness response- far less thought out than I normally go for. I don't have the time for that, sadly, so I will For the sake of convenience, I am going to loosely follow the format of her post in my response.

I want to begin with this little snippet:

…the level of apostasy becomes absurd

The thing is, I'm not really sure there are "levels" of apostasy. To be an apostate means to leave the faith. From Merriam Webster:

> 1. *1*: renunciation of a religious faith
> 2. *2*: abandonment of a previous loyalty

Either you leave the faith, or you don't. Perhaps you do it in secret, but still, you know in your heart that you are out. What I think that Hearthie is mostly talking about is heresy:

> a belief or opinion that does not agree with the official belief or opinion of a particular religion

Of course, an apostate can promote heresies. But heresy can have different levels to it, depending on how far from the Truth it is. Continuing on:

> But on the other hand, perhaps we're doing a disservice to the public by not calling out those who call themselves Christian while having no adherence to the Word whatsoever.

I think we often are. Our Lord and Savior told us that the Truth would set us free. It stands to reason that the opposite is the case, and lies therefore enslave us (to sin, I would imagine). They might not see their chains if someone else doesn't point out to them where they are in error.

> Is this a thing where some folks are gifted with the calling out, and some folks gifted with the chilling out – as parts of the body of Christ?

Yes, I think that correcting/rebuking others is a spiritual gift. At least, doing it effectively is. Not everyone is called to do it, at least regularly. We all still might have to do it from time to time.

> Is there a line beyond which one cannot cross before every Christian should refuse fellowship and communion until repentance is reached?

Yes, there is. Several lines, actually. Although that is me speaking as a Catholic there (I imagine my Orthodox readers would mostly match up with me on them). Where those lines are is the subject of another post (or the comments).

> Can we differentiate between the folks who are in grave error, and potentially apostate vs. those who are unquestionably out of the family?

Yes, I think we can. Some lines are so clear that there really isn't any debate (denying the divinity of Jesus, for example).

Of course, many of us make small errors, perhaps even frequently. Often those are the easiest to correct, especially if done gently. This is where humility becomes so important, and why I think it is essential to having a strong spiritual life.

> But these dudes are *still alive* so there's still hope of their coming to repentance.

Yes, as long as they are alive there is hope for them. Even better, if they repent then they can also make this public and undo some of the damage they have done.

That's all I have for now.

Saturday Saints- #108

March 20, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As I have mentioned before, I can't keep up the alphabetical listing of Saints. At least, not consistently. For the moment it will continue, but soon I will start a new method. Until then, I give you today's saint, Saint Abdas of Susa:

> **Abdas**, (also **Abda**, **Abdias**, and **Audas**) was bishop of Susa in Iran (Socrates of Constantinople also calls him "bishop of Persia"). He was born in fourth-century Chaldor to a Zoroastrian mother. The latter educated him in matters of virtue.
>
> After Abdas was educated and reached adulthood, he was ordained a Christian priest, and built up in his hometown a monastery and a school, which he took personal care of and which grew to have around 60 teachers, as some say. Abdas baptized many converts in Chaldor, which caused the magi to arrest him. In his prison, Abdas was subjected to humiliations, hunger and pain, but remained a Christian until his release.
>
> …
>
> Engaged in a dispute with the local magi in AD 420, he was accused of burning down one of their temples, a pyramid of Ahura Mazda. King Yazdegerd ordered the bishop to restore and repair the building at his own expense; upon Abdas's refusal the King ordered the destruction of the churches. These events soured the relationship between the Christian church and the Persian government, which had previously been good, and caused a wave of persecution against the Christians in Persia. Beyond this, Abdas is supposed to have helped Maruthas in driving out a demon from Yezdegerd's son. Nothing else certain is known of him. Tradition adds to this that he was one of the first martyred in the persecution (he was clubbed to death), and for this he is considered a saint. His companions in the killings included the priests Hashu and Isaac, the secretary Ephrem, the hypodeacon Papa, the laymen Daduk and Durdan, and Papa, a brother of Abdas himself. His feast day is 5 September or 16 May in the Roman Catholic Church, and March 31 in the Syrian church.

(Source)



Focused on Holy Week

March 25, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Just a quick update to inform folks that I will not be posting until after Easter. Regular posting should resume some time next week.

Masculine Monday- #6

March 29, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

No Pain, No Gain.

We have all heard that mantra at least once in our life. [And if you haven't heard it before, what planet did you come from? Totally serious here.] Athletes hear it more often than others, naturally.

Of course, not all pain is good. Some pain is a warning that something is going wrong, or has gone wrong, with our body. Thinking on it, I believe it is not so much pain but suffering that is necessary for gain. Nothing that has ever been worth gaining was acquired without suffering. Even if we are given something, to keep it usually requires suffering of some form. So a more accurate, but far less catchy, slogan would be: No Suffering, No Gain.

To excel at academics requires a certain kind of suffering. The sacrifice of time, the building up of discipline, the forgoing of certain pleasures… all are necessary to achieve success.

To excel at anything athletic likewise requires suffering. Time, effort, ache and the careful management of diet are all different types of suffering required for success.

Likewise, suffering is necessary for our faith. Deep Strength has a post up about meditation and building discipline, something absolutely necessary for a sustainable and rock-solid faith. Whether it is fasting, cold showers, the spending of time or something else, suffering is part of living the faith.

Heck, even advocates of Game will tell you that it takes a lot of time and effort to get anywhere. That is suffering of a form. Certainly learning to handle and deal with rejection involves some suffering, at the very least at first. While I don't agree with the purpose, I can give a grudging measure of respect for the discipline required to get anywhere with it.

The point of all of this is to remind men that we are made to persevere. Suffering is part of our life. There is no escaping that. Future posts (hopefully later this week), will cover this further. But in the meantime remember that mantra: No Pain, No Gain.

Saturday Saints- #109

April 2, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

After a short hiatus the series returns. Today's letter is B. Thus, our saint is Saint Boniface:

> **Saint Boniface** (Latin: *Bonifatius*) (c. 675? – 5 June 754 AD), born **Winfrid**, **Wynfrith**, or **Wynfryth** in the kingdom of Wessex in Anglo-Saxon England, was a leading figure in the Anglo-Saxon mission to the Germanic parts of the Frankish Empire during the 8th century. He established the first organized Christianity in many parts of Germania. He is the patron saint of Germania, the first archbishop of Mainz and the "Apostle of the Germans". He was killed in Frisia in 754, along with 52 others. His remains were returned to Fulda, where they rest in a sarcophagus which became a site of pilgrimage. Facts about Boniface's life and death as well as his work became widely known, since there is a wealth of material available—a number of *vitae*, especially the near-contemporary *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldi*, and legal documents, possibly some sermons, and above all his correspondence.
>
> Norman F. Cantor notes the three roles Boniface played that made him "one of the truly outstanding creators of the first Europe, as the apostle of Germania, the reformer of the Frankish church, and the chief fomentor of the alliance between the papacy and the Carolingian family." Through his efforts to reorganize and regulate the church of the Franks, he helped shape Western Christianity, and many of the dioceses he proposed remain today. After his martyrdom, he was quickly hailed as a saint in Fulda and other areas in Germania and in England. His cult is still notably strong today. Boniface is celebrated (and criticized) as a missionary; he is regarded as a unifier of Europe, and he is seen (mainly by Catholics) as a Germanic national figure.

Far more can be out about him at his wiki, located here.



The Misery Of Too Much Comfort

April 3, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[This post is a continuation of my post here. Consider this the equivalent of a Sunday Scripture post.]

For over a month I have been mulling something that I read over at 80 Proof Oinomancy:

> See, one of the hardest things for "Nice Guys" to understand is this:
>
> Healthy women like pain.
>
> [DON'T CONFLATE PAIN WITH ABUSE.]
>
> It's a feature; not a bug.
>
> If they didn't, humanity would've died out, long ago.
>
> [Birthing, being what it is, and kids being pains while breast-feeding, and all.
>
> Chalk yet another one up for the Book of Genesis.]

The source was Ace's post, "That's why I cut you just to heal you." The whole post, short as it is, is worth reading in full (as Ace's pretty much always are).

Since I read it oh so many weeks ago, I have been trying to formulate my own thoughts on what Ace is trying to describe. I definitely feel he is on to something here. I disagree about his use of the word pain, however. A more fitting word exists, in my opinion. To borrow from myself, it is not so much pain as suffering that is at play here. All pain is suffering, certainly, but not all suffering is pain. Suffering conveys the proper breadth of what is involved.

You see, healthy women "like" suffering.

I put quotations around like because it is not a conscious desire, but an unconscious one. Something deep down inside them recognizes that a certain amount of suffering is to be expected, is natural even. As Ace alludes to, this draws from Genesis:

> [16] To the woman he said,
>
> "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing;
> in pain you shall bring forth children,
> yet your desire shall be for your husband,
> and he shall rule over you."

(Genesis 3:16)

One consequence (among many) of Original Sin is that women will experience greater pain/suffering as a result of bearing and rearing children. I would argue that an expectation of this is "baked into" their genetics.

This leads us to the modern day, and the theory behind this post. The problem is that in the present age women are more coddled than they have ever been. They are, especially in the West and in families not at the bottom of the SES ladder, further removed from

suffering than ever before. The level of comfort in the civilized world has never been higher. True suffering, true sacrifice, is alien to most women growing up. Most parents take care to keep their children from having to suffer, often by ensuring as much comfort as possible.

While I certainly understand this behavior on the part of parents, it is at the same time utter folly. Suffering can never really be escaped. It will always be present, and I will use a future post to go into that in further detail. What matters for this post is that this coddling approach is a disaster. Why?

Simple: Women expect suffering in their life- it is the natural thing. [Think about the vast majority of human history- filled with suffering for pretty much everyone.] When women are too comfortable, when suffering is absent from their life, then it sends a message to their unconscious mind that something is wrong, that what they are living is an *unnatural* life. That message of unnaturalness will only be repeated over the years as they grow up. They will know, somewhere deep down inside, that *something* is wrong. Unfortunately, because this is unconscious, they won't know what it is, exactly, that is wrong.

This will, naturally enough, lead them to feel miserable. The misery is only made worse because they won't understand it. It will gnaw on their mind incessantly, like an itch you can't quite reach.

I suspect that part of the reason that women act so crazy in the west today is because of this. Using that itch analogy I just mentioned- women act crazy because they are trying to scratch that itch. Only they don't quite know how- so they do so in extreme ways. Again, deep down inside they know they should be suffering, so they go out and make themselves suffer (without every truly understanding that is what they are doing).

Fixing our broken culture will take a lot (and perhaps cannot even be done at this point). But whether we fix it, or build a new one, I would argue that if we want it to be sustainable then we need that future to be far less comfortable.

[Feel free to have at me in the comments. Even with almost two months of thinking, this theory is still far rougher than I would like.]

Tuesday Tips- #1

April 6, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today begins a new guest series by reader and commenter Michael Kozaki. It will take place on a semi-regular basis on Tuesdays, and will provide a place for him to state and argue for a counter-cultural Truth. The first in his series covers a subject I've addressed recently:

> ## Life Is Suffering
>
> *...we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles...*
>
> I was able to vote before I really understood that life is suffering. What can I say? I was the product of my culture.
>
> Few Christians embrace suffering nowadays. A thumbs-up, therapeutic Jesus is in vogue. No historic follower of Jesus would have recognized this guy. For good reason. The "therapeutic" or "feminized" Jesus is not the Jesus of the Scriptures nor of the Church. He's a pagan god, forged in man's image.
>
> Donal is currently writing about suffering. I don't intend to steal his thunder by going into detail. But there is simply no other way to start a series on countercultural living than to acknowledge that the desperate, futile, sniveling attempt to avoid suffering is the root of nearly every problem with the modern lifestyle.
>
> This quest to sidestep suffering is nonstop. It has pulled Jesus off the crucifix. It sidesteps fasting. It mocks the confession of sins (yet spends thousands on shrinks and medication). It winks at abortion. It celebrates birth control (while paying thousands for fertility treatments and importing cheap labor). It ignores gluttony (and spends lavishly on diets). It consents to divorce. If you think about it, every one of these cultural trends have a singular reason: to avoid suffering. At any price. And it never works. We merely trade pain today for pain tomorrow.
>
> My favorite example: Christians traditionally displayed their God in all His crucified agony and glory, front and center, in their churches. Moderns hate the real Jesus. Why? They hate suffering. They are ashamed and repulsed by Jesus' supreme act of passionate love.
>
> If you hide from suffering you can never be truly happy. Why? Because love – and salvation – demands suffering. It's not a bug, it's a feature. Our whole earthly life

> is a story of suffering that ends in the ultimate earthly catastrophe: physical death. We can either accept this and embrace our cross, or give God the finger and refuse to become who we were born to be.
>
> Avoidance of suffering is why so many people's lives and relationships degrade over time. But in the end (if not long before the end) we will suffer no matter how hard we try to hide. So why not embrace suffering? And live a life worthy of it?

Reference Posts

April 7, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post contains links to a series of Reference posts that I have written, or will write in the future. It is meant as a convenient location for me to find those posts, as well as for my readers who are curious to see if I've written such a post on this topic.

Men Refusing to Marry Non-Virgins Won't End The Hook-Up Culture

Improving the Sexual Attractiveness of Christian Men Won't Cure the Christian Marriage Crisis

[I have been bad about not referencing my past posts, so I am hoping to fix that in the future. These new posts might cover subjects I've discussed before, and will simply recycle material. The idea is to streamline and focus on particular topics. New topics can and will be covered as well, of course. I hope to have the first one up later tonight.]

Reference: Men Refusing To Marry Non-Virgins Won't End The Hook-Up Culture

April 7, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[This is a reference post, made to be linked to in the future by myself, or anyone else who finds it helpful and convenient. It may be updated over time to include both past and future conduct.]

Numerous solutions to the hook-up culture have been offered in the 'sphere. One such solution goes something like this:

If men refused to marry non-virgins (with a few potential exceptions) then women would no longer participate in the hookup-culture.

Here is one example of such a statement:

> Hookup culture is a great example. It could end tomorrow if the Church told the young men in the congregation not to marry nonvirgins except under special circumstances. It sends an indirect message to the girls that they'll be held accountable for their behavior and offers no pre-made rationalization that will work.

Unfortunately, this would not work for a number of reasons. The hook-up culture would not end if Christian men refused to marry non-virgin women, it would not end even if *all* men refused to marry non-virgin women.

Here are some reasons why:

1. Women do not have the same sense of time that men do. They are not, as a general rule, as forward thinking. Thus, they are less likely to consider the long term consequences of their actions. Therefore, many will fornicate even if they "know" the consequences, because at the time they won't be thinking about them.
2. Many women will believe (and this will have the strength of a religious conviction) that an exception will be made for them. They will be sure that the "right man" will come and marry them despite their past. Or they will be convinced that they will meet, somehow, the criteria to justify an exception. This will be the case even if there are *no* exceptions made.
3. Women are, in their fallen state, naturally inclined towards sins and wrongdoing. Their Appetites lead them towards such temptation. The soul, through the Natural Law, might feel a pull towards marriage. But for most that pull is not, in and of itself, enough to overcome the demands of the flesh. This means that the "lure" of marriage will, for many, not be strong enough to overcome immediate desires.
4. Many women, if given the choice between no marriage but he chance to have sex with attractive men, and marriage with little or no choice of that being with a truly attractive man, will choose the former. The "goods" of marriage are less than they

used to be, and in the present environment women do not feel the same push or pull towards marriage as in the past. Hence, the hook-up culture is an attractive option for them. Especially with the removal of social stigma for it, and for its consequences (bastard children).

5. Many women will believe that they can “cheat” the system by hiding the fact that they are not virgins. Plastic surgery and other devices can cover up or temporally hide the physical signs of past sexual activity. They can combine this by hiding their indiscretions. That means not keeping obvious boyfriends and engaging in secret hookups. Or perhaps keeping such behavior far from home, perhaps even overseas. That minimizes the chance of witnesses and someone talking.

This list is not exhaustive, and likely will be added to over time. Those who feel that they have additions to make to it may do so in the comments.

Reference: Improving The Sexual Attractiveness Of Christian Men Won't Cure The Christian Marriage Crisis

April 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[This is a reference post, made to be linked to in the future by myself, or anyone else who finds it helpful and convenient. It may be updated over time to include both past and future conduct.]

It is widely recognized in the 'sphere that Christian men, as a whole, tend to be unattractive and unappealing to women (Christian and secular alike). Under the PSALM/LAMPS model they fair poorly. They are for the most part raised that way, with everyone from their parents to the Church to society in general contributing to this deficiency. Many posters and commenters, myself included, have dedicated themselves to helping Christian men overcome this.

At the same time it is recognized that there is a serious crisis in the Church when it comes to marriage. Divorce, while lagging behind the general culture, is still increasingly prevalent. Furthermore, the number of those who do marry every year diminishes. The median age of marriage has continued to climb, even among Christians.

This problem has been tied to the fact that most Christian men aren't sexually attractive to women. While it is certainly a factor, the unfortunate truth is that even if Christian men were to become sexually attractive for the most part, the crisis wouldn't end. Here are several reasons for this:

1. Christian women don't want to marry, or at least, don't want to marry young. They are following along with the culture embraced by secular women, and delay or avoid marriage. Christian men becoming more sexually attractive doesn't mean that the hearts of Christian women will be changed and they will turn towards marriage.
2. Marriage is an increasingly dangerous legal landmine for men. It offers less than ever in terms of incentives, and the costs are higher than ever before. Even if Christian men became more attractive and knew they could gain a wife, they might view the risk as worthwhile.
3. Tied to the previous point, even if Christian men are more sexually attractive, that does them little good if the Christian women around them are not marriage material. The quality of Christian women has dropped precipitously in the last century (alongside that of men), and this impacts the marriage market. Even if a man could attract a woman, or more than one, the ones he attracts might not be ones he finds worthy to marry.
4. Parents and friends, Christian or secular, often discourage their children from marrying young. This has the net effect of discouraging marriage in general, and I would argue, also increases divorce in the aggregate.

5. Poor teaching about marriage also is a factor in this crisis. When young people are misguided when marriage is concerned, it is only natural that things won’t go well.

This list is not exhaustive, and likely will be added to over time. Those who feel that they have additions to make to it may do so in the comments.

Saturday Saints- #110

April 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post belongs to the letter C, and so our saint for today is Saint Chad of Mercia:

> **Chad** (Old English: *Ceadda*; died 2 March 672) was a prominent 7th century Anglo-Saxon churchman, who became abbot of several monasteries, Bishop of the Northumbrians and subsequently Bishop of the Mercians and Lindsey People. He was later canonised as a saint. He was the brother of Cedd, also a saint. He features strongly in the work of Bede the Venerable and is credited, together with Cedd, with introducing Christianity to the Mercian kingdom.

For a full (and boy do I mean full) account of this saint's life, read his wiki, located here.



St. Chad of Mercia

The Problem Before Us And The Problem Ahead Of Us

April 11, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post features two related but different subjects. Both relate to the Church, but one is focused on the present and the second on the future. The latter gets most of my attention today.

No Place for Men

Rollo, of the Rational Male, left quite a comment recently in Dalrock's latest post. It is too long to post in its entirety here, so I will instead post just the beginning:

> I think it's high time men acknowledge that modern Christian culture simply does not have men's best interests as part of its doctrine anymore. Christianity in particular is for women.
>
> Church culture is openly hostile towards any expression of conventional masculinity that doesn't directly benefit women and actively conditions men to be serviceable gender-loathing Betas.
>
> I recently read a study that our current generation is the least religious in history and I think as far as men are concerned much of that disdain for religion is attributable to church culture's constant and open ridicule and debasement of men's endeavors or anything characteristically masculine.
>
> That's not an indictment of faith, but rather a fairly measured observation of the way feminine-primary church culture has shaped that faith. In the future, any man with a marginal capacity for critical thought will avoid the church and religion for the obvious misandry it espouses; the only religious men you will find will be those raised into a life of religiously motivated Beta servitude.

While Rollo and I disagree about a lot, I agree with him that most churches are hostile to men. Even further, I agree that women have, to a large degree, captured most churches and re-purposed them to serve women. Most understand this, to one degree or another, and this is partially responsible for the disdain that most men hold for Christianity.

At the same time, I disagree with Rollo that "any man with a marginal capacity for critical thought will avoid the church and religion." While most churches are like that, not all are. I happen to attend a Church that is anything but anti-male. Masculinity is not only accepted, but celebrated. Women serve the Church, not the other way around.

Mine is not the only Church like that, either. As a Catholic, I can say that most Traditional Latin Mass Churches and Eastern Catholic churches will be a very different experience from what Rollo describes here. The same can be sound for most Eastern Orthodox Churches. The reason why is such churches are, by their nature, counter-cultural. They are deliberately set apart, and this has helped preserve them, to a degree. If a man is

looking to sate his thirst for righteousness, I would encourage him to look there.

But in the meantime, I definitely think that most Protestant Churches will be a hostile environment for men. Nor do I see that changing anytime soon. Mainstream, i.e., liberal Catholic parishes might not have that hostility, at least not yet, but they are getting there. Further, they are already geared up towards serving women. So avoid them guys. Really, just stay away. As Jesus said, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

The New Catacombs

This brings me to my next subject, the future.

I will be honest with you, I think the near future is going to be very dismal indeed for devout Christians. Persecution is coming. The Church is going to contract greatly as people flee it for the comforts of the secular world. In fact, I suspect that the worst persecutors of the True Faith will be our “fellow Christians”, who will use their zeal to bring us down as proof that they aren’t like us.

Now, the Church has survived persecution before. More than survived, it has flourished there. So I don’t really fear it, both in an abstract sense and in a visceral literal sense of what I might experience.

All the same, I *am* worried. You see, it is more than just persecution that threatens the Church. It is also a dangerous rot within. This rot has many forms, but what concerns me most is the danger to marriage and the family. Those two, which are really just one and the same, are under attack by the general culture. And that attack has been largely successful, even within the Church.

I have seen for myself, and have heard it from plenty of others (through this blog and off-line) the damage that has resulted. Very few young Christians take marriage seriously. Many express little desire to marry. This is especially prominent, from what I have seen, among Christian women. And this isn’t merely limited to “mainstream” churches, but even more traditional ones too.

The Church had to adapt to survive before. For many Christians, that meant huddling in the Catacombs. Well, that option isn’t really available to us this time. Hiding from the secular world won’t help us when we bring their ideals with us. Before the Church had to adapt to a society that wanted to crush it. Now it has to adapt to deal with a society that has struck at its foundation- the family.

How does the Church manage when many of its youth don’t want to, or can’t marry? For the confessional faiths, Catholics and Orthodox, where will the next generation of clergy come from? Conversion might bring new people in, but rarely are they young couples with a growing family. No, what conversion might do is slow the Church’s shrinking. But until this marriage crisis is resolved, I don’t see it stopping, much less growing again.

I was talking with a priest recently, and he remarked that what the Church needs to turn it around is more good men to marry a good woman and raise a large family of devout and orthodox Christian children. He mentioned that men need to take charge of their families and demonstrate how the faith is meant to be lived out. I agreed with him on

this. But then I asked how can we expect things to turn around if good men *can’t* marry good women. I pointed out how few women were actually interested in marrying. He acknowledged this, and really didn’t have an answer for me.

And that really is the crux of it- there is no answer for this. Not now, anyways. We are off the map now, in uncharted territory. The Church needs to find that answer, and soon.

Tuesday Tips #2

April 13, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is the second in the series of guest posts by reader/commenter Michael K. The subject is food:

> **Tuesday Tip #2: Stop Being A Food Addict**
>
> *...his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears of grain and to eat...*
>
> We live for only a short while. Therefore it's hard for us to grasp how dramatically food has changed from even recent times. The invention of fertilizer, diesel transport, air travel, and genetic engineering has transformed our food in both substance and quantity.
>
> Food has become ubiquitous for all first-world nations, and our bodies have not had the time to evolve for this bounty. Liquor is a good example here: many Native American tribes lacked exposure to liquor long enough to genetically adjust and many thus banned 'firewater' from their communities to save them.
>
> Modern food is unbelievably cheap by historical standards. It is also carefully bred, processed, refined, and even genetically engineered for concentrated succulence. So, of course, we get fatter and fatter every decade. In essence, modern processed food coupled with unrestrained consumption is a dangerous game that we clearly have not yet evolved to handle. If you doubt this, compare the weight of people today to photos from the 1940's. It's disturbing.
>
> Years ago my family and I saw these warning signs. We organized food-related activities and stuck with it. It was trying at first (with some social tension). Yet it proved to be one of the best decisions of our lives. What seemed radical then appears blasé now. We will never go back.
>
> We eat two large meals each day (kids eat a noon snack). Meals are reliably on time without exception. Only whole, unprocessed foods are used. Shopping is done every two weeks, with an inflexible shopping list. Recipes are step-by-step, timed, and practiced so anyone can prepare it as needed.
>
> The only "processed" foods in the house are cheese (milk, salt, enzymes), grain cereal (flour, barley, salt, yeast), and peanut butter (peanuts, salt). Zero coffee, tea, cane sugar*, or alcohol (except holidays). This may sound austere but it is actually no privation at all; the fact is that quality home cooking using real foods simply blows away anything else out there. We eat like kings.
>
> Recipes and portion sizes are carefully planned to guarantee heaps of nutrients, fully satisfied eaters, and dietary consistency. Leftover food has been phased out through portion adjustments before each shopping cycle: we literally waste zero food and have zero leftovers.
>
> Summary:

1) Shop only twice a month.

2) Table, kitchen, dishes cleaned every meal (before anyone leaves).

3) Meal quality is incredible; real, home cooked food is tasty!

4) Recipes, cooking, and meal times are firmly consistent.

5) Everyone is trim and healthy (visible by skin, hair, teeth, weight).

6) Strangely, less time is spent on food due to organization/routine.

7) Saves money (processed food is mostly brand profit).

8) We hunt, fish, and garden aggressively for better food.

9) Far less garbage (and no garish packaging).

10) Little to no cavities.

11) Less illness; many prior medical issues have vanished.

12) Fewer behavioral issues, mood swings, and much better sleep.

13) No leftovers due to well-planned meals; zero food waste.

14) Nobody complains about food anymore.

15) Nobody leaves meals hungry, bloated, or stuffed anymore.

Practical tips to actually DO something, not just talk, about food addiction:

A) Vitamix vegetables or fruits each meal. (toss in a multivitamin).

B) Make meal prep/cleaning a routine, organized family activity.

C) If single, make food for several days (planned leftovers only).

D) Use Living Cookbook to track recipe/meal cost, nutrition, and calories.

E) Plan every single meal two weeks out (shop biweekly) and stick to it.

F) Ignore food and diet fads. Processed food is 99% of the battle.

G) Eat mainly vegetables, meat, fish, eggs, fruit.

H) Be very restrained with grains, nuts, dairy, and tea.

I) Seldom (even never) eat coffee, alcohol, processed sugar.

J) Use lots of spices, experiment with recipes, and learn to cook.

K) Hunt, fish, berry pick, mushroom hunt, and garden.

Recommending Reading:

Nutrition and Physical Degeneration (Price)

*If modern fruit (genetically engineered for sweetness) such as pineapple, oranges, blueberries, strawberries, apples, and bananas isn’t sweet enough, you’re desensitized to sucrose. Desserts sweetened with fruit juice (and topped with real cream!) are deliciously sweet to a normal palate. Yum.

Tradition Thursday- #54

April 15, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few weeks back commenter Ioannes Barbarus was curious why John Chrysostom was so adamant that husbands cannot beat their wives:

> In more than one place, but especially in his homily on 1 Cor 11, St. Chrysostom denies that men may beat their wives. The vigor of his denunciation bothers me. Oddly, it's to him I look for support for the very reason I disagree: that women are best treated somewhat like children, as he says in his homily on Ephesians 5. Can you, DG, or anyone else, shed some light on this topic?

Before I write a post addressing that question, I would like to include some of the Doctor of the Church's discussion on the subject. Here is part of his 26th Homily on First Corinthians:

> 8. Let not then the wife tarry for the virtue of the husband and then show her own, for this is nothing great; nor, on the other hand, the husband, for the obedience of the wife and then exercise self-command; for neither would this any more be his own well-doing; but let each, as I said, furnish his own share first. For if to the Gentiles smiting us on the right, we must turn the other cheek; much more ought one to bear with harsh behavior in a husband.
>
> And I say not this for a wife to be beaten; far from it: for this is the extremest affront, not to her that is beaten, but to him who beats. But even if by some misfortune thou have such a yokefellow allotted you, take it not ill, O woman, considering the reward which is laid up for such things and their praise too in this present life. And to you husbands also this I say: make it a rule that there can be no such offense as to bring you under the necessity of striking a wife. And why say I a wife? Since not even upon his handmaiden could a free man endure to inflict blows and lay violent hands. But if the shame be great for a man to beat a maidservant, much more to stretch forth the right hand against her that is free. And this one might see even from heathen legislatures who no longer compel her that has been so treated to live with him that beat her, as being unworthy of her fellowship. For surely it comes of extreme lawlessness when your partner of life, she who in the most intimate relations and in the highest degree, is united with you; when she, like a base slave, is dishonored by you. Wherefore also such a man, if indeed one must call him a man and not rather a wild beast, I should say, was like a parricide and a murderer of his mother. For if for a wife's sake we were commanded to leave even father and mother, not wronging them but fulfilling a divine law; and a law so grateful to our parents themselves that even they, the very persons whom we are leaving, are thankful, and bring it about with great eagerness; what but extreme frenzy can it be to insult her for whose sake God bade us leave even our parents?

But we may well ask, Is it only madness? There is the shame too: I would fain know who can endure it. And what description can set it before us; when shrieks and wailings are borne along the alleys, and there is a running to the house of him that is so disgracing himself, both of the neighbors and the passers by, as though some wild beast were ravaging within? Better were it that the earth should gape asunder for one so frantic, than that he should be seen at all in the forum after it.

But the woman is insolent, says he. Consider nevertheless that she is a woman, the weaker vessel, whereas you are a man. For therefore were thou ordained to be ruler; and were assigned to her in place of a head, that you might bear with the weakness of her that is set under you. Make then your rule glorious. And glorious it will be when the subject of it meets with no dishonor from you. And as the monarch will appear so much the more dignified, as he manifests more dignity in the officer under him; but if he dishonor and depreciate the greatness of that rank, he is indirectly cutting off no small portion of his own glory likewise: so also thou dishonor her who governs next to yourself, wilt in no common degree mar the honor of your governance.

Considering therefore all these things, command yourself: and withal think also of that evening on which the father having called you, delivered you his daughter as a kind of deposit, and having separated her from all, from her mother, from himself, from the family, entrusted her entire guardianship to your right hand. Consider that (under God) through her you have children and hast become a father, and be thou also on that account gentle towards her.

Do you see not the husbandmen, how the earth which has once received the seed, they tend with all various methods of culture, though it have ten thousand disadvantages; e.g., though it be an unkindly soil or bear ill weeds, or though it be vexed with excessive rain through the nature of its situation? This also do thou. For thus shall you be first to enjoy both the fruit and the calm. Since your wife is to you both a harbor, and a potent healing charm to rejoice your heart. Well then: if you shall free your harbor from winds and waves, you shall enjoy much tranquility on your return from the market-place: but if you fill it with clamor and tumult, thou dost but prepare for yourself a more grievous shipwreck. In order then to prevent this, let what I advise be done: When any thing uncomfortable happens in the household, if she be in the wrong console her and do not aggravate the discomfort. For even if you should lose all, nothing is more grievous than to have a wife without good-will sharing your abode. And whatever offense you can mention, you will tell me of nothing so very painful as being at strife with her. So that if it were only for such reasons as these, let her love be more precious than all things. For if one another’s burdens are to be borne, much more our own wife’s.

Though she be poor do not upbraid her: though she be foolish, do not trample on her, but train her rather: because she is a member of you, and you have become

one flesh. *But she is trifling and drunken and passionate.* You ought then to grieve over these things, not to be angry; and to beseech God, and exhort her and give her advice, and do every thing to remove the evil. But if you strike her thou dost aggravate the disease: for fierceness is removed by moderation, not by rival fierceness. With these things bear in mind also the reward from God: that when it is permitted you to cut her off, and you do not so for the fear of God, but bearest with so great defects, fearing the law appointed in such matters which forbids to put away a wife whatsoever disease she may have: you shall receive an unspeakable reward. Yea, and before the reward you shall be a very great gainer, both rendering her more obedient and becoming yourself more gentle thereby. It is said, for instance, that one of the heathen philosophers , who had a bad wife, a trifler and a brawler, when asked, *Why, having such an one, he endured her;* made reply, *That he might have in his house a school and training-place of philosophy. For I shall be to all the rest meeker,* says he, *being here disciplined every day.* Did you utter a great shout? Why, I at this moment am greatly mourning, when heathens prove better lovers of wisdom than we; we who are commanded to imitate angels, nay rather who are commanded to follow God Himself in respect of gentleness.

But to proceed: it is said that for this reason the philosopher having a bad wife, cast her not out; and some say that this very thing was the reason of his marrying her. But I, because many men have dispositions not exactly reasonable, advise that at first they do all they can, and be careful that they take a suitable partner and one full of all virtue. Should it happen, however, that they miss their end, and she whom they have brought into the house prove no good or tolerable bride, then I would have them at any rate try to be like this philosopher, and train her in every way, and consider nothing more important than this. Since neither will a merchant, until he have made a compact with his partner capable of procuring peace, launch the vessel into the deep, nor apply himself to the rest of the transaction. And let us then use every effort that she who is partner with us in the business of life and in this our vessel, may be kept in all peace within. For thus shall our other affairs too be all in calm, and with tranquility shall we run our course through the ocean of the present life. Compared with this, let house, and slaves, and money, and lands, and the business itself of the state, be less in our account. And let it be more valuable than all in our eyes that she who with us sits at the oars should not be in mutiny and disunion with us. For so shall our other matters proceed with a favoring tide, and in spiritual things also we shall find ourselves much the freer from hindrance, drawing this yoke with one accord; and having done all things well, we shall obtain the blessings laid up in store; unto which may we all attain, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #111

April 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This time around we return to the letter D. Therefore our saint for today is Saint Dunstan:

> **Dunstan** (Latin: *Dunstanus*; 909 – 19 May 988 AD) was an Abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, a Bishop of Worcester, a Bishop of London, and an Archbishop of Canterbury, later canonised as a saint. His work restored monastic life in England and reformed the English Church. His 11th-century biographer, Osbern, himself an artist and scribe, states that Dunstan was skilled in "making a picture and forming letters", as were other clergy of his age who reached senior rank.
>
> Dunstan served as an important minister of state to several English kings. He was the most popular saint in England for nearly two centuries, having gained fame for the many stories of his greatness, not least among which were those concerning his famed cunning in defeating the devil.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



Masculine Monday- #7

April 19, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

If you are a young man in the West right now, I don't envy you. The culture is at best apathetic to your existence, and at worst downright hostile. And if you are a young man who wants to marry in this day and age, well then… you are truly up #$^ creek without a paddle. Lets cut to the chase here. Young women these days are, for the most part, awful.

Their attitudes? Unbearable.

Their behavior? Often unmentionable.

Their desire for marriage? Low.

Their capacity to honor their word? Most non-existent.

And on and on.

Good women who want to marry are few and far between, and their aren't nearly enough of them to go around. This means that many young men who want to marry will have to choose one of these two options:

1. Refuse to marry because no worthy women are available
2. Lower their standards in order to marry

This is a difficult choice to make, and nothing I can say will make it any less difficult. I sympathize with those going through this. How could I not, as I am going through it myself? As a matter of recommendation I would suggest the first course of action, but I won't belittle a man who chooses the second.

At the same time, a man who makes that decision shouldn't ever feel pressured into doing it. Which brings me to the point of this post:

Men, you are never obligated to buy damaged goods.

No matter what someone tells you, no matter how much they encourage or pressure or cajole you, you do not have a duty to make a woman "honest" by marrying her.

It is not now, and it never will be, your job to rescue a woman from her past mistakes.

When you marry someone you are basically intertwining them with pretty much every thread of your life. The consequences can't be overstated. So you owe it to yourself, not to mention the people who rely on you, to marry well.

If you choose to lower your standards on your own, that's fine. But don't let anyone tell you that you have to do it. Or that you are a wicked person if you don't. This goes especially for Christian men.

Don't let Churchian leaders try and guilt you into marrying a low value. They don't have your best interests at heart. They either are beholden to women and serve them, not

God, or they merely see you as a janitor whose job is to clean up the trash. If they make you feel unwelcome if you resist, then find a new church.

Don’t let people use words like charity or forgiveness to try and trip you up. Remember, marriage is about building a relationship with another person and God, about bringing children into the world and raising them right, and it is about you and your wife getting to heaven. Marrying poorly will help you in none of these.

So refuse to be steamrolled into marrying poorly. Marriage affects everything about you, including your soul. Marry wisely, and marry under your own direction, not that of others.

> [19] *My child, keep sound the bloom of your youth,*
> *and do not give your strength to strangers.*
> [20] *Seek a fertile field within the whole plain,*
> *and sow it with your own seed, trusting in your fine stock.*
> [21] *So your offspring will prosper,*
> *and, having confidence in their good descent, will grow great.*
> [22] *A prostitute is regarded as spittle,*
> *and a married woman as a tower of death to her lovers.*
> [23] *A godless wife is given as a portion to a lawless man,*
> *but a pious wife is given to the man who fears the Lord.*
> [24] *A shameless woman constantly acts disgracefully,*
> *but a modest daughter will even be embarrassed before her husband.*
> [25] *A headstrong wife is regarded as a dog,*
> *but one who has a sense of shame will fear the Lord.*
> [26] *A wife honoring her husband will seem wise to all,*
> *but if she dishonors him in her pride she will be known to all as ungodly.*
> *Happy is the husband of a good wife;*
> *for the number of his years will be doubled.*
> [27] *A loud-voiced and garrulous wife is like a trumpet sounding the charge,*
> *and every person like this lives in the anarchy of war.*

(Sirach 26:19-27)

A Fixer-Upper

April 22, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My previous post discussed why men weren't obligated to "buy damaged goods." This post extends that discussion a bit, towards something related yet different. [I should also mention that this post is open to both men and women.] My general argument can be stated as this:

Don't marry someone with the intention of making them a better person so that they end marriageable.

Otherwise stated:

Neither men nor women should ever marry someone who isn't marriageable at the time of the wedding, in the hopes that the spouse can be "fixed" and turned into a good spouse.

In other words, don't marry a "fixer-upper."

Now, that doesn't mean that people don't have flaws that can't be fixed. Far from it- we are all damaged to some degree or another. But there is damaged, and there is *damaged.* Some people, for whatever reason, are simply not fit for marriage at a given time. Perhaps they can be in the future. But that is the future, not now.

Whether you are a man or a woman, you shouldn't marry a fixer-upper- someone who needs some serious work before they are fit for marriage. Especially don't marry them with the goal of making them fit for marriage. That is not your job (and frankly, it shouldn't be). To tie in with my last post, it isn't your obligation to make an honest man or woman out of someone. That is between them and God.

The way I see it, and I might have borrowed this from some commenter in the past, but when you marry someone you should assume you are marrying them at their best, and they won't get better from there. So if you wouldn't want to be married to someone as they are when they marry you, don't marry that person. [Confusing, I know.]

I invite my readers/commenters to leave their own thoughts on the subject.

Reference: Women, Not Men, Are Driving The Delay In Christian Marriage

April 23, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[This is a reference post, made to be linked to in the future by myself, or anyone else who finds it helpful and convenient. It may be updated over time to include both past and future conduct.]

There is a significant delay right now in the age of first marriage in the US. We are well outside the historical norm, with women now at marrying at roughly 27 and men at 29. As many have pointed out, including myself, this is a disaster with many repercussions. Among them are a huge increase in sexual immorality, an increase in divorce and a drop in the birthrate.

Possible solutions for this problem are outside the context of this post. Instead, the focus is on why this problem developed. Some have accused men of driving the delay in marriage. An example of this can be found in one of Dalrock's posts, Clearing the Christian marriage-market. Dalrock correctly points out to one "Pastor Wilson" that it is not men (or at least, not primarily men) who are responsible for this. Rather, it is women who are driving the delay in marriage in the US right now. To quote from that post:

> He overlooks the fact that women are very open about their desire to ride the carousel for as long as possible before marriage. He also clearly doesn't understand the realities of the sexual marketplace (SMP) and marriage marketplace (MMP). Young women are the rockstars of the SMP, while young men are near the bottom. Since young women have the power, they set the terms. And what women want* is years, if not a decade or more, of sex with a small subset of the most attractive men before settling for a boring loyal dude. It makes no sense that men would prefer to marry just when their SMP stock is on the rise, and just when the SMP stock of their soon to be bride is rapidly declining.

Now, women need not desire to participate in the carousel, or at least not participate (although they may want to) to delay marriage. They might simply use their twenties for other endeavors. For example, there is the phenomenon of "Good Christian Girls" going on extended mission trips or ministries or the like. Adding up, they can do these for years, and in the process, delay marriage.

If it were men delaying marriage, and not women, then we would see a greater divergence between the median age of men and first marriage, and the median age of women at first marriage. But there is no such divergence. The gap between the two has remained relatively constant over the course of decades. Given that men prefer young women over older women, all else being equal, and given that women prefer men a few years older than themselves, we can determine that this delay is largely attributable to

women.

Update 1:

As a matter of clarification, I am speaking about the micro level here. It is individual women choosing to delay marriage, *en masse*, which is driving this delay. This is not to say that men are not involved in this process. A fair number of men are delaying marriage too- some because they are told to, and others because they don't need marriage to get their share of female companionship. In addition, fathers play a huge role in this delay of marriage. Many of them are essentially teaching their daughters to act like sons, and encouraging them towards a life path that necessitates marriage. So men are not blameless here.

At the same time, if one wants to fix this problem, and it is a problem, the primary focus needs to be on changing female behavior. Of course, that necessitates that fathers stop giving bad advice to their daughters. But the focus is on female behavior all the same, although covering the penumbra of factors which influence it.

Furthermore, I am not interested in a blame game. Rather, the goal is to identify a problem, and its source.

[My readers are of course encouraged to offer their own thoughts as well, and any data they have to support it.]

Low Profile

April 26, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This week is proving to be especially busy for me, so I am going to lay low for a while. I have a guest post coming tomorrow, and of course folks are invited to continue to comment on existing posts. Just don’t expect to see much of me for a week or so.

Tuesday Tips #3

April 27, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The guest post series by Michael K continues. Fitness is the theme for today:

> **Tuesday Tip #3: Work Out Daily At Home.**
>
> *…no wealth better than health of body…physical training is of some value…*
>
> There is nothing groundbreaking about this tip. It's old news. I include it only because I wish someone had shown *me* years ago a practical, low-cost workout that delivers results.
>
> Keeping fit is not the meaning of life. But good health is essential to maximize achievement and leisure, the basis of culture. Thus, in our sedentary culture, a daily exercise routine is vital.
>
> Method and Equipment:
>
> 1. Work out on a hard floor (basement or garage) 60 min a day, 6 days a week (minus holidays).
> 2. Use adjustable dumbells (e.g. SelectTech, $300+), pull-up/push-up bars ($60), yoga mat ($40).
> 3. Alternate (muscle confusion) intense (timed) workouts; heavy weights, low reps.
> 4. Minimal clothing under full-spectrum + UV bulbs (<$30).
> 5. Wear heart monitor (<$30) to ensure intensity on all exercises.
>
> Exercises:
>
> 1) Weight lifting, Pull-ups, Push-ups (60 min): 3x a week (rotate order biweekly).
>
> 2) Yoga (35 min), Kenpo (10 min), Abs (15 min): 2x a week.
>
> 3) Plyo (45 min), Abs (15 min): 1x a week.
>
> This workout hits every main muscle group weekly: chest, back, legs, shoulders, arms, and core. Performed intensely, it's also a solid daily cardio workout. After a $500 investment, it's free.
>
> We do this exercise first thing every morning. It's routine as meals. Sick or injured? Just show up and sit it out. Remarkably, I can't remember the last time anyone missed a workout. It's literally been years. Repetitive yoga has even healed every prior injury, now making this cause of absence moot.
>
> Many people make the perfect the enemy of the good. Yes, there are superior workouts (especially if you want to get jacked). Squats and deadlift are lacking here (though two 65# dumbells get close). Bench press is superior to push-up bars (but not overly so). And more time is always superior.

> But: can you maintain an elite, costly, time-consuming workout year after year? Along with a full, varied life that may include marriage, new children, moves, illnesses, and the injuries? My goal was to find that “golden mean” considering it all: time, travel, cost, ease, family, lifestyle, and *long-term* results.
>
> After nearly a decade of trialing, I think I’m close. Each year we’re stronger and feel younger than the last. Over these years I’ve watched workout fads come and go (along with their adherents’ passion and weight). And winced at their never-ending struggle to “get back” to the gym each new year.
>
> An intense, one-hour daily workout at home is absolutely doable. Year after year. Roll out of bed at 5:00, finish workout at 6:00. One hour. 6 days a week. Zero recurring cost. Zero travel. And *everyone* is fit, if not shredded. What’s not to like? Forget months. Forget years. Think decades.
>
> Recommended Reading:
>
> *Get Serious* (Osborn)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #107

May 2, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Given the recent discussion in this post about marriage and the responsibilities of setting it up, I think a post which covers some scripture on the topic would be appropriate. Without further ado:

> House and wealth are inherited from parents,
> but a prudent wife is from the Lord.

(Proverbs 19:14)

> A capable wife who can find?
> She is far more precious than jewels.

(Proverbs 31:10)

> [24] Do you have daughters? Be concerned for their chastity,
> and do not show yourself too indulgent with them.
> [25] Give a daughter in marriage, and you complete a great task;
> but give her to a sensible man.

(Sirach 7:24-25)

[I should note that the verse before these, 7:23, has a different reading in the Hebrew text which states something along the lines of this:

"Do you have sons? Choose wives for them while they are young."

> A sensible daughter obtains her husband,
> but one who acts shamefully brings grief to her father.

(Sirach 22:4)

> [3] For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication;
> [4] that each one of you know how to control your own body[b] in holiness and
> honor, [5] not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

(Thessalonians 4:3-5)

The footnote reads: Or *how to take a wife for himself*.

These are just a few quotes from scripture. I believe there are a few others to be found as well. I mention these because there is a lot of misunderstanding about marriage right now.

It is not merely a man's responsibility to find his wife and get married. But all the same he does need to know how to take a wife for himself.

Nor is it entirely up to a woman either. Yet she who is sensible or wise knows how to obtain a husband of her own as well.

Further, it is a parents duty to help their children find spouses as well. I quoted from Sirach before, and here are a few parts of St. John Chrysostom's 9th homily on First Timothy:

> Youth is wild, and requires many governors, teachers, directors, attendants, and tutors; and after all these, it is a happiness if it be restrained. For as a horse not broken in, or a wild beast untamed, such is youth. But if from the beginning, from the earliest age, we fix it in good rules, much pains will not be required afterwards; for good habits formed will be to them as a law. Let us not suffer them to do anything which is agreeable, but injurious; nor let us indulge them, as forsooth but children. Especially let us train them in chastity, for there is the very bane of youth. For this many struggles, much attention will be necessary. Let us take wives for them early, so that their brides may receive their bodies pure and unpolluted, so their loves will be more ardent. He that is chaste before marriage, much more will he be chaste after it; and he that practiced fornication before, will practice it after marriage. *All bread,* it is said, *is sweet to the fornicator.* Sirach 23:17 Garlands are wont to be worn on the heads of bridegrooms, as a symbol of victory, betokening that they approach the marriage bed unconquered by pleasure. But if captivated by pleasure he has given himself up to harlots, why does he wear the garland, since he has been subdued?
>
> …
>
> Mothers, be specially careful to regulate your daughters well; for the management of them is easy. Be watchful over them, that they may be keepers at home. Above all, instruct them to be pious, modest, despisers of wealth, indifferent to ornament. In this way dispose of them in marriage. For if you form them in this way, you will save not only them, but the husband who is destined to marry them, and not the husband only, but the children, not the children only, but the grandchildren. For the root being made good, good branches will shoot forth, and still become better, and for all these you will receive a reward. Let us do all things therefore, as benefiting not only one soul, but many through that one. For they ought to go from their father's house to marriage, as combatants from the school of exercise, furnished with all necessary knowledge, and to be as leaven able to transform the whole lump to its own virtue.

The point I want to make is this:

Marriage is something that everyone has a responsibility in helping set up- parents, son, and daughter. Our atomized and individualist age wants to try and push this job away to someone, anyone else. But the truth is that everyone has a part to play. Everyone needs to be proactive.

Young men need to actively seek out marriageable young women and they need to know how to woo them.

Young women also need to actively seek out marriageable young men and they need to

know how to properly indicate their interest.

Parents need to help their children find potential spouse candidates. One man or woman by himself will have difficulty in this task. It takes a concerted effort.

Random Musings and Links- #8

May 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Been preoccupied lately, and so blogging has slacked. Here are some links and thoughts in the interim.

Deep Strength has had several good posts lately. One is a story about a Real Life Ruth. The second discusses how to approach the topic of attraction with Christians. Principally how to explain the subject to Christian men who are "Blue Pill."

Ace of Spades returns for two short but important posts. The first deals with when to speak and when not to speak on the internet. The second concerns how a man should act when he no longer trusts his woman.

Mrs. ktc talks about NFP gone horribly wrong.

Zippy talks about Whitewashing and "pastoral mercy."

Dalrock points out, once again, that divorce is meant to provide Cash and Prizes to women.

Free Northerner discusses "Virtue Signalling." Not sure I exactly agree with his view, but it is an interesting discussion all the same.

Cane Caldo continues to shred the "Pro-Life" movement.

Now for some random musing…

I was thinking recently about how I would react if someone tried to match me a "reformed bad girl." It's been a while, and I don't remember how I reacted last time. So I am curious how my readers in a position similar to mine would react. And by react, I mean what would you think/feel, and also what would you say or do in response? Would the person conducting the match-making make a difference in your response?

In addition, I was struck by how easily men will lap up the rather consistent lie that women are "taken advantage of" by unscrupulous men **all the time.** Why do we soak up this lie so easily? Is this some cultural thing? A genetic component of being a man? I'm curious, because it is so obviously ridiculous when you actually confront the lie. Yet we do it all the time. I am curious what my readers think.

Masculine Monday- #8

May 10, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

Short and simple post today, with a short and simple message to men:

Learn how to say “No” to women.

Seriously, if you have trouble with it now, learn to do it. Your life will become so much better for it.

And, dare I say, so will the lives of most of the women who are part of it.

I might be a bit presumptuous here, but I think most men spend a lot of time trying to get women to say “Yes” to various things. But learning to say “No” to when when necessary can get you just as much. In fact, I would warrant a guess that you saying “No” just might be a factor in her saying “Yes.”

This is easier said than done, of course. We men have an instinctive desire to please women. We don’t like it when when are upset. And of course, we are fearful of being tagged a misogynist or the like. Couple that with a Western ~~upbringing~~ indoctrination, and most men in the West end up as the ones saying “Yes.”

So perhaps some of my male readers would be kind enough to offer their advice on how they learned to overcome all of that. Guys, what happened you learn to say “No” to women?

[This post was inspired by Dalrock’s recent examination of how many Christian leaders are fearful of telling the women in their congregation “No” in any way, especially the important ones.]

You Don’t Own Me

May 12, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I suspect that a fair number of my readers, or at least, those who are somewhat cognizant of pop culture, might have seen this trailer for Suicide Squad:

The first half of the trailer features a song, originally by Leslie Gore, titled “You Don’t Own Me.” I wasn’t familiar with it before this trailer, but wish I had been. It is a rather impressive piece in that it encapsulates so much of contemporary female thinking and behavior. Here are the full lyrics:

> You don’t own me
> I’m not just one of your many toys
> You don’t own me
> Don’t say I can’t go with other boys
>
> And don’t tell me what to do
> Don’t tell me what to say
> And please, when I go out with you
> Don’t put me on display ’cause
>
> You don’t own me
> Don’t try to change me in any way
> You don’t own me
> Don’t tie me down ’cause I’d never stay
>
> I don’t tell you what to say
> I don’t tell you what to do
> So just let me be myself
> That’s all I ask of you
>
> I’m young and I love to be young
> I’m free and I love to be free
> To live my life the way I want
> To say and do whatever I please
>
> And don’t tell me what to do
> Oh, don’t tell me what to say
> And please, when I go out with you
> Don’t put me on display
>
> I don’t tell you what to say
> Oh, don’t tell you what to do
> So just let me be myself
> That’s all I ask of you
>
> I’m young and I love to be young
> I’m free and I love to be free

> To live

Perhaps it is just me, but this song touches on a huge number of RP subjects. Heck, it almost seems like a parody of some of the stuff Rollo has covered over the years. Here are just a few subjects covered:

1. “Open” Relationships
2. Men shouldn’t try and change women
3. Young women need to be free to “find themselves”
4. Commitment is on a woman’s terms only

and so on and so forth.

Keep in mind this song dates back to **1964.** That is right, over 50 years ago. What we are seeing now in women is nothing new. The difference is the environment- it is far more hospitable to this type of behavior than it was in the past. But the desire was already there; it was *always* there.

Oh, and is it just me, or does this whole song seem like a fitness test writ large?

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #108

May 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will focus on the Psalms, as I haven't covered them much as of late.

One thing that is fascinating about many of the Psalms attributed to King David is how… plaintive they are. For example:

> How long, O Lord? Wilt thou forget me for ever?
> How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
> [2] How long must I bear pain in my soul,
> and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
> How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

> [3] Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
> lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
> [4] lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him";
> lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

> [5] But I have trusted in thy steadfast love;
> my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
> [6] I will sing to the Lord,
> because he has dealt bountifully with me.

(Psalm 13)

I sometimes find it easy to forget that King David wasn't always, you know, *King* David. Before that he was a soldier and before that a shepherd. Long before he reached the heights of his success he had to endure a considerable amount of suffering and hardship. And even as King he endured much (although a lot of that was his own fault). But before then, David knew full well just how much he relied upon God to be saved from all his distress.

Consider this Psalm:

> Vindicate me, O Lord,
> for I have walked in my integrity,
> and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.
> [2] Prove me, O Lord, and try me;
> test my heart and my mind.
> [3] For thy steadfast love is before my eyes,
> and I walk in faithfulness to thee.
> [4] I do not sit with false men,
> nor do I consort with dissemblers;
> [5] I hate the company of evildoers,

> and I will not sit with the wicked.

> [6] I wash my hands in innocence,
> and go about thy altar, O Lord,
> [7] singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
> and telling all thy wondrous deeds.

> [8] O Lord, I love the habitation of thy house,
> and the place where thy glory dwells.
> [9] Sweep me not away with sinners,
> nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
> [10] men in whose hands are evil devices,
> and whose right hands are full of bribes.
> [11] But as for me, I walk in my integrity;
> redeem me, and be gracious to me.
> [12] My foot stands on level ground;
> in the great congregation I will bless the Lord.

(Psalm 26)

Perhaps it is just me, but I get the feeling that this Psalm was written before he became King. As time passed on, David found, like many powerful men and women throughout history, that staying away from wickedness is easier said than done.

Finally, I find this part of Psalm 32 interesting:

> Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
> whose sin is covered.
> [2] Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
> and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

(Psalm 32:1-2)

St. Paul references this in Romans 4 as evidence of justification by faith. Why this was so wasn't immediately apparent to me years ago when I re-read Romans. But looking back to the Psalms helped me understand. This blessedness is a gift- God dispenses favors upon those whom he loves. This is a gift from God that is not something that we can every "buy." No works of ours can earn it, and thus it shows the greater value of what is offered by God in his new testament with us.

What Will She Think Of Me? -Masculine Monday- #9

May 17, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

My last Masculine Monday post was aimed at helping men in their interactions with women. Specifically, it was all about saying “No” to women. This post continues that trend, and was inspired in part by Dalrock’s most recent post.

One of the most important flaws that a man needs to excise from his mind is the question we are inclined by both nature and culture to ask: What will she think of me?

We need to stop caring what women think of us. We need to stop worrying that the girl we like might get a bad impression about us. We need to let go of our anxiety about what impact our actions will have on the way that women view us.

Letting go of this bad habit will only make our life that much better; *including* with women. Seriously, I speak from personal experience here. Many of strongest reactions (read, IOIs) I have gotten in my life are from the women I have cared the least about (at least as far as their opinion of me is concerned). A lot of PUAs say pretty much the same thing, at least from my limited understanding of them.

This ties in a bit with what “Game” types call an *abundance mentality.* I will save the definition for others, but there is a solid connection here. Having an abundance mentality requires a mindset in a man where he can let a woman go without a second thought. That mindset requires in turn that a man not care about what women (specifically that woman) think of him.

So guys, stop asking yourself: “what will she think of me?” when you are trying to decide something. Instead, ask yourself what *God* will think of you. After all, His is the only opinion that matters.

As always with this series, my readers are encouraged to offer their own thoughts, suggestions and tips on the subject.

An Abundance Of Concern

May 19, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I would like to clarify something from my previous post: I am *not* advocating that men adopt an abundance mentality. Least of all Christian men.

Rather, I was trying to explain that there was a similarity between the “Abundance Mentality” and a mindset which doesn’t care about how women view you.

Deep Strength explores much of what is wrong with the Abundance Mentality, at least as it concerns Christians, here.

As a prescriptive matter, I think men need to do a couple of things. Here are just a few:

- Stop caring what women think of you, especially women you might be interested in.
- Look for women who will be a good fit for you.
- Create an atmosphere of command (a concept worth exploring more later)
- Build yourself up- physically, mentally, economically and spiritually

Feel free to disagree or add your own thoughts as you see fit.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #109

May 22, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our God has provided us with many blessings, and promised yet more to come. This has been so with the faith even since the days of the Patriarchs and up to the present day. Yet we so often seem to forget that there is always a condition attached to these promises. Examples:

> **If you will only obey the Lord your God**, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth; [2] all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the Lord your God:
>
> [3] Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field.
>
> [4] Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock.
>
> [5] Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.
>
> [6] Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.
>
> [7] The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. [8] The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you undertake; he will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. [9] The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. [10] All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. [11] The Lord will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give you. [12] The Lord will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings. You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow. [13] The Lord will make you the head, and not the tail; you shall be only at the top, and not at the bottom—**if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God**, which I am commanding you today, by diligently observing them, [14] and **if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I am commanding you today**, either to the right or to the left, following other gods to serve them.

Note that most important of words- “if.”

Here are some from the New Testament:

> [32] “**Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others**, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; [33] but whoever denies me before

> others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

(Matthew 10:32-33)

> [46] While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were
> standing outside, wanting to speak to him. [47] Someone told him, “Look, your
> mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” [48] But
> to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother, and who are
> my brothers?” [49] And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and
> my brothers! [50] For **whoever does the will of my Father** in heaven is my
> brother and sister and mother.”

(Matthew 12:46-50)

> [12] “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
> [13] Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
> [14] **You are my friends if you do what I command you.** [15] No longer do I call
> you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have
> called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to
> you. [16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should
> go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the
> Father in my name, he may give it to you. [17] This I command you, to love one
> another.

(John 15:12-17)

It is important that we not lose sight of the fact that so much of what God promises is based on our following Him. Unfortunately, in this day and age that teaching has fallen by the wayside. We hear “Jesus loves us”, but we don’t hear, or ignore, the requirements of that love. Everything has a price, which even Jesus himself tried to make clear to us:

> [28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the
> cost, whether he has enough to complete it? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a
> foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying,
> ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish.’ [31] Or what king, going to
> encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he
> is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty
> thousand? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an
> embassy and asks terms of peace.

(Luke 14:28-32)

Today is as good a day as any to sit down and count the cost of discipleship. It is something I do often. Always I find the price to be terribly steep- but worth it, considering the payoff in the end.

Tuesday Tips- #4

May 25, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a few weeks, but the series by reader Michael K returns. Today's topic is the Economy:

> **Tip #4: It's the Economy, Stupid (Part 1)**
>
> *Note: These tips are about action. But some theory is needed on this one, so it's two installments.*
>
> Most people intuitively understand something is wrong with jobs, wages, and the economy today. The upper third is sometimes unaware of this. If this is you, wake up. Many of your fellow citizens are living "on the edge". They are isolated, vulnerable, unprotected, and often ashamed. Family breakdown is omnipresent. Ignore this growing reality at your peril.
>
> **My claim**: **the US has been in a hidden depression since 2008.** And many people are starting to agree; witness the dramatic political rise of Trump (a protectionist) and Sanders (a socialist) in a mere eight years.
>
> This depression has its roots in the past Great Depression. The creation of the Fed, paper money, and the resultant Roaring '20s set that stage, and the resulting depression required a World War and a near government takeover of the economy (900% debt/GDP) to pull through. And once a nation has tasted debt and tax-and-spend economy, it can never fully let it go.
>
> By 1964 total US credit reached $1 trillion. 44 years later, in 2008, it was *50 times higher*. The only way this was possible without hyperinflation? A massive trade deficit to soak up these dollars. The US went from the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor in a single generation. This was a party to remember!
>
> But why would other nations fund this debt? **Jobs!** We handed over our industrial capacity. This destroyed our working class families. But **government welfare** appeases the masses. And as a progressive bonus, **generous welfare for women and children sans men** makes male breadwinners unnecessary. **Who's your Daddy? Uncle Sam.** Toss in unbridled immigration of the world's desperately poor, and the progressive circle is complete. It's a cognitive elite paradise. And a disaster for working-class, traditional families.

This American credit bubble has transformed the global economy. The world gratefully took our jobs (or became our slaves, depending on your viewpoint). **But eventually the US hit the debt "wall" in 2008**. For the first time since the Great Depression, total US credit contracted. We simply couldn't take on any more debt with our shrinking middle class.

The panic was (and is) real. Without endless stimulus, this multi-generation debt bubble will collapse. **This won't be allowed to happen.** Government will continue to own the commanding heights of the economy. It's better to die tomorrow than die today. We will print as long as we possibly can.

It's a catch22. Households cannot run up more private debt without living wage jobs and a more equitable distribution of wealth. **But the 2015 median wage in China was *$8.13 per DAY***. And in three years, 2011–2013, *China has mixed more cement than the US did over the entire last century*. Jobs! So US companies buy back their stocks to create even more jobs overseas and less here. Stock owners are in heaven. We are now Mexico, a land of the Haves and the Have Nots. It's Yale or Jail. Male breadwinners (outside of the professional class) are now endangered and persecuted.

So we will continue to print. Only a few paths are left to stimulate the economy: Welfare. War. Pork-barrel government spending. Take your pick. Just remember the latter two actually create jobs, and are thus far more likely.

But America remains wealthy and moderately free, at least for now, and therefore remains the cleanest shirt in a very dirty laundry pile. For those who can adjust their mindset, look through the injustice to the other side, and take action, real opportunity exists. And that's for Part 2.

Masculine Monday- #10

May 31, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

There are not a lot of people that a man *needs* in life. Oh, there are plenty that a man would do well to have in life. And would be better off to have, certainly. But to actually *need*?

There are precious few of such truly necessary people. A mother and father, naturally (otherwise he wouldn't be here). But after that? I would argue it is a fairly short list, at that. Some debate can no doubt be had on the subject, and my readers can feel free to give their piece in the comments, as I will give mine here. The only other two on the list I would say are a good confessor and an honest friend. The former can be debated in another post, it is the latter that I address in today's short post.

I would argue that a man *needs* a good and honest friend. What do I mean by "a good and honest friend?" I mean a friend who a man can confide in, and know his confidences will be respected. A person who will tell him the truth when no one else will. Someone who will tell a man the truth even when the man doesn't want to hear the truth.

No man can be right all the time. We all make mistakes, we all err (as an aside, they are not the same thing). So it is essential to have someone in our life who will tell us what we *need* to hear, even and especially when we don't want to hear it. Naturally enough, that friend also needs to be a man.

If a man has a wife, she cannot be that honest friend. If she is truly devoted to him and reveres him, then she cannot be unbiased when he is concerned. She won't be capable of the brutal honesty required. And if she is not devoted to him, and reviles him, well then, her words cannot be trusted there either.

A man's parents, if they still live, also cannot fulfill this role. They too are biased, by both blood and the long years of nurture that were invested in raising the man to adulthood.

No, a man needs another man, one who will act as a true brother to him. An actual brother could fill this role, but it is just as capably (if not more so) carried out by another.

So I invite my readers to stop and consider whether they have such a friend. If the answer is no, I think they would be well advised to make finding such a friend a top priority in their life.

Spirit Of The Age

June 3, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[This post is aimed for men and women, and while it will have an obvious Catholic flair, I believe it will have value for all my readers.]

One of the biggest problems when trying to explain the Truth to someone, whatever that Truth might be, is that sometimes the Truth is incompatible with that person's mental framework.

What do I mean by "mental framework?" Well, the best explanation I can give is this: it is the set of mental tools and instructions/skills for both viewing the world around us and determining how it works. Essentially, it provides a canvass upon which we can paint reality and thereby interpret it.

How does this relate to my first statement? Simple: sometimes people lack the mental tools and instructions/skills which would allow them to be able to see the Truth, or to perceive that they have strayed from it.

Consider the following proverb: when all you have is a hammer, every problem begins to look like a nail.

The same applies to our mental framework of reality. When all we have is a mental hammer, our mind will only consider nails, and only see solutions that involve the use of nails.

A person caught up in this will not believe themselves to be irrational. In fact, they can appear and act very rational at times. Their explanations can be clear, thoughtful and at times seemingly brilliant. But at the same time they are very, very wrong- and the person has absolutely no idea of this.

What this means is that no matter how carefully your explain the Truth to someone, if that Truth is incompatible with their mental framework, you are wasting your breath. They just won't get it.

Unfortunately, those who are caught up in the Spirit of the Age- modernism or liberalism or whatever you wish to call it, all suffer from serious defects in their mental framework. They cannot grasp certain core Truths, because their view of how the world works, of how things *are and ought to be* (there is no separately the two in their mind), simply is incompatible with the Truth. To accept the Truth would require that they reject, either consciously or unconsciously, certain of their core beliefs about how the world works. Naturally enough, this is a terribly uncomfortable demand upon one's psyche- a demand that most will reject outright. Unless a person is willing to confront the dissonance between what we want things to be, and what the Truth demands them to be, he or she will be blind to just how out of step with the Truth they really are.

I should know- I was one of these people once. Perhaps I still am to a degree- after all, the rot runs deep.

Here is one case in point: Is the Pope a Feminist? And what's "Wives Submit" mean

anyway? Given the length, I won't quote the whole thing. Instead, I ask my readers do so to help understand my post. [Hat tip: Julian O'Dea]

The author is a self-described Catholic. He claims to be both explaining and upholding traditional, universal Catholic (but I repeat myself) teaching. To be on the same page as the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church.

He is, of course, doing no such thing. Rather, he is fully caught up in the Spirit of the Age. Whatever his intent, he is defending a modernist/liberal interpretation of Scripture and Church teaching. One need only read older Church writings (and not even that old- see Casti Conubii, for example) to see just how "off" the author really is. Anyone with an open mind (that is, a mental framework freed from at least some of the constraints of the Spirit of the Age) who reads the homilies of St. John Chrysostom and then compares it to the piece I linked will be able to see that disconnect, that dissonance. That isn't merely a cultural shift- they are on completely different pages.

Many Christians (from many different faith traditions) have expressed surprise about how so many other so called Christians find it so easy to bash the Truth and support positions that are in some cases openly heretical. The answer need not be *only* a dysfunctional mental framework, but by itself would likely suffice. Even those with no ill intent, such as the author here, can be led astray and lead others astray if they are caught up in the Spirit of the Age.

This problem with mental frameworks is why it is so essential for the Faithful to focus on the things of God, rather than the things of the world. The world, with its cultural institutions and modes of thought, aims to confuse us and muck up our mental framework. As a result, we will find it more difficult to turn towards God, as our ability to understand Him and His ways will be hindered. Consider these words of St. Paul:

> [18] Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. [19] For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," [20] and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." [21] So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, [22] whether Paul or Apol′los or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; [23] and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

(1 Corinthians 3:18-23)

The "wisdom of the world" is another way of describing the Spirit of the Age. It seems wise to men, but is folly with God. It confuses us and blinds us. So be wary of it. Accept that the wise people of this world will call you foolish if you follow the ways of God.

I have more to discuss on the subject, but that will require future posts. Here are two quick extensions. First, this same process can be applied to "the Red Pill" and "the Blue Pill." Those who have defective mental frameworks will have difficulty swallowing the Red Pill, and likely throw it up. Second, thoughts on how one might break free from the trap of a defective or dysfunctional mental framework have given me another metaphor to use,

rather than the Red Pill/Blue Pill metaphor, or The Glasses.

Reader Inquiry- Soul Mate Sources

June 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I am asking a favor of my readers, principally the Catholic and Orthodox ones. I am asking if any of you know of any writing by the Saints or early Church Fathers which would seem to support the notion of “Soul Mates.” At the same time, I would also like to know of any writing by said persons which argues against or rejects the idea of “Soul Mates.” I hope to use any quotes on the matter in a future post, but unfortunately I am low on time to search for them. Hence my inquiry. Thanks to any who do contribute.

Must It Be A Man?

June 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Both Men and Women Permitted

Today's post is a follow up to my most recent Masculine Monday post, found here. Therein I stated the need a man has for a good and honest friend. As part of my argument I explained that this friend needed to be a man. My specific words:

> No man can be right all the time. We all make mistakes, we all err (as an aside, they are not the same thing). So it is essential to have someone in our life who will tell us what we *need* to hear, even and especially when we don't want to hear it. Naturally enough, that friend also needs to be a man.
>
> If a man has a wife, she cannot be that honest friend. If she is truly devoted to him and reveres him, then she cannot be unbiased when he is concerned. She won't be capable of the brutal honesty required. And if she is not devoted to him, and reviles him, well then, her words cannot be trusted there either.

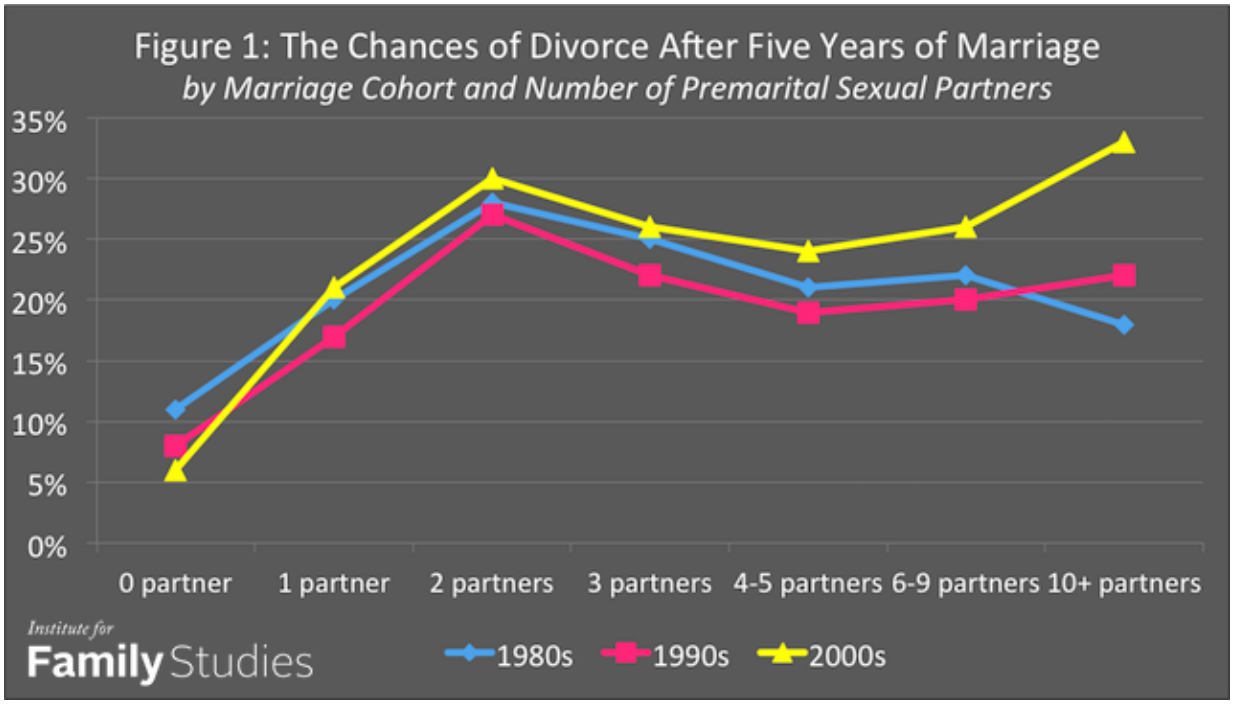
Somewhat unsurprisingly, a female reader objected to this argument. She felt that a wife could fulfill the role of objective imparter of the the truth. And unsurprisingly, I disagree with her. I felt a discussion on that particular subject was worth having, but the previous post was not a proper place for that discussion. Therefore I have created this post instead.

So tell me readers- must that friend be a man? Can it be a woman? A wife specifically, or a woman in general? Feel free to let loose in the comments.

Think Of The Children

June 10, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Reader and occasional commenter A Visitor recently alerted me to this post over at Vox Day's blog: N Matters, a lot. The key point of the post is this graph:



The study, and graph, reaffirm similar findings in the past about how a woman's N (her sexual partner count) affects the odds of divorce. Studies and charts like this have been discussed before, both on this blog and plenty of others, so I won't go into depth on it. I do like this one part from Vox's post, though:

> The interesting thing about this study is the way that it shows how the second-greatest risk is marrying a woman with only 2 partners; the researcher's theory is that this might be the result of over-emphasized comparisons; the woman has just enough experience to realize that there is something else out there, but not enough to realize that most of it isn't an improvement.

While not sold on it, it *is* a pretty solid theory. But I digress.

The reason for this post, and the reason for this post's title, is to emphasis the importance of visual cues. This chart is a powerful visual aid to explain to others the perils of marrying non-virgin women. It is bright, simple to understand and gets the point across without the reader needing to have any skill with statistics.

So for the time being, I will probably use this graph as my primary visual explanation for why I insist on marrying a woman with an N of 0. Setting aside all other concerns (of which I have plenty), the divorce angle cannot be ignored.

Most especially, I cannot ignore the impact divorce might have on any children that arise from the marriage before hand. If I am stupid and marry poorly, knowing that I should do better, than that is on me now. I will deserve it. But my kids don't deserve to be put

through the wringer. They deserve to have a stable and loving home- not one that is ripped apart. In addition, I would never want them exposed to a myriad of “boyfriends” and “step-dads” that their mother (whom I should have never married) will bring into her, and their, life.

Men, there are many ways to respond to someone who tries to shame you into marrying a non-virgin. But few will have quite the punch as pointing out that it greatly increases the chances of divorce, and the impact that will have on your children. Flip their shaming right back at them, and ask them why they want to make it more likely that your children will be put through the horrors of divorce. Ask them how they could be so callous. And remind them to think of the children.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #110

June 12, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I had something planned for this post over the week, but unfortunately forgot what it was over the weekend. A poor sign on my part- I shouldn't let the things of the world interfere with my spiritual life. So in order to jump start this post I opened my Bible at random, and this passage was there:

> 43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless
> places seeking rest, but he finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house
> from which I came.' And when he comes he finds it empty, swept, and put in
> order. 45 Then he goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than
> himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes
> worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation."

(Matthew 12:43-45)

What the faithful need to remember is that it is not enough that we empty our lives of evil thoughts and evil deeds. While that is a good start, it is just that- a start. It provides us an opening we must take advantage of. For as our Lord and Savior explains, when we empty out the evil of our life, we create a void. If we do not fill that void with what it good, then most assuredly the devil and his agents will seek to re-fill it with what is evil. Complacency cannot be part of our faith. If we are not moving forward on the path, then we are of necessity walking away from it.

This brings to mind some of what St. James said about faith and works:

> 14 What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works?
> Can his faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food,
> 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without
> giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 So faith by
> itself, if it has no works, is dead.
>
> 18 But some one will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith
> apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. 19 You believe
> that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. 20 Do you
> want to be shown, you foolish fellow, that faith apart from works is barren? 21 Was
> not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon
> the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was
> completed by works, 23 and the scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham
> believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness"; and he was called
> the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith
> alone. 25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works
> when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the
> body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead.

(James 2: 14-26)

If we become complacent in our faith, and do not demonstrate good works, then our faith will end up dying. In a way it can be compared to leaving the emptiness unfilled after clearing out an evil spirit. Our faith can remove that evil, but only good works can fill that void with actual good. There is no neutral ground here- we either produce good works, or we don't:

> "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. [2] Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [3] You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. [6] If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. [8] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. [9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. [11] These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

(John 15:1-11)

Here are some words of St. John Chrysostom on this particular passage:

> Then He adds, and says, "*I am the Vine, you are the branches.*" What wills He to imply by the comparison? That the man who gives no heed to His words can have no life, and that the miracles about to take place, would be wrought by the power of Christ. "*My Father is the Husbandman.*" *How then? Does the Son need a power working within?* Away with the thought! This example does not signify this. Observe with what exactness He goes through the comparison. He says not that the *root* enjoys the care of the Husbandman, but, *the branches.* And the foot is brought in in this place for no other purpose, but that they may learn that they can work nothing without His power, and that they ought to be united with Him by faith as the branch with the vine.
>
> *Every branch in Me that bears not fruit the Father takes away.*
> Here He alludes to the manner of life, showing that without works it is not possible to be in Him.
>
> *And every branch that bears fruit, He purges it.*
>
> That is, *causes it to enjoy great care.* Yet the root requires care rather than the branches, in being dug about, and cleared, yet about this He says nothing here, but all about the branches. Showing that He is sufficient to Himself, and that the

> disciples need much help from the Husbandman, although they be very excellent. Wherefore He says, *that which bears fruit, He purges it.* The one branch, because it is fruitless, cannot even remain in the Vine, but for the other, because it bears fruit, He renders it more fruitful. This, some one might assert, was said with relation also to the persecutions then coming upon them. For the *purges it,* is *prunes,* which makes the branch bear better. Whence it is shown, that persecutions rather make men stronger.

Tradition Thursday- #55

June 17, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I haven't had a post in this series for quite some time. Now is as good a time as any to fix that. The subjects of teaching and scripture have been on my mind as of late, and so this homily by St. John Chrysostom seems appropriate:

> *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. And whatsoever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*
>
> Having exhorted them to be thankful, he shows also the way, that, of which I have lately discoursed to you. And what does he say? *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*; or rather not this way alone, but another also. For I indeed said that we ought to reckon up those who have suffered things more terrible, and those who have undergone sufferings more grievous than ours, and to give thanks that such have not fallen to our lot; but what does he say? *Let the word of Christ dwell in you*; that is, the teaching, the doctrines, the exhortation, wherein He says, that the present life is nothing, nor yet its good things. If we know this, we shall yield to no hardships whatever. Matthew 6:25, etc./span> *Let it dwell in you,* he says, *richly,* not simply dwell, but with great abundance. Hearken ye, as many as are worldly, and have the charge of wife and children; how to you too he commits especially the reading of the Scriptures and that not to be done lightly, nor in any sort of way, but with much earnestness. For as the rich in money can bear fine and damages, so he that is rich in the doctrines of philosophy will bear not poverty only, but all calamities also easily, yea, more easily than that one. For as for him, by discharging the fine, the man who is rich must needs be impoverished, and found wanting, and if he should often suffer in that way, will no longer be able to bear it, but in this case it is not so; for we do not even expend our wholesome thoughts when it is necessary for us to bear anything we would not choose, but they abide with us continually. And mark the wisdom of this blessed man. He said not, *Let the word of Christ* be in you, simply, but what? *dwell in you,* and *richly.*
>
> *In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another. In all,* says he. Virtue he calls wisdom, and lowliness of mind is wisdom, and almsgiving, and other such like things, are wisdom; just as the contraries are folly, for cruelty too comes of folly. Whence in many places it calls the whole of sin folly. *The fool,* says one, *has said in his heart, There is no God* Psalm 14:1; and again, *My wounds stink and are corrupt from the face of my foolishness.* Psalm 38:5, Septuagint For what is more foolish, tell me, than one who indeed wraps himself about in his own garments, but regards not his brethren that are naked; who feeds dogs, and cares not that the image of God is famishing; who is merely persuaded that

human things are nought, and yet clings to them as if immortal. As then nothing is more foolish than such an one, so is nothing wiser than one that achieves virtue. For mark; how wise he is, says one. He imparts of his substance, he is pitiful, he is loving to men, he has well considered that he bears a common nature with them; he has well considered the use of wealth, that it is worthy of no estimation; that one ought to be sparing of bodies that are of kin to one, rather than of wealth. He that is a despiser of glory is wholly wise, for he knows human affairs; the knowledge of things divine and human, is philosophy. So then he knows what things are divine, and what are human, and from the one he keeps himself, on the other he bestows his pains. And he knows how to give thanks also to God in all things, he considers the present life as nothing; therefore he is neither delighted with prosperity, nor grieved with the opposite condition.

Tarry not, I entreat, for another to teach you; you have the oracles of God. No man teaches you as they; for he indeed oft grudges much for vainglory's sake and envy. Hearken, I entreat you, all you that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul. If you will not any other, yet get you at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befall you, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take thence comfort of your trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to you; keep them in your mind.

This is the cause of all evils, the not knowing the Scriptures. We go into battle without arms, and how ought we to come off safe? Well contented should we be if we can be safe with them, let alone without them. Throw not the whole upon us! Sheep you are, still not without reason, but rational; Paul commits much to you also. They that are under instruction, are not for ever learning; for then they are not taught. If you are for ever learning, you will never learn. Do not so come as meaning to be always learning; (for so you will never know;) but so as to finish learning, and to teach others. In the arts do not all persons continue for set times, in the sciences, and in a word, in all the arts? Thus we all fix definitely a certain known time; but if you are ever learning, it is a certain proof that you have learned nothing.

This reproach God spoke against the Jews. *Borne from the belly, and instructed even to old age.* Isaiah 46:3-4, Septuagint If you had not always been expecting this, all things would not have gone backward in this way. Had it been so, that some had finished learning, and others were about to have finished, our work would have been forward; you would both have given place to others, and would have helped us as well. Tell me, were some to go to a grammarian and continue always learning their letters, would they not give their teacher much trouble? How long shall I have to discourse to you concerning life? In the Apostles' times it was not thus, but they continually leaped from place to place, appointing those

who first learned to be the teachers of any others that were under instruction. Thus they were enabled to circle the world, through not being bound to one place. How much instruction, do you think, do your brethren in the country stand in need of, [they] and their teachers? But you hold me riveted fast here. For, before the head is set right, it is superfluous to proceed to the rest of the body. You throw everything upon us. You alone ought to learn from us, and your wives from you, your children from you; but you leave all to us. Therefore our toil is excessive.

Teaching, he says, *and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.* Mark also the considerateness of Paul. Seeing that reading is toilsome, and its irksomeness great, he led them not to histories, but to psalms, that you might at once delight your soul with singing, and gently beguile your labors. *Hymns,* he says, *and spiritual songs.* But now your children will utter songs and dances of Satan, like cooks, and caterers, and musicians; no one knows any psalm, but it seems a thing to be ashamed of even, and a mockery, and a joke. There is the treasury house of all these evils. For whatsoever soil the plant stands in, such is the fruit it bears; if in a sandy and salty soil, of like nature is its fruit; if in a sweet and rich one, it is again similar. So the matter of instruction is a sort of fountain. Teach him to sing those psalms which are so full of the love of wisdom; as at once concerning chastity, or rather, before all, of not companying with the wicked, immediately with the very beginning of the book; (for therefore also it was that the prophet began on this wise, *Blessed is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly*; Psalm 1:1, and again, *I have not sat in the council of vanity*; Psalm 26:4, Septuagint, and again, *in his sight a wicked doer is contemned, but he honors those that fear the Lord,* Psalm 15:4, Septuagint of companying with the good, (and these subjects you will find there in abundance,) of restraining the belly, of restraining the hand, of refraining from excess, of not overreaching; that money is nothing, nor glory, and other things such like.

When in these you have led him on from childhood, little by little you will lead him forward even to the higher things. The Psalms contain all things, but the Hymns again have nothing human. When he has been instructed out of the Psalms, he will then know hymns also, as a diviner thing. For the Powers above chant hymns, not psalms. For *a hymn,* says one, *is not comely in the mouth of a sinner* Sirach 15:9; and again, *My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they sit together with me* Psalm 101:6-7, Septuagint; and again, *he that works haughtiness has not dwelt in the midst of my house*; and again, *He that walks in a blameless way, he ministered unto me.* Psalm 101:6, Septuagint

So that you should safely guard them from intermixing themselves, not only with friends, but even with servants. For the harm done to the free is incalculable, when we place over them corrupt slaves. For if when enjoying all the benefit of a father’s affection and wisdom, they can with difficulty be preserved safe

throughout; when we hand them over to the unscrupulousness of servants, they use them like enemies, thinking that they will prove milder masters to them, when they have made them perfect fools, and weak, and worthy of no respect.

More then than all other things together, let us attend seriously to this. *I have loved,* says he, *those that love your law.* Psalm 119:165, not exact This man then let us too emulate, and such let us love. And that the young may further be taught chastity, let them hear the Prophet, saying, *My loins are filled with illusions* Psalm 38:7, Septuagint; and again let them hear him saying, *You will utterly destroy every one that goes a whoring from You.* Psalm 73:27, Septuagint And, that one ought to restrain the belly, let them hear again, *And slew,* he says, *the more part of them while the meat was yet in their mouths.* Psalm 78:30, Septuagint And that they ought to be above bribes, *If riches become abundant, set [not] your heart upon them* Psalm 62:10; and that they ought to keep glory in subjection, *Nor shall his glory descend together after him.* Psalm 49:17 And not to envy the wicked, *Be not envious against them that work unrighteousness.* Psalm 37:1 And to count power as nothing, *I saw the ungodly in exceeding high place, and lifting himself up as the cedars of Libanus, and I passed by, and lo! He was not.* Psalm 37:35 And to count these present things as nothing, *They counted the people happy, that are in such a case; happy are the people, whose helper is the Lord their God.* Psalm 144:15, Septuagint That we do not sin without notice, but that there is a retribution, *for,* he says, *You shall render to every man according to his works.* Psalm 62:12, Septuagint But why does he not so requite them day by day? *God is a judge,* he says, *righteous, and strong, and longsuffering.* Psalm 7:11 That lowliness of mind is good, *Lord,* he says, *my heart is not lifted up* Psalm 131:1: that pride is evil, *Therefore,* he said, *pride took hold on them wholly* Psalm 73:6, Septuagint; and again, *The Lord resists the proud*; and again, *Their injustice shall come out as of fatness.* That almsgiving is good, *He has dispersed, he has given to the needy, his righteousness endures for ever.* Proverbs 3:34 And that to pity is praiseworthy, *He is a good man that pities, and lends.* Psalm 73:7, Septuagint And you will find there many more doctrines than these, full of true philosophy; such as, that one ought not to speak evil, *Him that privily slanders his neighbor, him did I chase from me.* Psalm 112:9

What is the hymn of those above? The Faithful know. What say the cherubim above? What say the Angels? *Glory to God in the highest.* Psalm 112:5 Therefore after the psalmody come the hymns, as a thing of more perfection. *With psalms,* he says, *with hymns, with spiritual songs, with grace singing in your hearts to God.* Psalm 101:5, Septuagint He means either this, that God because of grace has given us these things; or, with the songs in grace; or, admonishing and teaching one another in grace; or, that they had these gifts in grace; or, it is an epexegesis and he means, from the grace of the Spirit. *Singing in your hearts to God.* Not simply with the mouth, he means, but with heedfulness. For this is to *sing to God,* but that to the air, for the voice is scattered without result. Not for

display, he means. And even if you be in the market-place, you can collect yourself, and sing unto God, no one hearing you. For Moses also in this way prayed, and was heard, for He says, *Why do you cry unto Me?* Exodus 14:15 albeit he said nothing, but cried in thought— wherefore also God alone heard him— with a contrite heart. For it is not forbidden one even when walking to pray in his heart, and to dwell above.

Ver. 17. *And whatsoever you do,* he says, *in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

For if we thus do, there will be nothing polluted, nothing unclean, wherever Christ is called on. If you eat, if you drink, if you marry, if you travel, do all in the Name of God, that is, calling Him to aid you: in everything first praying to Him, so take hold of your business. Would you speak somewhat? Set this in front. For this cause we also place in front of our epistles the Name of the Lord. Wheresoever the Name of God is, all is auspicious. For if the names of Consuls make writings sure, much more does the Name of Christ. Or he means this; after God say ye and do everything, do not introduce the Angels besides. Do you eat? Give thanks to God both before and afterwards. Do you sleep? Give thanks to God both before and afterwards. Launchest thou into the forum? Do the same— nothing worldly, nothing of this life. Do all in the Name of the Lord, and all shall be prospered to you. Whereonsoever the Name is placed, there all things are auspicious. If it casts out devils, if it drives away diseases, much more does it render business easy.

And what is to *do in word or in deed*? Either requesting or performing anything whatever. Hear how in the Name of God Abraham sent his servant; David in the Name of God slew Goliath. Marvelous is His Name and great. Again, Jacob sending his sons says, *My God give you favor in the sight of the man.* Genesis 43:14 For he that does this has for his ally, God, without whom he dared do nothing. As honored then by being called upon, He will in turn honor by making their business easy. Invoke the Son, give thanks to the Father. For when the Son is invoked, the Father is invoked, and when He is thanked, the Son has been thanked.

These things let us learn, not as far as words only, but to fulfill them also by works. Nothing is equal to this Name, marvelous is it everywhere. *Your Name,* he says, *is ointment poured forth.* Canticles 1:3 He that has uttered it is straightway filled with fragrance. *No man,* it is said, *can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* 1 Corinthians 12:3 So great things does this Name Work. If you have said, In the Name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, with faith, you have accomplished everything. See, how great things you have done! You have created a man, and wrought all the rest (that comes) of Baptism! So, when used in commanding diseases, terrible is The Name. Therefore the devil introduced those of the Angels, envying us the honor. Such incantations are for the demons. Even if it be Angel, even if it be Archangel, even if it be Cherubim, allow it not; for

> neither will these Powers accept such addresses, but will even toss them away from them, when they have beheld their Master dishonored. *I have honored you,* He says, *and have said, Call upon Me*; and do you dishonor Him? If you chant this incantation with faith, you will drive away both diseases and demons, and even if you have failed to drive away the disease, this is not from lack of power, but because it is expedient it should be so. *According to Your greatness,* he says, *so also is Your praise.* Psalm 48:10 By this Name has the world been converted, the tyranny dissolved, the devil trampled on, the heavens opened. We have been regenerated by this Name. This if we have, we beam forth; This makes both martyrs and confessors; This let us hold fast as a great gift, that we may live in glory, and be well-pleasing to God, and be counted worthy of the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and lovingkindness, etc.

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #112

June 18, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Fascinatingly enough, this series has also been quiet for a while. We resume where we left off, with the letter E. This gives us the saint of the day, Emmelia of Caesaea:

> **Emmelia of Caesarea** (Cappadocia, Central Anatolia, Turkey) was born in the fourth century, a period in time when Christianity was becoming more widespread, posing a challenge to the Roman government and its Pagan rule. She was the wife of Basil the Elder and bore nine or ten children, including Basil of Caesarea (born circa 330), Macrina the Younger, Peter of Sebaste, Gregory of Nyssa, and Naucratius.
>
> Emmelia—also known as Emilia or Emily—is venerated as a saint in both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church and is said to have died in 375. However, she is not the only woman in her family to be venerated as a saint. Both her mother-in-law, Macrina the Elder, as well as her daughters, Macrina the Younger and Theosebia are recognized as saints in the Eastern Orthodox Church.
>
> Emmelia spent much of her later years living with her eldest daughter, Macrina the Younger. Macrina the Younger had a profound impact on her mother. With her husband no longer around, Emmelia and her daughter lived a life dedicated to Christianity, surrounded by servants that they treated as equals, at Macrina the Younger's insistence. Their ascetic way of life attracted a following of women which created a convent like atmosphere, where one was considered rich if she lived a pure and devout Christian life and disregarded the materialistic lure of earthly pleasures and possessions.

(Source)

Half of this pious woman's children became saints, with several of them highly influential in the development of the faith. Here I suspect we find a woman whose reward in heaven will be great indeed- for she valued treasures of a spiritual nature, not a worldly one.

> [19] "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rus[t] consume and where thieves break in and steal, [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(Matthew 6:19-21)

Masculine Monday- #11

June 21, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

I disagree with the PUA wing of the 'sphere in a number of ways, nearly all of them significant. One area I want to touch on with this post is the way that most PUAs give women power over their lives. They will deny this, of course. Many will point out that they advocate taking women off the pedestal- if not smashing that pedestal outright. But pedestalizing women and giving them power over you is not the same thing.

This power transfer comes about when a man makes his notch count a metric to use in determining how much he "succeeds in life." When a man does this, he gives women the ability to determine his level of success. It is women who hold the key to the treasure vault, as it were. He is reliant on them to become a success. This gives women power over you.

That a man can become astute at convincing women (or certain types of women, anyways) to sleep with him doesn't change this. Sure they might be poor stewards of that power (nothing new, really). But they have that power all the same.

I would argue that an essential component of masculinity involves not being reliant on women to "succeed in life." *Boys* are the ones who rely on women (mothers specifically) to tell them how great they are. Being a man means not needing a woman to tell you (whether in words or actions) just how great of a man you really are.

> [2] What, my son? What, son of my womb?
> What, son of my vows?
> [3] Give not your strength to women,
> your ways to those who destroy kings.

(Proverbs 31:2-3)

In The Dark

June 23, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My Orthodox readers might find the following article interesting:

The Orthodox Church Stays In The Dark Ages

Of course, other readers could (and dare I say, should) find it interesting too. Now, the arcana of Orthodox policies and politics isn't my primary interest in that article. Instead, it was the focus on The Dark Ages.

You see, there is definitely some darkness going on in that piece. Only, the lack of light is found in the writer's head. His Western education clearly shows (at least to me), as he is clearly unaware of the actual nature of the Dark Ages. If he was historically literate, or at least had the brains to read Wikipedia, he would have known that the Dark Ages was a period in *Western* European history. It was the *Western* Church which went through the "Dark Age" period.

The Eastern Church, on the other hand, had a rather different experience. Why so? Simple- the *Eastern* Roman Empire lasted for a thousand years longer than in the West. The Light of the East didn't dim like that of the West when Rome fell. Instead the Eastern Church flourished and prospered. At least, it did until Islam showed up and conquered vast areas of formerly Christian lands.

The writer is letting his contempt for Tradition, and the haughtiness of a liberal mindset, show here. He has a point to make, and he won't let facts or history get in the way of it. Arguing the merits of why the Orthodox Churches are standing up for what they believe in is pointless with one such as him. The irony is that so called "Progressives" like him (although he may deny that is what he is) are the new barbarians- they are the ones trying to tear down the pillars of civilization all around them. Sadly, for the most part they succeeded. I hope for the world's sake that they continue to fail where the Eastern Church is concerned.

The Escape Plan

June 25, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I.

I have read with interest Deep Strength's latest posts on submission and marriage. In chronological order we have:

Intelligent submission is not required

Submission is a test of faith

Women's sin nature in marriage and contentment

Unfortunately, time restraints kept me from responding in detail until now. Since DS has written several follow-ups to the first post, some of what I was going to say is now dated. Some now ideas developed, however, and so I will try and flesh out this post as best as I can.

I should note that I don't agree with all that DS has to say- sometimes for theological reasons and sometimes practical reasons. But those disagreements can be worked out in other posts (and in some cases already have)

II.

To begin with, I want to explore the notion of "intelligent submission." As some alluded to in DS's post, such a term is highly disingenuous. Not because there is anything wrong with either word. The problem is when they are combined together. The addition of "intelligent" is meant to apply a condition to submission- in other words, to limit its application.

Frankly, whenever anyone proposes limiting any expression of faith, be it submission, or charity, or compassion, etc., massive red flags need to be raised. Has anyone among my readers heard of "Intelligent Compassion" before? I can't say that I have. And if I did, you better believe I would be looking for the con. I rather suspect I would not be alone in this.

Intelligence, or better put, Wisdom, is a trait that all Christian women should posses, or strive to build. Married women are no exception to this:

> She opens her mouth with wisdom,
> and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

(Proverbs 31:26)

However, when people start talking about "Intelligent Submission" they aren't referring to a woman exercising wisdom and submitting to her husband at the same time. No, they are saying a woman should intelligently decide when and where and how to submit to her husband. The gap between those two notions is as vast as that between Lazarus and the Rich Man. No bridging that gap.

All of this drives to my main point: beware of those who try and applies conditions to how they live out their faith. For most, if not all, their intentions are not benign. What they are trying to do is limit how much work they actually have to put into their faith. An example from our Lord:

> Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, [2] "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." [3] He answered them, "And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? [4] For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.' [5] But you say, 'If any one tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God,[a] he need not honor his father.'[b] [6] So, for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word[c] of God.

[Footnote b: By dedicating his property to God, i.e., to the temple, a man could avoid having to help his parents, without actually giving up what he had. The scribes held such a vow to be valid without necessarily approving it.]

(Matthew 15:1-6)

They want to have their cake and it eat it- to appear righteous, without having to live a righteous life. Which leads to the next part.

III.

This idea of appearing righteous without having to actually be righteous is what Deep Strength covers in his most recent post:

> That's ultimately what it comes down to: women want to let their husband lead instead of following his lead. I had thought that twisted rebellion like the complementarians espouse was the main sin nature of women. However, I believe I am now wrong about that. Covert rebellion which is "I let my husband lead" is probably the main sin nature of women because it's under the guise of righteousness (e.g. the husband is leading) but it gives her all of the power (e.g authority) in the relationship.
>
> **This is the true essence of virtue signalling. Grabbing power while maintaining the moral high ground. It's not enough to grab power. It must be done with the moral high ground.**
>
> In other words, a woman must look good while rebelling or sinning. As Looking Glass likes to call it: Vanity. Vanity rebellion. Women's sin nature in marriage is Vanity Rebellion.

DS is very close here. He is spot on about the specific behavior that women are exhibiting here. Although I think the name "Vanity Rebellion" is a bit clunky, I can't think of a better name myself, so VR it is.

This VR phenomenon is quite prevalent in Christian circles, and is something I think we can probably call endemic to human nature. Nor is it necessarily limited to women, although I think women are more prone to it.

As DS points out, can also see this virtue signalling when it comes to divorce- women always try to have the moral high ground when they initiate a divorce. It is never because the woman is just tired of marriage. That might be part of it, but there is always some major failing on the man's part.

At the same time, however, I think that this specific behavior is just a particular manifestation of a much broad behavior that women are prone to engage in. I call it "The Escape Plan."

It is as simple as it sounds- always have an escape plan in place in case something goes wrong. Whatever the situation is, always have an out for it. You can find this behavior everywhere:

Don't like what your husband is telling you to do? Claim it wouldn't be intelligent to submit to him, and *that* is what God expects of wives.

Don't like being married to your husband? Divorce him and claim it is his fault, that the moral blame lies on him because *he* failed as a husband and God wants you to be free.

Don't need an abortion but want to be free to get one if need be, and at the same time appear righteous? Say that you are personally against abortion but don't feel the state should intervene in women's lives/bodies.

Rollo's Plan B is an example of this. Keep a "Plan B" man around… just in case.

Heck, you see this in domestic violence cases all the time. The woman calls the police, but then tells them she doesn't want the man arrested. Why? Lots of reason, but a major one is she wants them there to cool the situation down, at least at first. But then she can decide whether to keep the relationship or not. If she decided to keep it, she says she doesn't want to press charges. If she decides to ditch her man, say she wants charges. You can also see this with women who will stick with a man, but then tell their friends or family they are "in fear of their lives." This gives them a great out- they can stay if they want, but once they want out they can call the police and point out they warned people in the past. [This is nothing, mind you. Having friends who are cops can provide all kinds of stories- but this isn't the place for that.]

Again, the goal is setting up a situation where the woman can bail at any time if she wants to. It is all having options.

This explains Vanity Rebellion- women want to appear to be a good, righteous woman. But they also worry about what the cost of that could be if they actually lived up to everything. So they gain power… just in case.

Now, men do this too. But women, who are more naturally covert than men as owing to their nature, are far and away more prone to this. So prone to it I would argue that it is a standard procedure for women- they will default to it unless they actively resist. For men I think it is much more likely to be an active choice, and thus less common.

IV.

And that wraps up my commentary for today. To recap:

- People who add conditional modifiers to expression of faith, such as submission, are almost always (and should be presumed to be) acting in bad faith.
- Vanity Rebellion is just one example of a larger phenomenon, The Escape Plan- whereby a woman tries to get some perceived good but at the same time leaves an option available to her to bail or escape if the cost should prove too high.

My readers are of course free to disagree and/or add their own thoughts.

Tradition Thursday- #56

July 1, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I would like to quote from St. John Chrysostom's fifth homily on first Thessalonians. I believe I have quoted from it before, albeit not in this series. Here is some of the latter part of his homily, after he decries fornication among men:

> What then do I advise, so as to extirpate the roots? So many of you as have young sons, and are bringing them up to a worldly life, quickly draw them under the yoke of marriage. For since while he is yet young desires trouble him, for the time before marriage, by admonitions, threats, fears, promises, and numberless other methods restrain them. But at the season of marriage, let no one defer it. Behold, I speak the words of a match-maker, that you should let your sons marry. But I am not ashamed to speak thus, since not even Paul was ashamed to say, *Defraud ye not one the other* 1 Corinthians 7:5, which seems more shameful than what I have said; yet he was not ashamed. For he did not pay heed to words, but to the acts that were set right by words. When your son is grown up, before he enters upon warfare, or any other course of life, consider of his marriage. And if he sees that you will soon take a bride for him, and that the time intervening will be short, he will be able to endure the flame patiently. But if he perceives that you are remiss and slow, and waitest until he shall acquire a large income, and then you will contract a marriage for him, despairing at the length of the time, he will readily fall into fornication. But alas! The root of evils here also is the love of money. For since no one cares how far his son shall be sober and modest, but all are mad for gold, for this reason no one makes this a matter of concern. Wherefore I exhort you first to regulate well their souls. If he find his bride chaste, and know that body alone, then will both his desire be vehement, and his fear of God the greater, and the marriage truly honorable, receiving bodies pure and undefiled; and the offspring will be full-charged with blessing, and the bride and bridegroom will comply with one another, for both being inexperienced in the manners of others, they will submit to one another. But one that begins when younger to wax wanton, and to have experience of the ways of harlots, for the first and second evening will praise his own wife; but after that he will soon fall back into that wantonness, seeking that dissolute and disorderly laughter, the words that are full of base import, the dissolute deportment, and all the other indecency, which it is not tolerable that we should mention. But a woman of free estate would not endure to make such exhibitions, nor to tarnish herself. For she was espoused to her husband to be his partner in life, and for the procreation of children, not for the purposes of indecency and laughter; that she might keep the house, and instruct him also to be grave, not that she might supply to him the fuel of fornication.
>
> …

> I said indeed to your fathers, that they ought early to lead you to marriage: but nevertheless neither are you without liability to punishment. For if there were not other young men also, more numerous than you, living in chastity, both formerly, and now, there would perhaps be some excuse for you. But if there are, how can you say, that we were not able to restrain the flame of lust? For they, who have been able, are your accusers, in that they are partakers of the same nature. Hear Paul saying, *Follow after peace…and the sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Hebrews 12:14 Is not this threat sufficient to terrify you? Do you see others continuing altogether in chastity, and in gravity passing their lives; and cannot you command yourself even so long as the period of youth? Do you see others ten thousand times overcoming pleasure, and cannot you once refrain? With your leave, I will tell you the cause. For youth is not the cause, since then all young men would be dissolute. But we thrust ourselves into the fire. For when you go up to the theater, and sit feasting your eyes with the naked limbs of women, for the time indeed you are delighted, but afterwards, you have nourished thence a mighty fever. When you see women exhibited as it were in the form of their bodies and spectacles and songs containing nothing else but irregular loves: such a woman, it is said, loved such a man, and not obtaining him, hanged herself; and unlawful loves having mothers for their object; when you receive these things by hearing also, and through women, and through figures, yea, and even through old men, (for many there put masks upon their faces, and play the parts of women,) tell me, how will you be able to continue chaste afterwards, these narratives, these spectacles, these songs occupying your soul, and dreams of this sort henceforth succeeding. For it is the nature of the soul for the most part to raise visions of such things, as it wishes for and desires in the daytime. Therefore when you there both see base actions, and hear baser words, and receive indeed the wounds but do not apply the remedies, how will not the sore naturally be increased? How will not the disease become more intense; and in a much greater degree than in our bodies? For if we were willing, our will admits of correction more easily than our bodies. For there indeed drugs, and physicians, and time are required, but here it is sufficient having but the will, to become both good and bad. So that you have rather admitted the disorder. When therefore we gather to us indeed the things that injure, but pay no regard to the things that benefit, how can there ever be any health?

(Source)

[Sorry for the length of paragraphs. Should I break them up for ease of reading?]

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #111

July 4, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Short post today. Here is a short passage from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians:

> [14] Do not be mismated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness
> and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? [15] What accord has
> Christ with Be′lial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? [16] What
> agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living
> God; as God said,

> "I will live in them and move among them,
> and I will be their God,
> and they shall be my people.
> [17] Therefore come out from them,
> and be separate from them, says the Lord,
> and touch nothing unclean;
> then I will welcome you,
> [18] and I will be a father to you,
> and you shall be my sons and daughters,
> says the Lord Almighty."
>
> Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every
> defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

(2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

Then we move to St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians:

> [12] But we beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are
> over you in the Lord and admonish you, [13] and to esteem them very highly in love
> because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.[a] [14] And we exhort you,
> brethren, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be
> patient with them all. [15] See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek
> to do good to one another and to all. [16] Rejoice always, [17] pray constantly, [18] give
> thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. [19] Do
> not quench the Spirit, [20] do not despise prophesying, [21] but test everything; hold
> fast what is good, [22] abstain from every form of evil.
>
> [23] May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul
> and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
> [24] He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

(1 Thessalonians 5:12-24)

The passage from First Thessalonians is important because important because St. Paul clearly lays out that our Body, Soul and Spirit are different aspects of our being. I talked

about these three parts of our being in my Background on the Nature of Man post, here. In addition, this passage shows St. Paul praying for the Thessalonians so that each of those parts of their being is “sound.”

This ties in with the first passage I quoted from. From Second Corinthians we can see that our Spirit, not just our body, can be defiled. Another word that I like is polluted, for it shows how the life within us, the life purchased at great price, can be made unclean in all the proper senses of the word. And of course that pollution is sin. But at the same time it also shows that we can cleanse this impurity from ourselves. Now, cleansing our bodies will be different depending on what we have done. However, cleansing our spirit relies on cleansing our soul through repentance and confession. This is where we see the great Hope of our faith- that no matter the defilement, God can cleanse us of it… *if we let him*. That is where Faith comes in, and why it is necessary to salvation. Without Faith we are lost because we won’t let work within us.

A Clever Rewrite Of History

July 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I found this worth a few laughs. Perhaps my readers will as well. Happy 4th everyone.

Marital Competency

July 7, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

{Bit of a stream of consciousness post tonight.]

I had an interesting discussion with a friend recently about the difficulty of living a Christian marriage. Our faith, our God, demands a lot from us. I don't think I am alone in thinking this either…

> His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

(Matthew 19:10)

After discussing the difficulty of living up to marriage, we briefly talked about how few are up to that these days. Which leads me to this post.After giving it thought, it occurs to me that what is going on is as simple as most people these days not being competent enough to marry.

Marriage, successful marriage, that is, requires a lot of life-skills and disciplines. Traits such as patience, strong self-control, charity and kindness all go a long way towards making a marriage succeed. An absence of those traits, and more, makes it more and more likely a marriage will fail (divorce), or will end up miserable for one or both spouses.

It seems to me that, assuming they were quantifiable, one could make a score of each of these core traits. Then you could create an Index of them, to get a rough value for how well someone scores overall. This would lead to a Marital Competency Index, or MCI score, that you could use to measure someone's marriageability.

Of course, I recognize that a really precise way of measuring the MCI is impossible- quantifying different traits is either impossible or arbitrary. All the same, as an abstract concept I think that it has some worth.

For example, one could use a theoretical MCI score to explain whether or not someone was "marriageable." By marriageable I mean a score which was high enough to represent that they possessed enough of those essential traits for them to be likely to live a successful marriage. Certain traits, being so essential, would be so heavily weighted that they naturally fall in line with the overall score. Others would have much lesser values, and so might not be "make or break" in terms of meeting the threshold.

Another advantage to this concept is that it helps to understand the role of culture and the surrounding society. This is because the MCI score which represents the threshold for "marriageable" would not be fixed. Rather, it would fluctuate with the culture. A healthy culture that respects and promotes marriage would have a lower threshold. People would be able to marry with less traits and yet still have successful marriages. On the other hand, in a sick culture that actively works to undermine marriage/marriages, such as ours today, the threshold increases. People need to bring more to the table in order to make marriage work these days.

Also, the MCI concept would help explain why someone “turning to Jesus” doesn’t simply make them marriageable. After all, these traits take time to build and develop. Many require years of development. A sudden conversion would not instantaneously cause someone to grow skills that have been stunted for years or decades. To provide a metaphor- a fruit tree that has been sick for a while will not instantly produce good fruit the moment a cure is applied.

[In addition, this highlights how important it is to raise daughters right. They have far less time to correct deficiencies than men, given that their fertility window is far more limited.]

I could probably continue, but at this point I think I’ve covered enough for a single post. Now, I know that I’ve covered this topic in different ways before. But having thought on it, I don’t think I have had a post which is as (hopefully) clear and specific as this one.

Those Sounds You Hear…

July 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

… are more dominoes hitting the floor.

Vox has some good advice here about how to approach the situation. Dalrock also has some thoughts on the matter.

I will try and find the time to give a more thoughtful response to this all. In the interim I would suggest that people network. Build up your personal community, and develop new ones, to compensate for the decrease in general community that is happening around us.

Saturday Saints- #113

July 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's letter is F, and thus we have our saint, Saint Florentina:

> **Saint Florentina** (died ca. 612) is venerated as a saint by the Catholic Church. Born towards the middle of the sixth century in Cartagena, Hispania, she and her family were actively engaged in furthering the best interests of Christianity.
>
> Florentina was the sister of three Iberian bishops in the time of the Visigothic dominion (Leander, Isidore of Seville, and Fulgentius), she consecrated her virginity to God, and all four have been canonized by the Church.
>
> She was younger than her brother Leander, later Archbishop of Seville, but older than Isidore, who succeeded Leander as archbishop of the same see.
>
> Before his elevation to the episcopal dignity, Leander had been a monk, and it was through his influence that Florentina embraced the ascetic life. She associated with herself a number of virgins, who also desired to forsake the world, and formed them into a religious community. Later sources declare their residence to have been the convent of S. Maria de Valle near Ecija (Astigis), of which city her brother Fulgentius was bishop.

Somewhat more can be found out about St. Florentina at her wiki, located here.

Never Enough

July 14, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was in a conversation recently at church in which the discussion turned towards Christians who held (what those present) considered to be pretty obviously heretical beliefs. Several of the men present (it was an all male conversation) expressed a belief that ignorance was the biggest problem. They felt that if people were better educated it would got a long way towards solving the problem.

I disagreed. In my opinion it isn't a lack of received truth on most people's part. The problem is found in the heart, not the mind. No amount of proof will work for them. Case in point:

> 19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who
> feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus,
> covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the
> rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man
> died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also
> died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up
> and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24 He called out, 'Father
> Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in
> water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25 But Abraham
> said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things,
> and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are
> in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so
> that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one
> can cross from there to us.' 27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my
> father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they
> will not also come into this place of torment.' 29 Abraham replied, 'They have
> Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 30 He said, 'No, father
> Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said
> to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be
> convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

(Luke 16:19-31)

You can tell people the truth, you can *show* them the truth, but if they don't want to accept it, and its implications, they will simply reject it, and choose a more preferable interpretation. That is not to say that ignorance is good- it isn't. We are called to tell the Truth, even if we know people will reject it. Sometimes error really is a product of ignorance- that was my case for much of my life.

The key is not to be disheartened when people do reject the Truth (in whatever form and case it may be).

Naturally enough, this also applies to the “Red Pill.” Of course, the Red Pill isn’t really “truth” per se. Rather, it is merely an exposure to the fact that one has been living a lie. (NSR has a good write-up on that here.) But all the same- plenty of folks will choose the lie, even after they have been told (and shown) it to be a lie. For them, there is never enough evidence to support your argument (whatever it may be). All you can do is carry on.

> [14] The mind of a fool is like a broken jar;
> it can hold no knowledge.

(Sirach 21:14)

Pulling The Plug

July 19, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Alternate title: **Putting on the Glasses**]

In my post Never Enough reader/commenter Coastal suggested that I write a post "helping Churchians's 'unplug' would be great, along with examining how swallowing the 'pill' tends to change your relationships with others in a church setting." It is quite a good idea, and one that I intend to pursue.

However, that is a lot to cover. More than would reasonably fit in a single post. And it would be difficult to have the comments flow together. So I am going to start a new series about how to help men accept the "Red Pill" or unplug or put the glasses on. [Use whatever analogy suits your preference.] At the same time I will have a side post (or series), which focused on how unplugging affects Church relationships.

I hope to have the first post up soon.

Pulling The Plug #1: Sounding Off

July 21, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is the first in my series on how help "unplug" Churchians, as well as Christians who are simply misguided. I am going to try and keep these posts narrowly focused, in order to save myself some time as well as get the most out of ideas developed therein.

For today's post I start with the beginning-

How do you start to "unplug" someone? How do you convince them to "put on the glasses?"

I think the best foundation is to determine where they stand. Get them to sound off on what truths they already recognize, and what lies they hold dear. Of course, it shouldn't be an interrogation, or a real demand that they list every single thing they believe which is connected to the ideas discussed in the 'sphere. Rather, try and figure it out over several conversations. Ask about related subjects, or RP subjects, and carefully get a feel for what someone believes.

The reason I suggest this is because you need to know where someone is already good, where they are really bad, and where they need improvement, but perhaps are already moving in the right direction. Once you know where they stand, you can begin in earnest.

I recommend beginning your "active unplugging" by reaffirming with them the truth that they already accept. Focus on it at first. Emphasize how you both agree on this matter. Get them to involve themselves in discussions on it, so that they feel invested in the topic. Once invested, it will be harder for them to reject the implications those truths point towards.

Also, getting someone to agree with themselves is usually not terribly difficult (shocking, right?). But in all seriousness, this makes it a good and easy way to start. You can start to get a feel for both your own knowledge, as well as what techniques work best to convince someone. Once you have built a rapport with someone, then you can move to the next step with a greater likelihood of success.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #112

July 25, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post begins with this passage from the gospel of Luke:

> Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in
> the wilderness, [2] where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate
> nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.
> [3] The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to
> become a loaf of bread." [4] Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live
> by bread alone.'"
>
> [5] Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the
> world. [6] And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this
> authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. [7] If
> you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." [8] Jesus answered him, "It is
> written,
>
> 'Worship the Lord your God,
> and serve only him.'"
>
> [9] Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the
> temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,
> [10] for it is written,
>
> 'He will command his angels concerning you,
> to protect you,'
>
> [11] and
>
> 'On their hands they will bear you up,
> so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"
>
> [12] Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"
> [13] When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an
> opportune time.

(Luke 4:1-13)

While re-reading this passage again, I was struck by the particular avenues of attack that the Evil One used. He offers Jesus different things- just as he "offers" us certain "gifts" in exchange for turning our backs on God.

He first starts by focusing on base, material concerns- our appetites, in this case quite literally with Jesus' hunger. Jesus, being both fully man and fully God, experienced hunger just as we do. And that ache would have been pretty intense after 40 days. But at the same time Jesus knows that there is more to our life than just satisfying material needs. St. Paul touches on this in his letter to the Philippians:

> [17] Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an

> example in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even
> with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their
> god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

(Philippians 3:17-19)

The second attack that the Adversary makes is by offering all earthly authority to Jesus. This is an attack via pride and greed. Again, as a man, Jesus experienced the same sense of ego and desire that we all experience. But He rejected those desires, for they ultimately lead to naught but ruin. What good is there to gain the world, but lose one's soul? Such a trade is that of a fool:

> [16] And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth
> plentifully; [17] and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to
> store my crops?' [18] And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build
> larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. [19] And I will say to
> my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat,
> drink, be merry.' [20] But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of
> you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' [21] So is he who lays
> up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

(Luke 12:16-21)

Finally, the devil makes a much more curious kind of attack. It is harder to explain- the devil is seemingly trying to pervert the protection and help that we know God gives us by making us squander that help, or use it in appropriately. In particular, by putting God to the test. It seems to me that putting God to the test is particularly sinful because it is an act of rebellion- we no longer act to serve God, but instead try and make him serve use. Almost like a child trying to order a parent around, as it were. I am curious as to how my readers see this particular test. Please leave your thoughts in the comments below.

Pulling The Plug #2: Slow And Steady

July 28, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My series on helping people "unplug" continues. Part 1 can be found here.

Today I want to talk about pacing. What I have noticed about myself is that I, at first, had a tendency to drop too much truth on folks at once. This was a mistake. Some things to keep in mind about helping people unplug:

- The truth isn't necessarily easy to understand- some concepts are rather complicated.
- The truth isn't necessarily easy to accept- getting someone to reevaluate their whole world-view is easier said than done.
- There is a lot to process, and the more you throw at someone, the harder it is to process.

All of this leads to the simple conclusion that you should take the slow and steady approach when helping someone. Resist the urge to give them everything at once. Instead of bombarding them (which rarely works), pick one or two areas to focus on. Then keep at them, introducing them to more and more concepts over time. Eventually they will really grasp something. Once you have that, move on.

Something to keep in mind is that when you help folks really grasp certain ideas, they can use that new mental framework to learn more on their own. One idea leads to the next. But this only works when they really understand that first concept.

I know there is a lot of demand for a comprehensive approach to the Red Pill, especially for Christians. A comprehensive "guide" would be a huge boon, certainly. But not for new folks. Rather, it is most useful to those who are trying to guide others, as a resource to fall back on. Throwing a book at someone, when that book will challenge some really deeply held beliefs, is rarely a successful method of educating someone, or convincing them.

Take it easy when teaching. Slow and steady worked for the tortoise, and it can work for you too.

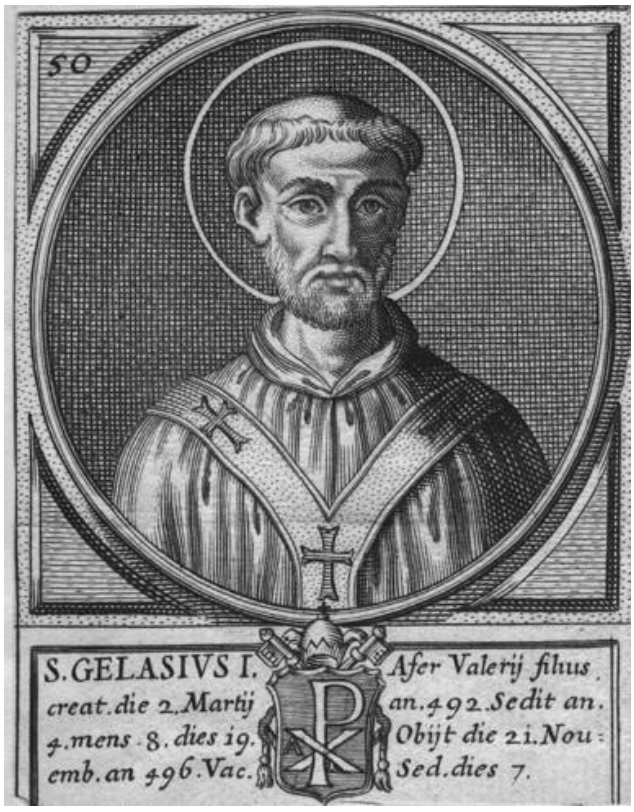
Saturday Saints- #114

July 30, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our letter for the day is “G”, and thus we have as our saint Pope Gelasius I:

> **Pope Gelasius I** (died 19 November 496) was Pope from 1 March 492 to his death in 496. He was probably the third and last Bishop of Rome of North African origin in the Catholic Church. Gelasius was a prolific writer whose style placed him on the cusp between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Gelasius had been closely employed by his predecessor Felix III, especially in drafting papal documents. His ministry was characterized by a call for strict orthodoxy, a more assertive push for papal authority, and increasing tension between the churches in the West and the East.

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #113

July 31, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is something of a spiritual successor to my post "Never Enough." We begin with Jesus talking about the Baptist and Forerunner John:

> [24] When the messengers of John had gone, he began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? [25] What then did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. [26] What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. [27] This is he of whom it is written,
>
> 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
> who shall prepare thy way before thee.'
>
> [28] I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." [29] (When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; [30] but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)
>
> [31] "To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? [32] They are like children sitting in the market place and calling to one another,
>
> 'We piped to you, and you did not dance;
> we wailed, and you did not weep.'
>
> [33] For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon.' [34] The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' [35] Yet wisdom is justified by all her children."

(Luke 7:24-35)

There is no pleasing or satisfying someone with their heart in the wrong place. You can do no right in their eyes. They will find *something* wrong with what you have done- no matter that their conclusion might be inconsistent with something they said at some earlier time.

One personal example:

Some time ago I was asked once by someone why I wasn't interested in a particular young woman. I explained to the questioner that, unfortunately, the woman in question was quite unattractive. Far below the level where I would be able to feel any passion towards her (to put it politely). The person told me that I was being shallow by focusing on the woman's looks. I needed to pay attention to her character- *that* should drive my decision.

Fast forward a little bit. Same person asks why I had rejected a different woman. I explained that this particular woman was severely lacking in character (former carousel rider). She was not marriage material, certainly for me and I would argue that at the time not for anyone (she needed to seriously reflect and change her life). The person then objected by point out: “But she is so beautiful…”

The disconnect was obvious, but the person here didn’t see it. Why? Because that person’s heart was in the wrong place. I could do not right- largely because I spoke up for myself and had my own views on what constitutes a good woman (and thus good wife).

> [2] A fool takes no pleasure in understanding,
> but only in expressing his opinion.

(Proverbs 18:2)

These words of St. Paul seem appropriate:

> Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. [2] For he says,
>
> “At the acceptable time I have listened to you,
> and helped you on the day of salvation.”
>
> Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. [3] We put no obstacle in any one’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, [4] but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, [5] beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; [6] by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, [7] truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; [8] in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; [9] as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; [10] as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.
>
> [11] Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. [12] You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. [13] In return—I speak as to children—widen your hearts also.

(2 Corinthians 6:1-13)

What holds many back the most is not a lack of understanding, but of desire. The Corinthians were constantly admonished by the early Church because they were told the Truth, but did not desire it. They did not, as St. Paul advised, widen their hearts. This is unfortunate, but at the same time, it is not the fault of those who preach the Word. It falls on them- they are restricted by their own affections, by their own defects. Pity them, pray for them, but don’t blame yourself for them.

Of Fighting And The West

August 4, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a response to Vox Day's post here, at Alpha Game. In his relatively brief post Vox criticizes both the MGTOW and PUA movements. A small snippet that conveys the principal themes of his post:

> What MGTOW and PUAs have in common is that both paths are surrenders to the dyscivilizationists. Both paths are the result of literal demoralization, the MGTOW in the emotional sense, the PUA in the spiritual sense.
>
> While the Red Pill is necessary for any Man of the West, there is only one effective way to fight for civilization, and that is to marry a white woman, have children with her, and raise those children to value and defend the West.

Summarized, Vox is making the following arguments:

- The MGTOW and PUA movements are incompatible with a drive to save civilization
- The West must be defended to save Civilization
- The only way to fight for the West/Civilization is to marry (a white woman), have children and raise them properly

I have no fundamental objection to his first point, and so won't address it. However, I will discuss the latter two arguments.

Give Upon on What, Exactly?

The title of Vox's post is "They want you to give up." Well, I get who "they" is from Vox's post. But what exactly is it that they are giving up on? When Vox speaks of "The West", or "Western Civilization," what exactly does he mean? Western Civilization as it stands now? As it did in 1950? Or 1850? How about 1350?
The truth is that you will likely find as many interpretations of "Western Civilization" as you will of the Bible. How does anyone agree on what it means? What happens if we disagree?

It is easy to call for a fight to save Western Civilization. But if there is no agreement as to what it means, than it will not be one fight but many. Because those who disagree about what Western Civ means will, sooner or later (and I predict sooner), start fighting one another. There is only one "West", and we all cannot have our own version of it for it to remain the West for very long.

Married to the Fight

This brings me to Vox's proposed solution to "fight" for the West: marry a white woman, have children, and raise them to value the West. Now, I happen to believe that history is won by those who show up, and so see some value in what he says. All the same, further examination is warranted.

Let's start with his advocacy that the women be white. What exactly does he even mean

by that? Before 1900 the Irish weren't considered white. Neither were the Polish. Or many other Caucasian groups, for that matter. So which nationalities count? And how pure must such a woman be? 100%? To 3 generations, or 4?

In case it isn't clear, I think Vox is being quite the fool here. While I am not one to argue that genetics and ethnicity plays no role in human affairs, at the same time I won't give it the almost religious credence that some do. Genes ultimately are just markers of potential. If a man were to find a woman with a ton of good, positive traits, and her ancestors also had/have them, then that should be enough. Unless there are some other reasons why ethnicity would prohibit a good marriage (some exist, but are not universal).

In addition, there is also the problem that there aren't enough good marriageable women out there. Simple fact. Marrying a poor choice of a woman is a fool's move. Which means that some men out there are not going to be able to marry. Again, just a simple fact.

Does that mean that they are opposing "the West?" Or that they cannot help fight for it? I would respond with an emphatic *No.*

I believe that even if a man doesn't marry he can be of great assistance to this struggle. For one, there are religious vocations (the priesthood, becoming a monk). Non-married men can also contribute to keeping "Pro-Western" communities going. Financial assistance is one way to do this- easing the burden on those who are married will help them have more children- which will benefit the community in the long run. They can teach and educate the youth (I believe it has been a significant mistake to have let this field be dominated by women). And so on and so forth.

In short, there are a lot of ways that they can help- *if* you approach it from a community level. I think it is a mistake to look at this only at the individual level. No man is truly an island. So long as the non-married men support their community and help build it up then they can still be a force for good.

And there you have it- my thoughts on the matter. Feel free to use the comments to voice your support, or shred my ideas.

Thoughts On Love In Marriage

August 9, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[My post Background on the Nature of Man will be helpful to understanding this post.]

I have had a long-standing theory about how love works within marriage, although I am not sure that I have ever devoted a post to it on this blog. I doubt it is a new or novel theory, in fact I would be surprised if it was. All the same, I think it is finally worth getting down.

My theory is simple: the best marriages are those which encompass all three major types of love- Eros, Philos and Agapos. When all three are present in marriage- when both husband and wife express all three towards their spouse, I believe that a marriage is at its healthiest.

To me, this makes sense because the relationship would then extend to all aspects of our being. Eros is connected to our Body. Philos to our Soul. And Agapos is the love of our Spirit. When all three are present, the fullness of our nature is in play.

At the same time, when one of these loves is *not* present, it is a sign of serious trouble in a marriage.

No Eros? Well then, that means no passion from one of the spouses (or both). [The phrase "I love you but I'm not in love *with* you" is a sign of a marriage where Eros is gone.] That can mean denial of sex, and the frustration inherent in it. An absence of Eros also leads to greater temptation and danger of leading to all kinds of immorality.

Philos not present? Well, that means there is no friendship and amity in the marriage (or at least from one side of it). Both spouses will likely quarrel, and if not, it will only be because the other is trying to preserve harmony. There will be a lot of hot and cold in this marriage- it will move from moments of great passion to indifference or even enmity.

Agapos missing? Well, for one, that means that the marriage is no longer Christian. Without the self-sacrificing nature of Agapos the marriage will not be able to endure all the trials and tribulations of the world. At least, not unless society gives the spouses no choice on the matter. But in our present age? Without Agapos it will fall apart, sooner or later.

Of all three loves, Agapos is the most important. Only it can withstand everything the world has to throw at a married couple. But just because a couple stays together doesn't mean the marriage is as healthy as it could or should be. All three loves should be present for a marriage to be as strong as God intended it.

At least, that is how I see it. I invite my readers to offer their own thoughts.

Beta Farming

August 11, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my post Of Fighting And The West, blogger Rollo Tomassi left a comment which included the following gem:

> The modern church is a Beta farm and only exists to produce the same masculinity-confused men that the secular world has perfected today.

I want to touch on that issue of "Beta Farming" today.

To start with, I agree with Rollo's first contention- that the "modern" church is a "Beta farm." What is taught and enforced in most churches these days is a theology which wrings the masculinity out of men. Most of the time this leaves the young men growing up in church as hapless, servile "Beta" males who exist to do whatever women want.

However, I disagree with the second part. I don't think that most churches *exist* to produce these kinds of men. They have other purposes, and not necessarily good ones at that. For example, they often preach a theology which provides moral cover to women and places moral blame on men. All the same, some might have good intentions. Some of those within might genuinely intend to serve the Lord. All the same, the modern church's purpose has been hijacked. While these churches don't exist to create "beta males", that is their functional end purpose at this point (or one of them, anyways).

This all leads to the interesting question of how this all came to be. Reader Lost Patrol left this speculation:

> I wouldn't say the modern church "only exists" to produce hapless men – I see it more as an unintended consequence of having ceded so much ground to secular feminism.

My view is somewhat different- I would argue that this has come about because we have ceded so much ground to *women.* As I explained:

> The more power women were given, the more natural this outcome was. Once you understand female nature, it is easy to see how this outcome was inevitable once women were given the power and control they were in our present system.

Lost Patrol responded by reaffirming that women were given this power. They could never have taken it from men. The *why* of men gave women that power I will discuss in another post. But before I close this one I want to cover why this ceding of power to women lead to our present troubles.

My theory is that the present "Beta farms" inside modern churches is a natural result of women influencing matters to reassure their native insecurity. This insecurity is something that I believe most men have no idea about, and even those who have some inkling of its existence usually fail to grasp its extent. I have covered this before, but to

briefly sum it up:

Women are far and away more insecure in their lives than men.

Much of this insecurity comes from the gap in physical prowess between men and women. We men are much more capable of defending ourselves and imposing our will on our environment than women are- at least at the individual level. But whatever its source, it has a profound effect on female behavior. Women are constantly, and often at an unconscious or subconscious level, trying to alter their environment to make it feel more secure.

I believe that this behavior is responsible for the “Beta farms” in modern churches. As women were given more power inside the church and its environs, they began to exert their influence. This influence was used to shape how men were raised, and what they were supposed to be as Christians. The goal, whether realized or not, was to create the hapless Beta nice guys who populate most churches these days.

Why? Simple- “Betas” are far less threatening to women. They are safer and do things on women’s behalf. So women reinforce this system to create more and more of these “safe” men. As long as they have any degree of power in a church, they will keep it this way. [Of course, this has the effect of leaving those men as unattractive, but female nature is known for wanting two opposites at once.] If we want to shut down the “Beta farms,” we need to reassert masculine control over the church. Otherwise this wicked cultivation will continue, and likely only get worse.

Feminism Is Comical

August 18, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

WARNING: Spoilers will abound in this post, especially concerning DC and Marvel movies. You have been warned.

Dalrock's recent post "The real problem with the Ghostbuster's Reboot" covered a wide array of feminism related topics. Among the areas covered were movies and comics, including the recent Suicide Squad movie. I had touched on that movie briefly in my post You Don't Own Me. That particular post featured this class Cane Caldo gem:

> It looks like a film about the government hiring a porn starlet and her prison groupies to kill a rapper.

Sadly, that was not what the film was about. Speaking of what films are "about", that brings me to this post. I want to examine the role and impact on feminism in recent comic movies.

Now, I haven't seen the new Ghostbusters movie (and hope to keep it that way). But from what others have indicated, it seems to be a Wave 2 Feminist work. This is quite different from the Wave 3 feminism I have seen in most comic movies. So lets cover them.

Suicide Squad

There are several characters to cover here: Harley Quin, Katana, Enchantress and Amanda Waller. Lets start with the crazy woman.

Harley Quin

Harley, as portrayed in the film, was the epitome of what Wave 3 Sex Positive Feminism is all about: Sexy, Strong, Smart. She uses her sex appeal as a weapon to get what she wants, and uses it to manipulate the men around her. She can hold her own in a fight. Oh, and did I mention funny too?

But here is the thing- that is a major shift from what her character was originally. In the beginning she was the poster child of DV- the Joker's girlfriend whom he liked to abuse and hurt. Heck, the cartoon would show (sometimes off screen) her get struck by the Joker, and he once threw her out a window to her (intended) death.

If anything, she was a Wave 2 feminist icon at first- a sign of how evil and depraved men are. How women cannot trust them and need to be in charge. But as people have pointed out, Wave 2 feminism doesn't sell nearly as well as Wave 3. After all, Wave 3 women are *empowered* and *hot*, and who doesn't like that?

So over time Harley Quin has changed as a character. Originally the battered GF of the Joker, she has becoming something else. Over time she became smarter (in the cunning variety). She was always smart (she was a shrink), but was easily manipulated. Now she

is the one doing the manipulating.

Her sex appeal was upped, and she became more physically capable. In the movie the Joker couldn't resist her, and it is implied that Batman could be swayed by her. Instead of becoming a punchline (hehe), she became an actual villain. Heck, she rose to be the "Queen of Crime." Major promotion there.

Of course, that wasn't *quite* right- she shouldn't be a pure villain. No, just *misunderstood* . So now she is an anti-villian as much as anything, at least as portrayed in the comics. And the movie moved her along those lines too.

Also, in the movie she was said to be crazier than the Joker, and more fearless. Talk about "Girl Power" there. And of course, since she is *hot*, she can totally get away with crazy. There is a message there- women can be crazy if they want to. It is their female prerogative- *especially* if they are hot. And Margot Robbie really sold the role, too. Expect to see her in a solo film, or maybe DC Girl Power film, in the future.

Katana

Again, we have an attractive female who is quite physically proficient. Also, kind of sort of crazy in that she talks to the soul of her dead husband trapped in a sword. But it is all ok, because after all she is a kick-ass hot female.

Enchantress

This character has two kinds of hot going on- the crazed, kinky, fetish kind, and the sweet girl-next-door kind. Also, she is absurdly powerful. In fact, her power plays a significant part in the film's plot.

Amanda Waller

Finally we come to the @&%#* herself. Now Waller is not exactly what one might call a "hot" character. Her character is known for being large and in-charge. And I mean that literally- she is normally portrayed as quite overweight. Naturally enough, she was not portrayed that way in the movie. Instead they had Viola Davis play her, and quite ably too. But again we see feminism slipping in. Since she isn't really supposed to be hot, they didn't or couldn't pull that off. But they did manage to at least ensure she wasn't *ugly*. Because for Wave 3 feminism, ugly is damned near a sin if it is assigned to a woman.

The Joker

I cannot leave this movie without covering the Joker. His character was quite different from The Dark Knight version. Frankly, I wasn't impressed. Although from what I have heard they left much of his stuff on the cutting room floor. So perhaps the character would have been better with superior editing.

All the same, this Joker was very different from the normal way Joker is portrayed. How so? Simple- he *actually* loves Harley. Traditionally the Joker never loved Harley. She was a just a tool to him- one that he would use and abuse at whim. He never tried to rescue her unless there was something in it for him. However, the new Joker actually goes into an active hostile zone to rescue her. He risks his own life for her. Even more, there is nothing in it for him.

Not really a fan of that. Frankly, it weakens the Joker as a character. Now he has a redeeming quality, when his character is not supposed to have any redeeming qualities. A “soft” Joker just doesn’t have quite the right edge.

And that ends that movie.

Man of Steel

This movie was all about Lois Lane. And oh boy, where to begin. Lois Lane begins as a confident, powerful and respected/feared reporter who is herself fearless. No real character flaws that I could find anywhere. She, more than anyone, drives the plot in the movie. Now, I like Amy Adams as an actress, but she was a poor fit for Lois. Too old, wrong hair and wrong… *flair.*

Here is the thing- for the most part she was perfectly capable of taking care of herself. Only when Superman screws up does he have to rescue her. The thing is, I would argue that Lois, as originally envisioned, might have been a subtle swipe at earlier editions of feminism. If you look at the earlier works, she constantly got herself in trouble. And it was Superman who *always* got her out of trouble. The confident, fearless and competent reporter Lois Lane only existed because Superman *allowed* her to exist as such. Without him she would have been dead many times over.

Here is a link to some of the old cartoons:

Watching through them it is pretty clear to me that Superman/Clarke Kent the force behind reporter Lois Lane. To me, that seems to be a subtle attack on Feminism. Namely, that women can only be strong and empowered if men enable that. Of course, I encourage my readers to offer their thoughts.

Batman v Superman

The same general pattern with Lois in this movie. But in addition we get Wonder Woman. If anyone is the stereotype of the strong, empowered and sexy woman, it is her. She basically runs circles around Batman/Bruce Wayne using her smarts. Then she does the same with her martial prowess. Basically, she leaves him in the dust.

Despite having only a small part in the movie, she played a significant role in the advertising- both before and after release. Why? Because what she represents – Smart, Strong, Sexy- sells.

Marvel

Finally, we come to the Marvel movies. There have actually been a fair number of complaints against Marvel for their lack of strong female characters. Certainly, for the most part, they haven’t let women steal the show like DC has. Of course, that will change over time. Captain Marvel will provide their counterpart to Wonder Woman. And expect other female characters to start to provide that same, much desired mojo.

Mind you, they do have some that fit the profile.

Black Widow certainly does. Very capable, quite smart, and of course lots and lots of sex appeal. I mean black leather, right? All the same, she doesn't have her own movie, and probably won't. But they did get her into a number of other movies instead.

Ironman 3 saw the rise of a strong Pepper Potts. She basically got superpowers towards the end of the film and in a way that pushed *hot* in an almost literal fashion. Her character was already smart, and she ended up running roughshod over the male antagonist. All the same, she hasn't shown up lately.

Conclusion

This post has run on long enough. Time to wrap things up.

Marvel has done much better than DC for a number of reasons. One of them, I believe, is because they for the most part haven't let female characters push male characters out of the limelight. I suspect they will take a hit at the box office if this starts to change. Not necessarily immediately, but over time the audience will react. While Wave 3 feminism sells better than Wave 2, that doesn't mean that audiences want to be overloaded with it. Certainly not at the expense of emasculating male comic heroes. [Which I suppose I will cover in my next comic related post.]

Studios are in something of a tough spot. On the one hand, they need to stick to the narrative or face a backlash. On the other hand, they risk losing money if they cater to feminist demands too much. It will be interesting to see how they handle these conflicting demands. My money is that Marvel will pull it off, while DC won't.

Let me know your thoughts in the comments.

Saturday Saints- #115

August 20, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We resume where we left off, and that means the letter H. Thus, our saint for today is Saint Hilda of Whitby:

> **Hilda of Whitby** or **Hild of Whitby** (c. 614–680) is a Christian saint and the founding abbess of the monastery at Whitby, which was chosen as the venue for the Synod of Whitby. An important figure in the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England to Christianity, she was abbess at several monasteries and recognised for the wisdom that drew kings to her for advice.
>
> The source of information about Hilda is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English* by the Venerable Bede in 731, who was born approximately eight years before her death. He documented much of the Christian conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.

More can be found out about here at her wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #114

August 21, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's post I want to examine the Fear of the Lord. Otherwise said, it can be scary to find yourself in the presence of God, or his actions. Here are but a few examples from the New Testament:

> [22] Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. [23] And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, [24] but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. [25] And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. [26] But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. [27] But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

(Matthew 14:22-27)

> [11] Soon afterward he went to a city called Na′in, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. [12] As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. [13] And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." [14] And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." [15] And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. [16] Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" [17] And this report concerning him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

(Luke 7:11-17)

> [28] Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. [29] And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. [30] And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Eli′jah, [31] who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. [32] Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep but kept awake, and they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. [33] And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli′jah"—not knowing what he said. [34] As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. [35] And a voice came out of the

> cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” [36] And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

(Luke 9:28-36)

> Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Mag′dalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre. [2] And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. [3] His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. [4] And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

(Matthew 28:1-4)

When we think of God, and Jesus especially, we like to think of a comforting force. Of God as our loving Father, or Jesus as our brother. It is easy for us to forget that power, *real* power, as displayed by God, is a frightening thing.

Why so? I would wager it frightens us because it isn’t natural. It is *supernatural*. God’s power and presence defies the “natural order.” It forces us, creatures all too often locked into our material ways, to confront the very real fact that there are forces and powers that we cannot see and cannot hear, and above all else, cannot comprehend.

I am curious what my readers think about the subject. Also, I would appreciate any sayings of the Saints that anyone knows of that address this subject.

Masculine Monday- #12

August 23, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

Today's brief post contains a brief message to men:

Stop apologizing so often.

Apologies should be given out sparingly. At the same time, they should be given out with full earnestness. A man should *mean* it when he apologizes for a wrong.

Saying you are sorry constantly takes a lot of the oomph from your apologies. They end up meaning little. And if it is really necessary, then it means you might not have really made up for whatever you did.

Also, and I don't normally use this word… but saying "sorry" a ton comes off as incredibly Beta. It is extremely unattractive. Something to keep in mind.

[Note: there is an exception to the above- a carefully pulled off stream of melodramatic apologies can make for good teasing.]

So, in summary, watch it with apologies- seldom and meaningful should be the order of the day.

Tradition Thursday- #57

August 26, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will feature a saint I don't believe I have yet covered in this series, St. Augustine of Hippo. Here is the beginning part of his first book on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount:

> 1. If any one will piously and soberly consider the sermon which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke on the mount, as we read it in the Gospel according to Matthew, I think that he will find in it, so far as regards the highest morals, a perfect standard of the Christian life: and this we do not rashly venture to promise, but gather it from the very words of the Lord Himself. For the sermon itself is brought to a close in such a way, that it is clear there are in it all the precepts which go to mould the life. For thus He speaks: *Therefore, whosoever hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that hears these words of mine, and does them not, I will liken unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.* Since, therefore, He has not simply said, *Whosoever hears my words,* but has made an addition, saying, *Whosoever hears these words of mine,* He has sufficiently indicated, as I think, that these sayings which He uttered on the mount so perfectly guide the life of those who may be willing to live according to them, that they may justly be compared to one building upon a rock. I have said this merely that it may be clear that the sermon before us is perfect in all the precepts by which the Christian life is moulded; for as regards this particular section a more careful treatment will be given in its own place.
>
> 2. The beginning, then, of this sermon is introduced as follows: *And when He saw the great multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying.* If it is asked what the *mountain* means, it may well be understood as meaning the greater precepts of righteousness; for there were lesser ones which were given to the Jews. Yet it is one God who, through His holy prophets and servants, according to a thoroughly arranged distribution of times, gave the lesser precepts to a people who as yet required to be bound by fear; and who, through His Son, gave the greater ones to a people whom it had now become suitable to set free by love. Moreover, when the lesser are given to the lesser, and the greater to the greater, they are given by Him who alone knows how to present to the human race the medicine suited to the occasion. Nor is it surprising that the greater precepts are given for the kingdom of heaven, and the lesser for an earthly kingdom, by that one and the same God, who made heaven and earth.

With respect, therefore, to that righteousness which is the greater, it is said through the prophet, *Your righteousness is like the mountains of God:* and this may well mean that the one Master alone fit to teach matters of so great importance teaches on a mountain. Then He teaches sitting, as behooves the dignity of the instructor's office; and His disciples come to Him, in order that they might be nearer in body for hearing His words, as they also approached in spirit to fulfil His precepts. *And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying.* The circumlocution before us, which runs, *And He opened His mouth,* perhaps gracefully intimates by the mere pause that the sermon will be somewhat longer than usual, unless, perchance, it should not be without meaning, that now He is said to have opened His own mouth, whereas under the old law He was accustomed to open the mouths of the prophets.

3. What, then, does He say? *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* We read in Scripture concerning the striving after temporal things, *All is vanity and presumption of spirit;* but presumption of spirit means audacity and pride: usually also the proud are said to have great spirits; and rightly, inasmuch as the wind also is called spirit. And hence it is written, *Fire, hail, snow, ice, spirit of tempest.* But, indeed, who does not know that the proud are spoken of as puffed up, as if swelled out with wind? And hence also that expression of the apostle, *Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies.* And *the poor in spirit* are rightly understood here, as meaning the humble and God-fearing, *i.e.* those who have not the spirit which puffs up. Nor ought blessedness to begin at any other point whatever, if indeed it is to attain unto the highest wisdom; *but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;* for, on the other hand also, *pride* is entitled *the beginning of all sin.* Let the proud, therefore, seek after and love the kingdoms of the earth; but *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Chapter 2

4. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall by inheritance possess the earth:* that earth, I suppose, of which it is said in the Psalm, *You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.* For it signifies a certain firmness and stability of the perpetual inheritance, where the soul, by means of a good disposition, rests, as it were, in its own place, just as the body rests on the earth, and is nourished from it with its own food, as the body from the earth. This is the very rest and life of the saints. Then, the meek are those who yield to acts of wickedness, and do not resist evil, but overcome evil with good. Let those, then, who are not meek quarrel and fight for earthly and temporal things; but *blessed are the meek, for they shall by inheritance possess the earth,* from which they cannot be driven out.

5. *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.* Mourning is sorrow

arising from the loss of things held dear; but those who are converted to God lose those things which they were accustomed to embrace as dear in this world: for they do not rejoice in those things in which they formerly rejoiced; and until the love of eternal things be in them, they are wounded by some measure of grief. Therefore they will be comforted by the Holy Spirit, who on this account chiefly is called the Paraclete, *i.e.* the Comforter, in order that, while losing the temporal joy, they may enjoy to the full that which is eternal.

6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* Now He calls those parties, lovers of a true and indestructible good. They will therefore be filled with that food of which the Lord Himself says, *My meat is to do the will of my Father,* which is righteousness; and with that water, of which whosoever *drinks,* as he also says, it *shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.*

7. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* He says that they are blessed who relieve the miserable, for it is paid back to them in such a way that they are freed from misery.

8. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.* How foolish, therefore, are those who seek God with these outward eyes, since He is seen with the heart! As it is written elsewhere, *And in singleness of heart seek Him.* For that is a pure heart which is a single heart: and just as this light cannot be seen, except with pure eyes; so neither is God seen, unless that is pure by which He can be seen.

9. *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.* It is the perfection of peace, where nothing offers opposition; and the children of God are peacemakers, because nothing resists God, and surely children ought to have the likeness of their father. Now, they are peacemakers in themselves who, by bringing in order all the motions of their soul, and subjecting them to reason— *i.e.* to the mind and spirit— and by having their carnal lusts thoroughly subdued, become a kingdom of God: in which all things are so arranged, that that which is chief and pre-eminent in man rules without resistance over the other elements, which are common to us with the beasts; and that very element which is pre-eminent in man, *i.e.* mind and reason, is brought under subjection to something better still, which is the truth itself, the only-begotten Son of God. For a man is not able to rule over things which are inferior, unless he subjects himself to what is superior. And this is the peace which is given on earth to men of goodwill; this the life of the fully developed and perfect wise man. From a kingdom of this sort brought to a condition of thorough peace and order, the prince of this world is cast out, who rules where there is perversity and disorder. When this peace has been inwardly established and confirmed, whatever persecutions he who has been cast out shall stir up from without, he only increases the glory which is according to God; being unable to shake anything in that edifice, but by the failure of his machinations making it to be known with how great strength it has

been built from within outwardly. Hence there follows: *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Chapter 3

10. There are in all, then, these eight sentences. For now in what remains He speaks in the way of direct address to those who were present, saying: *Blessed shall you be when men shall revile you and persecute you.* But the former sentences He addressed in a general way: for He did not say, Blessed are you poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven; but He says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:* nor, Blessed are you meek, for you shall inherit the earth; but, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* And so the others up to the eighth sentence, where He says: *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* After that He now begins to speak in the way of direct address to those present, although what has been said before referred also to His present audience; and that which follows, and which seems to be spoken specially to those present, refers also to those who were absent, or who would afterwards come into existence.

For this reason the number of sentences before us is to be carefully considered. For the beatitudes begin with humility: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, i.e.* those not puffed up, while the soul submits itself to divine authority, fearing lest after this life it go away to punishment, although perhaps in this life it might seem to itself to be happy. Then it (the soul) comes to the knowledge of the divine Scriptures, where it must show itself meek in its piety, lest it should venture to condemn that which seems absurd to the unlearned, and should itself be rendered unteachable by obstinate disputations. After that, it now begins to know in what entanglements of this world it is held by reason of carnal custom and sins: and so in this third stage, in which there is knowledge, the loss of the highest good is mourned over, because it sticks fast in what is lowest. Then, in the fourth stage there is labour, where vehement exertion is put forth, in order that the mind may wrench itself away from those things in which, by reason of their pestilential sweetness, it is entangled: here therefore righteousness is hungered and thirsted after, and fortitude is very necessary; because what is retained with delight is not abandoned without pain. Then, at the fifth stage, to those persevering in labour, counsel for getting rid of it is given; for unless each one is assisted by a superior, in no way is he fit in his own case to extricate himself from so great entanglements of miseries. But it is a just counsel, that he who wishes to be assisted by a stronger should assist him who is weaker in that in which he himself is stronger: therefore *blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* At the sixth stage there is purity of heart, able from a good conscience of good works to contemplate that highest good, which can be

discerned by the pure and tranquil intellect alone. Lastly is the seventh, wisdom itself— *i.e.* the contemplation of the truth, tranquillizing the whole man, and assuming the likeness of God, which is thus summed up: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.* The eighth, as it were, returns to the starting-point, because it shows and commends what is complete and perfect: therefore in the first and in the eighth the kingdom of heaven is named, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* and, *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:* as it is now said, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* Seven in number, therefore, are the things which bring perfection: for the eighth brings into light and shows what is perfect, so that starting, as it were, from the beginning again, the others also are perfected by means of these stages.

Chapter 4

11. Hence also the sevenfold operation of the Holy Ghost, of which Isaiah speaks, seems to me to correspond to these stages and sentences. But there is a difference of order: for there the enumeration begins with the more excellent, but here with the inferior. For there it begins with wisdom, and closes with the fear of God: but *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* And therefore, if we reckon as it were in a gradually ascending series, there the fear of God is first, piety second, knowledge third, fortitude fourth, counsel fifth, understanding sixth, wisdom seventh. The fear of God corresponds to the humble, of whom it is here said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, i.e.* those not puffed up, not proud: to whom the apostle says, *Be not high-minded, but fear; i.e.* be not lifted up. Piety corresponds to the meek: for he who inquires piously honours Holy Scripture, and does not censure what he does not yet understand, and on this account does not offer resistance; and this is to be meek: whence it is here said, *Blessed are the meek.* Knowledge corresponds to those that mourn who already have found out in the Scriptures by what evils they are held chained which they ignorantly have coveted as though they were good and useful. Fortitude corresponds to those hungering and thirsting: for they labour in earnestly desiring joy from things that are truly good, and in eagerly seeking to turn away their love from earthly and corporeal things: and of them it is here said, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.* Counsel corresponds to the merciful: for this is the one remedy for escaping from so great evils, that we forgive, as we wish to be ourselves forgiven; and that we assist others so far as we are able, as we ourselves desire to be assisted where we are not able: and of them it is here said, *Blessed are the merciful.* Understanding corresponds to the pure in heart, the eye being as it were purged, by which that may be beheld which eye has not

seen, nor ear heard, and what has not entered into the heart of man: and of them it is here said, *Blessed are the pure in heart.* Wisdom corresponds to the peacemakers, in whom all things are now brought into order, and no passion is in a state of rebellion against reason, but all things together obey the spirit of man, while he himself also obeys God: and of them it is here said, *Blessed are the peacemakers.*

12. Moreover, the one reward, which is the kingdom of heaven, is variously named according to these stages. In the first, just as ought to be the case, is placed the kingdom of heaven, which is the perfect and highest wisdom of the rational soul. Thus, therefore, it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:* as if it were said, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* To the meek an inheritance is given, as it were the testament of a father to those dutifully seeking it: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* To the mourners comfort, as to those who know what they have lost, and in what evils they are sunk: *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* To those hungering and thirsting, a full supply, as it were a refreshment to those labouring and bravely contending for salvation: *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* To the merciful mercy, as to those following a true and excellent counsel, so that this same treatment is extended toward them by one who is stronger, which they extend toward the weaker: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* To the pure in heart is given the power of seeing God, as to those bearing about with them a pure eye for discerning eternal things: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* To the peacemakers the likeness of God is given, as being perfectly wise, and formed after the image of God by means of the regeneration of the renewed man: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.* And those promises can indeed be fulfilled in this life, as we believe them to have been fulfilled in the case of the apostles. For that all-embracing change into the angelic form, which is promised after this life, cannot be explained in any words. *Blessed,* therefore, *are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* This eighth sentence, which goes back to the starting-point, and makes manifest the perfect man, is perhaps set forth in its meaning both by the circumcision on the eighth day in the Old Testament, and by the resurrection of the Lord after the Sabbath, the day which is certainly the eighth, and at the same time the first day; and by the celebration of the eight festival days which we celebrate in the case of the regeneration of the new man; and by the very number of Pentecost. For to the number seven, seven times multiplied, by which we make forty-nine, as it were an eighth is added, so that fifty may be made up, and we, as it were, return to the starting-point: on which day the Holy Spirit was sent, by whom we are led into the kingdom of heaven, and receive the inheritance, and are comforted; and are fed, and obtain mercy, and are purified, and are made peacemakers; and

being thus perfect, we bear all troubles brought upon us from without for the sake of truth and righteousness.

Chapter 5

13. *Blessed are you,* says He, *when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.* Let any one who is seeking after the delights of this world and the riches of temporal things under the Christian name, consider that our blessedness is within; as it is said of the soul of the Church by the mouth of the prophet, *All the beauty of the king's daughter is within;* for outwardly revilings, and persecutions, and disparagements are promised; and yet, from these things there is a great reward in heaven, which is felt in the heart of those who endure, those who can now say, *We glory in tribulations: knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* For it is not simply the enduring of such things that is advantageous, but the bearing of such things for the name of Christ not only with tranquil mind, but even with exultation. For many heretics, deceiving souls under the Christian name, endure many such things; but they are excluded from that reward on this account, that it is not said merely, *Blessed are they which endure persecution;* but it is added, *for righteousness' sake.* Now, where there is no sound faith, there can be no righteousness, for the just [righteous] man lives by faith. Neither let schismatics promise themselves anything of that reward; for similarly, where there is no love, there cannot be righteousness, for *love works no ill to his neighbour;* and if they had it, they would not tear in pieces Christ's body, which is the Church.

14. But it may be asked, What is the difference when He says, *when men shall revile you,* and *when they shall say all manner of evil against you,* since to revile is just this, to say evil against? But it is one thing when the reviling word is hurled with contumely in presence of him who is reviled, as it was said to our Lord, *Say we not the truth that you are a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* and another thing, when our reputation is injured in our absence, as it is also written of Him, *Some said, He is a prophet; others said, Nay, but He deceives the people.* Then, further, to persecute is to inflict violence, or to assail with snares, as was done by him who betrayed Him, and by them who crucified Him. Certainly, as for the fact that this also is not put in a bare form, so that it should be said, *and shall say all manner of evil against you,* but there is added the word *falsely,* and also the expression *for my sake;* I think that the addition is made for the sake of those who wish to glory in persecutions, and in the baseness of their reputation; and to say that Christ belongs to them for this reason, that many bad things are said about them; while, on the one hand, the things said are true, when they are said

> respecting their error; and, on the other hand, if sometimes also some false charges are thrown out, which frequently happens from the rashness of men, yet they do not suffer such things for Christ's sake. For he is not a follower of Christ who is not called a Christian according to the true faith and the catholic discipline.
>
> 15. *Rejoice,* says He, *and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.* I do not think that it is the higher parts of this visible world that are here called heaven. For our reward, which ought to be immoveable and eternal, is not to be placed in things fleeting and temporal. But I think the expression *in heaven* means in the spiritual firmament, where dwells everlasting righteousness: in comparison with which a wicked soul is called earth, to which it is said when it sins, *Earth you are, and unto earth you shall return.* Of this heaven the apostle says, *For our conversation is in heaven.* Hence they who rejoice in spiritual good are conscious of that reward now; but then it will be perfected in every part, when this mortal also shall have put on immortality. *For,* says He, *so persecuted they the prophets also which were before you.* In the present case He has used *persecution* in a general sense, as applying alike to abusive words and to the tearing in pieces of one's reputation; and has well encouraged them by an example, because they who speak true things are wont to suffer persecution: nevertheless did not the ancient prophets on this account, through fear of persecution, give over the preaching of the truth.

(Source)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #115

August 29, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Let us start this post with the beginning of Psalm 37:

> Fret not yourself because of the wicked,
> be not envious of wrongdoers!
> [2] For they will soon fade like the grass,
> and wither like the green herb.

> [3] Trust in the Lord, and do good;
> so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security.
> [4] Take delight in the Lord,
> and he will give you the desires of your heart.
> [5] Commit your way to the Lord;
> trust in him, and he will act.
> [6] He will bring forth your vindication as the light,
> and your right as the noonday.
> [7] Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;
> fret not yourself over him who prospers in his way,
> over the man who carries out evil devices!
> [8] Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!
> Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.
> [9] For the wicked shall be cut off;
> but those who wait for the Lord shall possess the land.

> [10] Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;
> though you look well at his place, he will not be there.
> [11] But the meek shall possess the land,
> and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

(Psalm 37:1-11)

Patience is a virtue urged here. We are called to wait upon the Lord and His time. I think I can speak for all my believing readers that this is usually easier said than done. When we want something, we want it *now.* Even when, or perhaps especially when, that something comes from God. But God has an entirely different perspective on time than us mortals:

> For a thousand years in thy sight
> are but as yesterday when it is past,
> or as a watch in the night.

(Psalm 90:4)

St. James offers some thoughts on time and human presumption in his letter to the

Church:

> [13] Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a
> town and spend a year there and trade and get gain”; [14] whereas you do not
> know about tomorrow. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a
> little time and then vanishes. [15] Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we
> shall live and we shall do this or that.” [16] As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All
> such boasting is evil. [17] Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for
> him it is sin.

(James 4:13-17)

Each day is a gift to us from God. We are not owed it. As a gift, we should treasure it and use it for all its worth. Do good today, for we know not what tomorrow may bring.

In Defense Of Marriage

August 30, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today marks the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner. From the Gospel according to St. Mark:

> [14] King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him." [15] But others said, "It is Eli′jah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." [16] But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." [17] For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero′di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. [18] For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." [19] And Hero′di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. [21] But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. [22] For when Hero′di-as' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." [23] And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." [24] And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptizer." [25] And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. [27] And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, [28] and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

(Mark 6:14-29)

There is much that the life, and death, of St. John the Baptist can teach us.

First, marriage is a sacred thing. To defend God's intentions and laws regarding marriage is something that is worth dying for.

Second, Mark's Gospel tells us that John was having a positive influence on Herod. Despite what John was saying about Herod's illicit union, Herod was glad to hear the Baptist speak. Clearly there was some part of him that was responding to God's message. Unfortunately, his choice of "associates" meant that he never had the chance to continue to hear and to repent.

Third, we can see the danger of wine and women to a man's senses. Herod never wanted

John dead, despite what the Baptist said. But those two constant haunts of man led him to make a rash vow he felt compelled to honor. Important lesson for my male readers: wine + women = folly.

Fourth, we can see here that women are just as capable of wickedness as men. It was Herodias, not Herod, who wanted John dead. She was the instigator of this evil. And her daughter went right along with it.

Groundless Fears Of Men About Their Daughters

September 2, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[DG Note: Today's post is a guest post by reader/commenter Tigersault (formerly A Visitor)]

Men today, regarding their daughters, act and think like women. Sure, being foolish is a surefire way to end up with your genetic lineage being annihilated but I'm not talking about that here. What I'm talking about is how men when confronted with the painfully obvious fact that most women (I'm talking a majority well over 50%) do not and, more importantly, ***SHOULD NOT*** attend a university/college, they immediately start thinking and acting like women regarding a range of possible scenarios that more often than not **DO NOT COME TO PASS**.

This post will examine three points: 1) the obvious dangers of sending your daughter(s) to a university/college 2) the various scenarios that men come up with to rationalize sending their daughters to university/college and 3) what happens in the rare scenario that something does happen. All three of these will be backed up with personal anecdotes when possible. Yes, exceptions do not break the rule but bear with me here.

Before delving into these three points, an aside about myself: I come from a very well-to-do upper class background and, in the current occupation I am in, I deal with death on a semi-regular basis as part of my job duties. Beyond that, I am prepared to say nothing more due to wishing to keep my anonymity.

First, the obvious dangers of sending your daughter(s) to university/college. They bear repeating. One of two things (or possibly both) will happen: 1) your daughter will come out a flaming liberal and/or feminist and/or 2) she will lose her virginity, potentially becoming an alpha widow, and/or have so many sexual partners that she will become unmarriable except to the most beta schlub.

In my family's case, one sibling came out a raging feminist. Even in a certain situation where she disliked someone who was a woman, when hearing that a certain requirement had to be met of all individuals, regardless of gender, she was quick to ascertain the woman was not being asked to fulfill said requirement only due to gender. Furthermore, she buys the campus rape myth. My girlfriend asked the following question, "Was [your sibling] like this before she went to college?" My response, "Not that I recall." My sibling's feminism is complimented by acceptance of homosexuality and transsexualism. In another sibling's case, she wears the pants in the relationship with my in-law. She may not admit it but she'd be happier submitting to his headship. And yes, this sibling views

anti-homosexuality as being bigoted.

Finally, on the obvious dangers point, although a woman's promiscuity may precede her time at a college/university, being in that environment certainly will not do wonders in terms of maintaining her chastity. Whether it be the greeters of a southern university or two (Google it if you don't believe me) being recruited as de-facto geishas to entice high school senior football players to attend their university for obvious benefits or just your run of the mill attractive girl, the environment in college/universities is generally not conducive to maintaining one of her most prized assets, namely being chaste. In one instance, I was at a tailgate with an individual that I had met the previous night. We were talking when suddenly he recognized one of my classmates and decided to leave. The reason? He had had a one night stand with her.

Second, when you bring up to men that their daughters would be better off not going to college/university a stream of woman rationalizations comes forth.

1) "What if she can't find a man to marry?"

2) "What if her husband turns out to be horrid and she has to separate due to physical security concerns?"

3) "What if she needs to hold herself over with work for a bit before she marries?"

4) "What if her husband dies and she has to go back to work?"

"What if…."

The above questions can be perceived as legitimate concerns but upon further examination are debunked easily. However, as one can see, this line of questioning can go on indefinitely. Before moving on to point 3 of the post (the rare case the worst comes to pass), ask yourself this question: is it really, assuming she'll be attending a four year in state public university, worth shelling out roughly $80,000 for a piece of paper that in many cases is worth as much as a high school degree due to market over saturation or, in the case of worthless majors like ethnic studies or women's studies, worth less than a normal degree AND a huge red flag to future employers? Keep in mind too that beyond all the time and effort they spend on said degree, they will have a lot of down time around alcohol and late teens/early 20's men with the same amount of raging hormones they do.

So, what if the worst comes to pass? We'll hit this in the order of the questions numbered in the paragraph on point two of this post. 1) What if she can't find a man to marry? Well, it may certainly not be too late. However, ask yourself this? What can a man bring to the table nowadays if women are told, from an extremely young age, that they can be anything they want AND do anything as well, if not better, than a man? If she can't find a man, don't despair. If she's young enough, keep an eye on quality boys that she interacts with regularly. If she is post college, put her in situations where she is around eligible men, especially parish life. Make a point to strike up conversations with parents of men who are looking to marry. Make sure she dresses modestly and that she acts like a woman. These two things alone separate from the vast majority of bottom feeders in women's bodies nowadays. If she cannot in fact, despite your and her best efforts, find a man to marry, through no fault of her own, see to it that she's well taken care of: have her work for a family member or friend in a secure line of work. Support her as needed, emotionally, spiritually, monetarily.

2) "What if her husband turns out to be horrid and she has to separate due to physical security concerns?" Those vows she took in the Sacrament of Marriage are binding until death due them part. So, what now? Do what is needed to make sure he won't harm her: i.e. restraining order, firearms training for her, followed by making sure she is in a safe place to live, whether it be your house, a trusted family friend, etc.

3) "What if she needs to hold herself over with work for a bit before she marries?" Pretty much see point 1. Introduce her to God-fearing righteous men, looking to marry. Let her live in your house until marriage. So far it's worked out fine for my parents. From personal experience, one sibling is married and the other is in the house until she marries. It is working fine thus far.

4) "What if her husband dies and she has to go back to work?"

I have two experiences with this. First, a friend of mine who is advanced in years had a daughter he supports due to her husband no longer being in the picture. My friend is not very well off and yet manages to do it. I cannot recall for certain if her husband is deceased but I believe he is.

Second, in my course of work, someone I knew professionally was murdered along with several others in a random killing several months back. Besides my professional obligations in aiding his widow, others in the state, as well as her parish have banded together to help the family of the deceased. This is not a one time thing either, regarding the parishioners. This is a continued process of supporting her as she works to support her family.

As horrible and tragic as the situation is for her and her children, we are committed to continuing to help her. Everyone, regardless of how desolate their situation seems, knows at least one other person that would help them in their time of need. And yes, to my knowledge, his widow did not attend college. I say that due to knowing them enough professionally that it is obvious and will say nothing further on it.

To conclude, men today, especially regarding their daughters, will delve into irrational thinking and acting like women when it comes to the subject of their daughters not attending college/university. Is it worth them a) turning their backs on what you've taught them re: the Faith, b) becoming flaming liberals c) losing their virginity/being so unchaste as to be unmarriable due to N count, STD(s), being an alpha widow and/or d) spending a great deal of your money on an investment that most likely will not be worth it? There are several "what ifs" addressed above with personal experiences where appropriate and likely scenarios when no personal anecdote was available.

In closing, as my girlfriend and I have discussed before if we get married, we are looking to marry off our daughters as soon as possible. Raising chaste, Catholic, feminine princesses to be queens, imbued with *truly* traditional values, who have God first, their husbands and families close behind, rather than a career, is worth dividends in the end, as well as a way to continue our way of life.

Saturday Saints- #116

September 4, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter for today is I, and thus we have our saint, Saint Ignatius of Loyola:

> Saint **Ignatius of Loyola**, SJ (Basque: *Ignazio Loiolakoa*, Spanish: *Ignacio de Loyola*; c. October 23, 1491 – July 31, 1556) was a Spanish knight from a local Basque noble family, hermit, priest since 1537, and theologian, who founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and, on 19 April 1541, became its first Superior General. Ignatius emerged as a religious leader during the Counter-Reformation. Loyola's devotion to the Catholic Church was characterized by absolute obedience to the Pope.
>
> After being seriously wounded in the Battle of Pamplona in 1521, he underwent a spiritual conversion while in recovery. *De Vita Christi* by Ludolph of Saxony purportedly inspired Loyola to abandon his previous military life and devote himself to labour for God, following the example of spiritual leaders such as Francis of Assisi. After experiencing a vision of the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus at the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat in March 1522, he went to Manresa, where he began praying for seven hours a day, often in a nearby cave, and formulating the fundamentals of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In September 1523, Loyola reached the Holy Land to settle there, but was sent back to Europe by the Franciscans.
>
> Between 1524 and 1537, Ignatius studied theology and Latin in the University of Alcalá and then in Paris. In 1534, he arrived in the latter city during a period of anti-Protestant turmoil which forced John Calvin to flee France. Ignatius and a few followers bound themselves by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In 1539, with St. Peter Faber and St. Francis Xavier he formed the Society of Jesus, approved in 1540 by Pope Paul III, as well as his *Spiritual Exercises* approved in 1548. Loyola also composed the *Constitutions* of the Society. He died in July 1556, was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1609, canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, and declared patron of all spiritual retreats by Pope Pius XI in 1922. Ignatius' feast day is celebrated on July 31. Ignatius is a foremost patron saint of soldiers, the Society of Jesus, the Basque Country, and the provinces of Gipuzkoa and Biscay.

(Source)

Masculine Monday # 13

September 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

I suspect that I were to try and create a list of different traits that men “need,” that it would generate a lot of debate. Some would say I am missing traits, while others would argue that I am including some unnecessarily. There is one trait, however, that I would wager very few would disagree with if it were included in such a list.

That trait? A capacity for focused, disciplined and effective violence.

Note that I say a *capacity* for violence, not a *propensity* for violence. Those are two *very* different things.

There is a time and place for all things, including violence and refraining from violence. But I would argue that a man who is incapable of exercising violence when needed isn’t much of a man at all.

Protecting those you love and care for is part and parcel of being a man. If you are a husband and/or father, then you are ultimately the last line of defense when it comes to protecting your family.

Men and women alike will evaluate you on your perceived ability to defend not only yourself, but others. In fact women are apt to find violent, or at least violence-capable men, to be sexually arousing.

So where am I going with this? The answer is that a man needs to know how to use violence effectively. That means he needs to study martial arts, or to shoot firearms (bows and crossbows are neat and useful, but too specialized). Don’t know how? Start taking lessons? Already know how to do these things? Then keep up with your training.

> Blessed be the Lord, my rock,
> who trains my hands for war,
> and my fingers for battle

(Psalm 144:1)

Starting With The Right Question

September 7, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I want to begin this post with a little bit of scripture:

> [25] And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” [26] He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” [27] And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” [28] And he said to him, “You have answered right; do this, and you will live.”
>
> [29] But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” [30] Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. [31] Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. [32] So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. [33] But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, [34] and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35] And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ [36] Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” [37] He said, “The one who showed mercy on him.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

(Luke 10:25-37)

Here we have the classic parable of the good Samaritan. I’m sure most of my readers are quite familiar with it. My purpose in mentioning this parable is to examine the lawyer.

You see, the lawyer asks two questions. The first one is good, and I think, honest. The second question is an entirely different matter, however.

When the lawyer asked Jesus “who is my neighbor?”, what do we think his purpose was?

Was the lawyer trying to ensure that he lived out God’s law to the fullest? Did he ask the question ensure he didn’t miss anyone?

Of course not. Scripture tells us that he was looking to justify himself. The lawyer wasn’t asking Jesus that question in order to get what I suppose you could call an “expansive” answer. Rather, the lawyer was trying to use whatever criteria that Jesus mentioned in order to limit those whom he would treat as a neighbor. He didn’t want lots of neighbors, he wanted as few of them as possible. Hence the question.

His goal was to restrict the amount of love he had to show his fellow man. In other words, the lawyer wanted to be miserly with love. And he was counting on Jesus to help him out

with this (boy was he in for a surprise).

In short, the lawyer's heart wasn't in the right place from the very beginning. And so his question was wrong from the very beginning. A better question, rather than "And who is my neighbor?", would have been "How can I live out the law to the fullest?" Such a question comes from a heart that is aligned to God.

Whenever we ask a question which concerns living out our faith, we always need to ask it when our heart is in the right place. If God is not first and foremost there- if serving and loving him totally is not our aim and purpose- then our endeavor is corrupt from the start. Whatever comes of it will invariably be twisted in some way.

I mention all of this because Deep Strength has a couple of recent posts concerning submission in marriage: The problems with intelligent submission being the first, and Wifely submission is easy being the second. Both of these posts draw as their origin a simple enough question: "When should I obey my husband?"

It is my belief that this particular question, just like the question of the lawyer, comes from the wrong place in the heart (perhaps intentionally, perhaps unintentionally) . Its purpose is *not* "How can I live out the law to the fullest?" Rather, the purpose is to limit obedience, to limit that which must be rendered to another. Much in the same way that the lawyer wanted to limit how much love he had to render to his fellow man.

A better question, one arising from a heart aligned with God, would be more along these lines: "Which action now available to me would be most pleasing to God?" Otherwise stated, "What action would be most loving?"

Avoiding Sacrifice

September 10, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Deep Strength has a new post up wherein he argues that Women hate suffering:

> I was trying to think of ways to make the this post into something elaborate, but the title really just explains itself. **Women hate suffering**, and by extension **women don't handle suffering well**.
>
> Examples:
>
> - Divorce rate is 70% women initiated. Because women are unhappy.
> - Husbands persist through contentious and shrewish wives in marriage taking on more responsibilities (e.g. choreplay, childcare), while women can't handle being unhappy.
> - Pastors and wives with unbelieving husbands will go out of their way to make up stuff like "intelligent submission" so they don't have to submit. Then the sad part is when "intelligent submission" is defended instead of admitting it is being used to rebel against husbands and against the Scriptures.
> - Christian men and husbands would rather cave to women when they are unhappy rather than to tell them it is a normal part of the Christian walk. "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" 2:Timothy 3:12. Suffering is normal for Christians. We do a lot of things in this life that we don't want to because they should be done.
> - Women are coddled by society, praised and pushed for college and credentialism. Men are put down and no on cares about them. When women fail they are helped as much as possible, especially by white knights. When men fail no one really cares that they are suffering except perhaps their parents.

I agree with a lot of what Deep Strength has to say in his post. Women are indeed coddled- more than men, anyways. There are plenty of women who aren't coddled out there, of course. Men cave all-the-time (hence "mancaves"). And so on and so forth.

At the same time, I think he is a bit off when he says that women hate suffering. In fact I have written a post on this subject before. A few snippets from that post:

> You see, healthy women "like" suffering.
>
> I put quotations around like because it is not a conscious desire, but an unconscious one. Something deep down inside them recognizes that a certain

> amount of suffering is to be expected, is natural even. As Ace alludes to, this draws from Genesis[.]
>
> …
>
> Women expect suffering in their life- it is the natural thing. [Think about the vast majority of human history- filled with suffering for pretty much everyone.] When women are too comfortable, when suffering is absent from their life, then it sends a message to their unconscious mind that something is wrong, that what they are living is an *unnatural* life. That message of unnaturalness will only be repeated over the years as they grow up. They will know, somewhere deep down inside, that *something* is wrong. Unfortunately, because this is unconscious, they won't know what it is, exactly, that is wrong.
>
> This will, naturally enough, lead them to feel miserable. The misery is only made worse because they won't understand it. It will gnaw on their mind incessantly, like an itch you can't quite reach.
>
> I suspect that part of the reason that women act so crazy in the west today is because of this. Using that itch analogy I just mentioned- women act crazy because they are trying to scratch that itch. Only they don't quite know how- so they do so in extreme ways. Again, deep down inside they know they should be suffering, so they go out and make themselves suffer (without every truly understanding that is what they are doing).

I think a better word, one that fits what Deep Strength is driving towards, is *sacrifice.* Women *hate* sacrifice. They don't want to have to sacrifice anything to get what they want. A few examples:

- They say they want a family, but they don't want to sacrifice their youth, and an education and/or career, to get one.
- They don't want to sacrifice their comfort and easy lifestyle for the pain and burden of children, so they opt for birth control and abortion.
- They don't want to have to sacrifice their happiness (and time, etc.) for a man whom they find unattractive, and so they opt for divorce.

And so on and so forth.

Later in his post Deep Strength says this:

> Christian wives hate suffering and putting their own will aside to display Christ-like behavior. They would rather manipulate the situation around them to be better by their own volition than try it God's way.

Again, putting aside their own will is a sacrifice. And one they don't want to have to make. Further, it is one they all too often refuse to make.

Of course, that isn't really any different from men. Men don't want to have to sacrifice either. That is just general human nature. The thing is, this is where Deep Strength's

statements about coddling are important.

Women are, on average, *far* more coddled than men in today's society. It is far more common for men to be taught and told that they will have to sacrifice to achieve what they want in life, than it is for women. And even then, for women, the scale of the sacrifice they are told to expect is likely to be less.

What does this means? It means that women are less inclined to sacrifice in general. When they must sacrifice, they are inclined to sacrifice less. And of course, they try and shift as much of that burden of sacrifice onto men as they can get away with.

The solution requires confronting this problem head on. Women, of all ages, need to be reminded that we all must sacrifice. *Especially* as Christians. Our faith is one of self-sacrifice. Without a willingness to sacrifice, well, our Lord and Savior explained what would happen:

> [18] "Hear then the parable of the sower. [19] When any one hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path. **[20] As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; [21] yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.** [22] As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. [23] As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

(Matthew 13:18-23)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #116

September 12, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our faith is one of sacrifice. We can see this as early as Genesis, when our father in faith Abraham was called by God:

> Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.”
>
> [4] So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. [5] And Abram took Sar′ai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, [6] Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. [7] Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. [8] Thence he removed to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. [9] And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

(Genesis 12:1-9)

When God called Abraham (then Abram), Abraham was required to sacrifice the security and assurance he had in his native land. This was a dangerous journey, but Abraham made it all the same.

We can see sacrifice later in the Old Testament when the Israelites were required to render unto God the first fruits of the land:

> “When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and have taken possession of it, and live in it, [2] you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the Lord your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place which the Lord your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. [3] And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, ‘I declare this day to the Lord your God that I have come into the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.’ [4] Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God.
>
> [5] “And you shall make response before the Lord your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number;

> and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. [6] And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. [7] Then we cried to the Lord the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; [8] and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; [9] and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. [10] And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Lord, hast given me.' And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God; [11] and you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

(Deuteronomy 26:1-11)

There is a cost to all that we do. I know I have said this before (in this series no less), but it bears repeating. There is a great cost to being a Christian. We shouldn't embark on this journey if we aren't willing to pay that cost. That cost will require great sacrifice of us. Jesus told us as much:

> [25] Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, [26] "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. [28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' [31] Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. [33] So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

(Luke 14:25-33)

God must come first, everything else afterwards. If we cannot pay the costs associated with that, better to not even start down this path at all.

[This post was inspired, in part, by Deep Strength's recent posts on suffering/sacrifice, found here and here.]

Tradition Thursday #58

September 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's post, I am going to feature the writings of Ephraim the Syrian, Doctor of the Church. Here I will cover his homily on Admonition and Repentence. Given its length, I will break it into three parts. Here is part 1:

> 1. Not of compulsion is the doctrine; of free-will is the word of life. Whoso is willing to hear the doctrine, let him cleanse the field of his will that the good seed fall not among the thorns of vain enquirings. If you would heed the word of life, cut yourself off from evil things; the hearing of the word profits nothing to the man that is busied with sins. If you will to be good, love not dissolute customs. First of all, trust in God, and then hearken to His law.
>
> 2. You can not hear His words, while you do not know yourself; and if you keep His judgments while your understanding is aloof from Him, who will give you your reward? Who will keep for you your recompense? You were baptised in His Name; confess His Name! In the Persons and in the naming, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, three Names and Persons, these three shall be a wall to you, against divisions and wranglings. Doubt not of the truth, lest you perish through the truth. You were baptised from the water; you have put on Christ in His naming; the seat of the Lord is on your person and His stamp on your forehead. See that you become not another's, for other Lord have you none. One is He Who formed us in His mercy; one is He Who redeemed us on His cross. He it is Who guides our life; He it is Who has power over our feebleness; He it is Who brings to pass our Resurrection. He rewards us according to our works. Blessed is he that confesses Him, and hears and keeps His commandments! You, O man, are a son of God Who is high over all. See that you vex not by your works the Father Who is good and gracious.
>
> 3. If you are angry against your neighbour, you are angry against God; and if you bear anger in your heart, against your Lord is your boldness uplifted. If in envy you rebuke, wicked is all your reproof. But if charity dwell in you, you have on earth no enemy. And if you are a true son of peace, you will stir up wrath in no man. If you are just and upright, you will not do wrong to your fellow. And if you love to be angry, be angry with the wicked and it will become you; if to wage war you seek, lo! Satan is your adversary; if you desire to revile, against the demons display your curses. If you should insult the King's image, you shall pay the penalty of murder; and if you revile a man, you revile the image of God. Do honour to your neighbour, and lo! You have honoured God. But if you would dishonour Him, in wrath assail your neighbour!
>
> 4. *This is the first Commandment,— You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and your soul, and with your might* according as you are able. The sign that you love God, is this, that you love your fellow; and if you hate your

fellow, your hatred is towards God. For it is blasphemy if you pray before God while you are angry. For your heart also convicts you, that in vain you multiply words: your conscience rightly judges that in your prayers you profit nought. Christ as He hung on the height of the tree, interceded for His murderers; and you (who art) dust, son of the clay, rage fills you at its will. You keep anger against your brother; and do you yet dare to pray? Even he that stands on your side, though he be not neighbour to your sins, the taint of iniquity reaches unto him, and his petition is not heard. Leave off rage and then pray; and unless you would further provoke, restrain anger and so shall you supplicate. And if he (the other) is not to encounter you in fury, banish rage from that body, because it is holden with lusts.

5. You have a spiritual nature; the soul is the image of the Creator; honour the image of God, by being in agreement with all men. Remember death, and be not angry, that your peace be not of constraint. As long as your life remains to you, cleanse your soul from wrath; for if it should go to Sheol with you, your road will be straight to Gehenna. Keep not anger in your heart; hold not fury in your soul; you have not power over your soul, save to do that which is good. You are bought with the blood of God; you are redeemed by the passion of Christ; for your sake He suffered death, that you might die to your sins. His face endured spitting, that you might not shrink from scorn. Vinegar and gall did He drink, that you might be set apart from wrath. He received stripes on His body, that you might not fear suffering. If you are in truth His servant, fear your holy Lord; if you are His true disciple, walk in your Master’s footsteps. Endure scorn from your brother, that you may be the companion of Christ. Display not anger against man, that you be not set apart from your Redeemer.

6. You are a man, the dust of the earth, clay, kinsman of the clod; you are the son of the race of beasts. If you know not your honour; separate your soul from animals, by works and not by words. If you love derision, you are altogether as Satan; and if you mock at your fellow, you are the mouth of the Devil; if against defects and flaws, in (injurious) names you delight, Satan is not in creation but his place you have seized by force. Get you far, O man, from this; for it is altogether hurtful; and if you desire to live well, sit not with the scorner, lest you become the partner of his sin and of his punishment. Hate mockery which is altogether (the cause of weeping), and mirth which is (the cause of) cleansing. And if you should hear a mocker by chance, when you are not desiring it, sign yourself with the cross of light, and hasten from thence like an antelope. Where Satan lodges, Christ will in nowise dwell; a spacious dwelling for Satan is the man that mocks at his neighbour; a palace of the Enemy is the heart of the mocker. Satan does not desire to add any other evil to it. Mockery is sufficient for him to supply the place of all. Neither his belly nor yet his purse can (the sinner) fill with that sin of his. By his laughter is the wretch despoiled, and he knows not nor does he perceive it. For his wound, there is no cure; for his sickness, there is no

> healing; his pain, admits no remedy; and his sore, endures no medicine. I desire not with such a one to put forth my tongue to reprove him: enough for him is his own shame; sufficient for him is his boldness. Blessed is he that has not heard him; and blessed is he that has not known him. Be it far from you, O Church, that he should enter you, that evil leaven of Satan!
>
> 7. Narrow is the way of life, and broad the way of torment; prayer is able to bring a man to the house of the kingdom. This is the perfect work; prayer that is pure from iniquity. The righteousness of man is as nothing accounted. The work of men, what is it? His labour is altogether vanity. Of You, O Lord, of Your grace it is that in our nature we should become good. Of You is righteousness, that we from men should become righteous. Of You is the mercy and favour, that we from the dust should become Your image. Give power to our will, that we be not sunk in sin! Pour into our heart memory, that at every hour we may know Your honour! Plant truth in our minds, that we perish not among doubts! Occupy our understanding with Your law, that it wander not in vain thoughts! Order the motions of our members, that they bring no hurt upon us! Draw near to God, that Satan may flee from you. Cast out passions from your heart, and lo! You have put to flight the enemy. Hate sins and wickedness, and Satan at once will have fled. Whatsoever sins you serve, you are worshipping secret idols. Whatsoever transgressions you love, you are serving demons in your soul. Whenever you strive with your brother, Satan abides in peace. Whenever you envy your fellow, you give rest to Devils. Whenever you tell the shortcoming of others who are not present, your tongue has made a harp for the music of the devil. Whenever hatred is in your soul, great is the peace of the Deceiver. Whenever you love incantations, your labour is altogether of the left hand. If you love unseemly discourse, you prepare a feast for demons. For this is the worship of idols, the working of the lusts (of the flesh).

(Source)

Saturday Saints- #117

September 17, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's saint hails from the east, and Syria in particular, although Lebanon became his eventual home. Our saint is Saint John Maron:

> **John Maron** (Arabic: يوحنا مارون, *Youhana Maroun*; Latin: *Ioannes Maronus*) (born in 628 in Sirmaniyah or Sarmin, present Syria – died in 707 in Kfarhy, Lebanon), was a Syriac monk, and the first Maronite Patriarch. He is revered as a saint by the Maronite and Roman Catholic Churches, and is commemorated on March 2. He died and was buried in Kfarhy near Batroun, in Lebanon, where a shrine is dedicated to him.

Some of his early life:

> John studied Greek and patrology in Constantinople. Returning to Saint Maron's, he wrote on such diverse topics as teaching, rhetoric, the sacraments, management of Church property, legislative techniques, and liturgy. He composed the Eucharistic Prayer which still bears his name. As a young priest he engaged himself in ecumenical debates with the Monophysites. Noted as a teacher and preacher, he explained the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon (which focused on the nature of Jesus as both God and human), wrote a series of letters to the faithful against Monothelitism which Beit-Marun had adopted, and then travelled Syria to explain the heresy.
>
> He was consecrated bishop in 676, and assigned to Mount Lebanon with a mission to oppose heresies, keep the Maronites united with the Church, and support the faithful in an area being invaded by Arabs. He travelled extensively in the areas involved in combat, preaching, conducting Mass, tending to the sick, and sheltering the homeless.

More can be found out about the founder of the Maronite Catholic Church at his wiki, located here. I should note that some of what is written in the wiki does not match up with what the Maronites teach about their history. Even today there is some dispute about such matters, including alleged heresies on their part at first.



Setting Up A Collection

September 20, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Long time blog-friend Deep Strength has been exploring the idea of some kind of Treatise on Marriage/Patriarchy:

> I don't see a need to "defend" Patriarchy as it is an inherently good system as it was created and affirmed by God throughout the Scriptures. Hence, the term treatise. However, it seems that a "defense" is needed because most Christians are entrenched unknowingly in the Necropolis (e.g. formerly churchianity) and are convinced by secular culture that Patriarchy is an evil system.

He then explores the different collections that need to be made for this project:

> - Compilation of the Scriptures on God's structure of authority marriage.
> - Writings and commentary on the structure of marriage with sound logical defense.
> - Examples of Christian organizational structures going off the mark on marriage. CBMW is obviously one of them.

I would like to help him out with this project, at least as to part 2. I know a number of the Church Fathers and Saints have written on this subject, in some cases extensively. So what I hope to do is create a list of various early writings on marriage/patriarchy, and more specifically the structure of marriage. I would like to collect them here on this post.

So I am asking my readers for help. If any of you know of such writings/commentaries, please mention them in the comments and provide a link as well. I will probably collate them by author, and perhaps by date as well (if possible).

Prayer, Anger And Peace

September 22, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my recent Tradition Thursday post, reader Pedat Ebediyah left this comment:

> This is hard.
>
> If we plant truth in our hearts, but see evil men sowing their wares, how can we NOT be angry?
>
> In this wicked generation, when we peruse the landscape, how can we not feel some kinda angst in the face of what we see?
>
> Can I pray and STILL be pissed off?

Elspeth then replied with this comment:

> I was thinking the same thing when I read that part. I have prayed and asked God to help me NOT be angry about a thing anymore. Is it better when angry not to pray at all? And what about the command to:
>
> Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Eph 4:26-27

Emotions, anger especially, are a dangerous thing. They are often but not always one and the same as feelings. Whether separate or not, they are dangerous because they are associated with our Body. Thus, they are tied to the material plane and the effects of sin. Emotions, if we let them control us, take us away from God.

This is why Jesus told us to let go of our anger. If we go to bed angry then that anger will fester within us, and like a rot it will grow. Over time it will consume us. The same goes for *any* emotion.

It may be shocking to hear for some, but our faith is one that should eschew emotionalism. Emotions cloud the reason, and thereby allow the Evil One to slip past our defenses. They are a weakness, not a strength. Sure *some* of them can feel good, such as happiness, but again that and any emotion can be deceptive. Plenty of evil works evoked happiness in their makers.

Instead we should be experiencing/demonstrating the fruits of the Holy Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity. These are things not of this world, but of the spiritual world. Thus, they are both safer and more fulfilling.

Now, to the specific questions:

> Can I pray and STILL be pissed off?

If you are praying earnestly, then your anger should abate. You should not aim to be angry after praying. If you are, then your soul is not stilled, and your prayers ineffectual. I recommend praying aloud this part of Psalm 37:

> Fret not yourself because of the wicked,
> be not envious of wrongdoers!
> [2] For they will soon fade like the grass,
> and wither like the green herb.
>
> [3] Trust in the Lord, and do good;
> so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security.
> [4] Take delight in the Lord,
> and he will give you the desires of your heart.
> [5] Commit your way to the Lord;
> trust in him, and he will act.
> [6] He will bring forth your vindication as the light,
> and your right as the noonday.
> [7] Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;
> fret not yourself over him who prospers in his way,
> over the man who carries out evil devices!
>
> [8] Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!
> Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.
> [9] For the wicked shall be cut off;
> but those who wait for the Lord shall possess the land.

(Psalm 37:1-9)

As for this question:

> Is it better when angry not to pray at all?

The answer is no. Quite the opposite, in fact. You *should* pray when you are angry. You should *also* pray when sad, or afraid, or experiencing any emotion. We cannot overcome the weaknesses of our flesh on our own. Only God can do this- if we allow him, for He never forces his healing/mercy/love on us. Prayer is an important component of this. You should pray to your Father in Heaven that He give you peace; that you might no longer be troubled.

The Psalms are an excellent source of such prayers. Another that I might recommend would be Psalm 62:

> For God alone my soul waits in silence;
> from him comes my salvation.
> [2] He only is my rock and my salvation,
> my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved.
> [3] How long will you set upon a man
> to shatter him, all of you,
> like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
> [4] They only plan to thrust him down from his eminence.

They take pleasure in falsehood.
They bless with their mouths,
but inwardly they curse. *Selah*

[5] For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.
[6] He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
[7] On God rests my deliverance and my honor;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
[8] Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

[9] Men of low estate are but a breath,
men of high estate are a delusion;
in the balances they go up;
they are together lighter than a breath.
[10] Put no confidence in extortion,
set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, set not your heart on them.
[11] Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God;
[12] and that to thee, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.
For thou dost requite a man
according to his work.

(Psalm 62)

Finally, remember these words of our Savior:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

(John 14:27)

Telling Photos

September 25, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a precursor of one to follow in the next few days (Monday or Tuesday, most likely). I have a simple request for my readers- tell me what you see in these side by side photos:



No trick question here. I want to hear your thoughts on what those photos tell you.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #117

September 26, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few weeks back Rollo left a comment on my "Have Questions or Suggestions" page which said the following:

> So, I have a serious theological question that I've encountered recently. I had a fairly liberal pastor attempt to explain in a sermon that Jesus never said he literally offered 'Eternal Life' and that the translation from the Greek is more accurately translated as "the life of the age" if one believes in him.

I have heard the occasional statement along those lines before, so I delved into this a bit. After consulting with those with expertise in this area (both in Scripture and Koanic Greek), I can finally respond.

My/Their response is: rubbish.

Jesus clearly meant Eternal Life. Not some "life of the age." Or some (temporary) life in some next, "better" age. Rather, our Savior something that lasted beyond merely this age, and the next age, and in fact would last forever. Heresies like this are probably why St. John the Evangelist felt called to write his gospel.

Here are some of the relevant passages:

> [11] Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. [12] If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? [13] No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. [14] And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, [15] that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."
>
> [16] For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. [18] He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. [19] And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [20] For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. [21] But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God.

(John 3:11-21)

Then a little later:

> [31] He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks; he who comes from heaven is above all. [32] He

> bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony;
> [33] he who receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. [34] For he
> whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he
> gives the Spirit; [35] the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.
> [36] He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall
> not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.

(John 3: 31-36)

> [7] There came a woman of Samar′ia to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a
> drink.” [8] For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. [9] The Samaritan
> woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of
> Samar′ia?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. [10] Jesus answered her, “If
> you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’
> you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” [11] The
> woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep;
> where do you get that living water? [12] Are you greater than our father Jacob, who
> gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?” [13] Jesus
> said to her, “Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, [14] 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.” [15] The
> woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here
> to draw.”

(John 4:7-15)

> [19] Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own
> accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the
> Son does likewise. [20] For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he
> himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may
> marvel. [21] For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son
> gives life to whom he will. [22] The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment
> to the Son, [23] that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who
> does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. [24] Truly, truly, I
> say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal
> life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

(John 5:19-24)

From the Bread of Life discourse:

> [25] When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi,
> when did you come here?” [26] Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you
> seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.
> [27] **Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which
> endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him**

has God the Father set his seal." [28] Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" [29] Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." [30] So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? [31] Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" [32] Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. [33] For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." [34] They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

[35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. [36] But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. [37] All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. [38] For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; [39] and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. [40] For this is the will of my Father, **that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."**

[41] The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." [42] They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" [43] Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. [44] No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. [45] It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. [46] Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. [47] Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. [48] I am the bread of life. [49] Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. [50] This is the bread which comes down from heaven, **that a man may eat of it and not die.** [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven; **if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever**; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

[52] The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"[d] [53] So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; [54] he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [55] For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. [56] He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. [57] As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. [58] This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as

> the fathers ate and died; **he who eats this bread will live for ever.**” [59] This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper′na-um.

(John 6:25-51)

I bolded the relevant parts of that quotation. From this, and from what the Apostle Peter says in reply to Jesus, this isn’t merely some life of the “2nd Age” thing going on:

> [66] After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him.
> [67] Jesus said to the twelve, “Will you also go away?” [68] Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life;

John (6:66-68)

Another passage later in the gospel:

> [25] Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness to me; [26] but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. [27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; [28] and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

(John 10:25-28)

Again, they are promised life that won’t end, that is, that they won’t perish. Not some kind of “life of the (2nd?) age.”

So, to repeat: the notion that Jesus wasn’t talking of Eternal Life is rubbish. But really, what else do you expect from some guys prancing about a stage with a guitar and drums in the background? Translation shenanigans should be expected from someone like that. St. Paul warned us about people like that:

> I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: [2] preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. [3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.

(2 Timothy 4:1-4)

The Way We Met

September 28, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[*See update at the bottom of the post.*]

I ran across the following story via a friend. Apparently it is part of some Facebook feed called The Way We Met:

> "I was best friends with George for 10 years before we started dating. We met in High School and developed a really special friendship over the years. I always felt more comfortable telling George something than anyone else I knew. He became my most trusted companion and we hung out all the time. People who didn't know us always thought we were dating. When we went our separate ways for college, we didn't talk as much anymore but our friendship remained just as strong. George was always there for me after every bad relationship ended to help me pick up the pieces. I would often say to people, "I think friends can be soul mates, I really think George is mine." It was odd how we would say the same thing at the same time and always knew what the other person was thinking. I always knew how much George meant to me, but it wasn't until after my Mom got remarried that I started to look at him in a different light. The day of my Mom's wedding I came down the stairs and he looked up at me with a big smile and said, "You look beautiful baby," and then kissed me on the cheek. I don't know why but something about that moment has always stuck out so strongly to me. The rest of the evening I kept staring at him and thinking about how handsome he was, what a gentleman he was, and how much I cared about him. We danced with each other all night and I realized how perfectly we fit together. It felt like home. After that, it took a couple weeks of nervous deliberation but we finally decided we wanted to be together. It's crazy to think that my soul mate has been with me this whole time, I just wasn't ready to accept it yet."

There are a couple of images that accompany this. They are side by side for comparison:



Now some of you might recognize these images. That is because I featured them in my recent post, Telling Photos. Now that I have included the text that accompanies the photos we can finally start with the making of sense.

So what do we learn from both of them together? Here are a few things:

- The guy (George), was a beta orbiter for a long, long time.
- The gal (whose name I don't have), had numerous broken relationships. A reasonable inference can be made that [those relationships, or at least some of them, were sexual, although it is not certain].
- The gal believes in Soul Mates. Ouch.
- The gal's mom was either a divorcee or was a widow. That is not good news for good ol' George [if it is the latter].
- They are probably somewhere between 24 and 28 years old.
- George majorly stepped up his attractiveness over those ten years.
- She was somewhat overweight at first, and it seems she has managed to get at least some of that weight off.

[A number of these are red flags. They are indicators of possible problems with her as LTR material. That doesn't necessarily mean she is poor material, but they should prompt caution.]

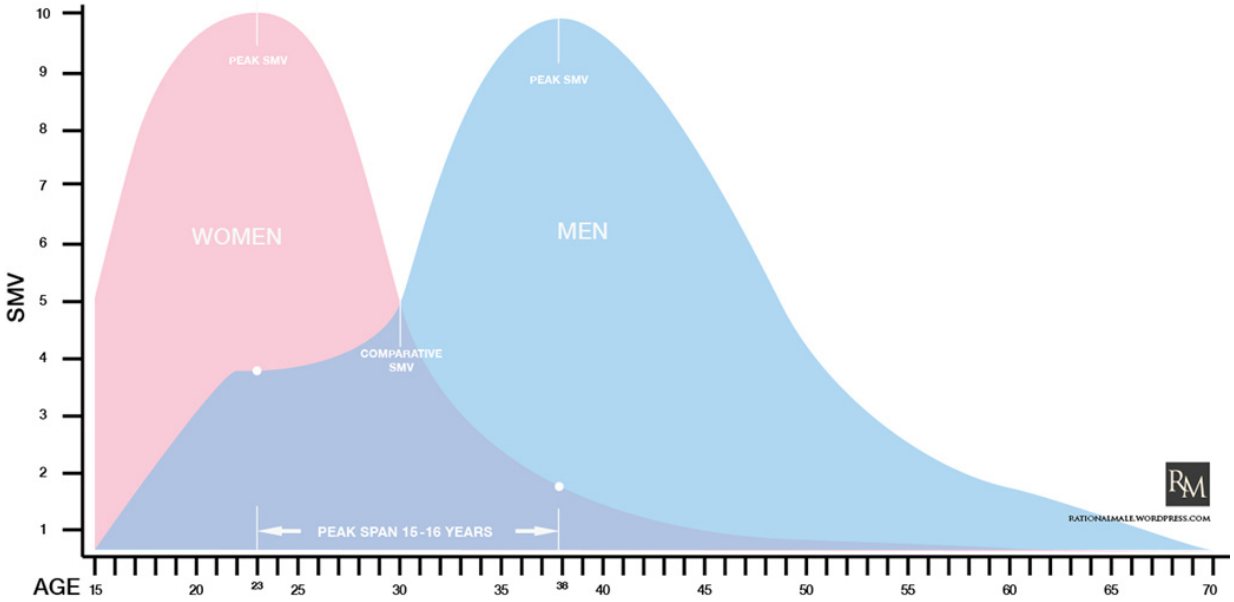
Here is the thing- if someone who wasn't "Red Pill" savvy read this piece, they would probably find it sweet. Those of us who are savvy, however, would probably have an entirely different reaction. I found the story sad, not sweet.

You see, reading the piece and looking at those photos tells me that the woman here wasn't having issues accepting that she was supposed to be with George. Rather, the

problem from the beginning was that George just wasn't sexually attractive. He was too "Beta", if you will. Since he wasn't sexually attractive to her, his other great traits meant jack. However, as the years passed by George grew in confidence, and it shows in that second photo. Eventually his attractiveness grew to the point where she no longer dismissed him as a sexual partner. At that point his other great traits were able to come to the forefront, and before you know it you have this:

> "I realized how perfectly we fit together."

Among other things, this story serves as further evidence in support of Rollo Tomassi's SMV chart:



What happened here is that the girl's SMV started out much higher than George's. However, as time went on his SMV continued to climb and climb. Meanwhile, age has reduced the girl's potential SMV. However, her (presumed) weight loss had the effect of reducing the effective loss of SMV that she felt. The end result of all of this is that both are pretty close in comparative SMV at the time of this photo.

I mentioned before that I find this sad. The reason why is simple: George is now attractive enough that he can get the attention of decent looking girls (I suspect that while most readers would disagree about the actual number, most would agree that she is at least attractive). Yet what does he do with that newfound power? He goes after the girl he has been crushing on for a decade. A girl with all kinds of baggage (which she freely admits to). A girl whose mother probably was a divorcee. A girl who might very well be reaching her "Epiphany phase," and thus looking to "cash out"on what remains of her SMV.

George seems like a decent guy, and now probably one with options. He should have focused on younger women with less baggage. Instead he married a girl with more red flags than a Communist parade.

Now that I have fleshed out the rest of this story, I invite my readers to comment further. I believe some good solid lessons can be derived here. Sure, most will already know them, but a refresher course never hurts. Plus you never know, there is always the

chance for some newfound wisdom.

*For the record, the couple put all of this out there. They made it public, not me. I am merely commenting on what is effectively a public statement of theirs.

Update: Made a few corrections to try and clarify things; they are in brackets. People came to more conclusions than I was expecting in this post.

Update 2: I wrote a followup post which addresses the problems with this one- In Defense of George.

The Strain

October 1, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

There is a terrible condition out there now that is afflicting many western men.

If not treated, it can lead to a lifetime of suffering, and in some circumstances, even death.

Even worse, many men do not realize that they have it.

What is this awful malady, pray tell?

It is *Oneitis.*

To give it my best try at describing it…

Oneitis is the belief that one single, specific, identifiable person out there is *THE ONE* for you and you must wait until that person finally recognizes this; that is, that single person is your soul mate whom you *must,* nay, are *destined*, to be with and it will become so in the end, despite your soul mate not realizing it at the time.

A person with oneitis will forsake all other possibilities and options to be with The One. This "crush" will override reason and can blind someone to the glaring red flags found in their "soulmate." This is, of course, terrifyingly disastrous for the person with Oneitis. They will endure unnecessary frustration, angst and misery.

This can come about several ways. For one, they will ignore other, better romantic options. Two, they will give more and more power over to the other person if a relationship does develop. Three, they will be blind to the flaws in the other person, even when such flaws should compel a reasonable person to run away.

Now, all of that is descriptive. Here is the prescriptive part of the post:

Readers, Commenters and Fellow Bloggers, warn your male friends and family about the dangers of Oneitis. Tell them that is is deadly, and can and will ruin their life.

Explain that there is no such thing as a "Soul Mate." It is pagan nonsense. Point out how it clouds reason, and blinds them to other, better possibilities. Remind them that there are BILLIONS of women on this planet- there are plenty of other options out there. Help them understand that it is highly unattractive to women, and will only frustrate their romantic endeavors.

Do the men in your life a favor, and help cure their Oneitis. The whole world will be better off for it.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #118

October 3, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A conversation with some friends got me thinking about the topic of salvation. More specifically, the false doctrine of Once Saved, Always Saved. Before chiming in it is always good to hit the books. Let us begin with the Letter to the Hebrews:

> [26] For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries. [28] A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. [29] How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." [31] It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

(Hebrews 10:26-31)

Next we move to Philippians:

> [12] Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13] Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [15] Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you. [16] Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

(Philippians 3:12-16)

Finally we end with St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians:

> [24] Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. [25] Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. [26] Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; [27] but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

(1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

What we can see here is that there is no scriptural support for OSAS. We are not "saved" at some point while we are alive. Salvation is not a living state. Rather, salvation is the goal, the prize at the end of the race. Even Saint Paul was worried that he might lose out, after having accomplished so much! Clearly *he* didn't believe that he was "saved." Rather, he imagined himself a runner in a race where the stakes were as high as they

could be. We too should be just as concerned as he was.

Buy hey, don't take my word for it. Rely on Jesus instead:

> [31] "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. [32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, [33] and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. [34] Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; [35] for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, [36] I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' [37] Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? [38] And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? [39] And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' [40] And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' [41] Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; [42] for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, [43] I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' [44] Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' [45] Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' [46] And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

(Matthew 25:31-46)

Notice how there is no mention of being "saved" here? Nor is there any mention of "professing me (Jesus) in your heart" or anything else like that.

So what is involved then? Well, lets look to the Gospel of John:

> Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. [2] He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." [3] Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." [4] Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" [5] Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. [6] What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.
>
> …

> [16] “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.
>
> [17] “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. [18] Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

(John 3:1-6, 16-18)

From this and other passages we can figure out how we can win the race. There are a number of steps necessary to win this race. Here is a crude outline I created which tries to lay them out:

1. Believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and our Lord and Savior (the most essential step)
2. Be baptized (born of water)
3. Be chrismated -the laying of hands (born of Spirit)

Of course, these just get us on the path. We can swerve from it if we are not careful. That is where repentance and confession come in. And of course Communion/Eucharist helps fortify our spirit so we can keep on the path as well. Taken together, we can see how it is sort of a two stage process. The first stage is to get on the path, and the second stage is to keep on the path.

None The Wiser

October 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

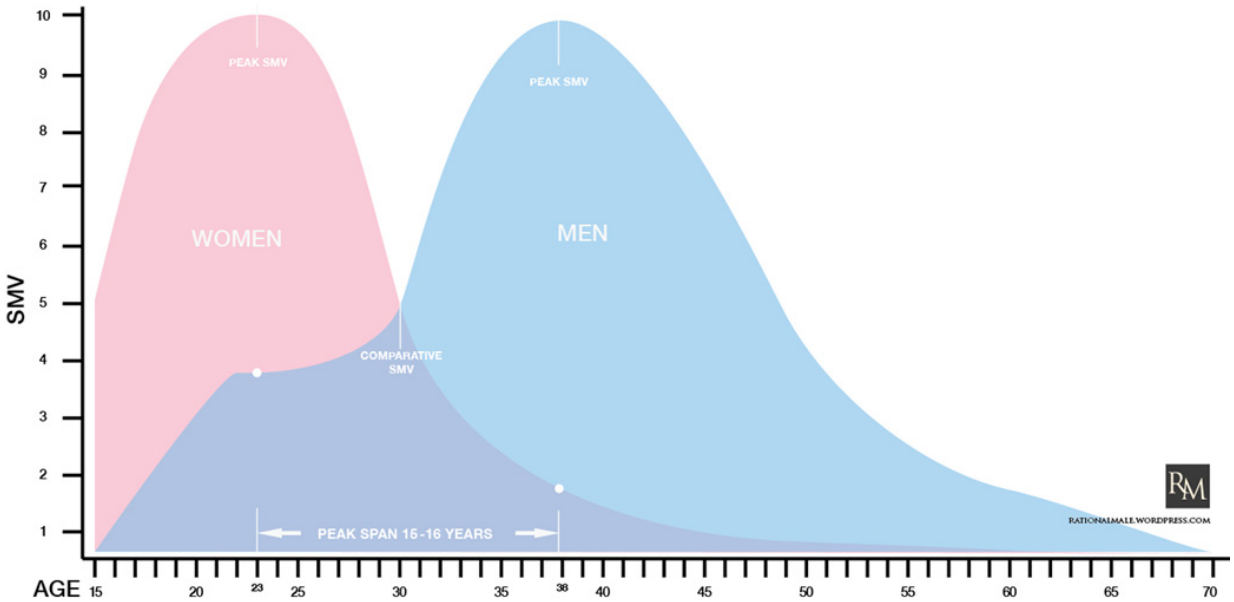
One of the important points which I raised in The Way We Met that I think bears repeating is that the woman gained no wisdom in the process. She didn't come to any great realization that she needed to accept George. As I explained:

> You see, reading the piece and looking at those photos tells me that the woman here wasn't having issues accepting that she was supposed to be with George. Rather, the problem from the beginning was that George just wasn't sexually attractive. He was too "Beta", if you will. Since he wasn't sexually attractive to her, his other great traits meant jack. However, as the years passed by George grew in confidence, and it shows in that second photo. Eventually his attractiveness grew to the point where she no longer dismissed him as a sexual partner. At that point his other great traits were able to come to the forefront[…]

It is a not infrequent refrain these days that women "wise up" when they get older. This is why they ignored "nice guys" and "good men" for so long, only to start paying them attention once they get older. Beforehand they were young and foolish. After some worldly wisdom sets in, they realize the error of their ways and shift their attention and affection (and impliedly their attraction) towards such men.

Nothing could be further from the truth in nearly all cases.

What is really happening is that women are adapting to changes in the sexual markeplace as they get older. At least, changes as it relates to their change in position vis-a-vis age. For ease of reference, Rollo's chart again:



As women age their value in the SMP declines. Depending on the woman, this can be a gradual shift, or a disturbingly rapid one. Meanwhile, as a general rule men increase in value over time. Due to a variety of factors their LAMPS/PSALM attributes will increase as they age, making them overall more and more attractive to women. So when young, very

few men have a high SMV, at least in relation to women.

Now, at the same time remember that women are far, far picker than men when it comes to sexual partners. They find far less men attractive out of the general population than men find women attractive in the general population. In addition, the woman's own SMV will affect how she views the attractiveness of a man. The higher her SMV relative to that of the men she meets, the fewer and fewer she will find acceptable/sexually attractive.

Taken together, this means that when women are young and are at their peak, they tend to pick find only a handful of men to be attractive. [Again, there are always exceptions, but we are talking about the general population here.] Those men are almost never "nice guys" or "good men." In other words, guys like how the woman described George. It is these men who women tend to favor with their affections.

However, as they age, and men increase in their SMV value, and women decrease in SMV value, this all shifts. All of a sudden a bunch of men who otherwise weren't attractive in the eyes of a woman suddenly start to be more and more attractive. Many will actually reach the threshold where she actually rates them as attractive. At this point the man becomes a viable option, and all his other traits "click in to place." Think George.

All of which brings us back to the point of this post- women are none the wiser at the end. They change, sure. But that change comes about from their decrease in relative SMV, and their understanding of their change in SMV. Otherwise, the *real* change takes place in the men she considers her peers. They are the ones changing… by becoming more attractive to her.

Wisdom requires a certain amount of reflection and self-examination. And that is simply not happening here. Instead, women are just adapting reflexively to changes in the SMP around them. They are not developing a newfound understanding about "Beta" traits. They are not suddenly finding them sexually appealing. Don't let anyone fool you with notions that women naturally get wiser when they age- especially when romance is concerned. Keep a level head, and hopefully you will avoid a potential pitfall which others will try and lead you towards.

In Defense Of George

October 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my recent posts The Way We Met and None The Wiser I was accused of being uncharitable towards George and the young woman he had been infatuated with for a long time. Looking back, I can see that this was true. Pretty much nearly every inference was drawn against both George and the young woman on my part. I implied that he was being foolish, and pointed out numerous indicators that she was probably poor relationship material. Mind you, I didn't accuse her of being malicious or manipulative. [One thing to keep in mind is that she always appreciated his good qualities; they just didn't matter until she saw him as sexually attractive]. Rather, I just pointed out that she was questionable as a partner, and said George could have probably done better.

People came to a lot more conclusions about the two of them than I was intending with that post. This is my fault- I tried to do too much in a single post. My original focus was on how the young woman's change in feelings towards George was based on his SMV growth over anything else. However, at the same time I also devoted space in the post towards expressing sympathy towards George, in that I believed he was making a poor choice by entering into a relationship with her. Given that I had included photos of them, that put me on morally shaky ground- especially without any defense of them in that post or admonition against coming to unwarranted conclusions.

Today I will, in the spirit of fairness, offer the defense I should have included from the beginning. I will draw all the inferences in their favor this time. Of course, to do that I need to cover where I drew it against them. So what where my inferences again? Here they are:

- George was a Beta Orbiter
- She has had numerous bad relationships where George had to help her pick up the pieces- a.k.a., she had numerous failed sexual relationships in the past
- She believes in soul mates
- Her mother was probably a divorcee

Those are the big ones, anyways. So lets flip them around, and then extrapolate on what they mean.

The first one is about him and his behavior. If we assume the best about him than he wasn't infatuated with her for 10 years. Instead, he was using that time to build himself up, and perhaps consider other options as far as female company are concerned. In those ten year he was a friend, but not someone stuck in the friendzone. This conclusion would make George more confident and aware of his own value. His decision is not the product of years of frustrated pining for a woman who ignores him, but a more deliberate, and hopefully informed choice.

For the second inference, and first red flag, we assume that those were not sexual

relationships. Perhaps the reason they ended badly was because the young woman *wasn't* sleeping with her boyfriends. It would certainly be understandable to see how she could have numerous failed relationships if she was saving herself for marriage. Given how rare chastity is these days, most men she would run across, including the "Christian" ones, would likely dump her if she wasn't putting out. Now, if this were true- that the reason for her failed relationships was because she was saving herself- then it would be a huge *green* flag. It would be a huge sign in her favor, one that George would be a fool to ignore. [There is of course the whole frigidity thing, but I believe that is reasonably rare as to be a minor concern- especially since she is still in her 20s.]

The third inference was the most solid of all- that she believes in soul mates. For those curious, that is not a good thing- those who do believe in soul mates are more likely to divorce. To draw it in her favor would mean to assume she was just making a figure of speech. She didn't really mean soul mate in the typical -pagan- way of looking at it. Rather, she just wanted to say that her relationship with George felt like it was destined.

Finally, we have the fourth inference. To infer in her favor would be to assume that her mother was a widow. In this case, she did have a father, but lost him at some point. Hopefully it would mean that she had a strong and positive male influence in her life. Also, it would mean that she would have a living example in her life of how marriage is "until death do us part." This is not so much a "green flag", but would obviate the harm that comes from being a child of divorce.

If all four of these points were true- George wasn't a Beta Orbiter, the woman wasn't sleeping around, she didn't believe in soul mates, and her mother was a widow, then it would change how we would view the relationship. George wouldn't be a fool. After all, she appears to have long recognized his good qualities- he just needed to become more attractive for them to really shine. He would be in a relationship with someone who valued those qualities, who valued her body, and who saw that marriage was until "death do us part." Compared to your average American female, she would be well ahead of the pack. One could even argue he would be a fool not to pursue her.

And that brings my defense of George and his woman to a conclusion. If you can see other ways to buttress that, feel free to add them in the comments below.

Believing Is Not Seeing

October 11, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Human beings make assumptions all the time. We do it every day, often without realizing it. Sometimes those assumptions are minor, and sometimes they are significant.

Many times assumptions can be very helpful in our daily life. On occasion they can even save our life.

The problem comes when we let this behavior get out of hand. This can happen a number of way. One possibility is if we always assume the best of people, or we always assume the worst of people. Another is where we make an initial assumption, and it isn't necessary. Not everything is life or death, and not everything demands we fill in gaps with probabilities or statistical likelihoods. This can be compounded further when we fail to follow up and clear up assumptions by doing some actual investigating. Acting in haste can also make it even worse.

That is what I let happen in my post The Way We Met. I started with something simple- the notion that George became more attractive, and that is why the woman had changed her perception of him. But I didn't stop there. I started to make more and more assumptions. And then let those play out, such that I started to feel sympathy for George.

And then I acted in haste. Rather than lay out what the different possibilities were- ranging from George being taken advantage of by an unscrupulous woman, to him being blinded by an old crush and missing the red flags, to him making a reasoned decision that she would be a good choice for him, to *him* taking advantage of *her*– I simply went with what was most likely. [That last bit didn't even occur to me until this post. I would call it unlikely, but I never considered it before now- a significant error.] I expressed sympathy without any real thought of whether it was deserved (or was even directed towards the right person).

Fortunately some of my readers pointed out where I had gone wrong, both in the comments and via other channels. That gave me a chance to realize where I had gone astray. And a chance to try and correct myself. I want to thank them for that.

Now, I still think I was close to the mark in my estimation of the situation (and I must say that I disagree with some of my readers about their estimations). But my analysis was incomplete, and therefore, fundamentally flawed. Flawed on a moral level (I included photos, after all), but also on an analytical level- there was a lot of valuable insight to be made by fully examining the situation. Hopefully my next post (coming soon) will benefit from that.

I am only human. That means I will make mistakes. And I will err. I would like to think that my ego is not so large that I cannot accept it when someone points out that I am wrong. So if you, my readers, feel that I am way off, let me know. Post a comment, or contact me via e-mail and let me know. We may end up still disagreeing, but I won't brush off a respectful pointer to where I might have gone astray.

An Unsettling Evaluation

October 11, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In the past couple of days I have been carrying on a discussion with a reader of mine about my “The Way We Met” series. The principal topic has been the question of “settling.” It was prompted by his observation that a number of the more traditional minded Catholic unmarried Catholic women are in their late 20s and early 30s. [The how and why of that is not the topic of this post.] From his perspective they at least seemed outwardly chaste.

What he was curious about was the effect of their settling versus a woman with a long and/or troubled “history.” Here are some questions he asked:

- As a man, should you care if a woman is settling for you, assuming that she has been chaste?
- Does it even make a difference that she has been chaste?
- How do you find out or realize this is happening?
- What should you consider if you find yourself in this scenario?

Those are his questions, slightly rephrased. And good questions they are, too. I invite my readers to try and answer them to the best of their abilities. At the same time, I would like to keep the conversation focused on this particular topic.

[Note: In a couple of days I intend to create a post in reverse of this- advice for women about men settling. Mayhaps it might be useful for some of my female readers, or women they know.]

Saturday Saints- #118

October 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter K returns, and gives us today's saint. That saint? Saint Kessog:

> **Saint Kessog** was an Irish missionary of the mid-sixth century active in the Lennox area and southern Perthshire. Son of the king of Cashel in Ireland, Kessog is said to have worked miracles, even as a child. He left Ireland and became a missionary bishop in Scotland. Using Monks' Island in Loch Lomond as his headquarters, he evangelized the surrounding area until he was martyred, supposedly at Bandry, where a heap of stones was known as *St Kessog's Cairn*. Kessog was killed in 520 AD.
>
> The St McKessog's church in Luss on the banks of Loch Lomond is named after Kessog and the church contains an effigy of the saint. Kessog is claimed to have brought Christianity to the area around Luss in 510 AD and 1500 years of continuous Christian presence in the area was celebrated in 2010.

A bit more can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures-#119

October 17, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I want to begin today's post with these words by St. Paul:

> [23] "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. [24] Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. [25] Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. [26] For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." [27] If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. [28] (But if some one says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then out of consideration for the man who informed you, and for conscience' sake— [29] I mean his conscience, not yours—do not eat it.) For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples? [30] If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?
>
> [31] So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [32] Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, [33] just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

(1 Cor 10:23-31)

These words seem especially topical as of late. Just because I can do something, or say something, doesn't mean I necessarily should. Beforehand I need to examine whether or not my actions serve to glorify God.

A similar statement from St. Paul can also be found in his Letter to the Romans:

> [13] Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. [14] I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean. [15] If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. [16] So do not let what is good to you be spoken of as evil. [17] For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; [18] he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. [19] Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. [20] Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; [21] it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble. [22] The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. [23] But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for

> whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

(Romans 14:13-23)

Here we can see that what glorifies God is that which builds up our fellow brothers and sisters in the faith. We all stumble, we all fall. That is our nature. But all the same we shouldn't encourage it in others, on the contrary we should do what we can to help them avoid those falls. Sadly, all of this is often easier said than done.

What I think is required is a conscious effort to always be aware of what we are doing, and to always ask what the consequences of our actions will/might be. We can't simply auto-pilot through life. Nor can we take short-cuts or "the easy way out" by doing things in a hurry- so we can claim we didn't have time to reflect. I suspect we always are given enough time by God to make the right decision. The real issues is whether we have the desire to do the right thing. Of course, that sort of is the crux of our faith journey, isn't it?

An Unsettling Evaluation- Part 2

October 19, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I want to thank my readers for their response in my post An Unsettling Evaluation. In my first post, I mentioned that I would create a post for my female readers, or those who knew women who might benefit. That is what this post is for. Here are the questions again, slightly tweaked:

- As a woman, should you care if a man is settling for you, assuming that he has been chaste?
- Does it even make a difference that he has been chaste?
- How do you find out or realize this is happening?
- What should you consider if you find yourself in this scenario?

I invite my readers to try and answer them to the best of their abilities. At the same time, I would like to keep the conversation focused on this particular topic.

One thing to note- I didn't really clarify "Chaste" in my first post. Might be worth exploring a bit in this post and revisiting in that post. After all, virgin doesn't necessarily mean chaste, which is as much of the heart as anything. This is especially topical when you have things like pornography, which can have a significant impact on a married couple's sex life.

Something Else

October 24, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is a Masculine Monday post. Male commenters only, please. Also, somewhat stream of consciousness as well.

Rollo has a new post up titled "The Something Else."

If you want to sum up Rollo's post, it would be in this simple phrase:

> If it wasn't X-Box it would be something else.

The reality of male/female relations these days is driving more and more men to seek out "something else" to occupy their life.

For some it is escapism- merely an attempt to drone out the overwhelming meaninglessness they feel marks their lives.Whether it is porn or video games or something else, they want to blur out reality. There is no drive for something more, something greater. Merely something to distract.

For others it is a genuine desire to find something of meaning and value. To obtain a purpose for life. Some Red Pill sites call this "your mission." As a Catholic, I recognize that the word they are searching for is *vocation*. These men are looking for a calling that they can hold fast to and make their own.

Unfortunately, for many the vocation that most will be called to, marriage, seems mostly out of grasp. And for most probably will be (if they are smart, anyways). The problem, from the Church's perspective, is that there is nothing in place to really help men who find themselves so frustrated. They will instinctively search of that "something" to replace their vocation, but how much is really there for them? Just among Catholics many will not be called to be priests, or monks (in the traditional sense).

It seems to me that the Church needs to adapt to the change in the Marriage Marketplace. There needs to be something for all the young men who will not be able to marry in the years ahead. And probably something as well for the men who find themselves divorced. I'm talking more than some support group. Rather, something more akin to a community, a brotherhood. Something that provides support and doesn't leave all these men discrete individuals adrift in the modern world.

I suppose some sort of urban monastery might be in order. Not a place for contemplatives, but a communal home where everyone is a "roomie" and can uplift and support his fellow men. I invite my readers to offer their thoughts on the matter. All the same, I am sure that *something* is needed to help devout men find that something. Many men are drifting away from the faith, and given the cold shoulder the Church is basically giving them these days, it is hard to blame them. Furthermore, creating a place for men without a home might help secular men who are also adrift in the same ocean.

Men are looking for *something else,* and the Church needs to help them find it.

The Blind Spot

October 28, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My recent post Something Else led to some excellent comments by my readers. Two subjects were raised there that I think should be readdressed in a separate post- this one.

The first is the role of the Church in all of this. Deti left a comment on the subject, and here is part of it:

> Zippy Catholic addressed this a while back, saying that "The Church is not your daddy". The Church's only job is to administer the Sacraments to the faithful and provide for education and training up in the faith. That's it. It's not to help socialize men, provide vocations for them, or help them find wives. So I think you'll have to convince the Zippys of the world that the church should take up the banner of providing outlets to channel what is essentially untapped and unreleased sexual energy. You have to convince folks like Zippy that helping guys do things other than get laid is something the church should and must do.

He then linked to Zippy's post on the subject. I would like to make a couple of points here.

First, when I speak of the Church I don't mean only ordained clergy and the official hierarchy of the Church. I mean the whole body of Christ. Yes, I think the clergy has a role to play in all of this, but they shouldn't have to shoulder the burden alone.

Second, the Church has historically done more than just administer sacraments and teach/train. From the beginning the Church was helping to take care of its members. The first deacons, Stephen the First Martyr among them, were ordained in order for them to help minister to the needs of the faithful. St. Paul was very active in helping ensure charitable relief. At the same time there is quite a difference between providing food to someone on one hand, and ensuring a vocation on the other.

This brings me to the second comment I want to cover, by feeriker:

> This is a blind spot that the Body of Christ on Earth is never going to even acknowledge, let alone address. To do so would lead it to some very unpleasant places and demand some serious introspection, which in turn would lead to an obvious call to re-evaluate doctrine and practice in a variety of areas. Not gonna happen, or if it finally ever does when all [e]lse fails, it will be too little too late.

I disagree with feeriker here on a couple of points.

First, while the Church might not be acknowledging it now, it did in the past. Many of the Fathers of the Church argued *against* the criminalization of prostitution. While they called it out for the sin that it was, they recognized at the same time the problem of untapped male sexual energy. They knew the problems that would result if men didn't have an outlet. Hence why prostitution was legal in so many Christian nations (until Progressivism

had its way).

Second, the problem right now is not doctrine (at least for Catholic and Orthodox Christians). Rather, the problem is practice. What should be taught is not taught, and what should be encouraged is not encouraged, and what should be exhorted is not exhorted.

Now, I agree with feeriker that some serious introspection is required. And sadly, I agree with him that when it does happen, it will be mostly in the too little, too late scenario. Which I would argue is today.

Now, to try and put this all together…

It is not the responsibility of Church leadership to ensure that everyone is able to fulfill their vocation. Priests aren't matchmakers (and neither are Deacons or Bishops). That is not only impossible to guarantee, but also outside its sphere of responsibility. Instead of being charged with ensuring "fair outcomes", the Church hierarchy and clergy is charged with teaching and exhorting those things which are necessary to give everyone a fighting chance. Some examples:

- Teach and exhort the importance of young marriage
- Teach and exhort the importance of parents and family helping their children/relatives marry
- Teach and exhort an anti-materialist/consumerist mindset
- Teach and exhort parishioners that helping their brothers and sister in Christ to marry is charitable

The laity isn't responsible for fair outcomes either. However, they are responsible for teaching their children these things as well. In addition, while not a duty to specifically help their fellow Christians marry, it is charitable to help them find their vocation, and thus the right thing to do. This can and should go beyond helping individual Christians to include group and community actions as well.

I should note that plenty of Churches have various ministries which help those in need. There is no reason why lay members of the Church cannot help minister in this area as well. Perhaps not directly as a matchmaker, but in other, more indirect ways. And of course, even if there are matchmakers, they will be limited by the pool of those seeking marriage. So other avenues need to be available. Reader MK mentioned lay orders, and I think that is one path that has a lot of merit.

In summary, there is a lot that can and should be done in this regard. Clergy and laity all have a role to play. Everyone can contribute. But such contributions aren't taking place and that is a tragedy which will continue to harm many faithful men for a long time to come.

The Necessity Of A Secret Identity

November 3, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Post full title: Superheroes And The Necessity Of A Secret Identity From A “Red Pill” Perspective

[I enjoyed my last comic book post so much I decided to write another one. It should go without saying that this might be less than entirely serious.]

Not too long ago I had a conversation with a friend wherein the subject of superheroes came up. One of the things we talked about, that was interesting from a sociological perspective, was the effect that the presence of superheroes would have on general society. But what really got me thinking was to wonder what it would be like to actually be a superhero.

Oh, I’m not talking about what it would feel like to be able to fly, or have super strength or speed. No, what I was wondering about was the effects that superpowers and a superhero persona would have on someone’s everyday life. Would an everyday life be even possible? Maybe, but it might not be ordinary. Guess it depends.

There is one area of life, however, that would be dramatically affected by one’s superpowers and super-heroic persona: romance.

As I was pondering the impacts that being a super would have on one’s love life, I came to the realization that any hero, male or female, who wanted to marry would need a secret identity. I would go so far as to argue that in today’s climate a secret identity would be a necessity, even.

Why? Well, lets examine it for men and for women separately.

For men who don’t want to marry, and who otherwise don’t care about the possible benefits of a secret identity, then being an “open” Super would be quite a perk. The PSALM/LAMPS boost that a man would enjoy from being a super would have to be enormous. The Status alone would push you into the very top tier of men (unless powers were super-plentiful, I suppose). Then throw in a likely boost to Masculine Power from the confidence of super-powers, and possible athleticism boosts, and yeah… you are set. Oh, and you could probably make bank with endorsements, too. You would be the ultimate player.

But what if you want to marry? Well, here is the problem- that huge PSALM/LAMPS boost from being an open Super would make you a huge target for gold diggers and ultra-hypergamous women. [I imagine that female Supers would fall here.] Sure you might be able to get a 10… but will she stick by you? The thing about Supers is that their Status would probably fluctuate. Just like sports teams, some Supers might be seen as more “hot” at one time than at another. If your “stock” as a Super goes down then your attractiveness will drop (and your bankroll as well re: endorsements). This risks your wife leaving you if she is ultra-hypergamous and thinks she can find greener/fresher pastures

elsewhere.

Besides all of the regular problems with divorce, any Supervillain foes you might have could possibly use that ex-wife as a source of info. She might blab all kinds of secrets that you don't want out. Whether that is any kind of weakness (like kryponite), or merely something embarrassing, it could really hinder your heroics. Even if she didn't leave you, she would be an obvious target for seduction. And lets face it, if anyone could pull off "Game", it would be a Supervillain.

Heck, even if she doesn't leave you, you might still need to constantly "game" her if she is "needy." Since super-heroism is probably pretty demanding all the time, is that really worth it? I would say not.

Given all of this, a secret identity makes perfect sense. Setting aside all the other benefits, it means you can woo women without the danger they are marrying you just because of your powers. It also makes her less likely to blab your secrets, and reduces the potential of her being targeted for seduction by a foe.

Now on to women…

As a female Super, you would have a number of things to worry about as well. One thing worth mentioning is that the status of being a Super won't be a boost to your attractiveness like it is with men. Since female attractiveness/beauty is nearly all physical, unless your powers affect your looks, it is a wash- at best.

The first issue that I can think of is that some male Super would marry you just to have super-powered children. That assumes it is genetic, of course. But if it is, then you risk being used as a breeder. Maybe it isn't so malevolent, but still, there is always the possibility that he marries you just to marry a female super. Perhaps it is a family dynasty thing, like race can be.

Another issue is the concern over being perceived as an Alpha Widow. An open female Super who dated male Supers in the past will have trouble with non-Super men. And I mean trouble aside from her own hypergamy. The problem is that non-Super men might worry (reasonably, I might add) that they would have trouble competing with a male Super, either in terms of memories or future faithfulness.

A secret identity would protect against both problems. Men looking for genetic mothers of super-powered kids would skip you by. At the same time female Supers would be mostly insulated from the association of uber-Alphaness with male Supers and being able to compete.

I am sure there are more reasons to use a secret identity for both male and female super-heroes, so if my readers think of any feel free to add them below. Also feel free to critique my thoughts to your heart's desire.

Saturday Saints- #119

November 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a while since a post in this series. Today we resume where we left off, the letter L. Thus, our saint for today is Saint Lawrence of Rome:

> St Lawrence is thought to have been born in Huesca, a town in the region of Aragon that was once part of the Roman province of Hispania Tarraconensis. The martyrs Orentius and Patientia are traditionally held to have been his parents.
>
> He encountered the future Pope Sixtus II, who was of Greek origin, one of the most famous and highly esteemed teachers in Caesaraugusta (today Zaragoza). Eventually, both left Spain for Rome. When Sixtus became the Pope in 257, he ordained St Lawrence as a deacon, and though Lawrence was still young appointed him first among the seven deacons who served in the patriarchal church. He is therefore called "archdeacon of Rome", a position of great trust that included the care of the treasury and riches of the church and the distribution of alms among the poor.
>
> St Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, notes that Roman authorities had established a norm according to which all Christians who had been denounced must be executed and their goods confiscated by the Imperial treasury. At the beginning of August 258, the Emperor Valerian issued an edict that all bishops, priests, and deacons should immediately be put to death. Sixtus was captured on 6 August 258, at the cemetery of St Callixtus while celebrating the liturgy and executed forthwith.
>
> After the death of Sixtus, the prefect of Rome demanded that St Lawrence turn over the riches of the Church. Saint Ambrose is the earliest source for the tale that St Lawrence asked for three days to gather together the wealth. He worked swiftly to distribute as much Church property to the poor as possible, so as to prevent its being seized by the prefect. On the third day, at the head of a small delegation, he presented himself to the prefect, and when ordered to give up the treasures of the Church he presented the poor, the crippled, the blind and the suffering, and said these were the true treasures of the Church.[5] One account records him declaring to the prefect, "The Church is truly rich, far richer than your emperor." This act of defiance led directly to his martyrdom and can be compared to the parallel Roman tale of the jewels of Cornelia.
>
> On 10 August, St Lawrence, the last of the seven deacons, suffered a martyr's death.

More can be found at his wiki, located here.


SAINT
LAWRENCE
DEACON
MARTYR

Money Matters

November 8, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In his most recent post, Blue Pill Alphas, Rollo asks the following question:

> But does that make a capacity for provisioning inherently a Beta trait?

Before I try and answer that, here is the surrounding text for context:

> While I do concur with the assessment about women's exaggerated sense of entitlement, I would also argue that this difficulty is a result of women's prioritizing long-term security (emotional and provisional) as part of their sexual strategy reprioritizations that come in the wake of their *Epiphany Phase*. Ergo, this would explain the ease in gaming women pre and post *Epiphany Phase*. Provisioning and long term security are low sexual priorities for these demographics of women.
>
> But does that make a capacity for provisioning inherently a Beta trait? I think it's easy to misconstrue that capacity as Beta, because provisioning is a high-value attribute that is expected from Beta men according to their own sexual strategy. Provisioning is associated with Betas because it is integral to their sexual strategy, and also part of the Blue Pill plan for which women are hoping to fulfill at a point in their maturity when they are subjectively at their most necessitous.
>
> What do you think?

It is easy to presume that provisioning, or a man's access to resource/Money is something that is purely "Beta." After all, a steady job hardly moves the needle when it comes to sexual attraction from a woman. However, this does not mean that Money/resources mean nothing.

In my page "What do Women Find Attractive in Men?" I lay out what attributes women look out for when it comes to male sexual attractiveness. Some snippets:

> While visual features do play a part, and other physical features have their role as well, there are other things which can make him attractive to women. It is well established throughout history that money is something which women find attractive in men, along with that undefinable characteristic known as charisma, and women have long been known to be drawn to men of high station. When all of this is analyzed in the context of female behavior like hypergamy, it is possible to discern the triggers for male attractiveness to women, and categorize them based on their nature. There are three principal categories under which male attractiveness is analyzed: Appearance, Personality, and Externalities, or APE for short. Under these three categories are five more specific subcategories which contain the sets of attributes which determine male attractiveness: Looks, Athleticism, Money, Power, and Status, or LAMPS for short.

Incidentally, you will see this model sometimes called the LAMPS or PSALM model (the reason for which I explain next).

> There is no universal female measure of what makes a man attractive. Some women are more attracted to one attribute over the other, just as men are attracted to different women in varying degrees. Each woman has her own set of preferences, so there is no single standard. As a mental exercise, one can view these as a point system, where a man has a certain value from 1 through 10 in each LAMPS subcategory. Then they are added together some sort of weighted average is applied. Theoretically, as long as you have enough in certain areas, it can make up for deficiencies in others. However, based on personal observations, anecdotes and the vast amount of empirical research provided by the PUA community, it is clear that certain attributes/subcategories tend to be more important than others for most women. In general the (not universal) order of importance:
>
> 1) Power- Clearly the most important set of attributes, well above the others. Charisma is king.
>
> 2) Status- Also extremely important, plays a significant role in interacting with female hypergamy.
>
> 3) Athleticism- Of middling importance, perhaps because resources are plentiful, but still something which women like in men.
>
> 4) Looks- With the exception of height, this set of attributes provides little bang for your buck; it might get you initial attention but won't keep it for you.
>
> 5) Money- Great wealth is required for this attribute to be meaningful, likely a product of a resource-rich culture where women can easily provide for themselves.

Money comes last in importance, and let me repeat again what I just said: *Great wealth is required for this attribute to be meaningful, likely a product of a resource-rich culture where women can easily provide for themselves.*

We live in an age where material comfort is the norm. The overwhelming majority of Western women have no concept of what it is to "do without." They can support themselves, or they can rely on the state (i.e., other anonymous men) to support them. Thus, it takes a *lot* of Money/resources for this particular attribute to move the needle re: sexual attraction. I would argue that 6 figures isn't enough, not any more. Now it takes millions, at least.

With that in mind, we should also remember that Money/resources plays into those Desirable traits that women want as well. Since "desire" and sexual attraction are not the same, the fact that Money is also a desirable trait only really matters when women are looking for desirable traits in the first place. And as Rollo and others (myself included) have explained elsewhere, most women in the West care about them the most while in their *Epiphany phase*.

Hence, it just seems like Money or provisioning is a “Beta” trait. Rather, it is a low priority PSALM/LAMPS trait that rarely affects a man’s sexual attractiveness. After all, most men aren’t millionaires. And those who are usually have other traits going for them, blurring the lines somewhat.

Handling The Truth

November 12, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In his most recent post, Deep Strength discusses the differences between Kindness and Niceness. I find no disagreement with his explanation of both:

> Kindness, of course, is a fruit of the Spirit, whereas niceness is concerned meeting a need while placating feelings.

Where I disagree is his view on how Truth and Kindness interact, as least so far as where women are concerned. As he explains it:

> Women, however, tend to need more flavoring with their food. Food is Truth. Is the essence and meat of the subject. However, Truth (or meat) by itself tends to be very unpalatable to women. Thus, they need flavoring with food to make it more palatable. This is where grace comes in.

An example he uses of this in practice is this:

> If a woman/wife asks if something makes her look fat and she is then…
>
> - the Nice answer is no, but that is a lie.
> - the Truthful answer is yes, but it is generally not graceful.
> - a Kind answer may be to decline to answer or a sarcastic answer, as a Truthful answer may not be palatable to the ears.

To begin with, I don't see how there is really any flavoring here. To flavor something is to add something extra to make it more palatable, right? Except there is none of that going on here. Instead, the Kind answer contains no Truth, and instead dances around it. Perhaps this is simply a bad analogy, or perhaps I am missing the point. But I don't see where this supports the argument advanced by DS.

But setting that example aside, I question whether anything but the Truth is kind. One of the major analogies used in the 'sphere is the Hamster- that invisible rodent ever spinning on a wheel of rationalization inside the brain. The Hamster churns out rationalization after rationalization to do just what DS is talking about here- making things more palatable.

It seems to me that what he proposes is dangerous. Mixing up the Truth with something else just feeds the female Hamster. It gives women more of an opportunity to rationalize things. This makes it more likely for the Truth to be lost in whatever mental machinations are necessary to make the woman feel better about the situation.

Now, I can agree that *how* one tells the Truth to women should be different to men. Perhaps different words, perhaps a different tone is needed. But the Truth stands on its

own, and should so stand. Mixing it up with anything else… well, let us keep in mind these words of Saint Paul:

> [5] For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness. [6] For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love. [7] You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? [8] This persuasion is not from him who called you. [9] A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

(Galatians 5:5-9)

The danger is that adding something to the Truth is like leaven- it causes the whole lump to rise. In this context, it means that a little leaven changes something that was True into something else entirely.

Also, part of me questions the entire premise that women can't handle the unvarnished Truth. I am curious if there is any Scriptural support for this notion. Perhaps 1 Peter 3 and the "weaker vessel" analogy, but that seems like quite a stretch. Frankly, I think Deep Strength is giving women less credit than they deserve. I am curious what my readers, male and female alike, have to say on the matter….

In Service Of The Truth

November 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is not so much a continuation of my last post but rather a further exploration of the nexus of Truth and the differences between men and women. I want to start it with a small story:

Some time ago I was eating at a restaurant and overheard a couple of women speaking about their religious views. I wasn't eavesdropping, they were just that loud (I am sure my readers know the type). One of them explained that she was Catholic, and had been for a number of years. When she was quizzed on that by the other woman, the first one explained that she was familiar with other Christian sects. In fact she had "tried" several out. And what she had found was that she enjoyed the Catholic liturgy (the new Roman one, anyways) the best.

As if anticipating something the second woman might say, she went on. She said that she "knew" that other people could find God their own way. It was just that, for her, the Catholic liturgy was the best way to "experience God."

What fascinated me was that there was absolutely no mention during this conversation of the word "Truth." It never came up, not even once. It was all about "the experience." In other words, how a particular liturgical experience made either woman *feel*.

Thinking it over, I wondered if that was the primary motivator in a woman's religious preference- the desire for something that *felt* good or right. Based on my own observations, I am inclined to think that many, if not most women, operate this way. Mind you, I know that not all do- I personally know women whose religious conviction was based on a quest for Truth, and not simply feels. Yet I am fairly certain they are the minority.

At the same time I wonder about men. I am sure that *some* men operate this way too. But I am not convinced that as many men do it as women. I think that men are more likely to base their religious preference based on what they view as True, and not merely something that will make them feel good.

[Incidentally, given the overall greater number of women in Church, I wonder if the percentage of overall truth seekers might be closer than it appears.]

All the same, I am curious what my reader's thoughts are on the matter. So feel free to contribute your thoughts on the matter. Tell me where I am right… or wrong.

Saturday Saints- #120

November 19, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our letter for today is the letter “M.” So we have as our saint, Margaret of Hungary:

> **Saint Margaret**, O.P. (January 27, 1242 – January 18, 1271) was a Dominican nun and the daughter of King Béla IV of Hungary and Maria Laskarina. She was the younger sister of St. Kinga of Poland (Kunegunda) and the Blessed Yolanda of Poland and, through her father, the niece of the famed Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.
>
> …
>
> The four-year-old Margaret was entrusted by her parents to the Dominican monastery at Veszprém in 1245. Six years later she was transferred to the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin founded by her parents on Nyulak Szigete (Rabbit Island) near Buda (today Margaret Island, named after her, and a part of Budapest; the ruins of the monastery can still be seen). She spent the rest of her life there, dedicating herself to religion and opposing all attempts of her father to arrange a political marriage for her with King Ottokar II of Bohemia. She appears to have taken solemn vows when she was eighteen years old. In marked contrast to the customs of her Order, she received the Consecration of Virgins along with some other royals to prevent further attempts on the part of her father to have her vows dispensed by the Pope for marriage.

More can be found out about her and her life at her wiki, located here.



Set In Stone

November 23, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I came across this this story recently, and thought that some of my readers might find it fascinating:

> The world's earliest alphabet, inscribed on stone slabs at several Egyptian sites, was an early form of Hebrew, a controversial new analysis concludes.
>
> Israelites living in Egypt transformed that civilization's hieroglyphics into Hebrew 1.0 more than 3,800 years ago, at a time when the Old Testament describes Jews living in Egypt, says archaeologist and epigrapher Douglas Petrovich of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada. Hebrew speakers seeking a way to communicate in writing with other Egyptian Jews simplified the pharaohs' complex hieroglyphic writing system into 22 alphabetic letters, Petrovich proposed on November 17 at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
>
> "There is a connection between ancient Egyptian texts and preserved alphabets," Petrovich said.
>
> That's a highly controversial contention among scholars of the Bible and ancient civilizations. Many argue, despite what's recounted in the Old Testament, that Israelites did not live in Egypt as long ago as proposed by Petrovich. Biblical dates for the Israelites' stay in Egypt are unreliable, they say.

You can read the rest at the link.

Something like this could certainly be a publicity stunt. The fact that the archeologist making the claim is writing a book would give that notion some support. At the same time, however, I am also highly suspicious of most modern scholars. I don't imagine I am alone in thinking that many of them would go to great lengths to come to a conclusion that just coincidentally argued against biblical timelines.

Happy Thanksgiving

November 24, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I hope all my American readers have a Happy Thanksgiving.

> I give thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
> before the gods I sing thy praise;
> [2] I bow down toward thy holy temple
> and give thanks to thy name for thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness;
> for thou hast exalted above everything
> thy name and thy word.
> [3] On the day I called, thou didst answer me,
> my strength of soul thou didst increase.

> [4] All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord,
> for they have heard the words of thy mouth;
> [5] and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
> for great is the glory of the Lord.
> [6] For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;
> but the haughty he knows from afar.

> [7] Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
> thou dost preserve my life;
> thou dost stretch out thy hand against the wrath of my enemies,
> and thy right hand delivers me.
> [8] The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
> thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever.
> Do not forsake the work of thy hands.

(Psalm 138)

> Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!
> [2] Serve the Lord with gladness!
> Come into his presence with singing!

> [3] Know that the Lord is God!
> It is he that made us, and we are his;
> we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
> [4] Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
> and his courts with praise!
> Give thanks to him, bless his name!

> [5] For the Lord is good;

> his steadfast love endures for ever,
> and his faithfulness to all generations.

(Psalm 100)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #120

November 28, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today marks the beginning of the Advent season. In light of that I have been reading over scripture which foretells the coming of the Messiah. I start with the word of the Lord through Nathan the prophet:

> [8] Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel; [9] and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. [10] And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, [11] from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. [12] When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. [13] He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. [14] I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; [15] but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. [16] And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'" [17] In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

(2 Samuel 7:8-17)

There are several things of note in this passage. The first deals with the promise that the people of Israel will not be disturbed. We of course know that much of Israel was later disturbed- whether carried off into Assyria or Babylon many were displaced. The whole region was in fact never truly settled afterwards. There was perhaps a small period during the Maccabean revolt, but that is it. In fact it is unsettled even to this day.

All of which leads me to two possibilities: that time has not yet come, or that the "place" mentioned here for the people Israel is not the area of land we know as "Israel." The first would perhaps be the traditional Jewish interpretation. Certainly it would seem to have been the understanding of the Jews during the time of Jesus. However, I think, based especially on what Jesus tells us in the New Testament, that God here was speaking of the age to come. The age when we would see a new heaven and new earth. This the prophet Isaiah speaks centuries later:

> [17] "For behold, I create new heavens

> and a new earth;
> and the former things shall not be remembered
> or come into mind.
> [18] But be glad and rejoice for ever
> in that which I create;
> for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
> and her people a joy.
> [19] I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
> and be glad in my people;
> no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
> and the cry of distress.
> [20] No more shall there be in it
> an infant that lives but a few days,
> or an old man who does not fill out his days,
> for the child shall die a hundred years old,
> and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.
> [21] They shall build houses and inhabit them;
> they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
> [22] They shall not build and another inhabit;
> they shall not plant and another eat;
> for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
> and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
> [23] They shall not labor in vain,
> or bear children for calamity;[c]
> for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,
> and their children with them.
> [24] Before they call I will answer,
> while they are yet speaking I will hear.
> [25] The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
> the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
> and dust shall be the serpent's food.
> They shall not hurt or destroy
> in all my holy mountain,
> says the Lord."

(Isaiah 65:17-25)

Such a time has not yet come. It will not come until the end of the age, the Day of Judgement. Isaiah spoke of it, and John the Evangelist was granted a vision of it towards the end of his life:

> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned

> for her husband; [3] and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; [4] he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.”
>
> [5] And he who sat upon the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” [6] And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life. [7] He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. [8] But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

(Revelations 21:1-8)

Notice the symmetry there? To both David and John we have reference to a son of God. For that son will inherit, and will be a conqueror, like his father David. Yet he will also be the son of God, and call God (and not simply David) his father. The promise to David is still in awaiting final fulfillment. It is for this day that we, all of us, await. This, ultimately, is the purpose of the Advent season- to prepare us for the coming of the Lord.

Lowest Common Denominator

November 30, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In today's post I want to examine the subject of who "keeps" a nation's morality. Given the state of moral decay in the West at the moment, and the overall mess that is the marriage market, I think it a topic worth exploring. Since it is a fairly broad subject, I will give considerable latitude to my readers in their responses. But at the same time I would ask that folks use common sense, and not abuse this privilege.

A number of figures have argued, and argue still, that women are the one's who set the "moral tone" of a civilization. One such figure was Fulton Sheen, who said in Life is Worth Living:

> "To a great extent the level of any civilization is the level of its womanhood. When a man loves a woman, he has to become worthy of her. The higher her virtue, the more noble her character, the more devoted she is to truth, justice, goodness, the more a man has to aspire to be worthy of her. The history of civilization could actually be written in terms of the level of its women."

Others, including I think some around the 'sphere, have argued the opposite. I do not have any quotes to provide at the moment, as I think this position is argued more by the commentariat than by most bloggers. But I know I've seen it.

Before I go on, I should clarify something. I am not examining the subject of which sex, male or female, is more "naturally virtuous." Or which is more naturally civilized, or a greater fit for civilization, or some such. Rather, I am examining which sex sets the bar of morality in a civilization. In math terms, which is the lowest common denominator?

I do not think that Rev. Fulton Sheen was expressing above a belief that women are more naturally virtuous than men. Rather, he was stating that when women in a society are moral, it is likely that the men will be too. Conversely, the implication is that when men in a society are moral, women do not necessarily follow suite. [The argument that the men in a society can only be moral when the women are, and so the reverse stated before isn't true, is a different argument altogether.]

As I see it, there are four mutually exclusive alternatives here: women set the bar, men set the bar, neither sets the bar (they are both independent of each other) or both set the bar (there is a casual link between the two in terms of moral level). I invite my readers to offer their thoughts on which they think is true.

Also, I think there can be a number of different possible factors which might be responsible for any bar setting that might occur. They are, in no particular order:

- Inspiration- The moral character of one sex inspires the other to live a more virtuous life (perhaps in order to be "worthy" of them).
- Reactivity- One sex might be more inclined by nature to mirror the moral character of the other sex (this is more instinctive than a deliberate choice)

- Responsiveness to Leadership- One sex might be more inclined by nature to respond to moral leaders and their directions on the moral life. [If one sex is less responsive than the other it is all the more essential that it be trained/raised properly when young.]

I am sure there are more, but those are the ones that I could think of in short order.

While I am one who loves intellectual discovery for no other purpose than curiosity, something else is driving me here. If one sex is naturally more influential when it comes to the moral character of a people, than it stands to reason that more care needs to be exerted raising that sex while young. After all, a misallocation of time (that most precious of resources) could have lasting effects on the virtue of a civilization. And even if time is spent, it if is spent poorly it will still have deleterious effects. Perhaps even leading to collapse, in the end.

And with those dark thoughts I invite my readers to step forward and voice their own.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #121

December 5, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We are now on the second week of Advent. With that in mind, I've chosen some passages linked to that theme. I begin with the opening of Matthew's gospel:

> The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

(Matthew 1:1)

And by opening, I mean that. Just the first verse. But a huge amount is contained in that single verse. Let us unpack it.

First, we have the name of our savior: Jesus Christ. That is how His name is translated in the Greek. If we were to say His hebrew name, it would be Joshua the Messiah. Now, that is just His Hebrew name. That doesn't actually translate what His name actually means.

Joshua is a familiar name to those fluent in the Old Testament. He was the Israelite who took over after Moses, and actually led the People of God into the Promised Land. A translation of Joshua into English would be "God Saves."

Messiah is another important and old Hebrew word. It means "anointed." To anoint someone was to mark them with oil as special, as set apart. In the Old Testament we see two different figures who were anointed, the King and the Priest. Some examples of this from scripture:

> [10] And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." [11] And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here." [12] And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." [13] Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

(1 Samuel 10-13)

> [12] Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and shall wash them with water, [13] and put upon Aaron the holy garments, and you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. [14] You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, [15] and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests: and their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

(Exodus 40:12-15)

I mention both of these because this separation was not how it was supposed to be.

Originally the Patriarch, the head of the family of the People Israel, was both King and Priest. Both roles belonged to him as father. However, with the Exodus the roles are split- the kingship is retained by Judah, but the priesthood went to Aaron's line, of the House of Levi. In Jesus we see them returned to their proper place together, hand in hand. Just as it was before in his ancestor, Melchizedek.

Then Matthew mentions that He is "the son of David." This is important because it is a fulfillment of a promise by God to David:

> [12] When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. [13] He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. [14] I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; [15] but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. [16] And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'"

(2 Samuel 7:12-16)

It is important to remember that as the first Gospel Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience. By opening with this statement that Jesus was the Son of David, he is informing the reader that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise I just quoted above. Jesus is the Son that was promised to David, the Son whose throne would be established forever.

Then we have the mention that Jesus was the Son of Abraham. Here again Matthew was informing the reader that yet another promise was being fulfilled. This was a promise of God to Abraham:

> [15] And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, [16] and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, [17] I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, [18] and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

(Genesis 22:15-18)

Jesus was the blessing to all the nations that was promised. And the gates of the enemies were the gates of the Underworld, of Sheol, which Jesus smashed after his Crucifixion. And by possessing them, he freed from the pit those righteous dead which had awaited the Lord's Day.

Matthew is telling his Jewish readers all of that, and in a single sentence. For those who don't really know the Old Testament, it seems like a mere prologue. But for those who

truly know it, Matthew was actually giving away the whole book there- this book is about The Anointed of God, King and Priest in the order of Melchizedek, God Saves, who established a kingdom and throne forever and thereby blessed all nations and peoples by smashing the gates of Death.

A Validation And A Warning

December 7, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Vox at Alpha Game tipped me to this article a few days ago. I couldn't resist addressing it myself. He quoted the money part, and so too will I:

> *My husband has a life that many people who are "rule-followers," like me, would envy. When I first met him, it was undeniably a passionate love affair. I'd never dated anyone or known anyone like him before. He took risks, lived all over the world, had many passions and has been a loyal friend. He's seven years older than I am, and we met at work, where his power and seniority at the office was insanely attractive to me. The year we got married, he wanted to take a risk and go back to graduate school to find his dream job. I trusted his judgment, and between his savings, my new job, and some sacrifices, we comfortably lived while he went through two years of graduate school. My husband now has his dream job. I'm proud of everything he's accomplished and what we were able to do together to make it happen.*
>
> *Over the past four years, my career has skyrocketed in ways I never could have dreamed of. I've broken through the hypothetical glass ceiling in a male-dominated industry. I am a huge believer in women in the workplace and always will be. If they become the breadwinners in marriage, more power to them.*
>
> *Now herein lies my problem — I became the breadwinner in an extreme way. I committed to supporting us for two years, but we're going on four now, and it will likely be five. Our income divide is so extreme that I pay for 90 percent of our living expenses. What I've found is I can't live this girl-power lifestyle that I believe in.*
>
> *I'm very close to a breaking point, and I never stop thinking about leaving my husband. And no matter what other reasons I come up with, it always leads back to money, power and sexual attraction.*

This sordid tale is yet further validation of my LAMPS/PSALM model. In particular we see the role of Money/Status (they are often linked) in affecting sexual attraction. The woman here was drawn to her husband because his M and S values were high, both in general and compared to hers. However, the shift in their job situations has altered the equation dramatically. Now he makes much less than her. And as a result she finds him much less sexually attractive.

Ouch time.

I feel sorry for this guy. He bought into modern egalitarian thinking, and believed that his wife really would be ok with this change in breadwinner status. And he is probably going to lose his marriage as a result.

This brings us to the lesson…

Men: marry down, not up.

Be wary about letting your woman take your place as breadwinner. Perhaps she won't be as bad as this woman here, but it will *not* be easy on her. Her nature inclines itself against this model, and you don't want her to fight that throughout your marriage. Even if it lasts, it is a recipe for misery.

That isn't to say it cannot be done, but I caution men all the same against it.

> There is wrath and impudence and great disgrace
> when a wife supports her husband.

(Sirach 25:22)

Edit 1: This post went live before I had intended. So instead of trying to integrate additional thoughts above, I will make them here instead. This will likely involve several edits over time.

I mention above that men should marry down, not up. That is of course the first step. The second step, just as important, is to stay above her in social rank. That dream job you've always wanted? Well, if it lowers you in relation to her… you just might want to give it a pass. Sure she may *say* she is ok with it, but what her conscious and unconscious minds want can be two entirely different things.

Of course, life has a way of messing with that plan. And if you do find yourself on the down angle, you will have to adapt. Hypergamy is a trait all women share, but some seem to keep that more under control than others. If you do decide to marry in this age (a risky proposition to be sure), keep an eye out for that kind of woman. Again, it isn't necessarily the end of the world if you find yourself outside breadwinner status. But it does mean you will need to step up the rest of your game in maintaining sexual attraction.

Edit 2: Something else which I hinted at above was that this woman was especially affected by Status and Money. It is worth remembering that no two women are exactly alike. While each is influenced by one of the LAMPS/PSALM factors, the prominence of each factor will vary from woman to woman.

What I am curious about is how one should go about using this info. Should some women be avoided based on their preferences? Should a man try and figure out which factors influence a woman most? How do you even go about figuring it out? Food for thought.

Like A Boss

December 13, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have a fair number of pet peeves, and long-time readers will be aware of a few of them. I want to talk about one in particular today.

You see, I really hate it when a married guy calls his wife “the boss.”

I mean, I might be able to tolerate it if it was said sarcastically. Perhaps as some sort of flirtation/foreplay thing.

But I cannot say that I’ve ever heard it used in that way. The only way I’ve ever heard used is seriously, or in that half-joking way which deep down is tinged with fear.

Frankly, its pathetic.

Unmanly.

Men, your wife is not your “boss.” She is your helpmate. God is your boss. Not your wife. Remember what happened last time a man decided to let his wife play boss? Yeah… didn’t end so well, did it?

So in all seriousness, stop calling your wife your boss. Just stop. Everyone will be better off for it.

And that brings this PSA to an end.

Christmas Time Management

December 16, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My Christmas season this year is quite busy. As a result, my posting will likely be light. I hope to have a post up tomorrow, but otherwise one post a week is to be expected until after New Years.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #122

December 18, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The Nativity is nearly upon us. There are two passages in particular I want to cover with this post. The first is the genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew:

> [2] Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, [3] and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, [4] and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, [5] and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, [6] and Jesse the father of King David.
>
> And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, [7] and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, [8] and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, [9] and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, [10] and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, [11] and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.
>
> [12] And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, [13] and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, [14] and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, [15] and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, [16] and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

(Matthew 1:2-16)

What we can see from this list is there was a mix of really good, righteous people (flawed as they were), and some truly wicked people here. Some were great, and others not so much. All of which is meant to show that God can accomplish His will despite any seeming human obstacles. He can work greatness out of nothing, and can find a way to turn something evil towards the service of good. No human evil can overcome the Will of God, or interfere with His plans. That is one lesson, among many, to draw from the genealogy of Jesus.

Then we have the beginning of the Gospel of John:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being [4] in

> him was life, and the life was the light of all people. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
>
> [6] There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. [8] He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. [9] The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
>
> [10] He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. [11] He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. [12] But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.
>
> [14] And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:1-15)

There is a strong message of hope here- the darkness cannot overcome the Light. That should be of great comfort to us in the days ahead. I imagine that much darkness lies yet before us in the times to come. Whatever happens, the darkness cannot truly win.

At the same time there is a sadness. For it was through Jesus, the Word, that all things came to be. And yet that same creation did not know him. We human beings had become (and still are) so estranged from our Creator that we no longer recognize Him. Much of our work as Christians is to change this- to no longer be estranged from God but establish a lasting relationship with Him. The Nativity of our Lord was a chance for us to really do that- an opportunity to overcome the consequences of the Fall. Let us not waste the precious gift that was offered to us, and to instead accept Him full into our lives. For if we do so, then we shall become children of God.

Not Worth It

December 20, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Men Only

Exposure to the “Red Pill” can have a variety of emotional consequences for men- some short term, and some long term.

At first it is usually a slew of negative emotions, including but not limited to: anger, sadness, disgust and despair. Pretty much every one of my male readers, with an exception or two, will be familiar with this.

For some men those emotions will subside over time, and in time the “Red Pill” can pave the way for positive emotions. Sometimes this is because of the knowledge and understanding acquired. Other times it is because men use that knowledge to try and improve their life somehow. And for others it is simply a process of matured acceptance of the way things are.

However, for a not insubstantial number of men there will be some lingering negative emotions. Sometimes the result is truly ugly- I am sure all of us have seen a man who couldn’t handle the truth, and became an emotional wreck as a result. However, not everyone tailspins like that. Sometimes those lingering emotions are flickers most of the time, with the occasional flare-up.

That has been me at times. While I am better now, I recognize that it is very easy, if you aren’t careful, to let negative emotions and thought processes take over. It hasn’t been good for me and won’t be good for any man. Dark Jedi can talk all they want about how anger and hate give you strength, but the truth is that it is a temporary strength. And in the long run, especially with the latter emotion, it will consume you and weaken you.

All of which is my long-winded way of advising my male readers that it isn’t worth it to hold onto these negative emotions. Furthermore, women aren’t worth becoming permanently hateful or angry or bitter or anything of the like. If you want to guarantee that they will ruin your life than there are few better ways than for them to dictate, albeit indirectly, your emotions.

I understand how difficult what I am saying is to actually achieve. Trust me when I say it is awfully easy to hold women *en masse* in contempt. It is really easy to despise your family and elders who let you down in life- sometimes massively. But it just isn’t worth it. Especially when you consider the long term consequences to your soul.

Gentleman, don’t let them drag you down to hell. They really, truly aren’t worth it. If you believe that many are destined to end that way, all the more reason to not join them. Seek peace in your life- you won’t find it otherwise. Letting negative emotions (or emotions in general, but that is a matter for another time) guide your life is a sure-fire way of damning yourself. And if that happens, guess what? They win. Don’t let them win.

Merry Christmas!

December 25, 2016 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Christ is Born!

Glorify him!

I shall be sparse around these parts until the New Year, so I want to wish all my readers a Merry Christmas. May you find joy however you can.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #123

January 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A year has come and gone. In many respects 2016 did not go as I had hoped. But it is past now, and nothing can be done about it. Instead I turn towards the future, and hope that it fares better. When times seem dark it is important to remember that God is always with us, and that he can turn any situation around. King David understood this quite well:

> [1] I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
> and did not let my foes rejoice over me.
> [2] O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
> and you have healed me.
> [3] O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
> restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

> [4] Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
> and give thanks to his holy name.
> [5] For his anger is but for a moment;
> his favor is for a lifetime.
> Weeping may linger for the night,
> but joy comes with the morning.
> [6] As for me, I said in my prosperity,
> "I shall never be moved."
> [7] By your favor, O Lord,
> you had established me as a strong mountain;
> you hid your face;
> I was dismayed.
> [8] To you, O Lord, I cried,
> and to the Lord I made supplication:
> [9] "What profit is there in my death,
> if I go down to the Pit?
> Will the dust praise you?
> Will it tell of your faithfulness?
> [10] Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!
> O Lord, be my helper!"

> [11] You have turned my mourning into dancing;
> you have taken off my sackcloth
> and clothed me with joy,
> [12] so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
> O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

(Psalm 30)

To me this Psalm has always seemed appropriate for New Years. It acknowledges the darkness and trials at the past, yet also points towards the light of hope in the future. I invite my readers to submit their own quotes from Scripture that they believe appropriate for this New Year, and to offer their thoughts on why they think so.

You Reap What You Don't Sow

January 5, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Alternate title: Shaking Yourself Apart]

So I caught this in the news recently: One of the Shakers' last three members died Monday. The storied sect is verging on extinction. An excerpt:

One of the last three remaining members of the dwindling Shaker sect died Monday.

> Sister Frances Carr died at the Shaker community at Sabbathday Lake in New Gloucester, Maine, "after a brief battle with cancer," according to a statement on the community's website.
>
> It continued, "The end came swiftly and with dignity surrounded by the community and her nieces." Carr was 89.
>
> Carr was a member of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearance, a Christian group formed in 1747 in Manchester, England. They earned the name the Shakers when critics began calling them "Shaking Quakers" because of "their ecstatic and violent bodily agitation in worship," according to Sabbathday Lake's website. The Shakers eventually abandoned this particular dancing-style worship, but the congregation adopted the term, according to the Associated Press.

I remember reading about this particular sect years ago. I am not at all surprised the group is nearly extinct. Here are some of their core beliefs:

> The Shakers practice celibacy, in addition to pacifism, equality of the sexes and communal ownership of property.

Their extinction is sort of a given considering their beliefs. Of course, the surviving members think otherwise, but hey, why wouldn't they? Another point from the article:

> Although it may sound like an old-fashioned religious sect by today's standards, at one time the Shakers were considered progressive. As PBS noted, "Seventy-five years before the emancipation of the slaves and 150 years before women began voting in America, the Shakers were practicing social, sexual, economic, and spiritual equality for all members."

We can see in the Shakers the end result of "Progressive Christianity" – extinction. This group just happened to (almost) get there a lot faster given their embrace of total celibacy. Other sects will come to the same fate as well, as sooner or later their deviancy will catch up with them.

The Necessity Of Suffering

January 14, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been meaning to write a follow-up to Ace's post "To feel the pain that spurs you on" "To feel the pain that spurs you on" for over a week now, but various matters intruded and kept me from it. It intrigued me for any number of reasons, not the least of which is that it explores critical difference in how men and women think- a pet issue of mine.

His post is in many respects a follow up to one he wrote almost a year ago- "That's why I cut you just to heal you." That post is one I also responded to, with The Misery Of Too Much Comfort. So in a way, this post is a double follow-up, in that it addresses posts both old and new.

In my old post I offered a theory as to why women these days are so quick to go out and do things that will make them suffer:

> Women expect suffering in their life- it is the natural thing. [Think about the vast majority of human history- filled with suffering for pretty much everyone.] When women are too comfortable, when suffering is absent from their life, then it sends a message to their unconscious mind that something is wrong, that what they are living is an *unnatural* life. That message of unnaturalness will only be repeated over the years as they grow up. They will know, somewhere deep down inside, that *something* is wrong. Unfortunately, because this is unconscious, they won't know what it is, exactly, that is wrong.
>
> This will, naturally enough, lead them to feel miserable. The misery is only made worse because they won't understand it. It will gnaw on their mind incessantly, like an itch you can't quite reach.
>
> I suspect that part of the reason that women act so crazy in the west today is because of this. Using that itch analogy I just mentioned- women act crazy because they are trying to scratch that itch. Only they don't quite know how- so they do so in extreme ways. Again, deep down inside they know they should be suffering, so they go out and make themselves suffer (without every truly understanding that is what they are doing).

Ace, in his own far more concise way, offers an alternate explanation:

> [W]omen use suffering (subconsciously, at least) to demonstrate resilience.
>
> …
>
> ***In fact, more often than not, women's complaints are (at heart) actually backhanded boasts of how much suffering they can take.***

Now, as interesting as these theories are, they aren't the key matter I want to examine in this post. Instead, I was fascinated by this (in hindsight obvious) point Ace made:

> ***In fairy tales, the most desirable/marriageable women***
> ***had terrible & harsh lives [“childhoods”].***
> ***This is not a coincidence but a lesson.***

This got me thinking about the role that suffering plays in the rearing/raising of children. More specifically, the different roles that it plays for men and women.

You see, I think that enduring a certain amount of suffering is necessary for the healthy growth and maturity of both men and women. However, the way that the suffering should be experienced/handled is different between them.

For men, suffering should be a tool that is used to strengthen them. They should be exposed to trials and challenges and then forced to overcome those challenges. In that overcoming of obstacles they will be forced to break down the old self, the boy, and build up a new self- the man. This process is repeated over and over as a boy grows up into a man. If successful, he comes out as a strong, tested and confident man who can tackles whatever life throws his way.

For women, on the other hand, suffering is a tool that is used to remove weaknesses and flaws. While that might seem similar to what men undergo, it isn’t. They aren’t put through trials and challenges in the same way. The reason why is simple- the goal isn’t to break the girl down and then build her up as a woman. Instead, the goal is to raise her right from the beginning, and over time to wear down any and all negative traits.

Let me try to explain this further with an agricultural analogy-

For both men and women you have a field that represents them and their character. In the beginning it is sown with wheat. As they get older, however, weeds creep up throughout the field. The wheat represents ideal traits, the weeds negative traits.

For women, the way to deal with this problem is to get on your hands and knees and pull up those weeds. Start in one corner and work your way throughout the field. It will likely be necessary to double-back at some point to deal with any new weeds that sprouted in already cleared parts of the field. As a result, this is a long, continuous process that won’t end for a long, long time (until the woman is that wizened grandmother).

For men, the way to deal with this problem is to cordon off parts of the field. Then, once it is in sections, turn to the first one. Tear everything up. Leave that section as a bare field. Then plant and sow new seed. Water it. Let it grow. Remove any weeds that start to sprout. Then move to the next section, and repeat the process. Do this section by section until the whole field has been attended to.

Tying all of this back to the title of the post, I am arguing here (as I have in the past) that suffering is necessary for healthy character development of both men and women. However, the way that suffering should play out is very between between the two sexes. One of the many problems with our present age is that we have forgotten this, and all too often children are raised alike, irrespective of whether they are boys and girls. And of course, all too often their lives contain far too much comfort, and far too little suffering.

This theory has been bouncing around in my head for almost two weeks now, and I am

curious what my readers think about it. Please leave your own thoughts in the comments below. Tell me where I am right, where I am wrong, and where else you think all of this can go.

New Year, Same Rules

January 19, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Since it has been some time since I've covered comment rules, I will take this opportunity to go over them again. As a general matter I tend to be fairly liberal in what I allow said, and by whom. However, certain things are prohibited, and will get you banned (or dumped in the spam filter without ever having a chance to get your comment visible). They are, in no uncertain order:

1. Obscenity or excess profanity. The latter is sometimes appropriate, but most of the time is unnecessary. Keep it clean, or keep it elsewhere.
2. Link dumping to your own blog. If you have your own blog, that is great. Feel free to link it on occasion, or when you have a post worth reading. But linking to your homepage every comment is irksome and will get you banned.
3. A lack of civility. One can challenge the ideas of another while still keeping it civil. If anything, this is easier with the internet, because you don't have the other person right in front of you getting in your face. Take the time to be respectful, even if you think the other person doesn't deserve it.
4. Sock Puppets. Just don't do it. Use one ID, and keep at it. If you need to switch, e-mail me to let me know. You can find my e-mail in the About page.
5. Linking to harmful or obscene websites. Nothing more need be said.
6. Lying about what I or other commenters have said. Feel free to critique myself or the other readers all you want. Just don't misrepresent what folks are actually saying. This is a pet peeve of mine, and *will* get you banned.
7. Extreme or excessive off-topic comments. Posts are meant to discuss specific topics, and just those topics. If you want to talk about something else, use another blog (such as your own), or petition for a post on that/those subject(s).

Those are just a few of the rules. This list is by no means exhaustive. If you have any questions about them feel free to ask in this post, or reach me via -email.

Saturday Saints- #121

January 21, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a while since I wrote a post in this series, so it seems only appropriate that I bring it back. We left off with the letter “M”, which means that today’s letter is “N.” Thus, our saint for today is Saint Naum:

> **Saint Naum** (Bulgarian and Macedonian: Свети Наум, *Sveti Naum*), also known as **Naum of Ohrid** or **Naum of Preslav** (c. 830 – December 23, 910) was a medieval Bulgarian writer, enlightener, one of the seven Apostles of the First Bulgarian Empire and missionary among the Slavs. He was among the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius and is associated with the creation of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts. Naum was among the founders of the Pliska Literary School and is venerated as a saint in the Orthodox Church.

More can be found out about his life at his wiki, located here.



Masculine Monday- Sympathy And Understanding

January 24, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Men only]

One of the hurdles that men face today in navigating the Marriage Marketplace is the widespread ignorance of most people where the MMP is concerned. For a variety of reasons most of the people that a man interacts with don't have a clue how the MMP really works. This applies as much to married men as to men seeking to marry. Most people just don't get it.

Which drives me to the subject of this post- men shouldn't expect much in the way of understanding from those around them re: the MMP. In fact, the only ones who might understand are men in the same position (or who recently occupied it). I don't know about most of my readers, but I find this to be a terribly frustrating matter. On more than one occasion I have been asked why I'm not married yet. And no matter how much or well I explain it, I can see in people's eyes that they don't understand. I find this quite isolating at times- it creates a climate of being cut off and without aid.

Now, at this point I should mention that one of Rollo's little "laws" is that women are ultimately incapable of understanding the male experience. In this area I agree- the disconnect in experience and thought patterns means that women just can't "get" what it is like to be a man. My advice is to not even try to go into detailed explanations with women when it comes to this field. You will be wasting your time.

At the same time, while understanding isn't possible from women, and from most men too (they are too bound up in their "Blue Pill" worldview), sympathy is still possible. Even those who don't understand why your life is the way it is can still be sympathetic. Personally speaking, I don't find that nearly as much of a relief as understanding. But it is something, at least. So if you do find those who are sympathetic, appreciate that sympathy for what it is- the best connection you can hope to make with most people you encounter, even the good ones.

I write all of this to perhaps save some man out there the frustration that comes from trying to explain to someone what they cannot hope to understand. Accept that you will never impart that understanding, and the connection that comes with it. Take what sympathy that you can get, and keep moving forward. Such is the burden of being a man in this day and age.

Saturday Saints- #122

January 28, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The letter “O” makes its triumphant return today. Thus, our saint is none other than Saint Oliver Plunkett:

> **Oliver Plunkett** (also spelt **Oliver Plunket**) (Irish: *Oilibhéar Pluincéid*), (1 November 1625 – 1 July 1681) was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland who was the last victim of the Popish Plot. He was beatified in 1920 and canonised in 1975, thus becoming the first new Irish saint for almost seven hundred years.

A few snippets from the Wikipedia article on him:

> On the enactment of the Test Act in 1673, to which Plunkett would not agree for doctrinal reasons, the college was closed and demolished. Plunkett went into hiding, travelling only in disguise, and refused a government edict to register at a seaport to await passage into exile. For the next few years he was largely left in peace since the Dublin government, except when put under pressure from the English government in London, preferred to leave the Catholic bishops alone.
>
> In 1678 the so-called Popish Plot, concocted in England by clergyman Titus Oates, led to further anti-Roman Catholic action. Archbishop Peter Talbot of Dublin was arrested, and Plunkett again went into hiding. The Privy Council in London was told that Plunkett had plotted a French invasion. The moving spirit behind the campaign is said to have been Arthur Capell, the first Earl of Essex, who had been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and hoped to resume the office by discrediting the Duke of Ormonde. However Essex was not a ruthless or unprincipled man and his later plea for mercy suggests that he had never intended that Plunkett should actually die.

You can find much more about this martyr at the link above.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #124

January 30, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Two passages for today's post. The first is a section of St. Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, which I propose to contain many valuable lessons:

> [6] Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. [7] For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, [8] we did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you. [9] It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate. [10] For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: If any one will not work, let him not eat. [11] For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. [12] Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living. [13] Brethren, do not be weary in well-doing.
>
> [14] If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. [15] Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

(2 Thessalonians 3:6-15)

Here is a quick list I have made of the important lessons which St. Paul teaches here:

- Avoid those "Christians" who are idle, that is, given over to sloth.
- Avoid those professed Christians who are living in a way which goes against Apostolic tradition.
- St. Paul and his companions may have worked for their upkeep, but they had the right to expect their fellow brethren in Christ to support them.
- Those who refuse to work should not eat- that is, be given food by the community.
- Christians should not grow weary, presumably in the soul, of hard work.
- Have nothing to do with fellow Christians who disobey the teaching of the Apostles. This will shame them and hopefully convince them to turn aside from their sin.
- Those who have fallen away are not our enemies, and shouldn't be treated as such. Instead they are wayward brothers who should be warned about the perils of sin out of love.

As for this next passage, it was motivated by Dalrock's long running series of weak men- many of whom seem to be screwing feminism up. This passage indeed features a weak man- Herod:

> [14] King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known. Some[c] said, "John

> the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him.” [15] But others said, “It is Eli′jah.” And others said, “It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” [16] But when Herod heard of it he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.” [17] For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero′di-as, his brother Philip’s wife; because he had married her. [18] For John said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” [19] And Hero′di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, [20] for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. [21] But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. [22] For when Hero′di-as’ daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it.” [23] And he vowed to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.” [24] And she went out, and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the baptizer.” [25] And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. [27] And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, [28] and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

(Mark 6:14-29)

Is it just me, or does this passage make Herod seem, well, kinda pathetic? He fears John, and yet it is only when a woman effectively blackmails him that he finally puts the prophet to death. Not to mention the fact that a pretty girl dancing (plus presumably a fair amount of drink) would compel the man to make that rash of a vow. And to make it even worse, Herod knew John was righteous and still was so full of pride as to keep on with his (initially) half a—d measures.

Splitting Eros Leads To Disaster

February 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

One of Dalrock's recent posts examines the consequences of the elevation of romantic love to a moral force:

> The simple fact is the moment you attribute moral value to romantic love you are creating a rival to biblical sexual morality. In biblical sexual morality it is marriage that creates a moral space for sex and romantic love (with romantic love not separated from sexual passion). We have overturned God's order here, and are now claiming that romantic love is the moral space for marriage and sex. This is deceptively subtle, and at the same time demolishes the moral meaning of marriage.
>
> …
>
> Passionless duty sex was for marriage, and passion was for adultery. Courtly love built upon this idea with a twist. It added a new concept of romantic love, separating out the emotional aspect of sexual passion. This newly separated concept of romantic love was worshiped and seen as sanctifying. CS Lewis summed up the concept of courtly love as (emphasis mine):
>
> "The sentiment, of course, is love, but love of a highly specialized sort, whose characteristics may be enumerated as **Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and the Religion of Love**."

What Dalrock is examining here is a situation where Eros has been split in two. As a reminder/refresher, the ancient Greeks believed in several different concepts of "love." The three principal loves were:

- Eros- sensual love associated with the body
- Philos- love in the form of friendship that is associated with the soul
- Agapos- the self-sacrificing love that comes from God and is thus associated with the Spirit

Now, Eros is a bodily love. However, emotions are as much of the body as the actual "rubbing together of bodyparts." Which is my way of saying that Eros properly contains both Romance as well as the actual physical acts of intercourse. Passion and Romance go hand in hand, if you will. Dalrock is making a mistake by calling it "Romantic love." It is really just the emotional aspect of the love we know as Eros. It is not something separate.

What has unfortunately been going on for centuries now is an attempt to split Eros up into a "dirty" part, sex, and a "pure" part, "romance." However, no matter how many games you play with this, it cannot be done. Eros encompasses both. Any attempt to separate the two is inherently insane. We should expect that craziness will follow from it. Thus, to me it is no surprise that efforts to separate Eros have helped "break" marriage in

the west. We have gone against God's plan for human beings- disaster is to be expected.

God created Man as a union of body, soul and spirit. Marriage, as an institution/sacrament coming from God, relies on a healthy state of that union. If they are unhealthy, or there is discord, then marriage will suffer accordingly. Marriage encompasses each of these loves, because marriage affects and is affected by all parts of that union. Trying to remove the physical component of Eros from marriage effectively breaks that unity and creates disorder in that man or woman- and thereby brings disorder into the marriage. It affects both husband and wife because in marriage the two become one.

Remember, Man was made for marriage. And by marriage I mean what God intends by marriage. Trying to fit man into anything other than what God intended is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. It doesn't work. Alas, we are seeing the proof of that all around us in the West right now.

Update: I should make it clear that the mistake that I think Dalrock was mistaking was calling it "Romantic Love." I don't think he failed to grasp the other parts of my post. One of his older posts in fact notes that courtly love is always sexual.

The Gamma-ization Of Superman

February 5, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been meaning to write this post for some time after numerous discussions withNSR, but never got around to it. However, Cane Caldo's latest post, The Judgement of Freaks, finally convinced me to get something down on electronic paper. Cane's post exams Sci-Fi/Fantasy fans and their nature and how it interacts with the market. The part that interested me was this:

> But if we talk about the collective of fans, a great many of whom are strange and ill-formed, then I must say that it ***does*** have to be this way. What these strange and ill-formed SF&F fans want is a structure of the superficial. The less substantive the better, for under it they can do a couple things.
>
> 1. Transform their crippling weirdness into a minor flaw which is subsumed under the temporarily-irrelevant category of *real life.*
> 2. Practice a wide assortment of perversions disguised as *make believe*.
>
> That's why there are so many freaks in the comicbook store. That's why there are so many freaks at the Star Trek conventions. That's why there are so many freaks at Renaissance festivals, comic conventions, anime conventions…there are a lot of freak conventions.

I have no idea how much experience Cane has with this sort of folk. I've always had the impression he was a jock in high-school, and not the nerd type. Unfortunately, I *was* the nerd type, and so I am all too familiar with these freaks. And freaks they are.

Oh, not all of them. I've been to comic shops and conventions and Ren fairs and the like. Not everyone there is a freak. But plenty are. Perhaps even a majority at many of these events/places. The thing is, this didn't always use to be the case.

Years ago comics used to be much more "mainstream," for want of a better term. But somewhere along the way that changed. Both the fans and the writers started to shift in their overall make-up, and it shows. This structure of the superficial became more predominant, and then finally dominant. Depth is out of the question in most places, and what "depth" you do get is typical SJW political drivel for the most part. The exceptions are just that, exceptions.

From my perspective comics started as a form of light fantasy entertainment. Superpowers sort of took the place of magic, and allowed for fun and interesting characters and stories. But then as the fandom and writers changed, this shifted. Light fantasy morphed into what I can only think is escapism. People created weirder and weirder characters and situations because they themselves were weirder and weirder. As for the existing characters, they were transformed in varying ways, few of them good.

Superman provides an excellent example of this. As originally conceived and as the

character was written in the golden and silver age, Superman fits many of the qualities that are often in these parts called “Alpha.” I mean, really, he is *the* Alpha. Strong, confident, dominant and admired/envied by everyone. And of course women throw themselves at him.

But over time the character of Superman has changed. Some of this might owe to the Comics Code, put in place in the mid 50s, which made things “tamer.” However, I think that only helped lay the groundwork- it didn’t actually lead to the character changing. Instead, it was a new generation of writers (and the fans with them) that transformed the character.

An interesting fact that NSR told me is that DC Comics originally figured they had only a 3-5 year run with most of their readers, who happened to be young boys. After that the boys would start getting interested in girls and their interest in comics would wane. Apparently that influenced the business model. However, at some point super-fans showed up and started to make noises about continuity and the need to collect *every* comic and the like. Over time these fans became writers, and they started to change the character.

I mention this because it seems to me that the super-fans, if we can call them that, evidently didn’t get caught up in the whole “chasing girls” thing. This to me suggests that they were “out there”, perhaps in a socio-sexual way. Enter Vox’s Socio-Sexual Hierarchy. I don’t subscribe to it in full, but I think there are some useful descriptions there. Here is the description of Gamma:

> The introspective, the unusual, the unattractive, and all too often the bitter. Gammas are often intelligent, usually unsuccessful with women, and not uncommonly all but invisible to them, the gamma alternates between placing women on pedestals and hating the entire sex. This mostly depends upon whether an attractive woman happened to notice his existence or not that day. Too introspective for their own good, gammas are the men who obsess over individual women for extended periods of time and supply the ranks of stalkers, psycho-jealous ex-boyfriends, and the authors of excruciatingly romantic rhyming doggerel. In the unlikely event they are at the party, they are probably in the corner muttering darkly about the behavior of everyone else there… sometimes to themselves. Gammas tend to have have a worship/hate relationship with women, the current direction of which is directly tied to their present situation. However, they are sexual rejects, not social rejects.

What I suspect is that over time many of the writers in the comics world started to fit this description. Their own nature as “Gammas” influenced their writing. They projected some of their own nature onto the characters they were writing. This is something you can see in the character of Superman. Some examples of the changes:

- Superman was always an alien, but he still fit in while on Earth. During his Gammization, however, two things happened. Some writers had him basically

disregard his Kryptonian heritage- an example of deliberately denying pride in one's ancestry. Other writers went to the other extreme, and emphasized his alien nature. They made him feel as if he was an outcast/outsider- which is just how many of them happened to feel.

- The way that Superman interacted with women, especially as Clark Kent, changed. In the beginning Clark was always mild-mannered, but his bumbling nature with women was also a disguise. Superman actually enjoyed pretending to be the fool who didn't "get" women. It was all a joke to him. But over time that disguise sort of disappeared, and he lost his humor at playing people. Instead he was confused and conflicted with how he should interact with women. This can be seen in the original Superman movie from the 70s.
- After 1986, Superman was often displaced within his own comics. Other characters would be the ones taking all the action, and he would just stand there. Along with this came a huge decrease in his power. While Superman certainly had some "power creep" in the early days, he was almost neutered once the Gammas took over the writing.

There is more, but those examples in particular stand out. Putting all of it together, we have seen Superman as a character be twisted by a wave of writers less masculine , and more freakish, than the ones who came before. Of course, he isn't the only character so affected. And it is important to note that many comics writers from the start were freaks who wanted ways to live out their perversions- see the character of Wonder Woman, for example.

Unfortunately, I see this trend only continuing. So those of us who enjoy the old comics- the light fantasy and not the shallow escapism and perversions of today, are sort of out of luck. At least we have the old ones to enjoy.

Tuesday Tips- #4 It's The Economy Stupid (Part 2)

February 8, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been quite a while since we have had any posts in this series from reader MK, and thus the time is right for issue #4. Today's topic is the economy, yet again. As always, these comments are not mine, and their inclusion in my blog doesn't necessarily mean I support them. I include them as food for thought and discussion.

It's been months since the last Tip. My excuse? I've been productive: a nice 2016 harvest (1,500 pounds of fish and game plus half this weight in crabapples). Look, teen boys flat-out *eat*. And this merely supplements an annual consumption of 1,500 pounds of oat & rice plus 14,000 eggs. Protein? It's kind of a big deal here.

This sidebar conveniently relates to my prior TT, which concludes: *For those who can adjust their [economic] mindset and take action, real opportunity exists.* So forget the theory; let's get specific about the opportunity:

1) Read the book *Dividends Still Don't Lie (Wright)*. Invest accordingly. Educate yourself regarding stocks. Grok book value, PE ratio, and dividend yield. Extra credit: read *The Intelligent Investor (Graham)*. Extra-extra credit: read Graham's classic *Security Analysis*. Look, knowing about money is just what men do, like fixing cars, shooting guns, or hanging drywall. You simply gotta know it. Especially if you are young.

2) Follow the *Investment Quality Trends* newsletter for at least a year. This value-investing methodology has yielded double-digits since 1966 in very conservative manner. Too much work? Just dollar-cost-average your savings into the Vanguard Total Stock Market. While higher risk and lower return than IQT value investing, it's not a bad option and requires little education. Extra credit: put savings outside of a 401k or IRA into an investment partnership (easy to start). This shields the money from lawsuits (cheap insurance). Remember, the primary cause of bankruptcy in the US is medical issues, and this could happen to anyone. We all get sick and die eventually. Be prepared.

3) Be a saver, not a spender. Select friends and romantic partners who are also savers. Avoid family members who spend recklessly. Hang with the kind of guys who actually play sports and do productive things, not the guys who watch other people do them on TV.

4) Kill. Your. TV. 'Nuff said. 90% of consumerism (and cultural filth) comes from our media. Don't even allow a TV in your house, especially if you have kids. Whisky and loaded guns seem less dangerous, to me.

5) Get serious about life. Do hobbies that *produce* health and wealth, not decrease them. For example, learn to fix everything. Buy less, and only buy quality. Eat at home. Vacation where you live. Learn to cook from scratch, sew, and tailor. If married, expect your wife to do this, and do it well. Grow a garden. Cut your own hair. Caveat: an alternative to this DIY approach? Pour excess time into a productive career. I prefer to live a fuller and leaner life and retire young, but heck, why not do both? Go big or go

home!

6) Invest in yourself by trying new and productive things. For example, buy a house, improve it, and sell it for tax-free profit. This works for all sorts of things: cars, appliances, whatever. As Scott Adams says, each new skill you learn doubles your chance of future success. Life is short, think big.

7) Keep at least 6-12 months of cash outside the system (remember that withdrawals of $10k are recorded, so take your time). Store it carefully against fire and theft (e.g., vacuum-pack and bury). This is base insurance. If you get sued, divorce-raped, or forced into bankruptcy due to a medical crisis, you will be glad you did this. The money must remain private and easily accessible. Remember, if you are a traditional Christian, you should anticipate persecution. It's not a question of if, but when.

8) Keep 10% of your net worth in physical precious metals and/or jewelry. Again, outside the system and stored carefully. Don't even consider a safe-deposit box! For the same reasons as above. This is longer-term insurance; unlike cash, it will match inflation over the decades. Personally, I like to sell half when prices go high, and then replace it at lower prices for profit later. It's nice to get paid to have insurance for a change!

9) Act. Everyone talks. Very, very few have the balls to DO. Be the doer. Take a risk. The odds are, you won't do any of these things, even if you like the ideas. Why? Inertia is the greatest force in the world. Trust me, none of these things are easy to do. But I can't recommend them enough. Act.

Lots of guys don't see much point in it all today. They are listless and uninspired. I get this. I assume this is generally due to a poor diet, lack of exercise, and the declining economic and social situation that defines our hopeless era. Lack of hope is a lethal spiritual wound. Men ask: what are the options today for a serious religious guy? Become a monk, or a cuckolded provider for a woman cashing out of the SMP? The game seems rigged. The deck stacked.

Well, I say: *Don't fall into this trap.* Forge your own economic lifestyle. Ignore the crowd. Become financially independent. Live with focus and purpose. Never look back. Demand more. You will be amazed at the number of people – especially women – who will follow *you*. I know I would. Hope, confidence, and excitement about the future are highly contagious.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #125

February 13, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will feature three Gospel readings. The first is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican:

> [9] He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: [10] "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' [13] But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

(Luke 18:9-14)

The second is that of the Prodigal Son:

> [11] And he said, "There was a man who had two sons; [12] and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. [13] Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. [14] And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. [15] So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. [16] And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. [17] But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! [18] I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; [19] I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."' [20] And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. [21] And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' [22] But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; [23] and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; [24] for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.
>
> [25] "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the

> house, he heard music and dancing. [26] And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. [27] And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.’ [28] But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, [29] but he answered his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. [30] But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!’ [31] And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. [32] It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

(Luke 15:11-32)

The third comes from Jesus’s denouncing of the Pharisees:

> [25] “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. [26] You blind Pharisee! first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.
>
> [27] “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. [28] So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

(Matthew 23:25-28)

All three passages deal with those who appear clean, that is, righteous, on the outside. The Pharisees in the first and third passage, and the older brother in the second. On the outside they are obedient- they do what the law requires of them. But inside, their hearts are just as full of sin as those they look down on them, whether they be tax collectors or wayward brothers. In all three situations you have as the principal sin that of pride. Pride, that most indispensable of sins. That which comes before the fall.

With the older brother we see more, of course. Envy and Avarice have also blinded him to the fact that his brother has returned. He has let his love of material things get in the way of his love for his brother. And if he cannot love his brother, whom he has seen, how can he hope to love God, whom he has not seen?

As we move along our spiritual journey, we need to watch out for pride and the other sins we keep inside. As we get better and better and keeping the outside of the cup clean, it becomes all the more imperative that we keep the inside clean too. It is good to appreciate and acknowledge our accomplishments. But at the same time we cannot let them give us a false sense of being “better” or more worthy than those around us. All have fallen short- all of us have missed the mark. And ll of us are equally dependent on the mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. At the end of the day, we will all be throwing ourselves at the feet of our Lord and begging him to show mercy. Let that

reminder keep us on our toes, and prayerful in our hearts.

Tissue-Paper Walls

February 15, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A few days ago a first time commenter left a comment on an old post of mine, A Must Read Story. There is a small part of her rather longish comment that I want to examine. The key part is in bold:

> it's very difficult to have high self-esteem when you do everything "right" but still have poor luck with the opposite sex, and it creates a very lonely feeling when you follow your values but end up getting victimized for it. Our society is simply set up so that selfish people appear to get ahead–that goes for Chads sleeping with hundreds of women, and the slutty girls having "fun." Eva is the equivalent of the beta male looking on confused, and just because you can't imagine a woman sharing that experience with you, doesn't mean it doesn't happen. **In fact, most women are profoundly insecure.** The ones who are open about it–like Eva–haven't learned the lesson that YOU perceive all women to be adept at–hiding their feelings and vulnerabilities.

Most women are profoundly insecure.

That little tidbit is the subject of today's post. I've written on it before, in my post Beta Farming. I explained my reasoning at the time of *why* women might be insecure. Some of my reasoning:

> Much of this insecurity comes from the gap in physical prowess between men and women. We men are much more capable of defending ourselves and imposing our will on our environment than women are- at least at the individual level. But whatever its source, it has a profound effect on female behavior. Women are constantly, and often at an unconscious or subconscious level, trying to alter their environment to make it feel more secure.

Having thought about it more, I can think of additional reasons for female insecurity. One of them is that women know (mostly at an unconscious level) how vulnerable pregnancy and child-raising makes them. Another is that women, again unconsciously, realize how limited their peak fertility and SMV window is. They worry about optimizing that time, and covering for when they are no longer at their peak. There is plenty of room for speculation there, and my commenters can feel free to contribute.

However, I want talk about how the insecurity should be handled. One of the problems with that insecurity is that ill-intentioned men can exploit it. Often times quite easily. And course, it usually isn't entirely unwillingly. But exploitable it still remains.

At the same time, I think that this insecurity is something that good men can relieve or buttress. They can, in the right scenario, build up women's confidence in a positive way. This can help women resist that lure of exploitation or build up a wall against it. Men can supplement the tissue paper or paper mache walls that women may have with walls of

stone and gates of iron.

Unfortunately, our society isn't exactly eager to see this happen. Fatherhood has been trashed, both as a social as well as a legal force. Fathers are essentially powerless to protect their daughters these days, especially when they are older. Likewise, our society does its level best to keep women away from actual good men, who though few in number still exist. Certainly it tries hard to keep women from marrying such men when they are young.

Now, what I am saying gets awfully close to white knighting. I will admit that gives me pause. All the same, I think the argument is potent indeed that strong men are needed to protect women- from themselves. But for that to happen men need actual power to go with that responsibility. Our present cadre of White Knights, especially in Churchian circles, is what you get when you take that power away from men. Men become modern caricatures of Don Quixote, assaulting windmills left and right and ignoring the real threats all around them.

I will leave with two questions I want to pose to my readers.

First, what methods can be used to protect women, assuming the necessary social structure was in place?

Second, if that structure is not in place, how can it be created, or what workarounds can be used if it cannot?

Saturday Saints- #123

February 19, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today we feature the letter “P.” So our saint for the day is Padre Pio:

> **Padre Pio**, also known as **Saint Pio of Pietrelcina** (Italian: *Pio da Pietrelcina*), O.F.M. Cap. (May 25, 1887 – September 23, 1968), was a friar, priest, stigmatist, and mystic,now venerated as a saint of the Catholic Church. Born **Francesco Forgione**, he was given the name of Pius (Italian: *Pio*) when he joined the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin.
>
> Padre Pio became famous for exhibiting stigmata for most of his life, thereby generating much interest and controversy. He was both beatified (1999) and canonized (2002) by Pope John Paul II.

There is a great deal more to his life, no surprise given he was a figure of much controversy. More can be learned about him at his wiki, located here.



Tuesday Tips- #5 Reject It Unless You Would Have Created It Yourself

February 22, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Reader MK provides us today with another guest post. As always, these opinions don't necessarily represent my own.

——————————————————————————-

This tip seems a tad antisocial, but it's precisely the opposite.

I recommend critically examining every cultural event then ask: *"Would I have created this myself?* If the answer is no, just walk away. Life is too short.

In this light, here's some events I (and now my family) gratefully sidestep:

Proms

Valentine's Day (modern version)

TV parties (e.g. sports, movies)

Birthdays

Birthday/Christmas cards

Secular holidays

Secular anniversaries

Expensive, garish weddings

Expensive recreation

Non-active, non-local vacations (rare exceptions)

I feel deep discomfort watching men chase the modern rat race. They rush to the florist, obligated to support a fem-centric commercial "holiday". Or even worse, an unsung anniversary. How many men would create these customs on their own? Very few, methinks. Yet they participate like a chained bear at the circus. Tragic, to my mind.

What's even more sad? Everyone therefore lacks the *time* to celebrate life. Most who have families work endless hours. For what? To buy throwaway things. To fund an irresponsible wife. Maybe to impress their fellow bipeds? Or so they can gallop through Disneyland or Paris only to return more stressed out than before? Meanwhile real life (that is meaningful, healthy, exciting life, to be lived deliberately) passes them by. Until the divorce. Or heart attack.

Personally, I like the term "converged" to describe modern holidays (which ironically used to be called "Holy Days"). Indeed, all of the events and activities on the above list are fully converged into the commercial culture. The marketable expectations are there and they can't easily be extracted.

I've long held this "sidestep" viewpoint, even as a kid. I skipped prom without regret. That just whetted my appetite: I haven't bought flowers or candy for a woman on her

birthday or on V-day *ever*. Not even Skittles. It certainly hasn't hurt my romantic life, either.

I don't celebrate birthdays at all, and have no regrets. Heck, with a family of my size birthdays would a monthly event anyway. I'll pass. What a modern, self-absorbed invention birthday celebrations are, anyway; egomania, greed, and gluttony are now being taught to kids from the earliest age. Sad.

So what do I do instead with my saved time? Religious feast days, for one. The RC liturgical cycle (e.g. Easter, Lent, Christmas, etc.) is how celebrations are done for real. This is the way my ancestors did it, and they definitely had perfected things. The dozen or so Holy Days are carefully timed to the seasons, balancing both fasting and feasting. This way, one can stay in shape, remain healthy, and yet celebrate with abandon. And it's plenty sufficient; about a dozen celebrations a year is enough! We do massive feasts, with rich, real, expensive, wholesome foods: delicious fruits, nuts, fish, muffins, pies, cakes, cream, meats, and cheese (we skip processed sugar, junk, and commercial crap).

Look: there is simply not enough time to engage in the tomfoolery of the American holiday rat race yet still live an active, happy life. It can't be done. So I advise men to Just Say No and cheerfully reject anything they wouldn't have created on their own. This culture has turned men into a slaves supporting the fem-centric beast; why play this dirty game? Do only what makes sense for you and yours.

And start living!

Dressed To Impress

February 24, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Women like to get dressed up. They like to look their best.

But for whom?

One of the interesting surprises of “the Red Pill” was that women don’t really dress up for men. Or at least, men as a whole. Reader/Commenter Ame had this to say in my post Tissue-Paper Walls:

> a woman can pick another woman apart in a nano-second with one eye covered and the other only half open. women dress for other women more than they dress for men. as has been stated in the manosphere … women compete with other women – some much more fiercely than others.

Women dressing for other women [over dressing for men] was something that I had no clue about before finding the ‘sphere. And what is interesting about this particular tidbit of RP knowledge is that it was a woman who passed it on to me shortly after I found the ‘sphere. She of course thought it was common sense. Which just goes to show the gap in understanding that exists between men and women.

What is interesting to think about is the motivation behind this behavior. What we have is women dressing the best, but not to try and attract men in general. Instead they are trying to show off to other women how attractive they are in order to one-up other women. Otherwise stated, they are showing off how they could pull a quality man, without actually aiming to do so (at least as their primary interest).

Let’s add together a couple of things: 1) The vast majority of men are normally of little concern to women. 2) Women compete fiercely with one another over sexual attractiveness. From this we can extrapolate a significant amount about female behavior, especially socio-sexual behavior.

For one, we can see that women are clearly able to evaluate each others attractiveness in the eyes of men.

Second, we can see that the hierarchy

among women is dominated by their sexual market value, or at least their perceived value.

Third, we can see that this isn’t an objective value by any measure, at least as men evaluate it. The 1-10 scale, for example, is subjective between men. But for an individual man he will generally rate women independent of one another. That isn’t how women do it, however. Instead, women rank each other on their attractiveness as much as gauge their actual SMV value. So it isn’t enough to be an 8, you have to be a higher 8 than the woman over there.

Nothing I’ve said is an kind of revelation, naturally. However it is a good thing to

remember. Plus I will try and work it into my next Selected Sunday Scriptures post.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #126

February 27, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Sorry for the late post. Busy day, and this post itself was rushed out. Apologies for missed mistakes and poor construction.]

In my most recent post I explored women's dress. Today I want to explore some scripture that deals with the matter. Here we have St. Paul's 1st Letter to Timothy:

> [9] also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire [10] but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion.

(1 Timothy 2:9-10)

Then we have St. Peter's 1st Letter:

> [3] Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of robes, [4] but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

(1 Peter 3:3-4)

I know there are some other passages that would be appropriate, but I cannot think of them at the moment.

But what we have here is basic teaching on modesty. As I've argued elsewhere, modesty as the Christian understands it stands two functions: the first is to reduce sexual temptation, and the second is to avoid avarice and envy. Both of them, however, have as their base the following:

Wearing clothing or other adornment such that others are not tempted into sin.

At the same time, that can be extended to include the wearer as well, who can no doubt be affected by the clothes she (or he) is wearing.

From looking at the admonishments above, and the previous post, we can see that a Christian understanding of modesty, as far as women is concerned, is about alleviating tendencies women face when dressing. As was pointed out in Dressed to Impress by Maea, "Women seem to fall into one of 3 groups– the women who dress for other women, the ones who dress for men, and the ones who dress for the sake of beauty." Modesty aims to target the first two groups, or tendencies (which I think fits better).

The first tendency is to dress "for" other women. That is, to dress to impress other women with their own attractiveness, to show off their "value", as well as to show off their wealth and social status. The second is when women dress "for" men. That is, to dress to impress men (or a specific man) with their sex appeal.

Modesty aims to stop both. It limits the signs of social status and wealth, and limits displays of attractiveness. Modest dress thus helps the woman who dresses as well as the

men and women who see her later. Hopefully that third tendency, the one women should aim for, is what is elevated instead. At least, that is how I see it. Perhaps my readers have their own thoughts.

Tuesday Tips #6 Stay In Control Or Get Out

February 28, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

The series continues. As always, these do not necessarily represent my opinion.

————————————————————-

Tuesday Tips was started for a singular reason. I presumed (rightly or wrongly) that Donal was weary of blogging and might close up shop. Tuesday Tips was an attempt to give him a breather.

My motive was and is entirely selfish. As a father (many time over, from 'moved out' to newborn) I unfortunately can't just ignore the modern 'religious' SMP. I may not be interested in it, but it sure as hell is interested in me! So I'm doing my small part to help keep this blog alive in order to keep up with what's going on out there.

For this tip, I'm going to tell a personal story reinforcing the need for a man to maintain his balance in a relationship. It's a bit dated, but still applicable to today I think.

I was about 21 (early '90s). I had a kinda "girlfriend" I had met in my former coed dorm. Blond. Total ditz. I found her addictive, but honestly have no idea why. She was at best a 6. My friends found her ridiculous. But she "clicked" something deep and primordial in me. Beauty or personality certainly had nothing to do with it.

Anyway, we were out on a Friday night playing a sport with friends. She did something clumsy (not uncommon) and broke her nose. Blood everywhere. I wasn't involved in the accident itself but as the informal "boyfriend" I took her to the emergency room.

Guys, you know where this is going. She called her mom for the insurance number, got her nose taped up, and everyone closed out the ruined night with cards and beer. Or so we thought.

Within hours, cops were banging on the door. Why? Her mom had "intuited" I smacked her around and requested the cops investigate.

I will never forget those cops. They flanked me, armed, visibly threatening, while I stood gaping incredulously. They didn't even seem to want information, just an excuse to bash somebody's head. Specifically, mine. They wouldn't let it go, no matter what I (or she) said. Eventually, a roommate corralled a few people who had personally witnessed the injury. The cops finally left. Grudgingly.

I was inflamed, to put It mildly. I remember thinking: what if we had been alone when she broke her nose? What if she wanted to get even with me for something? I demanded answers. She actually had the nerve to kind-of/sort-of defend her mom's behavior. I was aghast and stated flatly we were over, it was her mom or me; I wasn't going to keep dodging cops. She burst into tears. I *should* have just walked, but I was obsessed. And thus a fool.

I'm humiliated to admit that this "relationship" lingered for *years* after this event. I didn't actively pursue her, but I couldn't move on. I remained infatuated. In fact, she was the

one who finally “manned up” to initiate a formal breakup. Thank God.

So where did I go wrong? Where to start?

1) *Never* answer your door to cops, period. Set up a door microphone (I have one now) and don’t be afraid to ignore the bell. If they threaten to break in (in supposed DV cases like this one they may) just send out the required parties one by one. But never talk. Record everything. Keep control.

2) Never date women from bad/broken homes who haven’t dealt with their dysfunctional parents. I know this flies in the face of many people’s interpretation of “honor your father and mother” but they forget the second part of the commandment, which helps to explain its proper interpretation and application. In this case, her mom was divorced (natch) and I must wonder with chuckle what her father would have said about the situation. Regardless, I should have been far, far more careful. And critical. The danger signs with that woman were *everywhere*.

3) Get control of your emotions regarding women, or prepare to reap the whirlwind. It’s better to just not get involved with any woman who pickles your emotions to idiocy. Lose control and command of the relationship? It will likely end badly. Get out long before then.

4) Try to date various women. Never get oneitis like I did. There is no “one”.

5) Pay close attention to what others think about your girlfriends (spoken or unspoken). Do so with an open mind; you may have lost your head. I certainly did, and I’m not the type to do so.

This tip is so obvious I’m skeptical it’s even worth sharing. And a lot has changed since then; today I’m not sure the cops would have even came by, don’t most places have mandatory arrests in DV callouts and this was just a hysterical mother?). But regardless, if I can prevent even one man from being the fool I was, it’s worth the pixels and the time. Be careful out there, guys.

Set Up To Fail

March 4, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I would like to revisit this comment from "Hungarian Girl," one which I have addressed already in my post Tissue-Paper Walls. Here is the same money paragraph again:

> **it's very difficult to have high self-esteem when you do everything "right" but still have poor luck with the opposite sex, and it creates a very lonely feeling when you follow your values but end up getting victimized for it. Our society is simply set up so that selfish people appear to get ahead–that goes for Chads sleeping with hundreds of women, and the slutty girls having "fun." Eva is the equivalent of the beta male looking on confused,** and just because you can't imagine a woman sharing that experience with you, doesn't mean it doesn't happen. In fact, most women are profoundly insecure. The ones who are open about it–like Eva–haven't learned the lesson that YOU perceive all women to be adept at–hiding their feelings and vulnerabilities.

I have put in bold those parts of the paragraph that I want to go over this round- most of the beginning, as you can see.

Before I go further, let's break this comment down into its constituent parts:

- A lack of success with the opposite sex + doing everything right= lack of self-esteem
- Following your values + being victimized for it= extreme loneliness
- Society is set up for the selfish folks
- Women can experience the same kind of confusion that "Betas" feel when the market runs over them

Now to tackle each of those points in order.

The first point is something that many men, especially the young ones, in the sphere completely understand. Anyone who has spent time as a "Beta", or whatever point in Vox's model that you think applies, knows the confusion that this system creates. We have been told many things which, when applied, fail utterly. Or when we compare what see with what we have been told, nothing adds up. And over time, that just crushes your confidence and spirits.

The second point is again pretty easy to understand. That is just human nature. We will just naturally feel lonely when we do what we think is right, and get blasted for it.I am sure the Prophet Elijah felt that way after he fled Ahab into the desert.

As for the third point, I think our society goes beyond just being set up for the selfish. It is also set up for the short-sighted and the short-term focused. It benefits those looking for

immediate gratification (pretty much always sexual), and punishes those who try to plan or optimize for the long term. Otherwise stated, short term relationships are favored (and the shorter the better), and long term relationships are disfavored. We have set up a SMP/MMP which is an enormous version of the Prisoner's Dilemma, only this one is far more likely to end in betrayal.

The fourth point is one that I think many, if not most, men in the 'sphere have trouble with. However, if we look back to the first point here, they can see there is nothing which really restricts the principle of crushed self-esteem to men. Women can experience it too, although the circumstances might be different. Now, their confidence won't affect their attractiveness like it does for men, but it will impact their desire to play the market. So there is a strong negative effect, even if it is less direct that men feel.

Now that is just self-esteem. There is nothing which makes it so women cannot face a similar kind of confusion that men feel. Do I think it is less common for women to experience that confusion? Yes. But some will no doubt experience it.

So where does all of this take me? It goes back to a simple conclusion that I made in my post Market Failure:

> However the Marriage Marketplace worked in the past, one thing is abundantly clear about how it works today: it doesn't. The current Marriage Marketplace is broken, and is almost completely subsumed into the greater Sexual Marketplace ("SMP") which has largely taken its place. This process has been a complete and utter disaster, whose consequences will be felt for generations

The present Market does its very best to set up for failure anyone who aims to "do it right." In fact, it goes even further than that. It attempts to hide what "doing it right" actually is, and also creates confusion about what constitutes "doing it right."

The end result is that the present Market is really great for short-sighted and selfish people who are only looking for immediate gratification. They benefit while everyone else suffers.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #127

March 6, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We have started the period of Lent. This is a period of fasting and repentance- of turning back to the Lord. In that spirit, here are some passages from scripture which I found appropriate:

> In the fourth year of King Dari′us, the word of the Lord came to Zechari′ah on the
> fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. [2] Now the people of Bethel had
> sent Share′zer and Reg′em-mel′ech and their men, to entreat the favor of the
> Lord, [3] and to ask the priests of the house of the Lord of hosts and the prophets,
> “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?”
> [4] Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me: [5] “Say to all the people of the
> land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the
> seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? [6] And when you
> eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?
> [7] When Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, with her cities round about
> her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited, were not these the words
> which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets?”

(Zechariah 7:1-7)

A good gospel accompaniment would be this passage:

> [16] “And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure
> their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have
> their reward. [17] But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that
> your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and
> your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

(Matthew 6:16-18)

Fasting is of little worth if our hearts are not in the right place. If we fast for God, then our reward will come from God. But if we fast for the sake of men, our reward will come from them- and thus perish in the end. Our actions must mirror our internal state- otherwise we are just stage actors.

A key part of this is turning towards the Lord and repenting.

> [25] Turn to the Lord and forsake your sins;
> pray in his presence and lessen your offenses.
> [26] Return to the Most High and turn away from iniquity,
> and hate abominations intensely.
> [27] Who will sing praises to the Most High in Hades,
> as do those who are alive and give thanks?
> [28] From the dead, as from one who does not exist, thanksgiving has ceased;

> he who is alive and well sings the Lord’s praises.
> [29] How great is the mercy of the Lord,
> and his forgiveness for those who turn to him!
> [30] For all things cannot be in men,
> since a son of man is not immortal.
> [31] What is brighter than the sun? Yet its light fails.
> So flesh and blood devise evil.
> [32] He marshals the host of the height of heaven;
> but all men are dust and ashes.

(Sirach 17:24-32)

King David, a man who was all too familiar with sin, understand the importance of repentance well:

> [6] Be mindful of thy mercy, O Lord, and of thy steadfast love,
> for they have been from of old.
> [7] Remember not the sins of my youth, or my trangressions;
> according to thy steadfast love remember me,
> for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!

> [8] Good and upright is the Lord;
> therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
> [9] He leads the humble in what is right,
> and teaches the humble his way.
> [10] All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
> for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

> [11] For thy name’s sake, O Lord,
> pardon my guilt, for it is great.

(Psalm 25:6-11)

> Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
> whose sin is covered.
> [2] Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
> and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

> [3] When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away
> through my groaning all day long.
> [4] For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me;
> my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
> [5] I acknowledged my sin to thee,
> and I did not hide my iniquity;
> I said, “I will confess my trangressions to the Lord”;

> then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.
>
> [6] Therefore let every one who is godly
> offer prayer to thee;
> at a time of distress, in the rush of great waters,
> they shall not reach him.

(Psalm 32:1-6)

And of course, it is important to keep in mind how Jesus opened his ministry after being tempted in the desert:

> [12] Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee;
> [13] and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Caper′na-um by the sea, in the
> territory of Zeb′ulun and Naph′tali, [14] that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah
> might be fulfilled:
>
> [15] “The land of Zeb′ulun and the land of Naph′tali,
> toward the sea, across the Jordan,
> Galilee of the Gentiles—
> [16] the people who sat in darkness
> have seen a great light,
> and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
> light has dawned.”
>
> [17] From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of
> heaven is at hand.”

(Matthew 4:12-17)

4 years

March 10, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I happened to be looking through some old posts of mine in order to get ideas on what to write. Imagine my surprise when I saw that my first post dated to March 10, 2013. It has been 4 years since I started this blog. Hard to imagine that much time has passed.

Over time I have become far less prolific in my writing, especially in the last year or so. Some have even expressed concern that I will shut down the blog. I don't intend to do that, but I cannot promise I will return to previous activity levels any time soon. Perhaps, in time, things will change.

Setting that aside, I would like to thank the readers and commenters who have contributed to my blog. You have helped keep me at it, and many have inspired me to write yet more. Thanks to all of you. Here's to another year.

Saturday Saints- #124

March 11, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been some time since I have tried to cover the letter “Q” in this series. Understandable, given how few canonized saints have names which begin with that letter. Since there are so few, I will instead do something different with the letter- I will feature a *Queen* who is also recognized as a saint. Our first saint will thus be Queen Jadwiga of Poland:

> **Jadwiga** ([jad'vʲiga]), also known as **Hedwig** (Hungarian: *Hedvig*; 1373/4 – 17 July 1399), reigned as the first female monarch of the Kingdom of Poland from 16 October 1384 until her death. She was the youngest daughter of Louis the Great, King of Hungary and Poland, and his wife, Elizabeth of Bosnia. Jadwiga was a member of the Capetian House of Anjou, but had more close ancestors among the Polish Piasts. She was canonized in the Roman Catholic Church in 1997.
>
> …
>
> Jadwiga was crowned “king” in Kraków on 16 October 1384. Her crowning either reflected the Polish lords’ opposition to her intended future husband, William, adopting the royal title without a further Act or only emphasized that she was a queen regnant. With her mother’s consent, Jadwiga’s advisors opened negotiations with Jogaila, Grand Duke of Lithuania, who was still a heathen, about his marriage to Jadwiga. Jogaila signed the Union of Krewo, promising to convert to Roman Catholicism and to promote his ‘pagan’ subjects’ conversion. Meanwhile, William of Habsburg hurried to Kraków to demand the consummation of his pre-arranged marriage with Jadwiga, but the Polish lords expelled him in late August 1385. Jogaila, who received the baptismal name Władysław, married Jadwiga on 15 February 1386. Legend says that she had only agreed to marry him after long prayers, seeking divine inspiration.
>
> Władysław-Jogaila was crowned king on 4 March. As her co-ruler, Władysław closely cooperated with his wife. After rebellious lords had imprisoned her mother and sister, she marched into Ruthenia, which had been under Hungarian rule, and persuaded most local inhabitants to become subjects of the Polish Crown without resistance. She acted as mediator between her husband’s quarreling kinsmen, and between Poland and the Teutonic Knights.

Far more can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.



Masculine Monday- Defanging The Dragon

March 14, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Somehow I missed this post by Bonald over at Throne and Alter back in January. In a surprise me (at least to me), Bonald was able to take My Little Pony and create an effective social observation and argument from it. Mind you, with the great name for the title, he had better have.

I encourage everyone to read the whole thing, if only to make sense of the parts I am about to quote:

> In the season 2 episode "Dragon Quest", Spike, finding his alienation from his nature unbearable, sets out to join the Great Dragon Migration and learn "what it means to be a dragon". He meets up with a gang of unsupervised male teenage dragons at a volcano. The gang tease Spike and subject him to a number of difficult and embarrassing tests to prove his worth. Three of Spike's pony friends, watching in disguised, are shocked to find Spike responding with enthusiasm. What's brilliant about this episode is that it's shown from the perspective of these girl ponies who can't understand the psychological forces at play. Probably most of the little girls watching don't understand it either. Spike is getting his first taste of male companionship and camaraderie. Having to prove himself is important to him, although he is frightened and probably doesn't understand it himself. What the ponies don't recognize, but adult viewers will, is that although the teenage dragons are acting tough with Spike, they're actually showing quite a bit of restraint and accommodation to this baby. Belly flopping into lava is not actually impressive, but it lets them give him the sense of having earned membership. Men being the ritualistic sex, Spike is them put through an initiation ritual, followed by a night of revelry with his new companions. Again, the ponies are horrified. How can Spike want to stay with these awful dragons?
>
> …
>
> It is a disturbing ending, at least to those who understand the episode fully and realize the magnitude of the tragedy. There is nothing wrong per se with the moral principles the ponies have given Spike. What the ponies haven't given him, because they *cannot* give it to him, is a way to relate these abstract moral imperatives to his own nature, a way to see his own abilities and inclinations in their light. So it is as well with boys in today's world, deprived of natural law and traditional culture.

What we are seeing in our society right now is an ongoing process to defang dragons- that is, men. To strip them of their masculinity, with special care and attention given to the male capacity for violence. Which just happens to be the subject for today.

I've written about men and violence before, including in this Masculine Monday series. Today's post is a chance to discuss the subject again, as it has been some time. Back in

July of 2013 I wrote The Latent Threat: Male Dominance and the Capacity for Violence. In that post I examined, among other things, the latent male potential for violence and how it intersects with sexual attractiveness. One section of that post:

> It is easy for men to forget how much more powerful we are than women. We just take our strength for granted. But because they are the weaker vessel women must approach the world in a very different way. Sometimes they express this consciously, but most of the time subconsciously. Women are fearful because they must be fearful, they can't defend themselves like a man can. How do women compensate for this?
>
> Well, they act as a herd with other women, for one. You ever notice how oftentimes women will all go to the restroom together? As a group? Myself, I see it all the time. What I've never seen is men do the same thing. I suspect the reason for this behavior is because women subconsciously know that when you are relieving yourself you are even more vulnerable than normal, and so for protection women will group up, counting on numbers to protect them. Men, who can both relieve themselves more easily and are more capable of defending themselves, experience no such compulsion.
>
> But the most important way that women compensate for their weakness is by associating with men. But not just men in general. Or any man. No, *the* Man. The Alpha Male. The big, strong man who can defend her, and her children, from harm. The Man who makes her feel Safe. This is where a man's capacity for violence is important, even essential. Because a man who has a strong capacity for violence is a man who can keep his woman safe. Of course, sometimes this violence is directed at the woman herself, a perfect example of unintended consequences. Yet even those women who suffer at the hands of their man will often go back to him, perhaps driven by the subconscious belief that while may hurt her, he can also protect her from greater harms at the same time.

In my 13th Masculine Monday post I examined violence in a more limited context:

> I suspect that I were to try and create a list of different traits that men "need," that it would generate a lot of debate. Some would say I am missing traits, while others would argue that I am including some unnecessarily. There is one trait, however, that I would wager very few would disagree with if it were included in such a list.
>
> That trait? A capacity for focused, disciplined and effective violence.
>
> Note that I say a *capacity* for violence, not a *propensity* for violence. Those are two *very* different things.
>
> There is a time and place for all things, including violence and refraining from violence. But I would argue that a man who is incapable of exercising violence when needed isn't much of a man at all.

Looking at those posts again, and Bonald's most recent posts, it reaffirms for me again that violence and masculinity are inextricably linked. Any attempt to separate a capacity for violence from men is to separate them from, and deny, their basic masculinity. And as I think on it, it really isn't just a capacity for violence. There just is a certain amount of violence that is natural to masculine behavior. *And there is nothing wrong with that.*

Something which our society tries vehemently to deny, of course. Violence is wrong. It is *EVIL.* Period. End of sentence.

But we men know better, or at least, we should. Force and the exertion of force -violence- is part and parcel of being a man. In my opinion, we need to start standing up for that. We need to defend the truth that "boys will be boys" and rough-house each other. And everything else about men which is inherently forceful and turbulent.

And no, I am not defending violence for the sake of violence. There is good violence, and bad violence. But good violence exists, and not only has a right to exist, it *needs* to exist.

The alternative is a bunch of dragons raised to be ponies.

For Old Time's Sake

March 16, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Vox's most recent post caught my eye when he mentioned this:

> I noticed a long time ago that while I still have pretty much the same friends that I did in high school, virtually no woman I knew hadn't changed out her entire set of friends more than once. There are exceptions, of course, but it does seem strange that the supposedly social sex tends to be less inclined to maintain lasting friendships.

That got me thinking about the differences in friendship between men and women. As I thought it over, I came to the realization that I have never heard a woman do something for a past friend "for old time's sake." I've only ever heard that language, and behavior, from men.

I'm curious if any of my readers have noticed the same as well. Perhaps it is simply my limited experience, and thus limited data set. Or maybe there is something to this.

If it is "a thing", then I wonder if it might have to do with male notions of honor and obligations. Perhaps for women it might also have to do with their more pragmatic (in theory) natures, especially when it comes to relationships.

So please folks, chime in and let me know what you think.

Looking Back- What A Bleak Ride

March 21, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

As of late I have been reviewing a lot of my old posts, especially from the first few months of blogging. In so doing I have been struck by the differences in what I wrote about, and cared about, back then as compared to now. It has been an interesting experience to see how much change I've experienced or gone through since then.

Man, have I become cynical. I had plenty of dark posts in the past, but there were still plenty where I evidenced some hope I might be able to work some change in the future. Those are pretty much gone now. Nowadays I have been given up any notion of actively making a difference in society, and frankly, I am cynical about even making a difference in any particular church.

I don't cover "Game" or technique, or whatever you want to call it, anymore. It has been ages since I have given it any serious mention. Partly this is because much of the 'sphere has moved past that. But also partly because I don't see much point in it in the first place. What good is it to learn such things when it won't help you?

I also haven't been doing as much systematic analysis as I used to. A lack of time plays a role here, for sure. But I also think I don't see it as making any kind of difference.

I could probably go on, but I think I've made my point. What I am curious about is what I might be able to discern about myself if I keep going through old posts until I get to my most recent ones. Perhaps there is a pattern to be found there. If I had to guess, it would be a greater trend towards faith and spirituality, and living in an age of wickedness.

A Poor Example

March 24, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been reading with some interest this post over at Scott's blog. The comments in particular have made for fascinating reading. It has been something of an encapsulation of years of discussion in the 'sphere in just one comment thread.

I am still trying to put together my own response to the post. My suspicion is that it will result in several separate posts, as there is a lot to cover. But before I go there, I want to make an observation about myself and my own writing.

One of the problems in my writing that has plagued me since the beginning of my time in the 'sphere has been projection. I have projected far too much of myself into assessing how others (mostly men), would act or react in different situations. That is a problem because, as the post title suggests, I am a poor example.

I am abnormal. Heck, even for the *manosphere* I am abnormal. I am an outlier among outliers. Which means, frankly, that any advice I give is suspect if it is based on an assumption of what a man other than myself would do.

This has held me back from a lot of writing, especially when it comes to advice. I used to do that often in the beginning. With all of that in mind, I won't bother trying to give advice any more. I don't think it can really help anyone.

However, I would like to think that I am good at analyzing systems. So when I get a chance I will try and apply that skill to what is discussed in Scott's post and comments.

Market Watch

March 25, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my previous post, A Poor Example, I mentioned a post that Scott and Elspeth wrote about how June Cleaver might be unmarriageable right now. What I want to do with this post is make a series of observations based on what they mentioned in their post, as well as in the comments. I will likely expand on it over time, as I have a chance to re-read the comments. This won't be an in-depth post, but rather more of a list with perhaps a comment or two of my own.

So here are some of my observations:

- The Market for devout Christians, men and women alike, is awful. I wrote previously on this topic in my Market Failure series of posts. You can read Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 via the links. As for who has it worse, I think that is mostly an academic exercise. My gut says men more than women, but not by a huge amount.
- Geography play a huge role in the difficulties of the marriage market right now. Different geographic locations are more or less favorable to men or women. My suspicion is that where I live the ratio between marriageable men and women heavily tilts to men, and that of course makes the market tougher for men.
- Demographics also plays a significant role. As various Christian groups have splintered, and there is even more separation in belief within groups, the overall pool of eligible mates has dropped precipitously. So while absolute numbers might be up, the actual pool is perhaps smaller than it has been for perhaps even centuries.
- Most Christian parents are not raising devout Christian children. Much less marriageable ones.
- Young men are much less interested in marriage than they were in the past. Having a few more years under my belt since I started blogging, I have seen this more and more. Younger men are just less interested in marriage. The why of this is worthy of a whole post of its own.
- Too many people are doing too little to make marriage happen these days. Marriage needs to be a matter for the whole community.

Also, the answer to this:

> Is it possible that parents of the last several generations, responding to the cultural cues from blue-pill pastors and other sources have raised *both* sex children to be pretty useless at "traditional" marriage, and therefore a different approach to finding matches for them may be required?

…is yes and yes.

More to come as I think on it.

Update: A few more observations-

- The market is seriously hampered by the amount of deception going on. The worst lies, from what I have seen, tend to be those that people tell themselves. Self-deception makes hit harder to diagnose problems, among other ills.
- Introverts and shy people are especially vulnerable in the market right now. Given how few effective venues there are for meeting eligible mates, each one has to count that much more. For introverts, that is much more difficult.
- I am among the most the most “pro-marriage” of guys in the Christian manosphere. At least as it applies to my own life. Only a couple might be at the same level as me, such as Deep Strength. I don’t know if that was the case originally, but it seems to be the case now. And even despite my subjective “gun-ho” approach I am still very cautious.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #128

March 27, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's first passages comes from the book of Sirach. I was inspired to use it thanks to this comment by Gunner Q about how daughters should be viewed as a potential liability. He is not the first to make this observation:

> [9] A daughter keeps her father secretly wakeful,
> and worry over her robs him of sleep;
> when she is young, lest she do not marry,
> or if married, lest she be hated;
> [10] while a virgin, lest she be defiled
> or become pregnant in her father's house;
> or having a husband, lest she prove unfaithful,
> or, though married, lest she be barren.
> [11] Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter,
> lest she make you a laughingstock to your enemies,
> a byword in the city and notorious among the people,
> and put you to shame before the great multitude.

(Sirach 42:9-11)

An exchange started to develop in my most recent post. Lest it get any worse, I quote from this part of the gospel of Matthew as a refresher course:

> Judge not, that you be not judged. [2] For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. [3] Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

(Matthew 7:1-5)

Finally, these words of hope in the Lenten season:

> [16] From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. [17] Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech

> you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Deep Strength’s Advice On How To Make It Happen

March 28, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

DS has a new post up that I think is appropriate and worthwhile reading given the overall discussion taking place in various parts of the Christian ‘sphere at this time. He calls it Make it happen. Go on over and give it a read. I might offer some of my own thoughts later if time permits.

Market Analysis: Stock Imbalance

March 29, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post comes as a follow-up to a debate between Zippy and Deti in my post Market Watch. Given the amount of talking past each other, and the fact it was derailing that post, I decided a new one was appropriate. This post will let them, myself and others answer the questions that were raised. At least, that is my hope.

I will begin by quoting a question that Zippy was trying to address:

> What I am interested in is whether *women who are trying to do the right thing* have an easy time of it compared to *men who are trying to do the right thing*.

This was, in my view, the best example of that question which he raised. He put it several different ways, but I think that version is the easiest to understand.

Deti had his own set of questions:

- if women really aren't satisfied with all this casual sex they're having, why are they having it?
- If the casual sex they have is so unsatisfying and they want something else, what are they doing to change such that they don't have to have all this unsatisfying casual sex (but continue to have, nonstop)?
- And if casual sex is so unsatisfying, then what would satisfy them?
- And if something other than casual sex would satisfy them more, why don't they go get it? Or at least, why don't they NOT do things they claim are so unsatisfying?

Any other questions they have, which they would like people to try and answer, they can mention in the comments below. I will bring them up here and mention them in the main post if I feel it appropriate.

With all of that out of the way, let me try and answer these questions myself.

Let's begin with Zippy's:

> What I am interested in is whether *women who are trying to do the right thing* have an easy time of it compared to *men who are trying to do the right thing*.

His is fairly simple. I think the answer is that both of them have such a terrible time of it that it is impossible to tell who, if anyone, has it worse.

Something important to note is that Zippy is looking at the market as a whole, which effectively moves the real question to moral agency and the ability/likelihood of choosing what is good over what isn't. It isn't about who can marry, or even marry well. Just how easy it is do to what is right- which can include marrying or not marrying. With those parameters, I think men and women are on equally awful footing.

Now, if one were to alter Zippy's question (and it would be an alteration), towards asking whether men or women have an easier time when it comes to marrying right, then my

answer would change somewhat. In the past I have said that women had it easier. However, as time has passed I've reconsidered this. Originally it was a more significant advantage comparatively, although insignificant in an objective lens. it lessened over time, with teh advantage mostly owing to the lower number of marriage-worthy women as compared to men (again, comparatively- absolute numbers are something else). Nowadays I am not sure this is true. Enough men might be dropping out of the market entirely that this has changed.

Now to try and answer Deti's questions. I will tackle them in order.

1. A lot depends on the meaning we attach to "satisfaction". And of course, who we are talking about. However, if we assume just temporary sexual gratification, and women as a general aggregate, then women probably are getting *some* satisfaction. However, it is not to the level of what they want. They want more satisfaction. Remember, they are women- only the best will do (I jest, I jest). As for why they have it- because they are fools, and to borrow a metaphor, they are throwing good money after bad. They don't know where else to look for true satisfaction/fulfillment.
2. They are trying to weed out as many unworthy men as possible from the SMP. Oh, and they are also trying to sabotage each other, too.
3. Fried Ice. No, in all seriousness the answer depends on who we are talking about again. If it is women as an aggregate, it would be to have a top tier men all to herself. And to be able to toss him if bored or he loses top tier status.
4. Many possible answers. Perhaps they are lazy. Perhaps they don't know, or cannot think of anything other/better. Maybe I should let this one go…

And with that, I leave the floor open to others to take there stab at these questions, and related ones.

Who has it harder in the marriage market: devout and serious minded Christian men, or devout and serious minded Christian women?

Can we even tell? And does it even matter?

Go ahead and add your own.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #129

April 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In light of last week's post, and the fact that this is Lent, we start today's post off with another passage from the Book of Sirach:

> Do not desire a multitude of useless children,
> nor rejoice in ungodly sons.
> [2] If they multiply, do not rejoice in them,
> unless the fear of the Lord is in them.
> [3] Do not trust in their survival,
> and do not rely on their multitude;
> for one is better than a thousand,
> and to die childless is better than to have ungodly children.
> [4] For through one man of understanding a city will be filled with people,
> but through a tribe of lawless men it will be made desolate.
> [5] Many such things my eye has seen,
> and my ear has heard things more striking than these.

> [6] In an assembly of sinners a fire will be kindled,
> and in a disobedient nation wrath was kindled.
> [7] He was not propitiated for the ancient giants
> who revolted in their might.
> [8] He did not spare the neighbors of Lot,
> whom he loathed on account of their insolence.
> [9] He showed no pity for a nation devoted to destruction,
> for those destroyed in their sins;
> [10] nor for the six hundred thousand men on foot,
> who rebelliously assembled in their stubbornness.
> [11] Even if there is only one stiff-necked person,
> it will be a wonder if he remains unpunished.
> For mercy and wrath are with the Lord;
> he is mighty to forgive, and he pours out wrath.
> [12] As great as his mercy, so great is also his reproof;
> he judges a man according to his deeds.
> [13] The sinner will not escape with his plunder,
> and the patience of the godly will not be frustrated.
> [14] He will make room for every act of mercy;
> every one will receive in accordance with his deeds.

(Sirach 16:1-14)

Last week the topic of children as a liability was raised. It is clear that Ben Sira regarded

children as something that could be either a blessing or a curse. If they turn out well, then they are a blessing of the greatest nature. But if they turn out wicked- well, you better watch out. God find no joy or happiness in wicked offspring. In fact, he makes clear through the Prophet Malachi what he wants:

> Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life?And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let none be faithless to the wife of his youth.

(Malachi 2:15)

So parents have a special responsibility that they face- raising children in righteousness. As much as I want to, and feel called to marry and have children, I can appreciate the fact that my responsibilities are that much lighter without either.

St. Paul agrees that this responsibility exists, and in his first Letter to Timothy explains that it is part of the process of sanctification for mothers:

> [15] Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

(1 Timothy 2:15)

St. John Chrysostom explains in his homily concerning 1 Timothy 2 that this applies to fathers and mothers alike:

> Hear this, you fathers and mothers, that your bringing up of children shall not lose its reward. This also he says, as he proceeds, *Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children.*1 Timothy 5:10 Among other commendations he reckons this one, for it is no light praise to devote to God those children which are given them of God. For if the basis, the foundation which they lay be good, great will be their reward; as great, if they neglect it, will be their punishment. It was on account of his children that Eli perished. For he ought to have admonished them, and indeed he did admonish them, but not as he ought; but from his unwillingness to give them pain he destroyed both himself and them. Hear this, you fathers, bring your children up with great care *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Children are indeed a blessing. But like all the blessing of God, they place a responsibility upon us to use them rightly. Failing to do so brings us not further blessing, but condemnation. Our Lord and Savior explained it thus:

> [14] "For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; [15] to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. [16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. [17] So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. [18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his

> master’s money. [19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and
> settled accounts with them. [20] And he who had received the five talents came
> forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five
> talents; here I have made five talents more.’ [21] His master said to him, ‘Well done,
> good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over
> much; enter into the joy of your master.’ [22] And he also who had the two talents
> came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have
> made two talents more.’ [23] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful
> servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into
> the joy of your master.’ [24] He also who had received the one talent came forward,
> saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow,
> and gathering where you did not winnow; [25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid
> your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ [26] But his master
> answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I
> have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? [27] Then you ought to
> have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have
> received what was my own with interest. [28] So take the talent from him, and give
> it to him who has the ten talents. [29] For to every one who has will more be given,
> and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be
> taken away. [30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men
> will weep and gnash their teeth.’

(Matthew 25:14-30)

This last parable is one that I try to keep at heart at all times. God has given me much, and expects much from me. We are called to be fruitful in our lives, not barren like the Fig tree. At least, not unless we want to end up like it.

Market Analysis: Adjustments And Imbalances

April 5, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My last significant post generated quite a lot of discussion, which was a plus. I want to thank my readers for keeping it civil. That makes my job that much easier. With it out of the way, I want to make a bit of a clarification of my own stance on the matter.

I ended my post Stock Imbalance with this:

> Who has it harder in the marriage market: devout and serious minded Christian men, or devout and serious minded Christian women?
>
> Can we even tell? And does it even matter?

I offered some responses to the first two questions earlier. But today I want to tackle the third. You see, I think that the imbalances do matter, and they should be talked about, *if* discussing them can help lead to solutions.

Description without prescription helps no one in my opinion. At best it leads us into a time sink. At worst it creates bitterness and mistrust. I might still be wasting time, but I think that trying to look for solutions to the problems in the market is still worthwhile.

Perhaps only personal solutions can be found- those that work at an individual level. That is something, at least.

But maybe solutions on a larger scale are possible. Perhaps that is merely at the level of a family, or maybe a particular church. Yet that will still be significant for the community in question. And you never know, it might be possible to sow the seeds of a long-term solution at some point. To set something in motion which will reap significant dividends in the end.

It might be just a fool's hope, but it is better than nothing. Certainly I find it a better alternative to quiet despair.

So I intend to continue on with this line of inquiry- an examination of the marriage market, and a delving into possible methods of correcting the many problems that exist. My readers are more than welcome to chime in and add their own thoughts if they so desire. And if anyone finds this pointless, well, he or she can always sit it out.

Update: Just so I am crystal clear- at this point I *don't* really care who has it better. What I *do* care about is imbalances- that is, forces which favor or disfavor men or women within the market. My goal is to discuss them with the hopes of eliminating as many forces that disfavor, and spreading around or boosting those forces which favor. I look on the situation as a case where a rising tide lifts all boats.

Saturday Saints- #125

April 8, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

R is the letter for today. Thus, our saint is Saint Rimbert:

> **Saint Rimbert** (or **Rembert**) (Flanders, 830 – 11 June 888 in Bremen) was archbishop of Bremen-Hamburg from 865 until his death.
>
> A monk in Turholt (Torhout), he shared a missionary trip to Scandinavia with his friend Ansgar, whom he later succeeded as archbishop in Hamburg-Bremen in 865. He also wrote a biography about Ansgar; *Vita Ansgari*.
>
> Rimbert was unable to successfully complete the mission work to Denmark and Sweden, begun under Ansgar. He obtained market, coinage and toll rights for the city of Bremen in 888 from Emperor Arnulf of Carinthia and thus considerable improved the financial state of the archbishopric. In 884 he personally led a Frisian army against the Vikings and, after the victorious Battle of Norditi was able to drive them permanently out of East Frisia.
>
> Rimbert is revered as a saint particularly in Frisia. His feast day is 4 February. After Ansgar, epithetised the *Apostle of the North*, Rimbert is revered as the *Second Apostle of the North*, besides the missionary Sigfrid of Sweden. Lutherans likewise honor Johannes Bugenhagen.

(Source)

Market Analysis: A Lack Of Confidence

April 12, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

My Market Analysis series continues. Today I want to examine, to some degree, a point I made in Market Watch:

> Young men are much less interested in marriage than they were in the past. Having a few more years under my belt since I started blogging, I have seen this more and more. Younger men are just less interested in marriage. The why of this is worthy of a whole post of its own.

I have been thinking over this point for some time, because I knew something was going on, but wasn't sure what. I am still not certain I have it nailed down, but I will try and address it all the same. [Perhaps this discussion will help fix that.]

While I was thinking this over, it appears that Seriously Please Drop It was on the same wavelength as me. His recent post, Our Fates Are Bound- And Some Good News covered much of what I intended to discuss. So I will quote a great deal from his post. I will start with his second point, because it ties directly to my original observation:

> To put it another way: young men have generally ceased to believe what Concept 1 says it is *very important* that they believe: that they stand a reasonable chance of marrying well. In response, they work less hard to be eligible husbands.
>
> The standard conservative response has been: No problem, we'll just lie to them. Or yell at them. And that actually *worked* for a surprisingly long time, but as Dalrock details, that train is running out of steam.

I believe that young men are much less inclined to marry these days in large part because they cannot marry well. Simple cost-benefit analysis, really. The stock isn't worth the price, and so they won't play the market, if you will.

Furthermore, I believe this is most pronounced among young men who are devout Christians. Now, among the general population there isn't a marriage strike going on. [n fact a secular acquaintance of mine got married to his long time GF recently. So secular guys still are interested in marrying.] All the same, I think a drop off *is* happening. However, it is happening the most among the most devout men.

The reason for this? Well, I don't think it is just one reason. I suspect a couple are at play. Some possibilities:

- Devout Christian men are much more "picky" when it comes to a mate. They are screening for a variety of personality and character traits that are in short supply. If they are convinced that such options aren't available, they may just give up and opt out of the market.
- Devout Christian men are presumably more likely to take marriage and marriage

vows more seriously. Looking around, they can see that few do. With that kind of observation comes a natural disinclination to take part in something they perceive as likely to end poorly.
- Female behavior has become increasingly more egregious. Devout Christian men are the most likely to notice this, and to use this to come to a general determination that women simply aren't worth it these days.

I am sure there are others, and I invite my readers to supply their own thoughts.

Taken together, all of these are indicators that young men are not confident with the market. They see volatility and watered stocks everywhere. In such circumstances, it makes sense to not want to play the market at all. Which brings us to the next point:

> ### Concept 1: Marriage requires pre-marital cooperation, and therefore intersexual societal trust
>
> Good grooms and brides do not simply appear from the ether. Eligibility requires work and self-denial from both sexes, for many years before marriage.
>
> Much of the motivation for this work and self-denial comes from the carrot of marriage. But for this to work, young people must believe that somewhere in the world, their opposite number is doing the same thing.

The Market relies on both men and women to act appropriately. If one sex misbehaves, then the whole market will start to fall apart. Cooperation is key. As a lawyer once explained to me: "the most basic underlying assumption of contract law is that everyone is operating under good faith. If you take away good faith, you don't have a contract." What we have right now is a system where at least one side is perceived as acting in bad faith (if not actually doing so in large part).

Dropit sort of sums everything up in this:

> What we are hitting upon here is the importance of *morale*. We could aptly describe current failures in the marriage market as a cyclical "Morale Crisis." We should start talking about this!

He uses the word morale, and it works. Morale is certainly low. However, I think the underlying basis for that low morale is a lack of confidence or trust in the market. People are convinced that the players in the market are not acting in good faith. Let's examine in further detail this tidy little bit of wisdom:

> **"Why prepare for marriage? Guys will always be available"**
>
> leads to
>
> **"Why prepare for marriage? There are no girls available"**
>
> leads to
>
> **"Why prepare for marriage? There are no guys available."**

Examining it in detail, you can see where bad faith leads us towards. Point 1 is all about women acting in bad faith. The realization of this leads men to stop bothering becoming marriageable, because it is clear to them that women aren't to be trusted. In turn this leads those women who don't engage in Point 1 thinking to be convinced that men aren't serious about marriage, and they in turn throw their hands in the air. It is a vicious cycle with no end-point but an utter lack of trust in the opposite sex and in the institution of marriage.

My attempt at a brief summation: Young men, especially devout Christian men, are not inclined towards marriage because they have come to believe they cannot trust their female counterparts. In turn many of the remaining decent women are also coming to believe they cannot trust the men, either. We cannot begin to fix the marriage market, especially among devout Christians, until we fix the trust issues that exist between men and women.

I am going to hold off on further commentary for the moment. In the meantime I hope my readers will chime in and offer their thoughts.

The Burden Of Iniquities

April 15, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link



> Who has believed what we have heard?
> And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
> [2] For he grew up before him like a young plant,
> and like a root out of dry ground;
> he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him,
> and no beauty that we should desire him.
> [3] He was despised and rejected by men;
> a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
> and as one from whom men hide their faces
> he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

> [4] Surely he has borne our griefs
> and carried our sorrows;
> yet we esteemed him stricken,
> smitten by God, and afflicted.
> [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions,
> he was bruised for our iniquities;
> upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
> and with his stripes we are healed.
> [6] All we like sheep have gone astray;
> we have turned every one to his own way;

and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth.
8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
9 And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him;
he has put him to grief;
when he makes himself an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;
11 he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous;
and he shall bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out his soul to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

(Isaiah 53)

Christ is Risen!

April 17, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> Are there any who are devout lovers of God?
> Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival!
>
> Are there any who are grateful servants?
> Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!
>
> Are there any weary with fasting?
> Let them now receive their wages!
>
> If any have toiled from the first hour,
> let them receive their due reward;
> If any have come after the third hour,
> let him with gratitude join in the Feast!
> And he that arrived after the sixth hour,
> let him not doubt; for he too shall sustain no loss.
> And if any delayed until the ninth hour,
> let him not hesitate; but let him come too.
> And he who arrived only at the eleventh hour,
> let him not be afraid by reason of his delay.
> For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first.
> He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour,
> as well as to him that toiled from the first.
>
> To this one He gives, and upon another He bestows.
> He accepts the works as He greets the endeavor.
> The deed He honors and the intention He commends.
> Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord!
>
> First and last alike receive your reward;
> rich and poor, rejoice together!
> Sober and slothful, celebrate the day!
> You that have kept the fast, and you that have not,
> rejoice today for the Table is richly laden!
>
> Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one.
> Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith.
> Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!
>
> Let no one grieve at his poverty,
> for the universal kingdom has been revealed.
>
> Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;
> for forgiveness has risen from the grave.
>
> Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free.

> He has destroyed it by enduring it.
> He destroyed Hell when He descended into it.
> He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh.
>
> Isaiah foretold this when he said,
> “You, O Hell, have been troubled by encountering Him below.”
> Hell was in an uproar because it was done away with.
> It was in an uproar because it is mocked.
> It was in an uproar, for it is destroyed.
> It is in an uproar, for it is annihilated.
> It is in an uproar, for it is now made captive.
>
> Hell took a body, and discovered God.
> It took earth, and encountered Heaven.
> It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.
>
> O death, where is thy sting?
> O Hell, where is thy victory?
>
> Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated!
> Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!
> Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!
> Christ is Risen, and life is liberated!
>
> Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead;
> for Christ having risen from the dead,
> is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
>
> To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!
>
> *The Easter sermon of John Chrysostom (circa 400 AD)*

Saturday Saints- #126

April 22, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Tomorrow is Thomas Sunday, so named because of St. Thomas the Apostle. Thus, it seems fitting that he is the saint for today:

> **Thomas the Apostle** (called **Didymus** which means “the twin” or Mar Thoma in Syriac) was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament. He is informally called *doubting Thomas* because he doubted Jesus’ resurrection when first told (in the Gospel of John account only), followed later by his confession of faith, “My Lord and my God”, on seeing Jesus’ wounded body.
>
> Tradition claims he travelled outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel, travelling as far as Tamilakam which are the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in present-day India. According to tradition, the Apostle reached Muziris, (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in the state of Kerala, India) in AD 52 and baptized several people, founding what today are known as Saint Thomas Christians or MarThoma Nazranis. After his death, the reputed relics of Saint Thomas the Apostle were enshrined as far as Mesopotamia in the 3rd century, and later moved to various places. In 1258, some of the relics were brought to Abruzzo in Ortona, Italy, where they have been held in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle. He is often regarded as the Patron Saint of India, and the name *Thoma* remains quite popular among Saint Thomas Christians of India.

Much, much more can be found at his wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #130

April 24, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Thomas Sunday. So named because of the following passage from the Gospel of John:

> [24] Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.”
>
> [26] Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace be with you.” [27] Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.” [28] Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” [29] Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

(John 20: 24-29)

Here is what St. John Chrysostom had to say about this particular passage:

> *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said, Except I shall see in His hands —I will not believe.*
> 1. As to believe carelessly and in a random way, comes of an over-easy temper; so to be beyond measure curious and meddlesome, marks a most gross understanding. On this account Thomas is held to blame. For he believed not the Apostles when they said, *We have seen the Lord*; not so much mistrusting them, as deeming the thing to be impossible, that is to say, the resurrection from the dead. Since he says not, *I do not believe you,* but, *Except I put my hand— I do not believe.* But how was it, that when all were collected together, he alone was absent? Probably after the dispersion which had lately taken place, he had not returned even then. But do thou, when you see the unbelief of the disciple, consider the lovingkindness of the Lord, how for the sake of a single soul He showed Himself with His wounds, and comes in order to save even the one, though he was grosser than the rest; on which account indeed he sought proof from the grossest of the senses, and would not even trust his eyes. For he said not, *Except I see,* but, *Except I handle,* he says, lest what he saw might somehow be an apparition. Yet the disciples who told him these things, were at the time worthy of credit, and so was He that promised; yet, since he desired more, Christ did not deprive him even of this.
>
> And why does He not appear to him straightway, instead of *after eight days*? John

20:26 In order that being in the mean time continually instructed by the disciples, and hearing the same thing, he might be inflamed to more eager desire, and be more ready to believe for the future. But whence knew he that His side had been opened? From having heard it from the disciples. How then did he believe partly, and partly not believe? Because this thing was very strange and wonderful. But observe, I pray you, the truthfulness of the disciples, how they hide no faults, either their own or others', but record them with great veracity.

Jesus again presents himself to them, and waits not to be requested by Thomas, nor to hear any such thing, but before he had spoken, Himself prevented him, and fulfilled his desire; showing that even when he spoke those words to the disciples, He was present. For He used the same words, and in a manner conveying a sharp rebuke, and instruction for the future. For having said,

Reach hither your finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither your hand, and thrust it into My side; He added,
And be not faithless, but believing.

Do you see that his doubt proceeded from unbelief? But it was before he had received the Spirit; after that, it was no longer so, but, for the future, they were perfected.

And not in this way only did Jesus rebuke him, but also by what follows; for when he, being fully satisfied, breathed again, and cried aloud,

My Lord, and my God, He says,
Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.
For this is of faith, to receive things not seen; since, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*Hebrews 11:1 And here He pronounces blessed not the disciples only, but those also who after them should believe. *Yet,* says some one, *the disciples saw and believed.* Yes, but they sought nothing of the kind, but from the proof of the napkins, they straightway received the word concerning the Resurrection, and before they saw the body, exhibited all faith. When therefore any one in the present day say, *I would that I had lived in those times, and had seen Christ working miracles,* let them reflect, that, *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

It is worth enquiring, how an incorruptible body showed the prints of the nails, and was tangible by a mortal hand. But be not thou disturbed; what took place was a matter of condescension. For that which was so subtle and light as to enter in when the doors were shut, was free from all density ; but this marvel was shown, that the Resurrection might be believed, and that men might know that it was the Crucified One Himself, and that another rose not in His stead. On this account He arose bearing the signs of the Cross, and on this account He eats. At least the Apostles everywhere made this a sign of the Resurrection, saying, *We, who ate and drank with Him.*Acts 10:41 As therefore when we see Him walking

> on the waves before the Crucifixion, we do not say, that that body is of a different nature, but of our own; so after the Resurrection, when we see Him with the prints of the nails, we will no more say, that he is therefore corruptible. For He exhibited these appearances on account of the disciple.

(Source)

I end the post with this passage from Ecclesiastes, along with some thoughts:

> [12] I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. [13] And I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. [14] I have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.
>
> [15] What is crooked cannot be made straight,
> and what is lacking cannot be numbered.
>
> [16] I said to myself, “I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.” [17] And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

> [18] For in much wisdom is much vexation,
> and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

(Ecclesiastes 1: 12-18)

Reading this passage, the truth of it leapt off the page. There are plenty of times in my life when I wish I wasn’t nearly so smart as I am. I imagine that stupidity would make me much happier with my life. I would be blind to most of what was going on around me, and accordingly would be not nearly as troubled as I am. Anyone else ever have similar thoughts?

Market Analysis: Penny Stocks

April 27, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a continuation of my Market Analysis series, which began with my post Market Watch. Today I want to cover a topic which was brought up by Elspeth in a couple of comments. Here is the first:

> I'm just done, done, done, with pretending that Christ cannot change people deep down and for real. Suppose Paul had been deemed of no earthly use to the Church because of his previous persecution of it.

Which is followed by this:

> None of that changes my original assertion that people can and do have sincere changes of heart, and that any person's decision to reject a certain group of people as mates is fine but let's kill the "even real and true Christians are damaged beyond any kind of repair as potential mates".

The issue here is whether some people are so "damaged" that there is no realistic hope of recovery, and thus, eventual marriageability. In the past the word "ruined" might have been used of such cases- as in, ruined for marriage.

First to define "damage" in this context. A simple explanation would be strains or burdens on someone's physical/mental/emotional well-being which impair his or her ability to have a successful/stable marriage. [If someone has thoughts on a better explanation please mention below.] I mention all of these because they can and do all affect one's capacity to be a good spouse.

It is also worth mentioning that these factors- these burdens- are not necessarily the fault of the person in question. Some are- the products of sin, for example. But others might simply be the product of nature (think certain illnesses) or the willful actions of others (the trauma created by abuse, for example).

The way I see it, what we are talking about here is a spectrum of "damage." Everyone has at least *some* damage- small things which would get in the way of their being a good husband or wife. However, there is a spread which takes place. Some people have relatively little damage (a few bad habits), and others have a huge amount of damage (think of some stories from the 'sphere). Now, somewhere on this spectrum is a point where someone is too damaged to be considered marriageable. That is, they are too burdened, as they are at that time, to make a good spouse. [I suspect this point is not fixed- it is heavily influenced by culture and the overall environment- thoughts for another post.]

Now all of this needs to take into account that where people fall in this spectrum changes over time. Sometimes damage is "healed." Sometimes it gets worse or new damage takes place. So the real question is whether some damage cannot "heal" or get better.

Well, having thought it over some, I think there are some people who are beyond simply

“damaged.” These people are *broken.* I suspect most of my readers know people like this. People who have experienced terrible trauma and struggle with it daily. They are enduring burdens which go beyond the need for ordinary healing- they need out and out miracles. And not the everyday miracles we often overlook- I mean the the kind which are unmistakable.

Now, these miracles do happen. Perhaps my readers know of some instances, either with people they know or have heard of through the grapevine. But all the same, without such miracles those people would not have improved. Thankfully they are not common. But they do exist.

At the same time, all of this has gotten me thinking about how exactly people “heal.” And how Christian transformations work. I know they work- I have seen them happen first hand. But I have been wondering about the process. Since Elspeth mentioned St. Paul, I think this seems appropriate to ponder:

> I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and
> revelations of the Lord. [2] I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was
> caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not
> know, God knows. [3] And I know that this man was caught up into
> Paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—
> [4] and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. [5] On behalf of
> this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my
> weaknesses. [6] Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be
> speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me
> than he sees in me or hears from me. [7] And to keep me from being too elated by
> the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of
> Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. [8] Three times I besought
> the Lord about this, that it should leave me; [9] but he said to me, “My grace is
> sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” I will all the more
> gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For
> the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships,
> persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

(2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

Part of me wonders if the transformation is not always about healing. That is, it isn’t about removing the harm or burden. Instead, it is about lending strength to the person in question such that they are able to carry on despite the burden. If so, this is important to understand because there is a marked difference in how they operate.

If the burden is gone, then it should hopefully not come back to haunt someone in the future. But if the burden remains and is covered by grace, then a lapse in faith by the person means that it comes out full force again.

Perhaps my readers have some thoughts on this they would like to share. I am curious to hear what you folks have to say.

Market Analysis: Collective Bargaining

May 3, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a continuation of my Market Analysis series, which began in my post Market Watch. In today's post I want to examine and discuss in greater detail this observation that I made:

> Too many people are doing too little to make marriage happen these days. Marriage needs to be a matter for the whole community.

I have two general areas I want to examine here. The first to look at is the community angle. The second is about making marriage happen.

Starting with community, there is a saying about how "it takes a village" which I think is appropriate here.

Marriage is a communal effort. Everyone in the community is involved in ensuring that it works. When the community isn't supportive of marriage in general, and marriages in particular, then you get what we have today: tons of divorces and a crashing marriage rate.

Looking back at my quote, I had it wrong. I shouldn't have said "Marriage needs to be a matter for the whole community," but instead should have said "Marriage **is** a matter for the whole community." Whatever we say or think about it, that simple fact cannot be changed any more than human nature can be changed. We are social beings, and our social environment impacts all of our relationships.

The marriage market cannot be healthy unless the community is supportive of it. When that support is withdrawn, then our baser natures will assert themselves. Thus we end up with the sexual marketplace instead. I suppose, to continue with market metaphors, that the marriage market can be described as a fairly regulated market which, absent those regulations, will quickly turn into a real mess.

Let's expand that first sentence somewhat. What does "make marriage happen" actually mean? I can think of a number of things:

- Encourage young people to marry verbally- that is, talk to them and spur them towards marriage if that is their calling.
- Publicly talk about the benefits of marriage and how wonderful it is or can be, especially around young people.
- Stop badmouthing marriage- eliminate the griping and negative attitude that is so often expressed. [At the same time efforts need to be made to address the source of these woes. But keep it below the radar]
- Provide financial support and incentives to young people to marry.
- Discourage and admonish against individualist attitudes which lead young people away from marriage (careerism, travelism, etc.)
- Rebuke and punish those who break up marriages or treat them flippantly.

- Reassure young people that the community will have their back during rough spots in the marriage.
- Promote life and the unique blessing that is children.

Those are just a few ideas I have come up with while thinking about it. I invite my readers to offer their thoughts on the subject. This post is less developed because I am hoping many of you can propel the discussion forward, hopefully towards directions I haven't thought of.

Saturday Saints- #127

May 6, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Our letter for today is S. Given the Paschal season, our saint for today is Saint Salome:

> **Salome** (Hebrew: שלומית, *Shelomit*), was a follower of Jesus who appears briefly in the canonical gospels and in more detail in apocryphal writings. She is sometimes identified as the wife of Zebedee, the mother of James and John, two of the Apostles of Jesus, and sometimes also as the cousin of Mary, mother of Jesus. In Roman Catholic tradition Salome is counted as one of the Three Marys.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.



Knowing And Knowing

May 9, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

There is a different a difference between knowing something… and *knowing* something.

This is the difference between knowledge gained in the academic sense- that of a purely intellectual nature- and that knowledge which is reflexive and intuitive.

After my initial mental roadblocks, the continuing issue with “Red Pill” affairs for me has been the differences between those two forms of knowledge. I would like to think that I am pretty good at that first level of understanding. I am quite intelligent, and grasping interconnected concepts such as are discussed in these parts suits me well. On the other hand, I still have issues with knowing things on an intuitive or reflexive level. I find this to be a lot harder for me.

Is it the same for my readers? Or is this just a personality thing?

My suspicion is that intuitive knowledge is more difficult to acquire because it requires actual experience. Military training tries to create as much reflexive knowledge as possible through intense training. The goal is to make training as realistic as possible, so as to get a soldier to act the same way in the field. In terms of a reflexive understanding of women, I don’t think anything but actual experience interacting with them will do. From my understanding PUA training courses often involve a lot of work out in the field interacting with real women. This would tend to support the notion that nothing beats experience.

I also suspect that constant practice is important as well. I wouldn’t be surprised if the intuition aspect of this knowledge can fade over time, especially if a man’s original upbringing was very “Blue Pill.” In that case it isn’t necessarily like riding a bike- it all won’t come back to you right away. In bodybuilding you have to work to keep fit, you slack off and the muscle starts to atrophy. The same principle might apply here as well. I’m curious if my readers have their won thoughts on that.

And in case folks wonder why this post, well, let us just say that I flubbed something recently [at least, I’m 95% sure I did]. Looking back I was able to use that intellectual knowledge to see where I screwed up. At the time though I was thrown, and it took me too long to recover. I am a quick thinker, but not *that* quick.

Update: Zippy has a great explanation of knowledge/competence:

> Unconscious incompetence:
> You don’t even know that you don’t know how.
>
> Conscious incompetence:
> You know that you don’t know how.
>
> Conscious competence:
> You know how, but you have to think about it as you do it.
>
> Unconscious competence:

> You know how and don’t have to think about it.

Assistance Sought: Captain and First Officer Tales

May 12, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have strong suspicion that many of my readers are of a… shall we say… bookish nature. As in, they are major nerds. So I am counting on that nerd power to help me out.

What I am looking for is instances in Star Trek of good Captain and First Officer interactions. This would include instances where they operated well together, as well as instances where conflict was handled. In fact the latter would be especially nice.

I am hoping that my readers will know of specific episodes where these instances take place. At the moment I don't quite have the time to watch them all to find out on my own.

*Other instances of good Captain and First Officer interactions outside of Star Trek would also be ok too.

The Courage to Empathize

May 13, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is something of a spur of the moment thing. It comes about as a result of two posts intersecting in my mind today. The first is "well, when I called her 'evil', she just laughed" over at 80 Proof Oinomancy. I encourage everyone to read the whole thing, as it is pithy, in keeping with Ace's usual style. The most important parts are these:

> See, the vast majority (I'd say ≥ 95%) of women that play "*tough*" are, at their core—
>
> Terrified.
>
> Odds are they had a very weak – if not completely absent – father figure.
>
> This left them feeling twice as vulnerable as the average female.
>
> Now, be sure to understand, dear reader, **fear is a female's default position**.

coupled with:

> So, am I saying all of those women are – at heart – just frightened, little girls?
>
> (Permit me to be uncharacteristically clear, rather than my usually cryptic self.)
>
> Yes.
>
> That's exactly what I'm saying.

Now, all of this I have heard and known before. Still, a refresher never hurts, especially when the timing matches up with something else you read. In this case another post.

The second post is one over at Scott's blog, Ideals are never fully attainable. The relevant part is this section at the end:

> If may also be true that women do not naturally respond with graciousness at the sight of their husbands trying harder, this is also something that must be addressed. I don't actually believe that women struggle with empathy. I do, however believe they tend to lack the courage and/or motivation to turn the data provided by empathic responses into actionable items. In other words, the kind of empathy that changes your life and the lives around you. This is what happens when you see something that is not right and then you make a series of decisions about what can be done, and then do them. But no one escapes the Lords wrath in the end when He will ask "why did you stubbornly wait to do the right thing?" and we respond:

> "I was waiting for the other person to go first."

Both of these posts together, or at least the ideas they presented, made something click in me. You see, I have a theory now why women seem to have trouble with empathy. This

is something long discussed in the manosphere, and there are even some commenters who argue women are incapable of empathy. Of course, there are also those who argue women have no agency or are incapable of loyalty, etc.

As for myself, I think women are entirely capable of empathy. I have known some empathetic women. And history is filled with numerous examples of such women- indeed the general culture still clings to the notion that women are naturally empathetic. That had to come from somewhere. My suspicion is that it did in fact used to be the case, although in recent years that has changed.

So where am I going with all of this? Here goes:

I theorize that women are having difficulty in this age with empathy because they are insecure and afraid- and empathy requires courage to carry out.

Here are the individual arguments which lead to this conclusion:

Argument 1: Empathy requires courage-

To empathize with someone is to put yourself in their shoes. This requires that you both understand their position, and mentally assume it as well. That involves, by necessity, assuming a vulnerable state in order to feel what they feel. That requires courage because you will be experiencing- and confronting- fears and insecurities you would otherwise not face.

Argument 2: Women's default state is fear-

As Ace explains, fear is a female's default state. This is difficult for men to internalize, because while we feel fear we don't live it like a woman does. Consider their vulnerability and weakness compared to ours, and this becomes so much clearer. Not to mention test this argument against their actions and see how things start to make sense.

Argument 3: Women are more insecure than ever-

While there are exceptions, most women these days are profoundly insecure. It is no wonder why. Masculine men are increasingly scarce. They are cut off from the traditional sources of security and sense of belonging- families are small, separated and play little role in everyday life, a sense of greater community is non-existent, and they have increasingly been pushed into roles that are traditionally male (which under natural conditions would only occur in a state of social/community distress).

Argument 4: Insecurity undermines courage-

To be insecure and to be afraid are not necessarily the same, but both are closely aligned and both together interfere with courage. To feel fear, and to be afraid, are also not the same. It is natural to feel fear at various things. But to feel afraid is to let that fear take hold of you and guide you. Herein lies the problem- fear, when it guides an individual, interferes with our higher callings, such as empathy. I believe this is because being afraid is inherently emotional, and thus tied to our bodies and their Appetites, while being empathetic is a matter of the soul and the Reason/Will. Being afraid is an instance of the body suborning the soul, and thus matters of the soul, such as empathy, are tossed aside.

Argument 5- Notable empathetic women felt a sense of peace-

If you look back in history at some of the female saints noted for being empathetic, there was a profound sense of peace in their lives. They were unafraid- often despite great and obvious perils to their well-being. I believe this was a product of two functions. The first and most important was the peace that their Faith gave to them- a peace given not as the world gives it. The second reason was that the culture of the time didn't encourage or stimulate female insecurity like ours does now. Thus, it was easier for them to overcome and rise above that default state of fear.

When you take these different arguments and combine them, the natural conclusion is that women have trouble with empathy because they are profoundly insecure and afraid. Until those insecurities are resolved, and until they are no longer afraid (or are at least able to overcome their fears), they will lack the means to show true empathy.

In the context of Scott's post previously mentioned, you can see the problem with the Promise Keeper's movement. The men were doubling down on actions which made their wives even more insecure. Which only increased the tendency of those women to act out in a negative manner. Which of course made the men feel bad, and believe they were doing something wrong. So they doubled down again on the foolishness, with even more negativity resulting. It is a vicious cycle which cannot end well.

Random Musings and Links- #9

May 17, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Its been a while since I've done one of these, so here goes…

A random thought I had recently: Are most "social niceties" something that women created just so that men could break them?

Scott over at American Dad wrote a post over at American Dad titled Christian MGTOW as Pauline Celibacy. He asks:

> As "game" supposedly has a Christian application, (within the context of honorable courtship leading to marriage) does also MGTOW?
>
> I don't know. I'm just asking. I just know that I have obligations as a husband and father that make a certain level of risk for the Kingdom unacceptable. I try, I really do. This very site is risky in light of what it could cost me if taken the wrong way. But are the MGTOWs the true warriors of the faith?

My own take is that it probably isn't, at least when you look how how MGTOW is usually defined. As commenters over there pointed out, MGTOW means Men Going Their Own Way… and we as Christians are supposed to be going God's way. MGTOW is a secular response to widespread problems with the marriage market. A Christian response is necessarily different. As others have pointed out before, Christian men are called to be patriarchs or monks (which is not the same thing as a hermit, despite moderns tending to think as much). We are called to actively serve God- whether by raising a family, ministering to those in need or devoting our lives to prayer (which is ultimately about praying for the sake of others).

Ace over at 80 Proof Oinomancy has an interesting new post about friendship and social media. If I read him correctly, he is suggesting that people are using social media to try and keep friendships alive which rightly should be allowed to die. I suspect he is trying to point out that friendship always has a utilitarian component to it. By that I mean that when we have friend at some point in our life, they are our friends for (presumably) good reasons. And when those reasons are long gone, why exactly should we try to keep them our friends? Indeed, with those reasons gone, are they even friends any more? Food for thought.

Deep Strength wrote a post a few days back about the Questionable Strategy that woman employed. If you read through his post you will realize that she is on the wrong track, and so are a lot of other women. Now there is the thing- I will defend such women… to a point. They have almost certainly been mislead their whole life about how to increase their changes of snagging a good man. Including and especially from those they trusted to help them. Where I won't defend them is when they refuse to listen to reason. When they will refuse to change their approach and ignore the advice of those who are genuinely trying to help them (in an effective way). And a whole lot of people fall in that

category, unfortunately.

Mrs. ktc linked to an interesting poll. Loyalty and obedience (but I repeat myself) go a long way in the eyes of men.

[If I can think of others to add, I will update this post and mention them here. My readers are of course encouraged to offer suggestions of their own if they read any good posts lately.]

Update 1: Another rather random idea that popped in my head:

A woman either looks up to the men in her life, or looks down upon them. There really isn't any room for a middle ground.

Saturday Saints- #128

May 20, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's letter is the letter "T." This gives us our saint, Saint Thorlak:

> **Saint Thorlak Thorhallsson** (Old Norse: *Þorlákr Þórhallsson*; Icelandic: *Þorlákur Þórhallsson*; Latin: *Thorlacus*; 1133 – December 23, 1193), also spelled **Thorlac**, is the patron saint of Iceland. He was bishop of Skalholt from 1178 until his death. Thorlac's relics were translated to the cathedral of Skálholt in 1198, not long after his successor as bishop, Páll Jónsson, announced at the Althing that vows could be made to Thorlac. His status as a saint did not receive official recognition from the Catholic Church until January 14, 1984, when John Paul II canonized him and declared him the patron saint of Iceland. His feast day is December 23. He is currently being considered as a potential patron saint of people with autism and autism spectrum disabilities by a grassroots movement called the Mission of Saint Thorlak.

(Gotta love that name, eh?)

More can be found out about him at his wiki, located here.



Overt Versus Covert

May 24, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Short post today. I hope that my readers will really drive the discussion with this one.

I have been doing some thinking lately how the whole process of actively trying to “woo” someone. There are two main models which are proposed, one of them the more widely accepted model and the other more common around the manosphere. They are:

- **Men are the pursuers and Women are the pursued**
- **Men display and Women choose**

I would like to examine these two models, because I am wondering if they are necessarily mutually exclusive. One way of reconciling these two is the following:

Men Display –> Women Choose –> Men Pursue –> Women are Pursued

All of the potential models involve men starting the process. Not really a surprise, I guess. Now to get to the title of the post.

One way that I have been looking at this is that men generally are overt in their actions, and women are covert. For example, men display overtly- they are proactive in their masculine endeavors, for example. Or in their gaining of status/money. And of course, when it comes to actual pursuit, they are definitely overt.

On the other hand, women tend to be covert when they are pursued. They lead men on with IOIs and reciprocal behavior, much of it subtle. The interesting question then, is whether women are overt or covert when they “choose.” A covert approach would be to show subtle interest in a man, such as display IOIs or spend time near him. An overt approach though… I doubt it would look exactly like a man’s. Probably much less subtle IOIs.

What I would like is my reader’s input. What do you think tends to happen? Which model? And is it usually men are overt, women covert? Or are women just as overt? And does it look different from how men act overtly? Please give your thoughts below. Feel free to throw personal stories and anecdotes around all you want.

Sometimes It Is The Little Things

May 26, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was at a dance recently, and one of the ladies I danced with stood out above the others. It wasn't that she was the best dancer. Or that she was the best looking there (although she was cute). Rather, what set her apart was her attitude… and her smile. She came across as happy, even joyful. And her smile lit up her face.

This is something that a lot of women could afford to learn: A pleasant attitude and a cheerful smile go a long way in setting yourself apart from other women.

Compatibility And Failure

May 27, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A two topic post today. The first topic is this post over at Deep Strength's blog. In his post Biblical prescriptions with no bible, DS examines an ostensibly Christian article which discusses sex and marriage. As DS points out, actual scripture doesn't show up very often in the article, and the most important parts (at least of the New Testament) are missing. The key part I want to talk about is his response here:

> One would think that those who burn with passion and get married would have "great sex," especially with lots of practice. If they're burning with passion, they're going to have lots of sex. Of course, it's not guaranteed there will be "great sex," but if the each spouse is focusing on the needs of the other, then it will definitely improve significantly over the course of time.
>
> Then you have garbage like "sexual incompatibility" which is just a "lack of practice" and "lack of focusing on the other's needs" and/or "lack of attraction." In other words, selfishness.

Given how it is used, "sexual incompatibility" is a concept which means both everything and nothing at the same time. It is a catchall term that means whatever the user intends it to mean at any specific point in time, without necessary reference to how it is used elsewhere, or even before by the same person. Thus, it is basically worthless.

The way I see it, most sexual problems in marriage are rooted in one of these problems:

- One or both spouses is not sexually attracted to the other spouse
- One or both of the spouses has some sort of mental hangup with sex
- One or both of the spouses has some sort of medical condition which is tied to sex (perhaps something that causes pain during the conjugal act)

Now to talk about each.

Sexual Attraction is one of those elephants in the room that most Christians will just ignore. And I suspect most "compatibility" issues are tied to this. I've written on the subject numerous times before, but it never hurts to repeat myself here. Unless the situation is truly extraordinary, a couple should **NEVER** marry unless they share at least some sexual attraction towards each other. It is never certain that this will change in a positive direction after marriage, and even then, it won't make for a fun wedding night. Solutions to a problem here are for another post, but this is definitely a problem.

Mental hangups can come from a number of sources. Perhaps one of the spouses was the victim of sexual abuse in the past, and this has colored his/her view of sex. Maybe one or both of the spouses engaged in sexual sin in the past, and this has interfered with their ability to be one flesh with their spouse (say, because of a lack of bonding or an inability to be aroused normally). Or maybe one or both spouses was raised and taught an

improper view of human sexuality which has had a lasting impact on them. For example, maybe they were taught sexuality was inherently “dirty” or evil, and thus they tried to repress their sexuality (rather than discipline and control) it in the past. Finally, there are issues of heart and attitude- normally based in how one spouse views the other. This is mostly a female problem, as it is tied to attraction, which is based in part on how a woman views a man.

Medical conditions are another possibility. Some might not have solutions, but many do. As so many commercials say, see your personal physician about the matter.

The second topic has to do with failure, and relies on this post over at Alpha Game. Vox uses the example of a “Gamma” to explain this important point:

> What [the “Gamma”] has to do is adopt the philosophy “fail faster”. The more you try and fail, and the faster you can speed up that process, the more likely it is that one or more of your future endeavors will meet with success.

This is a tough thing for some men to accept. We can grow up with a sense that failure is to be avoided at all costs. That was me growing up (I definitely had Gamma tendencies). But failure is a necessary part of life. Without failure there can be no growth. Everyone fails at some point. Everyone. If you aren’t failing, it means you aren’t really trying. And if you aren’t really trying, you won’t ever get anything of important done in your life.

This is especially true, and especially difficult, when women are concerned. Rejection and failing with women isn’t easy for a man. At least at first. But it is part of the process of becoming good at interacting with them. A man just has to learn to deal with the frustration and feeling of failure. Like death and taxes, it is just part of life.

And yes, I know it is easier said then done. I flopped recently, and it was damned frustrating for a while. But I got over it. And I am still going forward. Self-pity of self-loathing might appear to feel good at the time, but you always regret them in the end. Remembering that helped me overcome any sense of failure, and instead try to look at it as a learning experience. It is always good to remember what Vox has to say in his closing lines:

> Don’t be afraid to fail. Don’t be afraid to be seen to try. Even the most successful people fail, badly, most of the time.

Prayers For The Fallen

May 29, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Unfortunately, I ran out of time yesterday to do a scripture post. Since today is Memorial Day here in the US, I think it would fit to do a post that tries to cover both bases. Here is a reading from Second Maccabees which is relevant:

> [38] Then Judas assembled his army and went to the city of Adul′lam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and they kept the sabbath there.
>
> [39] On the next day, as by that time it had become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kinsmen in the sepulchres of their fathers. [40] Then under the tunic of every one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jam′nia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was why these men had fallen. [41] So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; [42] and they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And the noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. [43] He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. [44] For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. [45] But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.

(2 Maccabees 12:38-45)

Brief Update

June 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have found myself pretty busy lately, and posting has suffered as a result. This will continue for at least the next week, if not two. So during that time period don't be surprised if I only write a weekend post or two.

in the meantime, while this is going on I am going to start to finally write my final "Market Analysis" post. The subject will be "parental malpractice," one that I've meant to write for a very long time. Hopefully it will prove worth the wait.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #131

June 5, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been over a month since I've written any of these posts. Not sure where the time went. Anyways, time to correct that- especially since today is Pentecost. Lately I have been going through the Letter to the Romans. This section caught my interest earlier today:

> [15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. [16] And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. [17] If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.
>
> [18] Then 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. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. [20] Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, [21] so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Romans 5:15-21)

Given how much terrible darkness came about as a result of the fall, it is always reassuring to be reminded that even greater things have come about from the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord. God saved the best for last. In the spirit of which (sorry, couldn't help it), I thought this passage was appropriate:

> On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; [2] Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. [3] When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." [4] And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." [5] His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." [6] Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. [7] Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. [8] He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. [9] When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom [10] and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when

> men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine
> until now.” [11] This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and
> manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

(John 2:1-11)

One of the areas where I am weak is in hope. It is something which I sometimes (too often, really) lose sight of. I need passages like these to remind myself that greater things are to come, especially at the end of the Age.

And of course, since today *is* Pentecost, I would be remiss if I didn't include this:

> When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. [2] And
> suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled
> all the house where they were sitting. [3] And there appeared to them tongues as
> of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with
> the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them
> utterance.
>
> [5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation
> under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were
> bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. [7] And
> they were amazed and wondered, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking
> Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?
> [9] Par′thians and Medes and E′lamites and residents of Mesopota′mia, Judea and
> Cappado′cia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phryg′ia and Pamphyl′ia, Egypt and the parts of
> Libya belonging to Cyre′ne, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,
> [11] Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty
> works of God.”

(Acts 2:1-11)

I will leave with this Byzantine prayer which speaks far better than I ever could:

> O Holy Spirit
> Mighty Defender
> To all who love You
> Comfort You give.
> Everywhere present
> Fountain of Virtues
> Without Your kindness
> No one could live.
>
> O Holy Spirit
> Treasury of Blessings
> Come, as was promised
> Live-giving Flame
> Come, dwell within us

> Quicken our cool hearts
> Strengthen our purpose
> To praise Your Name.

Saturday Saints- #129

June 17, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We come again to the letter “U”. Our saint for today is Pope Urban I:

> **Pope Urban I** (Latin: *Urbanus I*) was Bishop of Rome or Pope from 222 to 23 May 230. He was born in Rome and succeeded Pope Callixtus I, who had been martyred. It was previously believed for centuries that Urban I was also martyred. However, recent historical discoveries now lead scholars to believe that he died of natural causes.
>
> Much of Urban’s life is shrouded in mystery, leading to many myths and misconceptions. Despite the lack of sources he is the first Pope whose reign can be definitely dated. Two prominent sources do exist for Urban’s pontificate: Eusebius’ history of the early Church and also an inscription in the *Coemeterium Callisti* which names the Pope
>
> Urban ascended to the Chair of Saint Peter in the year of the Roman Emperor Elagabalus’ assassination and served during the reign of Alexander Severus. It is believed that Urban’s pontificate was during a peaceful time for Christians in the Empire as Severus did not promote the persecution of Christianity.

(Source)

A Note On Comments Policy

June 21, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I tend to be fairly lenient when it comes to comments. Probably too lenient at points, especially when people bring stuff from other blogs over here. However, I do have some limits. I posted earlier in the year about this subject. Here is what I said was not permitted:

1. Obscenity or excess profanity. The latter is sometimes appropriate, but most of the time is unnecessary. Keep it clean, or keep it elsewhere.
2. Link dumping to your own blog. If you have your own blog, that is great. Feel free to link it on occasion, or when you have a post worth reading. But linking to your homepage every comment is irksome and will get you banned.
3. A lack of civility. One can challenge the ideas of another while still keeping it civil. If anything, this is easier with the internet, because you don't have the other person right in front of you getting in your face. Take the time to be respectful, even if you think the other person doesn't deserve it.
4. Sock Puppets. Just don't do it. Use one ID, and keep at it. If you need to switch, e-mail me to let me know. You can find my e-mail in the About page.
5. Linking to harmful or obscene websites. Nothing more need be said.
6. Lying about what I or other commenters have said. Feel free to critique myself or the other readers all you want. Just don't misrepresent what folks are actually saying. This is a pet peeve of mine, and *will* get you banned.
7. Extreme or excessive off-topic comments. Posts are meant to discuss specific topics, and just those topics. If you want to talk about something else, use another blog (such as your own), or petition for a post on that/those subject(s).

I am going to add or modify this a bit, with a new addition:

8. No troll names. It doesn't have to be creative, but using your name to troll me, or my readers, and you will be banned. Use John or Jane Doe if you want.

I mention this because I got several comments recently from someone who hadn't shown up before. And the name used was basically a troll name- "Provide logical supporting evidence for your conclusions, please." If that commenter wants to try again with a different name, he or she is free to do so. But please folks, nothing like that.

It Could Be Worse

June 23, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have had some dark times in my life. I've written about a few of them on my blog here. But whenever I stop and begin to brood overmuch, I try to recall that my life could be worse. A lot worse.

For example, I have a buddy who is currently trying to get custody of his son. He didn't know he had a son until recently- his ex-girlfriend of many years ago lied to him when she broke up. And in the meantime she has turned out to be crazy and also a criminal. So he is fighting not just for visitation rights but custody to try and get his son away from mom and into a healthy environment.

I don't have the concerns of a desperate parent right now- so it could be worse.

Then there is a co-worker of mine who made a huge mistake and is now facing criminal charges. He will probably lose his job no matter what. And his life is a mess now.

I am not facing criminal charges- so it could be worse.

An old example is a former co-worker of mine. He has been married and divorced several times. He is basically consigned to poverty for the rest of his life because of child support and alimony payments. There is no escape for him (besides maybe leaving the country).

I am not a financial slave to the family law system- so it could be worse.

It is important to count your blessings. While a small step, it is an important step to avoid falling into the pit trap that is despair.

[And no, I am not in a bad place now- I am appreciative of the fact that I am not, having looked around at some people around me]

Saturday Saints- #130

June 24, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today marks the Nativity of the Forerunner of Christ St. John the Baptist. I don't believe I have done a post dedicated to him yet, and even if I have, a new one seems appropriate. Here is the account of his birth:

> 57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son.
> 58 And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to
> her, and they rejoiced with her. 59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise
> the child; and they would have named him Zechari′ah after his father, 60 but his
> mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." 61 And they said to her, "None of
> your kindred is called by this name." 62 And they made signs to his father,
> inquiring what he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and
> wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled. 64 And immediately his mouth
> was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. 65 And fear came
> on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill
> country of Judea; 66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying,
> "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.
>
> 67 And his father Zechari′ah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,
>
> 68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
> for he has visited and redeemed his people,
> 69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
> in the house of his servant David,
> 70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
> 71 that we should be saved from our enemies,
> and from the hand of all who hate us;
> 72 to perform the mercy promised to our fathers,
> and to remember his holy covenant,
> 73 the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, 74 to grant us
> that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
> might serve him without fear,
> 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.
> 76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
> for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
> 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people
> in the forgiveness of their sins,
> 78 through the tender mercy of our God,
> when the day shall dawn upon us from on high
> 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
> to guide our feet into the way of peace."

> [80] And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

(Luke 1:57-80)

More can be found at his wiki, located here.

Random Thought on Hardship/Suffering

June 28, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Thanks to some recent comments on this blog, and some e-mails discussions I have been participating in, I have been re-reading two of my posts lately:

The Misery of Too Much Comfort

The Necessity of Suffering

I have been thinking about those posts, and what I've written. The ideas I explored there were never fully developed, and I know I need to examine them again.

One idea that I had was the realization that suffering was still not necessarily the right word to use. I am still not sure on what word is right, although I am leaning towards hardship now. But that is a discussion for another post. Instead, I want to explore a rather simple idea with this particular post:

No man of worth has ever become that way without enduring hardship.

I cannot think of any man who is an exception to this rule. Indeed, I think that enduring and overcoming hardship is an essential component of becoming a man of worth.

At the same time, I think that men can, depending on their life circumstances, avoid suffering and hardship more easily than women. As someone recently pointed out to me, women, by virtue of their biology, will endure suffering on a fairly regular basis for much of their life. And certain other events and circumstances also involve suffering, and more specifically, pain. We men don't really have that- unavoidable pain as a result of biology. At least, I cannot think of any examples (please correct me in the comments if I am wrong).

All of which together means that men can, if they are "lucky", avoid a lot of pain, suffering and hardship. At the same time, our avoiding that pain, suffering and hardship is often the worst thing for men. It is a sure fire way to create a spoiled brat, and a pathetic weakling. At least, that is my experience. I am curious what my readers think on the matter.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #132

July 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Two passages from St. Paul's epistles stood out to me in the last week, and I wanted to share them with you. The first is from the letter to the Galatians:

> [6] I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel— [7] not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. [9] As we have said before, so now I say again, If any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.
>
> [10] Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

(Galatians 1:6-10)

One thing about reading St. Paul's letters is we know there have been other letters sent, often to him, but sometimes from him. So there is this sense of catching part of a conversation or dialogue. Yet, while we might like to know the full context, we are still hearing the authoritative (and thus important) part of that conversation.

Here we can see St. Paul lamenting several things. What I read from this is as follows:

- The Galatians are very quickly abandoning the true faith
- They are ditching the truth for the sake of another gospel
- Someone else is treading to lead them astray
- Anyone who tries to lead you from the truth is automatically anathema
- The Galatians are apparently doing this to please men

From the later context of the letter we can see what is going on: there has been a wave of "Judaizers" coming to the Church in Galatia who are trying to insist that Gentile converts to Christianity adopt completely the Mosaic law. This is leading the Church in Galatia astray- they are losing sight of the important of faith and think that following the works of the Mosaic law is all they need to be saved. And so St. Paul sent his letter to correct this.

What intrigues me is the last part, because it seems the most important to us today. The Galatians were evidently doing this in order to please other human beings (the Judaizers and presumably other Jews). While the particular currents of heresy might ebb and flow throughout history, the desire to please human beings remains. And now, just as then, it can lead us astray. Thus, the central lesson of this passage is to remind us that we must never forsake the truth for the sake of popularity.

The second passage that interests me is from the Second Letter to the Corinthians:

> We want you to know, brethren, about the grace of God which has been shown in
> the churches of Macedo′nia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of
> joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their
> part. [3] For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their
> means, of their own free will, [4] begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in
> the relief of the saints— [5] and this, not as we expected, but first they gave
> themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. [6] Accordingly we have urged
> Titus that as he had already made a beginning, he should also complete among
> you this gracious work. [7] Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in utterance, in
> knowledge, in all earnestness, and in your love for us—see that you excel in this
> gracious work also.
>
> [8] I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your
> love also is genuine. [9] For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that
> though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you
> might become rich. [10] And in this matter I give my advice: it is best for you now to
> complete what a year ago you began not only to do but to desire, [11] so that your
> readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you
> have. [12] For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a man
> has, not according to what he has not. [13] I do not mean that others should be
> eased and you burdened, [14] but that as a matter of equality your abundance at
> the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply
> your want, that there may be equality. [15] As it is written, “He who gathered much
> had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”

(2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

Generosity must come from the heart. It can never be ordered or compelled. Taxation is never generosity, no matter how the money is spent. It can never be charity, for charity is love, and again, love comes from the heart. “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love.” (1 John 4:18). We pay taxes out of fear, so they cannot meet that requirement.

St. Paul understood this, and so his invitation to the Corinthians to be generous was itself an act of love. He was giving them an opportunity to perfect themselves in their faith journey.

Saturday Saints- #131

July 8, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's letter is "V", and thus we have as our saint of the day Vincent de Paul:

> **St. Vincent de Paul** (24 April 1581 – 27 September 1660) was a French Roman Catholic priest who dedicated himself to serving the poor. He is venerated as a saint in the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. He was canonized in 1737. He was renowned for his compassion, humility and generosity and is known as the "Great Apostle of Charity".

He lived a truly fascinating life, and I would encourage my readers to follow this link to his wiki, which tells so much more about him.



Leaden Weights

July 15, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Apologies to everyone for the lack of posts these past few weeks. Free time has been sparse, and I have been trying to spend it wisely. Which usually means away from my computer. One of those activities as of late has been dancing. I've written on it before, when talking about the importance of a good smile for women. Now there are a few things I want to talk about: weight and following

One of the first things I noticed after taking up social dancing was how much of an impact a woman's weight had while dancing. It is more difficult to lead around a woman who is overweight. And *much* more difficult to lead a woman who is significantly overweight. Not to mention, it is also less fun as well.

And being so close, I cannot help but notice that a woman being overweight is a huge turn off (pun intended). Weight has a significant impact when it comes to a woman's SMV/MMV. A few dozen or so pounds really can be the difference between several points on the 1-10 scale (Deep Strength's post here includes good example). At the same time, a woman who can keep a healthy weight (18-22% body fat or so), can usually rate at least somewhat attractive for most men. All of which means that single women who want to have a chance of grabbing a good man should take care to keep their weight at a healthy level. As for married women, keeping the weight as close as possible to that level will help keep your husband attracted to you.

Another problem is when your follow doesn't, you know, *follow*. I don't mind so much when it is due to inexperience. In fact, if she is open to learning and improving, then I don't mind teaching at all (in so far as I am able). That can actually be an enjoyable thing, and demonstrates the right kind of mindset. However, I don't care much for a follow who wants to do her own thing.

Even if I can adapt to her "technique", it is a lot more taxing than it should be and takes much of the fun out of dancing. If I can't adjust quickly enough, then the dance both becomes awkward, and would look bad to anyone observing it. And again, the fun is gone. Perhaps someone with more experience and skill with me wouldn't mind as much, but for someone trying to leave beginner status I'd rather not deal with it. All of which means that I keep a mental note of who is a good follow and who isn't, and will dance accordingly.

A Lofty Double Standard

July 23, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Vox over at Alpha Game has a great new post up today. Post being a somewhat loose term, as it is just an image. But as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. And boy does this 1k worth of words say a lot:



I have seen and heard women be vicious about a lot of things. But without a doubt my experience has been that women are the most consistently savage when it comes to critiquing a man's height. If you are of below average height… lets just say this: most women these days wouldn't care if the average guy lived or died- but if you are short, well, many would rather you were dead.

Fortunately I'm not below average in height, much less short. But I have a lot of sympathy for men who are. A man needs to bring a lot more to the table to compete in the present SMP/MMP if his height is lacking.

Short Digression: One of the critiques aimed at my LAMPS/PSALM model was that there was no real place for height. I lumped it in with Looks, but given how much value women place in height, that moves Looks up way ahead of where I normally allocate its value. A few commenters have suggested I add Height as a separate attribute, and part of me is tempted. It is just that Looks is where it would fit naturally. Of course, in the simplified "APE" model it fits better into Appearance overall.

That aside done with, the response of the guy in that chat was the right one. There is a huge double standard out there when it comes to height. Women, for all their talk about

not judging by appearance, will judge men unmercifully on that particular trait. And of course they blow up if men try and flip the tables on them. Imagine if that guy above had started by asking the woman's weight. It would be the 4th of July. But her asking his height? Totally acceptable- or at least seen that way.

I am curious if any of my readers have been involved in conversations, discussions, debates, arguments where this particular topic has come up. If so, I would ask them to talk about how it all went. I don't recall having been in one myself, so I am curious what would be said. And of course, I would like to prepare myself for that argument ahead of time too. So comment away if you have anything to add.

Shoot The Messenger

July 27, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Dalrock has been on a roll lately in his take down of one “Pastor Wilson.” See the two most recent posts, here and here. The most recent post was inspired, in part, by an attempt to defend Wilson from those assailing him. The thing is, I can understand why someone might defend him. At least from a Protestant perspective, he is normally pretty good about standing up for (Protestant notions) of the Truth. Most of what he teaches is close, or even spot on. One might be tempted to argue that we shouldn’t tear him apart if he manages to get one or two things wrong.

However, this defense is misplaced. The fact that someone like him gets so close and yet fails is what makes him dangerous. How so?

Well, to begin with he makes the errors he defends seem that much more reasonable to the unaware. After all, if Wilson defends something, and since he is such a stand up guy, it has to be correct, right? The fact that he is right, say, 95% of the time means that people will be more likely to accept that 5% of error without thinking.

Second, he makes it harder to actually defend or teach the truth. Opponents (feminists, etc.) can point out to him, and say something along the lines of “even Pastor Wilson disagrees with what you are saying.” Thus they can push anyone who tries to tell the truth out of the periphery, labeling them as “truly extreme.”

There are probably other reasons as well which I am forgetting, but both of those suffice for the situation. Keep in mind also that these are not periphery issues. Rebellion, especially female rebellion, is one of the principal crises afflicting the church right now. It can only be solved when it is fulled exposed and explained. And messengers like Wilson are getting in the way of that.

I believe that until men like Wilson are dealt with, there really is no chance of “fixing” what is wrong with the Church in the West. Unless they are converted to the truth, or cast down from their high places, they will be effective obstacles to reform. Of course, my readers can offer their own thoughts on the manner. I encourage them to do so, as I wonder if others share these views.

[Much of this post is more oriented towards Protestants than it is Catholic or Orthodox Christians. But everyone is free to chime in.]

Saturday Saints- #132

July 29, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a while, but we return at last to the letter W. Today's saint is Saint Willehad of Bremen:

> **Willehad** or **Willihad** (Latin: *Willehadus/Willihadus*); c. 745 AD – 8 November 789 AD) was a Christian missionary and the Bishop of Bremen from 787 AD.

A snippet from his life:

> Willehad was born in Northumbria and probably received his education at York under Ecgbert. A friend of Alcuin he was ordained after his education and, about the year 766, he went to Frisia, preaching at Dokkum and in Overijssel, to continue the missionary work of Boniface who had been martyred by the Frisians in 754. At an assembly in Paderborn in 777, Saxony was divided into missionary zones. The zone between the Weser and the Elbe, called *Wigmodia*, was given to Willehad.

Learn more about him from his wiki, located here.

Masculine Monday- A Positive Approach

August 1, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Rollo Tomassi has kindly reminded me that his newest book- Positive Masculinity, is now available. I would encourage my readers to give it a look. I haven't had the time to grab or read it myself, but I intend to when time permits. A review will hopefully follow shortly after. While Rollo and I don't agree on a fair number of things, I find that his work is always worth reading- if only to provoke one to reexamine his own beliefs.

Works like his are all the more necessary in this age, when masculinity is openly derided and masculine role models are all but extinct. Rediscovering the ways of the past will be the work of generations, and an endeavor that must be started right away.

It is especially necessary for Christian men to stand up and establish examples of Christian masculinity. For the most part most of the role-models out there, the purported Christian ones, that is, are basically just secular examples with a dash of Christianese painted on. That needs to change. I hope to explore how in future posts in this long dormant series.

An Inquiry About Love

August 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I am hoping that my Christian, and Catholic/Orthodox in particular, readers will do me a favor here. I have something I want to try and nail down, and could use help.

You see, something which is not uncommon to run across is a variation of the following notion:

Women love more than men.

Sometimes it is as simple as that. Other times you will see it as “wives love more than husbands.” Or “mothers love more than fathers.” And so on.

The point being, it is all an example of the above idea that women are more loving. Nevermind what particular notion/definition of love is intended.

What I am asking from my everyone is if there is any scripture which justifies this notion. Anything at all, please mention in the comments. And for my Catholic/Orthodox readers, are there any writings of the Church Fathers or saints which say something along these lines?

I am quite curious about this. My gut tells me this is a modern notion, something which has appeared since “Chivalry” in the west was perverted. [If I was Rollo I might say something along the lines of “feminine primacy socialization” or the like] However, I might be wrong. So I’m asking for your help here. Anything you find, just leave in the comments.

A Helpful Reminder

August 5, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In my life I have heard plenty of Christians complain about what was in the Old Testament. They complain of the violence, the treatment of people, especially women, and the overall awfulness of the law and on and on. What I have explained to many of them is this: those were pagan times- awfulness is to be expected.

Most don't get it. I don't think it is because they are incapable; rather, I think most don't want to really process what it all means. It demands too much of them, especially giving up on comfortable notions of how things are, or should be.

Which brings me to the main point of this post, and the reminder I try to keep in my mind all the time now:

America is a pagan country.

[And by extension, so is the whole of the West.]

When something horrific happens here, we shouldn't be surprised. That kind of behavior is to be expected of pagans. Which is what the vast, overwhelming majority of Americans are.

Sure, the majority of the country might identify as Christian. But their everyday actions show them to be anything but disciples of Christ. The percentage of actual Christians, and I use that term very broadly, is probably in the low single digits.

My experience has been that some people (folks sincerely trying to be Christians) will not get this.

Others will get it on a surface level. They will know it is the case, but have trouble really grasping the full extent of what that means.

Only a handful will be able to appreciate the full magnitude of what living in a pagan country entails.

Unfortunately, I think that as events move forward, more and more people will end up in that latter camp. The cruel instructor that is reality has many harsh lessons in store for all of us in the years ahead.

However, I think we can do ourselves a service by keeping that reminder in place. We can prepare ourselves for what is to come, if only mentally.

Resuming Broadcasting

September 7, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have returned from my unofficial absence/sabbatical. I originally planned on only being gone for a week or two, but eventually stretched it to over a month. Partially because life kept getting in the way, and partially because I have felt for some time that this blog has become un-anchored.

My suspicion is that much of it is internal- I am trying to orient myself right now because I don't feel that I am doing what I should. Deep Strength has a recent post where he talks about how you should "Do you job." I found it timely, because I am less sure than I have been in a long time about what, exactly, my job is. Not my secular job- that is fine. Rather, it is my vocation- my calling to serve the Lord.

So much of my blogging energy will be directed towards examining that, in addition to my usual fare. In the meantime, I hope to get some regular posts up starting in the next few days.

Saturday Saints- #133

September 9, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Time for this series to resume. Unfortunately, we are the end of the alphabet, specifically the letter “X.” Alas, not many saints have that letter for a first name. So we will borrow the last name, and get our saint for today: Francis Xavier:

> **Saint Francis Xavier, S.J.** (born **Francisco de Jasso y Azpilicueta**, 7 April 1506 – 3 December 1552), was a Navarrese Basque Roman Catholic missionary, born in Javier (Xavier in Navarro-Aragonese or Xabier in Basque), Kingdom of Navarre (present day Spain), and a co-founder of the Society of Jesus. He was a companion of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and one of the first seven Jesuits who took vows of poverty and chastity at Montmartre, Paris in 1534. He led an extensive mission into Asia, mainly in the Portuguese Empire of the time and was influential in evangelization work, most notably in India. The Goa Inquisition was proposed by St. Francis Xavier. He also was the first Christian missionary to venture into Japan, Borneo, the Maluku Islands, and other areas. In those areas, struggling to learn the local languages and in the face of opposition, he had less success than he had enjoyed in India. Xavier was about to extend his missionary preaching to China but died in Shangchuan Island shortly before he could do so.
>
> He was beatified by Pope Paul V on 25 October 1619 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on 12 March 1622. In 1624 he was made co-patron of Navarre alongside Santiago. Known as the “Apostle of the Indies,” and the “Apostle of Japan”, he is considered to be one of the greatest missionaries since Saint Paul. In 1927, Pope Pius XI published the decree “Apostolicorum in Missionibus” naming Saint Francis Xavier, along with Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, co-patron of all foreign missions. He is now co-patron saint of Navarre with San Fermin. The Day of Navarre (Día de Navarra) in Spain marks the anniversary of Saint Francis Xavier’s death, on 3 December 1552.

More can be found out about his life at his wiki, located here.


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The High Ground

September 13, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I came to an epiphany recently, and I lay the blame at Cane Caldo's feet. Three of his recent posts made something "CLICK" inside my head and I can't let go of it. The three posts are the following:

Real Men Don't Impede Her Desires

Her Buck Stops Here

A Caned Response to the Nashville StatementsA Caned Response to the Nashville Statements

Read all three (they aren't that long) before continuing. The rest will make a lot more sense that way. Each one, in its own way, address the nature of men and women, and how we are to relate to each other. A (very) brief summary of them could be as follows:

- Men are no longer able to tell women *No* in any meaningful way
- Men can no longer enforce male spaces, and in fact none exist in any meaningful way
- Men in Christian leadership positions (and in general) won't teach the truth about women in marriage in any meaningful way

The bit in particular which was the "light bulb" moment for me was this:

Where is the article in which they deny that wives should be irreverent, rebellious, or usurpers? Where do they affirm that wives are to be sexually available to their husbands except for agreement of a limited time? What is more important to marriage than that the wife be submissive to her husband? **These are serious and timely issues of marriage worthy of writing in these statements; more so than sodomy and transgenderism.**

Cane is right, these are more serious issues. And I think I understand why. Perhaps he has already figured this out, or maybe I am going beyond the scope of his original idea. But everything makes sense to me now. You see, you *cannot* win on issues like "gay marriage" or "transgenderism" after yielding up the high ground in this battle.

Let me explain.

To begin with, high ground often has two different common meanings. The first is a "safe place", out of the reach of danger. The second is a height which has strategic military value. It is the second meaning I intend. After all, we are in a war- a spiritual war. Now, the war has already been won, thankfully. However, the fighting has yet to stop. In some respects it is like the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812. It was fought after the war officially ended. And while it didn't change the outcome of the war, it was still meaningful to the men who fought in it. And so it is today- we are fighting a battle in a war the enemy has already lost. But he can still inflict casualties- take souls – and so he

fights on. No surprise, really- he was a murderer from the beginning.

The strategic high ground in this battle was twofold- the nature of men and women, and the rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women in marriage. Those two things were places to make a last stand- a metaphorical hill to die on. Unfortunately, they were yielded to the enemy generations ago. And when they were, the battle was lost at that point.

Why are they necessary positions to hold? To begin with, they lay the foundations for any defense of everything to come after. Lets start with “transgenderism.”

The whole point of that particular “theory” is that there are no fixed genders. Male and female, man and woman, are social constructs. They exist because society says they exist. Take that away, and people revert to whatever they want. On an intellectual level, a strong, vigorous defense of the nature of the masculine and the feminine will over course reveal this to be the rubbish it is. But as is the case with so many things in life, personal experiences which shape someone will trump intellectual argument.

For transgenderism to succeed, people need to grow up where man and woman don’t really mean much. And how do you get that? Simple- you create a society with the following:

- No task or vocations or opportunities, and so on, which are the sole prerogative of men or women.
- Men and women are interchangeable in the various roles and positions which people occupy in life.
- You eliminate any spaces which are reserved for men or women.
- You eliminate any activities which are reserved for men or women.

And on and on.

When this is the society you have- the society we have today- then men and women essentially become interchangeable- fungible even. If that is the case, then the concepts of “man” and “woman” will lose any sense of meaning in the minds of those exposed to it. And this is what everyone is exposed to these days, especially youth. It should come as no surprise that “transgenderism” is on the rise right now. They don’t see any real difference between men and women, save minor biological differences, and those can be changed by surgery. The truth is, “transgenderism” was an inevitable byproduct of this organization of society. It was just a matter of time.

Let’s look now “gay marriage” in the context of the rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women in marriage. In the past they were clearly defined. Now, no one dares to defend any real difference whatsoever. At least, a meaningful difference. What is the end result of this? Well, when men and women have the same rights, roles and responsibilities, they become… you guessed it, *fungible*. They can be swapped out without changing the fundamental makeup of the marriage unit. After all, husband and wife are both equal, right? And since they are equal, they both can do whatever needs doing, right? And are deserving of equal, well, everything, right? In that context husband

and wife are no longer meaningful terms.

Instead husband and wife are replaced in the minds of people with “spouse 1” and “spouse 2” **[Update: Reader Lost Patrol suggests Partner 1 and Partner 2 work better, and I agree. I’m going to update the rest of the post to fit that.]** And of course if mother and father are also essentially the same- equal- then they are likewise fungible. And so you get “parent 1″ and parent 2.” Well, if spouse/parent replaces husband/father and wife/mother, you get some interesting outcomes. Because, after all, if marriage in the eyes of people is Partner1 + Partner 2, then does it really matter who happens to be Partner 1 and Partner 2? Of course not! It is all about two people who love each other who decide to becomes spouses.

And when you think about it, there isn’t really any reason to restrict it to just two spouses together. After all, *love* is the important part, right? As long as you have that, the nature and number of spouses doesn’t really matter. Dwell on where *that* line of thinking will take you.

I could continue at length, but I think I’ve made my point. Without a viable, effective and vocal defense of those two principles, nothing else can be defended. The battle will be lost- guaranteed. And it isn’t merely about logic. In fact, I believe that logic takes a distant backseat compared to the way that people’s common experiences affect their perception of the issues. Those experiences shape their views to a degree that rational argument never does.

If Christians want to have *any*, and mean *any* chance of turning this battle around, then those two strategic positions **must** be re-taken. There is no other recourse.

Saturday Saints- #134

September 17, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We are at Y now, and running low on saints with matching names. Today's saint is Saint Ywi, also known as saint Iwig:

> **Iwig** (alternatively, **Iwi**, **Iwigius**, or **Ywi of Lindisfarne**) was a saint venerated in Wiltshire in the Middle Ages. He was reputedly a Northumbrian monk, said to have died and to have been buried in Brittany. Historian David Dumville called him "the other principal saint of Wilton", in reference to Saint Eadgyth. He was supposedly a follower (*alumnus*) of Saint Cuthbert.
>
> He is listed in two 11th-century litanies. A narrative of this century claimed that his relics had been brought to Wilton Abbey by Breton monks in the 10th-century, and left for safe-keeping at the altar of Saint Eadgyth. The narrative claims that the relics subsequently became immovable [through the wish of the saint to reside there], though historian John Blair suspected that this story may have been invented to justify Wilton's theft of the relics.
>
> His feast day was celebrated on 8 October. The Priory of Ivychurch in Wiltshire is thought to have been named after him.

(Source)

Just How Universal Is the 80/20 Rule?

September 21, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Deep Strength had a post up a few weeks ago where he looked at how Tinder reaffirmed the 80/20 rule. The post is short, so go there to read it in full. I was not surprised by this result, in fact I would have predicted it if asked given the OKCupid numbers. What led me to create this separate post is the following comment by Deep Strength:

> The 'most attractive' men have a disproportionate amount of female attention and can pretty much pick and choose who to bang (if secular) or to marry (if Christian).

I happen to agree with that statement. But it got me thinking about the assumptions involved in it. What I would like to know is this:

Is the 80/20 rule truly universal? That is, does it apply to every "market?"

Tinder and OKCupid are specific markets. They cater to specific (and somewhat different) crowds. Those crows would be secular in nature, and with Tinder especially, focused on those looking for casual sex. So I would expect people to argue that the numbers apply only to those markets.

But my own experiences back up the 80/20 rule. I see which men in Christian (specifically Catholic) circles the women crush on. And it is the same handful of men. I hear this same thing from other Christian men- especially here on the sphere.

Everything leads me to believe that the rule is universal one, and doesn't depend on the particular market in question. I invite my readers to offer their own take on this. Am a right? Wrong? Somewhere in between?

Sins Of The Father

September 23, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Dalrock's new post, Why the blind spot matters, has proven to be fertile ground for a ton of great comments. I would encourage my readers to give it a look if they haven't already. I have found that his comment threads have been very hit or miss as of late, but that post is definitely in the hit category.

Update: Now to present some of my own thoughts.

To begin with, part of the problem with "blaming women" or holding them to account in society right now draws itself from the nature of how men react to women. There are two natural impulses which men have towards women:

1. Have sex with them
2. Protect them

The second impulse is the problem here. Men have a natural desire to protect women, and unfortunately absent careful anchoring that protection impulse can go awry. For example, that protection impulse can lead men to protect women from being sad or upset. And guess what can make women sad or upset? If you guessed rebuking them for doing wrong, give yourself a pat on the back.

The key to solving this is to identify what is going on, and to actively work towards replacing unhealthy applications of this impulse with healthy ones. It needs to be drilled into men that rebuking women can in fact be the loving response. The response that actually protects them from the real harm to them- not that which threatens the body, bu the soul. And of course that is sin.

> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death.

(James 1:15)

Next, I want to address the issue of Adam's responsibility over Eve. As other pointed out in that thread, God *does not call Adam out* for failing to "protect" or "stop" Eve. You would think that, if that were an issue, God would call him out for it. But He doesn't. This fact, plus the wording of Genesis 3:16, led at least one Church Father to explain that Adam didn't have headship before the Fall. Rather, headship came about as a result of the Fall. Assuming that is true (and I don't believe it has been conclusively settled for either Catholics or Orthodox), then Adam wasn't responsible for Eve. And thus couldn't be held responsible for her sin.

But even if Adam had headship before the Fall (and I think there is a strong argument for this, although I'm not certain about it), that doesn't mean he was responsible. Again, God was calling out sins there. And He didn't mention that particular sin. Further, nowhere in

Scripture is this argument to be found. And none of the Church Fathers mentioned it either. It is wholly a modern invention, a product of our misplaced attitude and understanding of women.

[More to come as I think on it]

Misunderstanding The Motive Force

September 30, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have thus far stayed away from the "flag controversy", but with today's post I will touch on it a bit. [My next post might be even more on point.] Scott examines the so called "narrative collapse" over at his blog and notes that "Narrative collapse" is not working. The key part of his post is this here:

> Colin Kaepernick started this whole thing–based on his own comments on social media–as a solidarity gesture with folks like BLM and the whole "hands up, don't shoot" crowd.
>
> **But that entire narrative has been shown over and over to be false.** So exactly what "racism" was Colin Kaepernick "noticing?"
>
> And this is why the latest rhetorical device of gentile mainstream "conservatives" pointing out "narrative collapse" is failing. It appeals to an objective standard of truth that can be known irrespective of race, ethnicity, etc. **But the other side does not care about any of that.** Therefore, there is no authoritative source of truth that can be appealed to show, definitively that there is no epidemic of "racist" white cops gunning down innocent black kids in the street while they surrender. "Hands up don't shoot!" is impervious to reason and facts.

The last sentence is key. The reason that the narrative in question is immune to reason and facts is because it isn't *based* on reason and facts. The motive force behind this burgeoning movement is not reason or logic, but rather emotions and feelings. Anger, fear, envy, etc.; those emotions drive the movement.

Unfortunately, this is something that so called "mainstream conservatives" fail to understand. Now, don't get me wrong, conservatives and liberals alike are all caught in the gravity well of the black hole that is liberalism. However, from my experience (and those of others), conservatives tend to be more fact oriented. However, most conservatives (being clueless in ways beyond count) don't grasp this. Perhaps they do intellectually, when they stop to consider it. But most of the time they don't get it.

This is why the idea of a "narrative collapse" will not work. The "narrative" isn't collapsing because while facts might be changing, the emotions and feelings are not. As long as people feel the way they do, facts won't matter. If forced to confront them, people will simply call them lies and the product of deception. Because, after all, it isn't facts which are real- it is emotions and feelings.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #133

October 9, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Its has been a few months since I've written one of these posts, and so this continuation is long past overdue. I've selected two passages from the Old Testament today, as part of a compare/contrast method. Some recent discussions I've had about female moral agency and the role of wives led me to choose these two passages, for each showcases a particular kind of woman. To be specific, we have an example of a righteous woman and an unrighteous woman. We start with the righteous woman (although she came later in time):

> [8] One day Eli′sha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged
> him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to
> eat food. [9] And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy
> man of God, who is continually passing our way. [10] Let us make a small roof
> chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so
> that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there."
>
> [11] One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there.
> [12] And he said to Geha′zi his servant, "Call this Shu′nammite." When he had called
> her, she stood before him. [13] And he said to him, "Say now to her, See, you have
> taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word
> spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?" She
> answered, "I dwell among my own people." [14] And he said, "What then is to be
> done for her?" Geha′zi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old."
> [15] He said, "Call her." And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway.
> [16] And he said, "At this season, when the time comes round, you shall embrace a
> son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your maidservant."
> [17] But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following
> spring, as Eli′sha had said to her.
>
> [18] When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the
> reapers. [19] And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to
> his servant, "Carry him to his mother." [20] And when he had lifted him, and
> brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died.
> [21] And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door
> upon him, and went out. [22] Then she called to her husband, and said, "Send me
> one of the servants and one of the asses, that I may quickly go to the man of
> God, and come back again." [23] And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is
> neither new moon nor sabbath." She said, "It will be well." [24] Then she saddled
> the ass, and she said to her servant, "Urge the beast on; do not slacken the pace
> for me unless I tell you." [25] So she set out, and came to the man of God at Mount
> Carmel.

(2 Kings 4:8-25)

Next we move to a very unrighteous woman indeed:

> Now Naboth the Jezre′elite had a vineyard in Jezre′el, beside the palace of Ahab
> king of Samar′ia. 2 And after this Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard,
> that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; and I will
> give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its
> value in money.” 3 But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid that I should give
> you the inheritance of my fathers.” 4 And Ahab went into his house vexed and
> sullen because of what Naboth the Jezre′elite had said to him; for he had said, “I
> will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.” And he lay down on his bed, and
> turned away his face, and would eat no food.
>
> 5 But Jez′ebel his wife came to him, and said to him, “Why is your spirit so vexed
> that you eat no food?” 6 And he said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the
> Jezre′elite, and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it please
> you, I will give you another vineyard for it’; and he answered, ‘I will not give you
> my vineyard.’” 7 And Jez′ebel his wife said to him, “Do you now govern Israel?
> Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard
> of Naboth the Jezre′elite.”
>
> 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent
> the letters to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city. 9 And
> she wrote in the letters, “Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the
> people; 10 and set two[a] base fellows opposite him, and let them bring a charge
> against him, saying, ‘You have cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out, and
> stone him to death.” 11 And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who
> dwelt in his city, did as Jez′ebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the
> letters which she had sent to them, 12 they proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on
> high among the people. 13 And the two base fellows came in and sat opposite
> him; and the base fellows brought a charge against Naboth, in the presence of
> the people, saying, “Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside
> the city, and stoned him to death with stones. 14 Then they sent to Jez′ebel,
> saying, “Naboth has been stoned; he is dead.”
>
> 15 As soon as Jez′ebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jez′ebel
> said to Ahab, “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezre′elite,
> which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” 16 And
> as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the
> vineyard of Naboth the Jezre′elite, to take possession of it.

(1 Kings 21: 1-16)

There are many things to note in these two passages. The first and most obvious is of course their behavior: the Shunammite woman is righteous and Jezebel is clearly not.

But also look at the role of the men in the passage. The Shunammite woman’s husband

persuaded her husband into whatever course of action was taken. She persuaded him to set aside a room for the prophet, and for her to seek him out after their son’s untimely death. Compare that to Ahad- he is passive and basically lets Jezebel do all the hard (and depraved work). Then he moves in afterwards to benefit from her misdeeds.

One wife offers counsel and advice, the other essentially takes headship away from her husband. Not an accident, that. I think every married Christian should ask themselves which role they would play in this story. There is a lot to be learned from that kind of self-reflection.

Der Kommissar

October 12, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Scott is once again lamenting the current state of affairs in our society, in particular the madness of the "Watermelon purge." The part that caught my attention is this:

> They have no idea the purging pogrom that is coming if this stuff is not stopped. *No one will escape it. If you have ever posted something online that looked like a watermelon, smelled like a watermelon or had the word "black" in it, you will be dismissed from polite society. It's just not your turn yet.*

Scott is correct- the new Commissars are indeed coming. The West is in for a series of purges, the likes of which haven't been seen for a very long time. I use the word Commissar because the allusion to Communist enforces of "orthodoxy" is quite apparent. The same level of viciousness is to be expected, although perhaps not the same level of violence. Rather, I predict that social, political and economic sanctions will be the primary means of enforcement. All the same, it won't be pretty.

Watermelons are far from the beginning, and far from the end. I've written on this many times before. Sadly, I will be writing on it in the future- at least, until I am forced to abandon this blog… or it is shut down.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #134

October 15, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

So I guess there was something of a debate over at Dalrock because of this post. Scott wrote his own thoughts about it over here. I've got a few thoughts of my own, but they are tied to scripture- hence why they are in this post. Reading through Dalrock's post, I immediately saw the apparent "shallowness" of Mrs. Stone's approach. At the same time, I was reminded of this:

> He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. [2] And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' [3] And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. [4] I have decided what to do, so that people may receive me into their houses when I am put out of the stewardship.' [5] So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' [6] He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' [7] Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' [8] The master commended the dishonest steward for his prudence; for the sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light [9] And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations.

(Luke 16:1-9)

I also got to thinking of this passage from First Timothy:

> [8] Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, [9] understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, [10] immoral persons, sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, [11] in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

(1 Timothy 1:8-11)

The way I look at it is this:

Those who are truly good – or at least aspiring towards it- won't need the kind of admonishment that Heidi provides. They will want to honor their vows, they will want to be loyal and faithful, etc. However, not everyone is like that. Some wives will not be like that- either because they never truly were, or because they are going through a time of

personal weakness. Whatever the cause, they are not necessarily inclined to seek righteousness at that point. However, those who weak in that way might be persuaded by Heidi. She will appeal to their lesser nature- their cunning. And that is something that we as Christians should understand, and acknowledge as perhaps helpful. After all, that is the point of the first passage above- cunning has its use. And we as Christians should recognize it. Even if “lowly” methods are what is needed at the time, we can always appeal to the higher nature later.

Power And Control

October 22, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Zippy has a new post up which demands a follow-up: With great power comes great incontinence. Short and to the point, I am tempted to repeat all of it. Instead I will merely quote what I see as the key parts. They are:

> - The most primal power of men is violence
> - The most primal power of women is sex
> - [O]ur society is willing to punish crimes of violence but is not willing to punish crimes of sex

I think it should be readily apparent to all my readers, but I will repeat it all the same-

Society and Civilization can only exist when there are structures in place which control the base, primal natures of human beings. Failure to control that primal nature leads to savagery in the end, and that means chaos. Towards that end, the building and the maintenance of civilization requires that the primal nature of both men and women alike must be strictly controlled and regulated.

For men our most primal power is violence. Thus, to control our primal nature requires the strict regulation of male violent tendencies. Fail to do so, and you have disorder.

For women, their most primal power is sex. Thus, to control their primal nature requires the strict regulation of female sexual tendencies. Fail to do so, and you have disorder.

The problem right now is what Zippy notes- we regulate violence extensively, but not sexuality. The result is that women are now the primary source of disorder in the "Civilized West." This will not change until sexuality is regulated with the same fierceness as violence is.

Unfortunately, what we see now is that efforts are being made to double down on the regulation of the male capacity for violence. And further efforts are being made to double down on the deregulation of female sexual tendencies. Rollo has a new post where this is discussed in the context of The War on Paternity. While most previous efforts to ensure paternity in the past have been dismantled, new technology has changed the field. DNA testing means that a man really can be certain, for the first time in history, that a child is truly his. That naturally conflicts with female sexual power. Thus, it has to go. Hence we are seeing increased efforts to limit when paternity testing can take place, and when it can be used to change a man's situation (legally, at least).

I have some more thoughts I may add to this post as I develop them. In the meantime feel free to comment below.

When Compassion Becomes Divorced From Reality

October 26, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Reader Michael K alerted me to this this article yesterday, and I thought it was worth remarking on. The tagline is “Beware of false compassion in implementing Amoris Laetitia.” Its not long, but I won’t quote the whole piece. Instead, here is the relevant section:

> Maybe my experience is atypical. But I doubt it. Statistically speaking, men are more likely than women to remarry after a divorce. And that’s just one way in which men typically fare better than women after the breakdown of a marriage. Divorced woman are disproportionately likely to have financial problems, health problems, emotional problems. In a word, they are apt to be women in need.
>
> If Catholic pastors adopt a more open attitude toward divorce, along the lines suggested by *Amoris Laetitia*, will that attitude benefit the people most in need? As a practical matter, if pastors make a special point of welcoming divorced-and-remarried Catholics, will the benefits flow to the spouses who are abandoned, or to those who abandoned them?
>
> Since the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*, much has been written about women who have been abandoned by one man and subsequently formed a new union with another. For every wife who is cruelly abandoned, there is a husband who cruelly abandoned her. He, too, might feel more comfortable if the Church relaxes her traditional insistence on the permanence of the marriage bond. Should he?
>
> …
>
> If women typically suffer more than men after a divorce, the children of a broken home often suffer even more. What sort of message do those children receive, when they see their father, who deserted them to live with another woman, sitting in the front pew with his attractive new partner, while they huddle in the back with their mother, all dressed in second-hand clothes?

Anyone notice a possible problem with what he said?

Well, lets start with the fact that the author mentions some statistics about divorce. Specifically, about who does better afterwards. But then he stops there. No further statistics come into play. Which is a pity. Because if they were, it would help show the error in his argument.

Because from there he essentially makes the argument that men are the primary beneficiaries in divorce, and thus are responsible for the problem. In other words, all the blame falls on them. There is this implicit assumption throughout that men instigate divorce more than women. We know this isn’t true; in fact the complete opposite is the case. Women initiate most divorces.

Furthermore, look at that final sentence. Does anyone else find that, well, questionable? I mean, has the author ever heard of child support? The truth is usually the opposite- it is the mom who enjoying her ex-husbands income, while he is making do with less- living in a smaller apartment, driving an old car and struggling with finances. Of course, not always; but there are always exceptions.

Also consider this: if mom makes the poor decision re: divorce, why shouldn't we expect her to make other poor decisions? Decisions which end up with her in a bad financial state? Poor decision makers have a habit of making poor decisions. That is common sense- which we all know is anything but common.

This is just another example of a classic white knight in action. [If I was Rollo I would probably insert here some comment about how this Catholic is saying that loosening the Catholic approach to the divorce should be rejected because it interferes with the feminine imperative.] Compassion is a good thing. But we must not divorce compassion from reality, else wise we end up doing more evil than good. In this case, it would be poisoning the argument against AL by using faulty examples of where it fails Catholic teaching.

Saturday Saints- #135

November 4, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

We finish up another round of alphabetical saints today with the letter Z. Our saint hails from central/eastern Europe and is Saint Zdislava Berka:

> **Zdislava Berka** T.O.S.D. (also, **Zdislava of Lemberk**; c. 1220–1252) was the wife of Havel of Markvartice, Duke of Lemberk, and is a Czech saint of the Roman Catholic Church. She was a particularly austere and generous woman who founded a convent.
>
> Zdislava was from a Moravian family, born in Křižanov, in what is now the Žďár nad Sázavou District of the Czech Republic. She was reportedly an unusually devout child, who at age seven ran away into the forest with the intention of living a hermit's life of prayer and solitude. She was forcibly returned by her family, and made to live a normal childhood from that point on. Later, her family arranged for her to marry Bohemian lord Havel of Markvartice (also known as Gallus of Lämberg or Havel of Lemberk) from prosperous Marquards family, founder of the towns of Jablonné (German: *Deutsch Gabel*) and Habelschwerdt (now Bystrzyca Kłodzka). Together they would have four children.

More can be found out about her at her wiki, located here.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #135

November 6, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post is inspired by this recent post over at Zippy's. A major point of discussion in the comments is Christian (in that particular context Catholic Christian) heroism. I want to move this post out of a narrow Catholic context into one that all Christians can address. A question is necessary: are we, as Christians, called to heroism? Lets look at some Scripture:

> [23] When they were released they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. [24] And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, [25] who by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, didst say by the Holy Spirit,
>
> 'Why did the Gentiles rage,
> and the peoples imagine vain things?
> [26] The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
> and the rulers were gathered together,
> against the Lord and against his Anointed'—
>
> [27] for truly in this city there were gathered together against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever thy hand and thy plan had predestined to take place. [29] And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, [30] while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus." [31] And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

(Acts 4:23-31)

That whole chapter features boldness, which I think is a heroic quality.

> [3] I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you constantly in my prayers. [4] As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy. [5] I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lo′is and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you. [6] Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; [7] for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.
>
> [8] Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God, [9] who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own

> purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, [10] and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. [11] For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, [12] and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. [13] Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; [14] guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

(2 Timothy 3-14)

These are just a couple of passages, but to me it seems like we as Christians are called to boldness and endure great challenges. Seems an awful lot like heroism to me. However, I could be wrong. So I ask my readers to offer their thoughts. And if they have passages from Scripture which they think would fit (or counter the above), feel free to mention them below.

How Hard Is It To Miss The Point?

November 17, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

This post is a response to Dalrock's latest, Missing the point is hard work. In that post Dalrock pokes fun at a certain Trevin Wax of the Gospel Coalition. Mr Wax apparently was stupefied as to why young girls were taking Frozen and its song "Let it Go" as encouragement to be immoral. He was expecting a toxic message, seemingly found a decent message, and yet the toxic message seems to seep through. How can this be?

Well, let me be the Devil's Advocate for Mr. Wax.

You see, I think the key is understanding levels of communication. As an adult Mr. Wax is picking up the (apparent) deeper message of the story. Namely that "letting go" is a disaster of an idea. This deeper message is not surface level- it requires analysis. Maybe not a lot, but analysis nonetheless. And it also requires a certain level of critical viewing skill as well. Guess what kids don't have? Yeah, that.

The problem is that the toxic message is surface level. This is what children are picking up- *especially* through the music. The song celebrates rebellion, and all its accompanying sins. That is what the children listen to, that is what they sing, and that is what they memorize. They don't do any of that for the deeper messages of the story (which I assume are present).

This is why Disney and similar products are so insidious. An adult watching them might think that the message of the story is ok- that it teaches that being rebellious and selfish and whatnot is a bad idea, and will leader to disaster. But the children are getting an entirely different message- one that is reverberated again and again, especially thanks to music.

Is all of this obvious- well, to some degree. But I suspect many miss it. A singular problem that I have noticed in my life is that many adults have forgotten what it is like to be a child. Especially parents. This only contributes to their often foolish behavior as parents. I suspect that some of this is going on as well.

But whatever else, this is how people "miss it." It doesn't even require willful blindness- just a healthy dose of folly and a lack of perception. And unfortunately those are in abundant supply these days.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #136

November 27, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Resuming posting after a brief Thanksgiving week break. Today's post begins with this passage from Ephesians:

> [25] Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need. [29] Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, [32] and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

(Ephesians 4:25-32)

A couple of things caught my attention while reading this passage.

The first was this: "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil." It seems to me that St. Paul does give room for what we might call "Righteous Anger" to a Christian. However, he warns us not to sin, and gives two specifics: don't let the sun go down, and don't give room for the devil. The way I interpret this, he is saying that anger must be momentary, not a permanent condition for us. And that we must not let our anger be a source of temptation for Satan to exploit us.

The second part that got my attention was this: " Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear." Elsewhere St. Paul warns about obscene language and foul language. Here what I found interesting was the mention of edifying and fitting the occasion. It seems to me that he might be giving a little leeway for what we might call "working blue," but only if it fits the occasion. That is, it is absolutely necessary to edify a brother.

Then we have this passage from First Peter:

> [13] Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is right? [14] But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, [15] but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; [16] and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good

> behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing right,
> if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong.

(1 Peter 3:13-17)

We Christians should always be hopeful. Always. It should be a constant mark of who and what we are. Just as pagans should know us for our love, they should know us for our hope. This is especially important in this day and age, because it seems to me that we are entering an age without hope. I sense very little hope in most people. They don't know what they are really living for. Consequently they are attaching themselves to various pleasure and diversions to try and bring meaning to their lives. Or at least satisfaction. Of course, that never works out for them in the end.

Finally I want to end with two verses from the Book of Proverbs. The first:

> Take a man's garment when he has given surety for a stranger,
> and hold him in pledge when he gives surety for foreigners.

(Proverbs 27:13)

Here translation makes a major difference. The RSV translates that last word as foreigners. But the literal translation is *foreign woman*. Which, if we consider what is being said before, actually helps everything make sense. The proverb is saying that if a man takes a loan and spends it on a foreign woman (aka, a harlot), then don't give him back his surety afterwards. He deserves to lose his clothes for that.

And finally I leave with this verse, which I hope to talk about in a post tomorrow:

> Iron sharpens iron,
> and one man sharpens another.

(Proverbs 27:17)

Toxic Femininity

December 2, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

These days we hear plenty about so called “Toxic Masculinity.” The phrase is naturally enough a ruse- the whole point of it is to tar *all* masculinity as toxic. Its goal is nothing more and nothing less than to eradicate all signs of masculinity from the public sphere.

Rather than go into a full on rebuttal of this distorted thinking, I want to take a different tack today. I want to talk about the possibility of a “Toxic Femininity.”

What would such a thing be? What would it look like? How would it manifest?

As Dalrock and many others have pointed out for years, there is a massive wave of female rebellion going on in the West. Such a rebellion has likely not been seen in all of recorded history. And this rebellion is manifesting itself in some truly ugly ways.

What I want to explore is which feminine behaviors have become toxic in the west today as a result of that rebellion. And I hope that my readers can chip in and help out too. There is a lot of truth to the old saying that many hands make light work. So hopefully my readers will offer their thoughts in the comments below.

The way I see it, there are a few steps to all of this. They are:

- Identify what constitutes female nature
- Determine those parts of female nature which either are, or can be, destructive if left unchecked
- Identify which of those are now running rampant in the West today

Some things are easy enough to identify- hypergamy, for example, is a major and obvious one. But there is more to be found. I’ve written other posts before which have covered some of these behaviors, but I want this post to be a sort of compilation of all of them. A go-to resource in the future, if you will. Hopefully it will be useful to more people than just myself.

Examples of Toxic Femininity:

Hypergamy-

[To be updated as time passes]

Saturday Saints- #136

December 9, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will be a bit different from the previous ways I've run this series. Instead of just featuring a different saint every time, going in alphabetical order A-Z, I will focus on the writings of the saints. Today's saint is Saint Leonard of Port Maurice. And this post will cover his Sermon on The Little Number Who Are Saved. It is rather long, but well worth the (sobering) read:

> Thanks be to God, the number of the Redeemer's disciples is not so small that the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees is able to triumph over them. Although they strove to calumniate innocence and to deceive the crowd with their treacherous sophistries by discrediting the doctrine and character of Our Lord, finding spots even in the sun, many still recognized Him as the true Messiah, and, unafraid of either chastisements or threats, openly joined His cause. Did all those who followed Christ follow Him even unto glory? Oh, this is where I revere the profound mystery and silently adore the abysses of the divine decrees, rather than rashly deciding on such a great point! The subject I will be treating today is a very grave one; it has caused even the pillars of the Church to tremble, filled the greatest Saints with terror and populated the deserts with anchorites. The point of this instruction is to decide whether the number of Christians who are saved is greater or less than the number of Christians who are damned; it will, I hope, produce in you a salutary fear of the judgments of God.
>
> Brothers, because of the love I have for you, I wish I were able to reassure you with the prospect of eternal happiness by saying to each of you: You are certain to go to paradise; the greater number of Christians is saved, so you also will be saved. But how can I give you this sweet assurance if you revolt against God's decrees as though you were your own worst enemies? I observe in God a sincere desire to save you, but I find in you a decided inclination to be damned. So what will I be doing today if I speak clearly? I will be displeasing to you. But if I do not speak, I will be displeasing to God.
>
> Therefore, I will divide this subject into two points. In the first one, to fill you with dread, I will let the theologians and Fathers of the Church decide on the matter and declare that the greater number of Christian adults are damned; and, in silent adoration of that terrible mystery, I will keep my own sentiments to myself. In the second point I will attempt to defend the goodness of God versus the godless, by proving to you that those who are damned are damned by their own malice, because they wanted to be damned. So then, here are two very important truths. If the first truth frightens you, do not hold it against me, as though I wanted to make the road of heaven narrower for you, for I want to be neutral in this matter; rather, hold it against the theologians and Fathers of the Church who will engrave this truth in your heart by the force of reason. If you are

disillusioned by the second truth, give thanks to God over it, for He wants only one thing: that you give your hearts totally to Him. Finally, if you oblige me to tell you clearly what I think, I will do so for your consolation.

The Teaching of the Fathers of the Church

It is not vain curiosity but salutary precaution to proclaim from the height of the pulpit certain truths which serve wonderfully to contain the indolence of libertines, who are always talking about the mercy of God and about how easy it is to convert, who live plunged in all sorts of sins and are soundly sleeping on the road to hell. To disillusion them and waken them from their torpor, today let us examine this great question: Is the number of Christians who are saved greater than the number of Christians who are damned?

Pious souls, you may leave; this sermon is not for you. Its sole purpose is to contain the pride of libertines who cast the holy fear of God out of their heart and join forces with the devil who, according to the sentiment of Eusebius, damns souls by reassuring them. To resolve this doubt, let us put the Fathers of the Church, both Greek and Latin, on one side; on the other, the most learned theologians and erudite historians; and let us put the Bible in the middle for all to see. Now listen not to what I will say to you – for I have already told you that I do not want to speak for myself or decide on the matter – but listen to what these great minds have to tell you, they who are beacons in the Church of God to give light to others so that they will not miss the road to heaven. In this manner, guided by the triple light of faith, authority and reason, we will be able to resolve this grave matter with certainty.

Note well that there is no question here of the human race taken as a whole, nor of all Catholics taken without distinction, but only of Catholic adults, who have free choice and are thus capable of cooperating in the great matter of their salvation. First let us consult the theologians recognized as examining things most carefully and as not exaggerating in their teaching: let us listen to two learned cardinals, Cajetan and Bellarmine. They teach that the greater number of Christian adults are damned, and if I had the time to point out the reasons upon which they base themselves, you would be convinced of it yourselves. But I will limit myself here to quoting Suarez. After consulting all the theologians and making a diligent study of the matter, he wrote, "*The most common sentiment which is held is that, among Christians, there are more damned souls than predestined souls*."

Add the authority of the Greek and Latin Fathers to that of the theologians, and you will find that almost all of them say the same thing. This is the sentiment of Saint Theodore, Saint Basil, Saint Ephrem, and Saint John Chrysostom. What is more, according to Baronius it was a common opinion among the Greek Fathers that this truth was expressly revealed to Saint Simeon Stylites and that after this

revelation, it was to secure his salvation that he decided to live standing on top of a pillar for forty years, exposed to the weather, a model of penance and holiness for everyone. Now let us consult the Latin Fathers. You will hear Saint Gregory saying clearly, “Many attain to faith, but few to the heavenly kingdom.” Saint Anselm declares, “*There are few who are saved*.” Saint Augustine states even more clearly, “*Therefore, few are saved in comparison to those who are damned*.” The most terrifying, however, is Saint Jerome. At the end of his life, in the presence of his disciples, he spoke these dreadful words: “*Out of one hundred thousand* ***people whose lives have always been bad****, you will find barely one who is worthy of indulgence*.”

The Words of Holy Scripture

But why seek out the opinions of the Fathers and theologians, when Holy Scripture settles the question so clearly? Look in to the Old and New Testaments, and you will find a multitude of figures, symbols and words that clearly point out this truth: very few are saved. In the time of Noah, the entire human race was submerged by the Deluge, and only eight people were saved in the Ark. Saint Peter says, “*This ark was the figure of the Church*,” while Saint Augustine adds, “*And these eight people who were saved signify that very few Christians are saved,* ***because there are very few who sincerely renounce the world****, and those who renounce it only in words do not belong to the mystery represented by that ark*.” The Bible also tells us that only two Hebrews out of two million entered the Promised Land after going out of Egypt, and that only four escaped the fire of Sodom and the other burning cities that perished with it. All of this means that the number of the damned who will be cast into fire like straw is far greater than that of the saved, whom the heavenly Father will one day gather into His barns like precious wheat.

I would not finish if I had to point out all the figures by which Holy Scripture confirms this truth; let us content ourselves with listening to the living oracle of Incarnate Wisdom. What did Our Lord answer the curious man in the Gospel who asked Him, “*Lord, is it only a few to be saved?*” Did He keep silence? Did He answer haltingly? Did He conceal His thought for fear of frightening the crowd? No. Questioned by only one, He addresses all of those present. He says to them: “You ask Me if there are only few who are saved?” Here is My answer: “*Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*” Who is speaking here? It is the Son of God, Eternal Truth, who on another occasion says even more clearly, “*Many are called, but few are chosen.*” He does not say that all are called and that out of all men, few are chosen, but that many are called; which means, as Saint Gregory explains, that out of all men, many are called to the True Faith, but out of them few are saved. Brothers, these are the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Are they clear? They are true. Tell me now if it is possible for you to have faith in your heart and not tremble.

Salvation in the Various States of Life

But oh, I see that by speaking in this manner of all in general, I am missing my point. So let us apply this truth to various states, and you will understand that you must either throw away reason, experience and the common sense of the faithful, or confess that the greater number of Catholics is damned. Is there any state in the world more favorable to innocence in which salvation seems easier and of which people have a higher idea than that of priests, the lieutenants of God? At first glance, who would not think that most of them are not only good but even perfect; yet I am horror-struck when I hear Saint Jerome declaring that although the world is full of priests, barely one in a hundred is living in a manner in conformity with state; when I hear a servant of God attesting that he has learned by revelation that the number of priests who fall into hell each day is so great that it seemed impossible to him that there be any left on earth; when I hear Saint Chrysostom exclaiming with tears in his eyes, "*I do not believe that many priests are saved; I believe the contrary, that the number of those who are damned is greater*."

Look higher still, and see the prelates of the Holy Church, pastors who have the charge of souls. Is the number of those who are saved among them greater than the number of those who are damned? Listen to Cantimpre; he will relate an event to you, and you may draw the conclusions. There was a synod being held in Paris, and a great number of prelates and pastors who had the charge of souls were in attendance; the king and princes also came to add luster to that assembly by their presence. A famous preacher was invited to preach. While he was preparing his sermon, a horrible demon appeared to him and said, "*Lay your books aside. If you want to give a sermon that will be useful to these princes and prelates, content yourself with telling them on our part, 'We the princes of darkness thank you, princes, prelates, and pastors of souls, that due to your negligence, the greater number of the faithful are damned; also, we are saving a reward for you for this favor, when you shall be with us in Hell*.'"

Woe to you who command others! If so many are damned by your fault, what will happen to you? If few out of those who are first in the Church of God are saved, what will happen to you? Take all states, both sexes, every condition: husbands, wives, widows, young women, young men, soldiers, merchants, craftsmen, rich and poor, noble and plebian. What are we to say about all these people who are living so badly? The following narrative from Saint Vincent Ferrer will show you what you may think about it. He relates that an archdeacon in Lyons gave up his charge and retreated into a desert place to do penance, and that he died the same day and hour as Saint Bernard. After his death, he appeared to his bishop and said to him, "*Know, Monsignor, that at the very hour I passed away,* ***thirty-three thousand*** *people also died. Out of this number,* ***Bernard and myself*** *went up to heaven without delay,* ***three*** *went to purgatory, and* ***all the others***

fell into Hell."

Our chronicles relate an even more dreadful happening. One of our brothers, well-known for his doctrine and holiness, was preaching in Germany. He represented the ugliness of the sin of impurity so forceful that a woman fell dead of sorrow in front of everyone. Then, coming back to life, she said, "*When I was presented before the Tribunal of God,* ***sixty thousand*** *people arrived at the same time from all parts of the world; out of that number,* ***three*** *were saved by going to Purgatory, and* ***all the rest were damned***."

O abyss of the judgments of God! Out of thirty thousand, only five were saved! And out of sixty thousand, only three went to heaven! You sinners who are listening to me, in what category will you be numbered?... What do you say?... What do you think?...

I see almost all of you lowering your heads, filled with astonishment and horror. But let us lay our stupor aside, and instead of flattering ourselves, let us try to draw some profit from our fear. Is it not true that there are two roads which lead to heaven: innocence and repentance? Now, if I show you that very few take either one of these two roads, as rational people you will conclude that very few are saved. And to mention proofs: in what age, employment or condition will you find that the number of the wicked is not a hundred times greater than that of the good, and about which one might say, "*The good are so rare and the wicked are so great in number*"? We could say of our times what Salvianus said of his: it is easier to find a countless multitude of sinners immersed in all sorts of iniquities than a few innocent men. How many servants are totally honest and faithful in their duties? How many merchants are fair and equitable in their commerce; how many craftsmen exact and truthful; how many salesmen disinterested and sincere? How many men of law do not forsake equity? How many soldiers do not tread upon innocence; how many masters do not unjustly withhold the salary of those who serve them, or do not seek to dominate their inferiors? Everywhere, the good are rare and the wicked great in number. Who does not know that today there is so much libertinage among mature men, liberty among young girls, vanity among women, licentiousness in the nobility, corruption in the middle class, dissolution in the people, impudence among the poor, that one could say what David said of his times: "*All alike have gone astray... there is not even one who does good, not even one*."

Go into street and square, into palace and house, into city and countryside, into tribunal and court of law, and even into the temple of God. Where will you find virtue? "*Alas!*" cries Salvianus, "*except for a very little number who flee evil, what is the assembly of Christians if not a sink of vice?*" All that we can find everywhere is selfishness, ambition, gluttony, and luxury. Is not the greater portion of men defiled by the vice of impurity, and is not Saint John right in saying, "*The whole world* – if something so foul may be called – "*is seated in wickedness?*" I am not the one who is telling you; reason obliges you to believe

that out of those who are living so badly, very few are saved.

But you will say: Can penance not profitably repair the loss of innocence? That is true, I admit. But I also know that penance is so difficult in practice, we have lost the habit so completely, and it is so badly abused by sinners, that this alone should suffice to convince you that very few are saved by that path. Oh, how steep, narrow, thorny, horrible to behold and hard to climb it is! Everywhere we look, we see traces of blood and things that recall sad memories. Many weaken at the very sight of it. Many retreat at the very start. Many fall from weariness in the middle, and many give up wretchedly at the end. And how few are they who persevere in it till death! Saint Ambrose says it is easier to find men who have kept their innocence than to find any who have done fitting penance.

If you consider the sacrament of penance, there are so many distorted confessions, so many studied excuses, so many deceitful repentances, so many false promises, so many ineffective resolutions, so many invalid absolutions! Would you regard as valid the confession of someone who accuses himself of sins of impurity and still holds to the occasion of them? Or someone who accuses himself of obvious injustices with no intention of making any reparation whatsoever for them? Or someone who falls again into the same iniquities right after going to confession? Oh, horrible abuses of such a great sacrament! One confesses to avoid excommunication, another to make a reputation as a penitent. One rids himself of his sins to calm his remorse, another conceals them out of shame. One accuses them imperfectly out of malice, another discloses them out of habit. One does not have the true end of the sacrament in mind, another is lacking the necessary sorrow, and still another firm purpose. Poor confessors, what efforts you make to bring the greater number of penitents to these resolutions and acts, without which confession is a sacrilege, absolution a condemnation and penance an illusion?

Where are they now, those who believe that the number of the saved among Christians is greater than that of the damned and who, to authorize their opinion, reason thus: the greater portion of Catholic adults die in their beds armed with the sacraments of the Church, therefore most adult Catholics are saved? Oh, what fine reasoning! You must say exactly the opposite. Most Catholic adults confess badly at death, therefore most of them are damned. I say “all the more certain,” because a dying person who has not confessed well when he was in good health will have an even harder time doing so when he is in bed with a heavy heart, an unsteady head, a muddled mind; when he is opposed in many ways by still-living objects, by still-fresh occasions, by adopted habits, and above all by devils who are seeking every means to cast him into hell. Now, if you add to all these false penitents all the other sinners who die unexpectedly in sin, due to the doctors’ ignorance or by their relatives’ fault, who die from poisoning or from being buried in earthquakes, or from a stroke, or from a fall, or on the battlefield, in a fight, caught in a trap, struck by lightning, burned or drowned,

are you not obliged to conclude that most Christian adults are damned? That is the reasoning of Saint Chrysostom. This Saint says that most Christians are walking on the road to hell throughout their life. Why, then, are you so surprised that the greater number goes to hell? To come to a door, you must take the road that leads there. What have you to answer such a powerful reason?

The answer, you will tell me, is that the mercy of God is great. Yes, for those who fear Him, says the Prophet; but great is His justice for the one who does not fear Him, and it condemns all obstinate sinners.

So you will say to me: Well then, who is Paradise for, if not for Christians? It is for Christians, of course, but for those who do not dishonor their character and who live as Christians. Moreover, if to the number of Christian adults who die in the grace of God, you add the countless host of children who die after baptism and before reaching the age of reason, you will not be surprised that Saint John the Apostle, speaking of those who are saved, says, "*I saw a great multitude which no man could number.*"

And this is what deceives those who pretend that the number of the saved among Catholics is greater than that of the damned… If to that number, you add the adults who have kept the robe of innocence, or who after having defiled it, have washed it in the tears of penance, it is certain that the greater number is saved; and that explains the words of Saint John, "*I saw a great multitude*," and these other words of Our Lord, "*Many will come from the east and from the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven*," and the other figures usually cited in favor of that opinion. But if you are talking about Christian adults, experience, reason, authority, propriety and Scripture all agree in proving that the greater number is damned. Do not believe that because of this, paradise is empty; on the contrary, it is a very populous kingdom. And if the damned are "*as numerous as the sand in the sea*," the saved are "*as numerous at the stars of heaven*," that is, both the one and the other are countless, although in very different proportions.

One day Saint John Chrysostom, preaching in the cathedral in Constantinople and considering these proportions, could not help but shudder in horror and ask, "*Out of this great number of people, how many do you think will be saved?*" And, not waiting for an answer, he added, "*Among so many thousands of people, we would not find a hundred who are saved, and I even doubt for the one hundred*." What a dreadful thing! The great Saint believed that out of so many people, barely one hundred would be saved; and even then, he was not sure of that number. What will happen to you who are listening to me? Great God, I cannot think of it without shuddering! Brothers, the problem of salvation is a very difficult thing; for according to the maxims of the theologians, when an end demands great efforts, few only attain it.

That is why Saint Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, after weighing all the reasons pro

and con in his immense erudition, finally concludes that the greater number of Catholic adults are damned. He says, "*Because eternal beatitude surpasses the natural state, especially since it has been deprived of original grace, it is the little number that are saved*."

So then, remove the blindfold from your eyes that is blinding you with self-love, that is keeping you from believing such an obvious truth by giving you very false ideas concerning the justice of God, "*Just Father, the world has not known Thee,*" said Our Lord Jesus Christ. He does not say "*Almighty Father, most good and merciful Father*." He says "***just Father***," so we may understand that out of all the attributes of God, none is less known than His justice, because men refuse to believe what they are afraid to undergo. Therefore, remove the blindfold that is covering your eyes and say tearfully: Alas! The greater number of Catholics, the greater number of those who live here, perhaps even those who are in this assembly, will be damned! What subject could be more deserving of your tears?

King Xerxes, standing on a hill looking at his army of one hundred thousand soldiers in battle array, and considering that out of all of them there would be not one man alive in a hundred years, was unable to hold back his tears. Have we not more reason to weep upon thinking that out of so many Catholics, the greater number will be damned? Should this thought not make our eyes pour forth rivers of tears, or at least produce in our heart the sentiment of compassion felt by an Augustinian Brother, Ven. Marcellus of St. Dominic? One day as he was meditating on the eternal pains, the Lord showed him how many souls were going to hell at that moment and had him see a very broad road on which twenty-two thousand reprobates were running toward the abyss, colliding into one another. The servant of God was stupefied at the sight and exclaimed, "*Oh, what a number! What a number! And still more are coming. O Jesus! O Jesus! What madness!*" Let me repeat with Jeremiah, "*Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes? And I will weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.*"

Poor souls! How can you run so hastily toward hell? For mercy's sake, stop and listen to me for a moment! Either you understand what it means to be saved and to be damned for all eternity, or you do not. If you understand and in spite of that, you do not decide to change your life today, make a good confession and trample upon the world, in a word, make your every effort to be counted among the littler number of those who are saved, I say that you do not have the faith. You are more excusable if you do not understand it, for then one must say that you are out of your mind. ***To be saved for all eternity, to be damned for all eternity, and to not make your every effort to avoid the one and make sure of the other, is something inconceivable***.

The Goodness of God

Perhaps you do not yet believe the terrible truths I have just taught you. But it is the most highly-considered theologians, the most illustrious Fathers who have spoken to you through me. So then, how can you resist reasons supported by so many examples and words of Scripture? If you still hesitate in spite of that, and if your mind is inclined to the opposite opinion, does that very consideration not suffice to make you tremble? Oh, it shows that you do not care very much for your salvation! In this important matter, a sensible man is struck more strongly by the slightest doubt of the risk he runs than by the evidence of total ruin in other affairs in which the soul is not involved. One of our brothers, Blessed Giles, was in the habit of saying that if only one man were going to be damned, he would do all he could to make sure he was not that man.

So what must we do, we who know that the greater number is going to be damned, and not only out of all Catholics? What must we do? Take the resolution to belong to the little number of those who are saved. You say: If Christ wanted to damn me, then why did He create me? Silence, rash tongue! God did not create anyone to damn him; but whoever is damned, is damned because he wants to be. Therefore, I will now strive to defend the goodness of my God and acquit it of all blame: that will be the subject of the second point.

Before going on, let us gather on one side all the books and all the heresies of Luther and Calvin, and on the other side the books and heresies of the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, and let us burn them. Some destroy grace, others freedom, and all are filled with errors; so let us cast them into the fire. All the damned bear upon their brow the oracle of the Prophet Osee, "*Thy damnation comes from thee*," so that they may understand that whoever is damned, is damned by his own malice and because he wants to be damned.

First let us take these two undeniable truths as a basis: "**God wants all men to be saved**," "**All are in need of the grace of God**." Now, if I show you that God wants to save all men, and that for this purpose He gives all of them His grace and all the other necessary means of obtaining that sublime end, you will be obliged to agree that whoever is damned must impute it to his own malice, and that if the greater number of Christians are damned, it is because they want to be. "*Thy damnation comes from thee; thy help is only in Me*."

God Desires All Men to be Saved

In a hundred places in Holy Scripture, God tells us that it is truly His desire to save all men. "*Is it My will that a sinner should die, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?... I live, saith the Lord God. I desire not the death of the sinner. Be converted and live*." When someone wants something very much, it is said that he is dying with desire; it is a hyperbole. But God has wanted and still wants our salvation so much that He died of desire, and He suffered death to give us life. This will to save all men is therefore not an

affected, superficial and apparent will in God; it is a real, effective, and beneficial will; for He provides us with all the means most proper for us to be saved. He does not give them to us so they will not obtain it; He gives them to us with a sincere will, with the intention that they may obtain their effect. And if they do not obtain it, He shows Himself afflicted and offended over it. He commands even the damned to use them in order to be saved; He exhorts them to it; He obliges them to it; and if they do not do it, they sin. Therefore, they may do it and thus be saved.

Far more, because God sees that we could not even make use of His grace without His help, He gives us other aids; and if they sometimes remain ineffective, it is our fault; for with these same aids, one may abuse them and be damned with them, and another may do right and be saved; he might even be saved with less powerful aids. Yes, it can happen that we abuse a greater grace and are damned, whereas another cooperates with a lesser grace and is saved.

Saint Augustine exclaims, "*If, therefore, someone turns aside from justice, he is carried by his free will, led by his concupiscence, deceived by his own persuasion*." But for those who do not understand theology, here is what I have to say to them: God is so good that when He sees a sinner running to his ruin, He runs after him, calls him, entreats and accompanies him even to the gates of hell; what will He not do to convert him? He sends him good inspirations and holy thoughts, and if he does not profit from them, He becomes angry and indignant, He pursues him. Will He strike him? No. He beats at the air and forgives him. But the sinner is not converted yet. God sends him a mortal illness. It is certainly all over for him. No, brothers, God heals him; the sinner becomes obstinate in evil, and God in His mercy looks for another way; He gives him another year, and when that year is over, He grants him yet another.

But if the sinner still wants to cast himself into hell in spite of all that, what does God do? Does He abandon him? No. He takes him by the hand; and while he has one foot in hell and the other outside, He still preaches to him, He implored him not to abuse His graces. Now I ask you, if that man is damned, is it not true that he is damned against the Will of God and because he wants to be damned? Come and ask me now: If God wanted to damn me, then why did He create me?

Ungrateful sinner, learn today that if you are damned, it is not God who is to blame, but you and your self-will. To persuade yourself of this, go down even to the depths of the abyss, and there I will bring you one of those wretched damned souls burning in hell, so that he may explain this truth to you. Here is one now: "*Tell me, who are you?*" "*I am a poor idolater, born in an unknown land; I never heard of heaven or hell, nor of what I am suffering now*." "*Poor wretch! Go away, you are not the one I am looking for*." *Another one is coming; there he is*. "*Who are you?*" "*I am a schismatic from the ends of Tartary; I always lived in an uncivilized state, barely knowing that there is a God*." "*You are not the one I want; return to hell*." *Here is another*. "*And who are you?*" "*I am a poor heretic*

from the North. I was born under the Pole and never saw either the light of the sun or the light of faith." "*It is not you that I am looking for either, return to Hell*." Brothers, my heart is broken upon seeing these wretches who never even knew the True Faith among the damned. Even so, know that the sentence of condemnation was pronounced against them and they were told, "*Thy damnation comes from thee*." They were damned because they wanted to be. They received so many aids from God to be saved! We do not know what they were, but they know them well, and now they cry out, "*O Lord, Thou art just... and Thy judgments are equitable*."

Brothers, you must know that **the most ancient belief is the Law of God**, and that **we all bear it written in our hearts**; that **it can be learned without any teacher**, and that **it suffices to have the light of reason in order to know all the precepts of that Law**. That is why even the barbarians hid when they committed sin, because they knew they were doing wrong; and they are damned for not having observed the natural law written in their heart: for had they observed it, God would have made a miracle rather than let them be damned; He would have sent them someone to teach them and would have given them other aids, of which they made themselves unworthy by not living in conformity with the inspirations of their own conscience, which never failed to warn them of the good they should do and the evil they should avoid. So it is their conscience that accused them at the Tribunal of God, and it tells them constantly in hell, "*Thy damnation comes from thee*." They do not know what to answer and are obliged to confess that they are deserving of their fate. Now if these infidels have no excuse, will there be any for a Catholic who had so many sacraments, so many sermons, so many aids at his disposal? How will he dare to say, "*If God was going to damn me, then why did He create me?*" How will he dare to speak in this manner, when God gives him so many aids to be saved? So let us finish confounding him.

You who are suffering in the abyss, answer me! Are there any Catholics among you? "*There certainly are!*" How many? Let one of them come here! "*That is impossible, they are too far down, and to have them come up would turn all of hell upside down; it would be easier to stop one of them as he is falling in*." So then, I am speaking to you who live in the habit of mortal sin, in hatred, in the mire of the vice of impurity, and who are getting closer to hell each day. Stop, and turn around; it is Jesus who calls you and who, with His wounds, as with so many eloquent voices, cries to you, "My son, if you are damned, you have only yourself to blame: '*Thy damnation comes from thee*.' Lift up your eyes and see all the graces with which I have enriched you to insure your eternal salvation. I could have had you born in a forest in Barbary; that is what I did to many others, but I had you born in the Catholic Faith; I had you raised by such a good father, such an excellent mother, with the purest instructions and

teachings. If you are damned in spite of that, whose fault will it be? Your own, My son, your own: '*Thy damnation comes from thee*.'

"I could have cast you into hell after the first mortal sin you committed, without waiting for the second: I did it to so many others, but I was patient with you, I waited for you for many long years. I am still waiting for you today in penance. If you are damned in spite of all that, whose fault is it? Your own, My son, your own: "*Thy damnation comes from thee*." You know how many have died before your very eyes and were damned: that was a warning for you. You know how many others I set back on the right path to give you the good example. Do you remember what that excellent confessor told you? I am the one who had him say it. Did he not enjoin you to change your life, to make a good confession? I am the One who inspired him. Remember that sermon that touched your heart? I am the One who led you there. And what has happened between you and Me in the secret of your heart, …***that*** you can never forget.

"Those interior inspirations, that clear knowledge, that constant remorse of conscience, would you dare to deny them? All of these were so many aids of My grace, because I wanted to save you. I refused to give them to many others, and I gave them to you because I loved you tenderly. My son, My son, if I spoke to them as tenderly as I am speaking to you today, how many others souls return to the right path! And you… you turn your back on Me. Listen to what I am going to tell you, for these are My last words: You have cost Me My blood; if you want to be damned in spite of the blood I shed for you, do not blame Me, you have only yourself to accuse; and throughout all eternity, do not forget that if you are damned in spite of Me, you are damned because you want to be damned: '*Thy damnation comes from thee*.' "

O my good Jesus, the very stones would split on hearing such sweet words, such tender expressions. Is there anyone here who wants to be damned, with so many graces and aids? If there is one, let him listen to me, and then let him resist if he can.

Baronius relates that after Julian the Apostate's infamous apostasy, he conceived such great hatred against Holy Baptism that day and night, he sought a way in which he might erase his own. To that purpose he had a bath of goat's blood prepared and placed himself in it, wanting this impure blood of a victim consecrated to Venus to erase the sacred character of Baptism from his soul. Such behavior seems abominable to you, but if Julian's plan had been able to succeed, it is certain that he would be suffering much less in hell.

Sinners, the advice I want to give you will no doubt seem strange to you; but if you understand it well, it is, on the contrary, inspired by tender compassion toward you. I implore you on my knees, by the blood of Christ and by the Heart of Mary, change your life, come back to the road that leads to heaven, and do all you can to belong to the little number of those who are saved. If, instead of this,

you want to continue walking on the road that leads to hell, at least find a way to erase your baptism. Woe to you if you take the Holy Name of Jesus Christ and the sacred character of the Christian engraved upon your soul into hell! Your chastisement will be all the greater. So do what I advise you to do: if you do not want to convert, go this very day and ask your pastor to erase your name from the baptismal register, so that there may not remain any remembrance of your ever having been a Christian; implore your Guardian Angel to erase from his book of graces the inspirations and aids he has given you on orders from God, for woe to you if he recalls them! Tell Our Lord to take back His faith, His baptism, His sacraments.

You are horror-struck at such a thought? Well then, cast yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ and say to Him, with tearful eyes and contrite heart: **“Lord, I confess that up till now I have not lived as a Christian. I am not worthy to be numbered among Your elect. I recognize that I deserve to be damned; but Your mercy is great and, full of confidence in Your grace, I say to You that I want to save my soul, even if I have to sacrifice my fortune, my honor, my very life, as long as I am saved. If I have been unfaithful up to now, I repent, I deplore, I detest my infidelity, I ask You humbly to forgive me for it. Forgive me, good Jesus, and strengthen me also, that I may be saved. I ask You not for wealth, honor or prosperity; I ask you for one thing only, to save my soul.”**

And You, O Jesus! What do You say? O Good Shepherd, see the stray sheep who returns to You; embrace this repentant sinner, bless his sighs and tears, or rather bless these people who are so well disposed and who want nothing but their salvation. Brothers, at the feet of Our Lord, let us protest that we want to save our soul, cost what it may. Let us all say to Him with tearful eyes, “Good Jesus, I want to save my soul,” O blessed tears, O blessed sighs!

Conclusion

Brothers, I want to send all of you away comforted today. So if you ask me my sentiment on the number of those who are saved, here it is: Whether there are many or few that are saved, I say that whoever wants to be saved, will be saved; and that no one can be damned if he does not want to be. And if it is true that few are saved, it is because there are few who live well. As for the rest, compare these two opinions: the first one states that the greater number of Catholics are condemned; the second one, on the contrary, pretends that the greater number of Catholics are saved. Imagine an Angel sent by God to confirm the first opinion, coming to tell you that not only are most Catholics damned, but that of all this assembly present here, one alone will be saved. If you obey the Commandments of God, if you detest the corruption of this world, if you embrace the Cross of Jesus Christ in a spirit of penance, you will be that one alone who is saved.

Now imagine the same Angel returning to you and confirming the second opinion. He tells you that not only are the greater portion of Catholics saved, but that out

> of all this gathering, one alone will be damned and all the others saved. If after that, you continue your usuries, your vengeances, your criminal deeds, your impurities, then you will be that one alone who is damned.
>
> What is the use of knowing whether few or many are saved? Saint Peter says to us, "*Strive by good works to make your election sure*." When Saint Thomas Aquinas's sister asked him what she must do to go to heaven, he said, "*You will be saved if you want to be.*" I say the same thing to you, and here is proof of my declaration. No one is damned unless he commits mortal sin: that is of faith. And no one commits mortal sin unless he wants to: that is an undeniable theological proposition. Therefore, no one goes to hell unless he wants to; the consequence is obvious. Does that not suffice to comfort you? Weep over past sins, make a good confession, sin no more in the future, and you will all be saved. Why torment yourself so? For it is certain that you have to commit mortal sin to go to hell, and that to commit mortal sin you must want to, and that consequently no one goes to hell unless he wants to. That is not just an opinion, it is an undeniable and very comforting truth; may God give you to understand it, and may He bless you. Amen.

(Source)

May The Farce Be With You

December 19, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I made the mistake of seeing the new “Star Wars” movie this weekend. Oops. TLDR version for my readers: don’t watch it.

****Spoilers**** [Minor ones, not that it really matters much]

****Spoilers****

So what made the movie awful? Lets see:

- It wasn’t Star Wars. It didn’t feel like Star Wars, and the characters basically didn’t act as if they were in Star Wars. Even the Force Awakens felt more like Star Wars than this. What they did to Luke Skywalker was a sick joke.
- It was yet another hackneyed repeat plot from the original trilogy. Force Awakens stole from A New Hope, and this stole from Empire Strikes Back. Only badly.
- The only half-way competent male in the entire movie was the chief villain. And I emphasize half-way competent. That is all he got. Every other male was an abject failure, save perhaps one who was maybe a quarter competent at the very end. They basically accomplished nothing at best, and in many instances made things worse.
- The female characters, on the other hand, were *awesome.* They were the only clever or successful characters besides the villain. Basically, what they set out to do, they accomplished.
- The protagonist slash heroine was super-awesome. She basically exhibited one flaw in the entire movie- being too trusting of the good of others. And of course it all worked out fine in the end.
- Speaking of her, she is the perfect glaring example of how the creators of this movie don’t know Star Wars at all. She basically upends all notions of how the Force, Light Side and everything works. She is a woman, and so cannot do wrong.
- I could go on and talk about the huge plot holes which filled the movie like swiss cheese, but that would force this page to run on and on. I will spare my readers the half-hour + it would take to cover them.

In truth, what Star Wars has become is sadly easy to see now: yet another damned Disney Princess movie. That is what it is. The heroine is a Disney Princess, and everyone else exists to show how awesome she is (and by extension empowered women). Frankly, the movie screams that it was written by what Vox Day would call a “Gamma Male”; in other words a male feminist with daddy issues and a fear of “toxic masculinity.”

So in recap, don’t watch this garbage film.

*Yes, I know the name and probably the content is unoriginal. But I felt this post deserved as much originality as the film displayed.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- # 137

December 25, 2017 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today (and tonight) is a period of expectation. Over two thousand years ago the People of God were awaiting the Messiah. Only the Savior they were expecting was not the one God was sending- the One they needed. They were expecting a King, and that is what they received:

> Clap your hands, all peoples!
> Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
> [2] For the Lord, the Most High, is terrible,
> a great king over all the earth.
> [3] He subdued peoples under us,
> and nations under our feet.
> [4] He chose our heritage for us,
> the pride of Jacob whom he loves.*Selah*

> [5] God has gone up with a shout,
> the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
> [6] Sing praises to God, sing praises!
> Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
> [7] For God is the king of all the earth;
> sing praises with a psalm!

> [8] God reigns over the nations;
> God sits on his holy throne.
> [9] The princes of the peoples gather
> as the people of the God of Abraham.
> For the shields of the earth belong to God;
> he is highly exalted!

(Psalm 47)

But they missed- or their hearts were blinded, to the fact that the King would also be a servant:

> Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
> my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
> I have put my Spirit upon him,
> he will bring forth justice to the nations.
> [2] He will not cry or lift up his voice,
> or make it heard in the street;
> [3] a bruised reed he will not break,
> and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;

> he will faithfully bring forth justice.
> [4] He will not fail or be discouraged
> till he has established justice in the earth;
> and the coastlands wait for his law.

(Isaiah 42:1-4)

And not just a servant, a lowly and humble one. For such is the path we all must walk if we too shall be saved and be part of the family of God.

> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. [2] This was the first enrollment, when Quirin′i-us was governor of Syria. [3] And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. [4] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, [5] to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. [6] And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. [7] And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.
>
> [8] And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. [10] And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; [11] for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

> [14] “Glory to God in the highest,
> and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”

(Luke 2:1-14)

To all men and women of good will, I wish you peace and joy and a Merry Christmas!

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #138

January 1, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have a post in the works (at least the workshop of my mind), and this post is tied to it. There is an obvious theme here which ties to the future post, which was prompted by a recent comment.

The first few verses comes from the Song of Songs:

> [8] We have a little sister,
> and she has no breasts.
> What shall we do for our sister,
> on the day when she is spoken for?
> [9] If she is a wall,
> we will build upon her a battlement of silver;
> but if she is a door,
> we will enclose her with boards of cedar.

(Song 8:8-9)

Then we draw from two selections from the Book if Sirach. The first is relatively short:

> [8] A drunken wife arouses great anger;
> she cannot hide her shame.
> [9] The haughty stare betrays an unchaste wife;
> her eyelids give her away.

> [10] Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter,
> or else, when she finds liberty, she will make use of it.
> [11] Be on guard against her impudent eye,
> and do not be surprised if she sins against you.
> [12] As a thirsty traveler opens his mouth
> and drinks from any water near him,
> so she will sit in front of every tent peg
> and open her quiver to the arrow.

(Sirach 26:8-12)

And then the longer section:

> [9] A daughter is a secret anxiety to her father,
> and worry over her robs him of sleep;
> when she is young, for fear she may not marry,
> or if married, for fear she may be disliked;
> [10] while a virgin, for fear she may be seduced
> and become pregnant in her father’s house;

> or having a husband, for fear she may go astray,
> or, though married, for fear she may be barren.
> [11] Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter,
> or she may make you a laughingstock to your enemies,
> a byword in the city and the assembly of the people,
> and put you to shame in public gatherings.
> See that there is no lattice in her room,
> no spot that overlooks the approaches to the house.
> [12] Do not let her parade her beauty before any man,
> or spend her time among married women;
> [13] for from garments comes the moth,
> and from a woman comes woman's wickedness.
> [14] Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good;
> it is woman who brings shame and disgrace.

(Sirach 42:9-14)

The translation leaves something to be desired at the end. My ~~NASB~~ NAB translates it thus: "Better a man's harshness than a woman's indulgence." Given the context, that makes much more sense than this translation.

There are a few more like in throughout Scripture, but this is a good baseline. Feel free to add others in the comments below if you like.

Trust Issues

January 4, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will tag along with my previous post, found here. It was prompted by the following comment, left by a man named Cem:

> A lot of perspectives in this particular site revolve around Christianity while other RedPill venues focus on short term gains such as "bang", "lay" etc. I want for myself to apply a moral but also sharp RedPill understanding in order to secure a marriage with a worthy girl. For religious reasons, I refrain from sex since it's before marriage forbidden in my belief. I am Muslim and 30 y/o. That being said I study RP for more than 5 years tracing it back to the Mystery and Neill Strauss' book, and have considerable experience of day-time pick-ups and dates. Only difference is that my efforts don't lead to bed, as my choice. While some argue that this is not game at all, I can say that I garnered enough understanding about the ways of women (not just in intersexual dynamics but also other social areas) and that this discipline opened my naive eyes. Five years ago, I'd never have thought that taking an engaged woman home would be so easy. However, now I see every woman as a conniving covert-whores who spread their legs after enough gaming, and can't trust any woman's loyalty. How does a man get past this?

To begin with, I am glad to see my readers come from a variety of backgrounds. Different perspectives add a lot to the blog.

A few thoughts came to my mind after reading Cem's comment. The first was that it was interesting to see a Muslim back up the writings/reports of secular, Christian and Jewish men (I don't know of any major 'spherian's who are Muslim, if one is let me know in the comments below. The second was to note that Muslim men can, just like Christian men, choose to learn without giving into sin. The final bit was that distrust of women is universal- which really shouldn't have been as surprising to me as it was. But enough about all that. What I want to talk about is this part here:

> **However, now I see every woman as a conniving covert-whores who spread their legs after enough gaming, and can't trust any woman's loyalty. How does a man get past this?**

This is tough. Real tough. It doesn't matter what your faith tradition is, women are still women. And when they are allowed to act as they are in the West, the vast majority will choose to use that liberty for license. That is the thing about the modern era: we have allowed women to act like they've always wanted to act throughout history. Women haven't really changed, or at least, their nature hasn't. What has changed is the social environment in which they find themselves.

This is my fancy way of saying this simple and ugly truth: Women weren't really any more

trustworthy in the past than they are now. My previous post showed some examples of 2000 year old+ thought on how far you could trust women to keep their legs shut.

So how do you deal with it? Well, here is my advice to Cem, and to other men who worry about trusting women.

- The possibility of betrayal is part of the human condition. Only God is trustworthy, everyone else can betray you and one shouldn't be surprised to find oneself betrayed. Family, friends… it can be anyone. Accept it, and don't let fear of it get you down. Instead vow to be stronger than your fear.
- Not every woman is a harlot. There have always been some who have showed restraint, whether in permissive cultures or restrictive ones. Even today some women don't sleep around. The goal of any man intending to marry is to look for those women. And don't marry if you don't find one.
- You can reduce the chances of betrayal by being in an environment which discourages and penalizes such behavior. Stack the deck in your favor by leveraging whatever you can against her betraying you.

Will this resolve the uncertainty forever? No. But it will help give some peace of mind. The truth is that this world will always carry with it risks and disappointments. That cannot be stopped. Instead we must do what we can to get the odds in our favor.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #139

January 15, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will have no central theme. Rather, I will feature some scripture which caught my attention in the last few weeks. First up is a verse from Proverbs 31:

> She girds herself with strength,
> and makes her arms strong.

(Proverbs 31:17)

I have tended to skip past this particular verse when reading through Proverbs 31 in the past. However, I am now of a different mind. This week at Church I saw a mother with two young children holding them throughout the service. Neither kid was a newborn- 1 and 3 years old, respectively. And she held them throughout much of the service. That couldn't have been easy. [For those curious, dad was dealing with the older and more troublesome children.]

Physical strength is often something which is seen as a male attribute. But women need strength of their own as well- being a mother pretty much demands it. While I've intended to get my wife a gym membership when/if I get married, it was mostly focused on general health and keeping the weight off. But building muscle is another important thing which I had overlooked until today.

Next comes this passage from Romans:

> What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? [3] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
>
> [5] For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. [6] We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. [7] For whoever has died is freed from sin. [8] But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. [9] We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. [10] The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. [11] So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
>
> [12] Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. [13] No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness.

> [14] For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

(Romans 6:1-14)

I've never understood those Protestant traditions which have held that Baptism is "optional" for Christians. Scripture alone is clear on its importance- its necessity. We *must* die to the sins of this world, and be born anew into the family of God. And baptism is the means we do so. It is a spiritual drowning, if you will, which recalls back to the parting of the Red Sea. This leads to a seeming paradox- the only way to live is to die. But this life is bound by death already. The only way to escape that is through God. And in so doing we become His children. See also this from John's Gospel:

> [12] But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

(John 1:12-13)

Going back to the passage from Romans, we can also see that if we choose to live a life of sin, we can bring back that part of us which was supposed to die. That life where we were the children of the Enemy, and not of God. We must keep that old self buried, and never seek to dig it up. If we can do so, then eternal life with our Heavenly Father is before us.

Incentive V. Motive Force

January 17, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I recommend that my readers, if they haven't already, read Dalrock's two most recent posts: "Headship makes all the difference" and "Incentives matter." There is an important point or clarification that I think should be made here, especially with regards to the first post.

People like Gilder believe that women civilize men. Another way of putting it is that they feel that women are the motive force which pushes men to become civilized. Women push, and men are moved. This is not at all how it works.

Rather, women *can* act as an incentive to men to civilize. However, it is men who civilize other men. [And women too, while we are at it- but that is for another post.] And the approach used, if one wants to succeed, is always the tried and true method of the carrot and the stick.

The stick takes the form of punishment and discipline. Discipline must be taught, must be encouraged, and perhaps even beaten into a man growing up. Without it he will revert to his "factory default setting" and become a thug. [At the same time it is possible to go overboard and beat out the masculinity from a boy- in which case he doesn't truly become a civilized man at all, as he is not a man.]

The carrot, however, can be a couple of things. Respect being one of them. Access to a good job and position in society being another. But the most powerful carrot is the promise of a woman… and with her a family. The promise of locking down a loyal woman, and the attendant sexual access that comes with it, is a powerful incentive for men. The kind of incentive which will make them endure the "stick" and become civilized.

However, as others have pointed out, that only works if the carrot is edible. When women are no longer seen as marriageable, when men no longer see them as 'worth the effort', then it all falls apart. Without the carrot, men won't finish the "civilizing" process. It seems that there are two primary outcomes from this: they resist the discipline, and becomes thugs, or they simply endure it as long as they have to and then become the so called "grass-eaters." Either way, the fail to live up to their potential and the civilization they live in suffers for it.

This is something that used to be understood in the past. Unfortunately our society has thrown it out, along with so many other necessary bits of knowledge. As things continue to fall apart, I anticipate efforts will be made to try and address this. There might even be an effort to seek out what was lost. But I do not anticipate any actual solution happening- society won't want to give up what it has "gained" for itself.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #140

January 29, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was reading Cane Caldo's most recent post this week, and I immediately thought of this passage from First Timothy:

> [8] Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. [9] This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, [10] fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching [11] that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

(1 Timothy 1:8-11)

The unfortunate truth is that society needs both criminal laws, as well as social sanction, to keep people in line. Those who are rebellious will not be motivated by virtue, therefore to restrain them you must appeal to their self-interest. That means using the laws of society to keep them in place.

As much as we would rather not have laws in place, or social sanctions, or whatever the particular instrument in question is, they are absolutely necessary. We are witnessing now the price that is paid when society gives those things up.

Also, I think I have found a corollary, of sorts, to the old engineer adage:

Cheap. Fast. Good…. pick two.

I suppose one could call it a social engineer's adage:

Virtue. Freedom. Wealth/Comfort… pick two.

The obvious scripture passage to back this up involves a certain gate:

> [16] Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" [17] And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." [18] He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; [19] Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [20] The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" [21] Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." [22] When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.
>
> [23] Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. [24] Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go

> through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” [25] When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?” [26] But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

(Matthew 19:16-26)

The more wealth there is, the more care needs to be taken to limit freedom (if only in a self-imposed way). Otherwise virtue will be pushed to the back-burner.

Finally, this passage from St. James’s letter appealed to me today:

> [13] Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. [15] Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. [16] For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

(James 3:13-17)

Well, maybe not appealed to me. Rather, convicted me. Envy is one of my long running problems, one that has been very difficult to stamp out. I’ve made progress in a lot of other areas, but this one still eludes me. All the more reason for me not to boast, and to remember that I too depend utterly on the mercy of God.

Lenten Update

February 21, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I meant to get this post up earlier, but alas, I have been very busy “in the real world.” This Lent I am not going to opt out of the ‘sphere, however, I will likely have a small presence. This owes to work, life, etc. So posting may happen, but only as time permits.

Masculine Monday- To Command And Obey

March 6, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a long while since I wrote one of these post, and thus long overdue. Today I want to examine the subject of authority and leadership as it relates to masculinity.

Before I continue, I would direct my reader's attention to this post by Cane Caldo. It helped stimulate the present post.

I believe that one of the essential qualities that makes a man a man is his ability to function effectively within a hierarchical structure. It is his ability to lead others below him in authority, in subjection, and his ability to follow orders of those in authority above him. In my opinion a man is not a man unless he is firmly capable of both task.

To Command and Obey go hand in hand.

From my experience, most men who come across as unmanly fail in at least one, if not both, of those areas. When it comes to authority, they come across either as weak or overbearing. And when it comes to obedience, they are either rebellious or spineless drones without initiative.

Creating proper men, that is, instilling in them the essence of command and obedience, must start at an early age. Deviations from acceptable behavior must be spotted and corrected. Creating a man is not an instant process, nor an automatic one. It can, I think, be likened to the forging of a sword- a process which takes time, patience and hard work. Yet the end result is a sharp tool, waiting to be used.

Unfortunately we don't have the structures in place anymore for this transformation to take place on a mass scale. Point in fact, we have been actively working to dismantle them for generations. And that process yet continues.

So it is up to individuals and small groups to continue this essential work. Men who are fathers of boys are especially demanded upon. Most of the work is up to them- and in a hostile work environment, no less.

I would like my readers, especially fathers, to give their thoughts on the subject. Both in terms of general views on whether I am right or not, and also as to specifics on how to achieve this.

Lazarus Saturday

March 25, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Holy Week is about to begin. But before it does, we remember one of the most important events in the ministry of Jesus.

> Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister
> Martha. [2] Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his
> feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. [3] So the sisters sent a message to
> Jesus,[a] "Lord, he whom you love is ill." [4] But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This
> illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God
> may be glorified through it." [5] Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her
> sister and Lazarus, [6] after having heard that Lazarus[b] was ill, he stayed two days
> longer in the place where he was.
>
> [7] Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." [8] The disciples
> said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you
> going there again?" [9] Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight?
> Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this
> world. [10] But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them."
> [11] After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am
> going there to awaken him." [12] The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen
> asleep, he will be all right." [13] Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death,
> but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. [14] Then Jesus told them
> plainly, "Lazarus is dead. [15] For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you
> may believe. But let us go to him." [16] Thomas, who was called the Twin,[c] said to
> his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
>
> [17] When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus[d] had already been in the tomb four
> days. [18] Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles[e] away, [19] and many of
> the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.
> [20] When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary
> stayed at home. [21] Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother
> would not have died. [22] But even now I know that God will give you whatever you
> ask of him." [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." [24] Martha said to
> him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." [25] Jesus
> said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.[f] Those who believe in me, even
> though they die, will live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me will never
> die. Do you believe this?" [27] She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the
> Messiah,[g] the Son of God, the one coming into the world."
>
> [28] When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her
> privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." [29] And when she heard it,
> she got up quickly and went to him. [30] Now Jesus had not yet come to the village,

> but was still at the place where Martha had met him. [31] The Jews who were with
> her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They
> followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.
> [32] When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said
> to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” [33] When
> Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was
> greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. [34] He said, “Where have you laid
> him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” [35] Jesus began to weep. [36] So the
> Jews said, “See how he loved him!” [37] But some of them said, “Could not he who
> opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”
>
> [38] Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a
> stone was lying against it. [39] Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister
> of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has
> been dead four days.” [40] Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed,
> you would see the glory of God?” [41] So they took away the stone. And Jesus
> looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. [42] I knew that
> you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here,
> so that they may believe that you sent me.” [43] When he had said this, he cried
> with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” [44] The dead man came out, his hands and
> feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to
> them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”
>
> [45] Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus
> did, believed in him.

(John 11:1-45)

John’s Gospel was written last, and it is important to keep that in mind. Nothing ended up in there by accident. John knew of the other Gospels, and so included what he felt was necessary to achieve his purpose with his Gospel. More than a recounting of the life of Jesus, John’s Gospel is highly theological in nature. It is also a response to many of the concerns, questions and difficulties that the early Church had faced.

The Bread of Life discourse was written to make clear the True Presence, the beginning of his Gospel made clear that Jesus was God from all time, and the mention of the piercing of Jesus’s side in the Passion made it clear that Jesus died on the cross, and died of crucifixion. Here John mentions the raising of Lazarus for another clear purpose.

Lazarus hadn’t simply died. He had died and been buried. More than that, enough time had passed, 4 days, that his body would have begun to decompose. This is why there is mention of the stench by Martha. The other people whom Jesus raised from the dead in the Gospels were not dead nearly so long. The young man at Nain had yet to be buried, and the young girl was dead perhaps only minutes, or maybe an hour or two. But this is four days later. Yet, despite the fact that Lazarus’s body was beginning to decay, Jesus commanded he come out of the tomb, and he did just that. Things like early decay mean

nothing to God.

This is a message for all of us- not to fear the decay of this world. And to be assured that the resurrection is real, and will happen to those who are faithful. No matter the conditions are bodies may be in, God can and will raise us up. This, I think, is why John included this passage in his Gospel. He was answering the concerns of those who were wondering how a bodily resurrection could work after decay set in. St. Paul had already answered those questions in a letter to the Corinthians, but they would of course have persisted. Hence why John brings us the story of Lazarus, and the other Gospels don't. We find in this passage a great reassurance for us, and so this is a special day to thank the Lord, and be mindful that death is not the end.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #141

March 26, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today marks both Palm Sunday and the Annunciation. This is altogether fitting, as both are days of heralding what is to come. We enter now Holy Week, a week marked by both triumph and tragedy. The passages for today are easy enough to guess ahead of time:

> [26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, [27] to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." [29] But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. [30] The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. [32] He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. [33] He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." [34] Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" [35] The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. [36] And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." [38] Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

(Luke 1:26-38)

Yet more triumph awaits:

> [28] After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
>
> [29] When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, [30] saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. [31] If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" [32] So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. [33] As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" [34] They said, "The Lord needs it." [35] Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. [36] As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. [37] As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, [38] saying,
>
> "Blessed is the king

> who comes in the name of the Lord!
> Peace in heaven,
> and glory in the highest heaven!”
>
> [39] Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples
> to stop.” [40] He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout
> out.”

(Luke 19:28-40)

But as I mentioned earlier, this is also a week of tragedy. And it is altogether fitting that the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem should transition quickly into a tale of tragedy:

> [41] As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, [42] saying, “If you, even you,
> had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they
> are hidden from your eyes. [43] Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your
> enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on
> every side. [44] They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you,
> and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not
> recognize the time of your visitation from God.”

(Luke 19:41-44)

Thinking on it, it occurs to me that in many respects all of Creation was waiting for this week since the beginning. Indeed, one might argue that Creation was made for this week, as it would restore what had been lost.

Inconvenience and Deliverance

March 31, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> [12] “Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
> because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;
> he reproaches us for sins against the law,
> and accuses us of sins against our training.
> [13] He professes to have knowledge of God,
> and calls himself a child of the Lord.
> [14] He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;
> [15] the very sight of him is a burden to us,
> because his manner of life is unlike that of others,
> and his ways are strange.
> [16] We are considered by him as something base,
> and he avoids our ways as unclean;
> he calls the last end of the righteous happy,
> and boasts that God is his father.
> [17] Let us see if his words are true,
> and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;
> [18] for if the righteous man is God’s child, he will help him,
> and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.
> [19] Let us test him with insult and torture,
> so that we may find out how gentle he is,
> and make trial of his forbearance.
> [20] Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
> for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

> [21] Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,
> for their wickedness blinded them,
> [22] and they did not know the secret purposes of God,
> nor hoped for the wages of holiness,
> nor discerned the prize for blameless souls;
> [23] for God created us for incorruption,
> and made us in the image of his own eternity,
> [24] but through the devil’s envy death entered the world,
> and those who belong to his company experience it.

(Wisdom 2:12-24)

> [1] My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
> Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
> [2] O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;

and by night, but find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
5 To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.
6 But I am a worm, and not human;
scorned by others, and despised by the people.
7 All who see me mock at me;
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
8 "Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"
9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.
10 On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
11 Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
12 Many bulls encircle me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
15 my mouth[a] is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.
16 For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shriveled;[b]
17 I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
19 But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!

20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life[c] from the power of the dog!
21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued[d] me.
22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;[e]
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
24 For he did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me,[f]
but heard when I[g] cried to him.
25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
26 The poor[h] shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live forever!
27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.[i]
28 For dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.

29 To him,[j] indeed, shall all who sleep in[k] the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and I shall live for him.[l]
30 Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord,
31 and[m] proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

(Psalm 22)

Guarding The Stone… And Heart

March 31, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Holy Saturday is a day like no other. Not exactly a day of mourning, and not exactly a day of joy. Rather, the day seems to me to be quite like a rather long instance of holding one's breath. It is a day of waiting, where Creation itself pauses in anticipation of what is to come.

Interestingly, there is only one short Gospel passage which addresses this day, from Matthew:

> [62] The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the
> Pharisees gathered before Pilate [63] and said, "Sir, we remember what that
> impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'
> [64] Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise
> his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised
> from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." [65] Pilate
> said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can."
> [66] So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

(Matthew 27:62-66)

It makes sense that Matthew's Gospel would address this, however. It was written primarily for a Jewish audience, and so those who heard the Gospel would have had questions. They would have heard what the Jewish leaders later said about these events, and so we have this passage here to help explain it. Coupled with the other parts, of course, after the resurrection.

What is important to note, though, is that the Jewish leaders and Pharisees set a seal on the stone. The stone was not the stone that bound Jesus, however. It was the stone that was their heart. They had closed themselves off to the power and mercy of God. And they let nothing attempt to break through to reach them. Let us not follow in their example.

The Hour Of Victory

April 1, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

> Let all pious men and all lovers of God rejoice in the splendor of this feast; let the wise servants blissfully enter into the joy of their Lord; let those who have borne the burden of Lent now receive their pay, and those who have toiled since the first hour, let them now receive their due reward; let any who came after the third hour be grateful to join in the feast, and those who may have come after the sixth, let them not be afraid of being too late; for the Lord is gracious and He receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him who comes on the eleventh hour as well as to him who has toiled since the first: yes, He has pity on the last and He serves the first; He rewards the one and praises the effort.
>
> Come you all: enter into the joy of your Lord. You the first and you the last, receive alike your reward; you rich and you poor, dance together; you sober and you weaklings, celebrate the day; you who have kept the fast and you who have not, rejoice today. The table is richly loaded: enjoy its royal banquet. The calf is a fatted one: let no one go away hungry. All of you enjoy the banquet of faith; all of you receive the riches of his goodness. Let no one grieve over his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed; let no one weep over his sins, for pardon has shone from the grave; let no one fear death, for the death of our Saviour has set us free: He has destroyed it by enduring it, He has despoiled Hades by going down into its kingdom, He has angered it by allowing it to taste of his flesh.
>
> When Isaias foresaw all this, he cried out: “O Hades, you have been angered by encountering Him in the nether world.” Hades is angered because frustrated, it is angered because it has been mocked, it is angered because it has been destroyed, it is angered because it has been reduced to naught, it is angered because it is now captive. It seized a body, and, lo! it encountered heaven; it seized the visible, and was overcome by the invisible.
>
> O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are abolished. Christ is risen and the demons are cast down. Christ is risen and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life is freed. Christ is risen and the tomb is emptied of the dead: for Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the Leader and Reviver of those who had fallen asleep. To Him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

(John Chrysostom’s Paschal Homily)

> The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
> [2] he makes me lie down in green pastures.
> He leads me beside still waters;
> [3] he restores my soul.
> He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name’s sake.

[4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.

[5] Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil,
my cup overflows.
[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
for ever.

(Psalm 23)

Blog Update

April 19, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Sorry for the lack of posts everyone, but work and life has kept me occupied. Every time I try and sit down to write, something comes up that keeps me away from the computer. Hopefully I will be able to find some time this coming week to get something written.

In the meantime, I hope everyone is having a good Paschal season.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #142

April 23, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been talking with one of my readers lately about the problem of peer groups, which are ostensibly full of "righteous" people, supporting sin and attacking those who point it out. This got me thinking about when similar situations occurred in Scripture. One example I can think of is found in the Gospel of John:

> 45 Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked
> them, "Why did you not arrest him?" 46 The police answered, "Never has anyone
> spoken like this!" 47 Then the Pharisees replied, "Surely you have not been
> deceived too, have you? 48 Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees
> believed in him? 49 But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are
> accursed." 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus[q] before, and who was one of
> them, asked, 51 "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a
> hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" 52 They replied, "Surely you are
> not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise
> from Galilee."

(John 7:45-52)

Indeed, this is a problem which has been with the Church since the beginning. St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians had, as one purpose, correcting a situation where the church there was supporting a sinful situation.

> It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind
> that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife.
> 2 And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has
> done this would have been removed from among you?
>
> 3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have
> already pronounced judgment 4 in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who
> has done such a thing.[a] When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with
> the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to hand this man over to Satan for the
> destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.[b]
>
> 6 Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens
> the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new
> batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been
> sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the
> yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
>
> 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons—
> 10 not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or
> idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am
> writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or

> sister[c] who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? [13] God will judge those outside. “Drive out the wicked person from among you.”

(1 Cor 5)

One can imagine the incredulity of Paul while writing this. One can also, I think, imagine that his letter was not well received back in Corinth. But he wasn’t concerned with whether they liked him or not. His concern was the Truth. And that should be our concern as well. And if that costs us “friends”, then I think I stand on firm ground in saying they were never true friends in the first place.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #143

May 28, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I hadn't realized it had been as long as it had since I posted. Hopefully no one was getting worried. The first passage today is from Acts, and is the ultimate resolution of the Council of Jerusalem:

> [22] Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsab′bas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, [23] with the following letter: "The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cili′cia, greeting. [24] Since we have heard that some persons from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, [25] it has seemed good to us in assembly to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, [26] men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. [27] We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. [28] For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: [29] that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

(Acts 15:22-29)

This passage is always a valuable one to keep in mind, as it shows the Apostles and elders of the Church exercising their authority over believers. In this age of everyone believing whatever they want to believe, a sign of order and authority is invaluable.

Next a passage from the Letter of St. James:

> [19] Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, [20] for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. [21] Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
>
> [22] But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23] For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; [24] for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. [25] But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.

(James 1:19-25)

Our faith is meant to be a dynamic, living thing. If we are not expressing it in our lives

daily, then it is dead. And so are we, once our time upon this world ends.

Finally, a Psalm with a reminder about the importance of humility:

> O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,
> my eyes are not raised too high;
> I do not occupy myself with things
> too great and too marvelous for me.
> [2] But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
> like a child quieted at its mother’s breast;
> like a child that is quieted is my soul.

> [3] O Israel, hope in the Lord
> from this time forth and for evermore.

(Psalm 131)

A Reminder And An Update

July 8, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A reader recently sent me an e-mail in which he questioned whether I should link to manosphere sites out of concern that it might other readers to occasions of sin. He suggested, at the very least, a warning message. Now, I think I have posted them in past, but the suggestion got me thinking.

Anyone who has any experience with the internet should know that it can lead to occasions of sin. There is no escaping it. Whatever the sin, you can and will easily find something to set it off. That is the danger of the internet. Therefore anyone who uses the web should be aware of this. Caveat Emptor and all that. People just need to use their smarts and understand that dangers are out there. And then take steps to compensate.

All the same, now is a good time to remind anyone reading my blog that a link, either in a post or in my blogroll, is not an endorsement of everything you will find in/on a blog. I link it because I think it has some value to my readers. Or can have value. I might disagree with everything else someone says, but that particular piece is worth reading- for whatever reason.

As for the update, I apologize for the lack of posts this whole year. I have been stretched very thin lately, between work and other matters I have very little free time. Mostly I have been focusing that small amount of time on things which relax me. Unfortunately the 'sphere is not one of them. Hopefully I will have less burdens in the near future, and can devote more time. There is still a lot to discuss in this particular area.

In the spirit of olden times, and to generate some discussion (and controversy), I leave readers with something to ponder/discuss/debate:

Women exist in a perpetual state of contradiction.

Otherwise stated, women live their lives continuously pulled in different directions by different motive forces (appetites, instincts, desires, wishes, dreams, etc.). This explains their (to men at least) apparent contradictory and confusing nature.

The Knowledge Base Spreads

August 11, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

A long time reader and commenter has clued me in to a series on the Orthodox Blog "Russian Faith" concerning attracting a spouse. The first post in the series is "How to Attract a Christian Spouse-Marriage Advice from a Christian Dad." The author cites my LAMPS/PSALM model favorably at one point, although he adds on a final S to include Spirituality. I think I will respond to that point sometime later, as it is good to understand what my model is, and what my model isn't.

He then wrote a follow up post, title Attractiveness: Beauty is Not Just On the Inside. It is very Un-PC in all of the right ways. A snippet from it:

> A woman's physical attractiveness is the most immediate and pressing point of interest to most men. Morally and spiritually, this can be quite dangerous — we all know very attractive women whose spiritual lives are a mess — but attractiveness itself is central to attraction by most men (whether godly or not).
>
> A young lady may be a devout Christian, but if she is not physically attractive, the vast majority of men will pass her over.

This is absolutely true, and something which unfortunately is not taught enough in Christian circles (of any faith tradition). The reverse is of course true for men as well, and is one of the reasons why we have the Christian side of the 'sphere.

One thing I found very striking about the second post is the photos. They showcase beautiful women who are very feminine and modest in appearance. Not the vulgar "sexiness" the world loves to push out.

I will be curious to see where the author takes the remaining posts. At the same time, I am already pleased to see this kind of article happen. Especially because it showcases my LAMPS/PSALM model and the understanding that goes with it. Hopefully more Christian outlets will take advantage of those kinds of resources in the future.

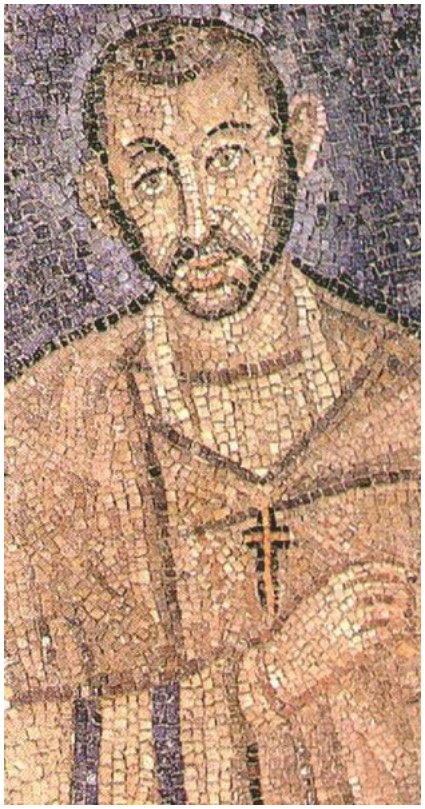
Saturday Saints- #137

August 25, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I am going to resume this series after almost 9 months of absence. Until I think of a better way of doing it, I will go alphabetical again. Our saint today is one of the early Fathers of the Church, Ambrose of Milan:

> **Aurelius Ambrosius**[a] (c. 340 – 397), better known in English as **Ambrose** (/'æmbroʊz/), was a bishop of Milan who became one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the 4th century. He was the Roman governor of Liguria and Emilia, headquartered in Milan, before being made bishop of Milan by popular acclamation in 374. Ambrose was a staunch opponent of Arianism.
>
> Traditionally, Ambrose is credited with promoting "antiphonal chant", a style of chanting in which one side of the choir responds alternately to the other, as well as with composing *Veni redemptor gentium*, an Advent hymn.
>
> He was also interested in the condition of contemporary Italian society.
>
> Ambrose was one of the four original Doctors of the Church, and is the patron saint of Milan. He is notable for his influence on Augustine of Hippo.

Much, much more can be found out about this influential saint at his wiki, located here.



Selected Sunday Scriptures- #144

September 16, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's post will draw heavily from the Psalms. First we have Psalm 141:

> I call upon thee, O Lord; make haste to me!
> Give ear to my voice, when I call to thee!
> [2] Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee,
> and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice!
>
> [3] Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord,
> keep watch over the door of my lips!
> [4] Incline not my heart to any evil,
> to busy myself with wicked deeds
> in company with men who work iniquity;
> and let me not eat of their dainties!
> [5] Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness,
> but let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head;
> for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds.
> [6] When they are given over to those who shall condemn them,
> then they shall learn that the word of the Lord is true.
> [7] As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land,
> so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol.
>
> [8] But my eyes are toward thee, O Lord God;
> in thee I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!
> [9] Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me,
> and from the snares of evildoers!
> [10] Let the wicked together fall into their own nets,
> while I escape.

(Psalm 141)

I love this Psalm, as it teaches a great deal about humility. It reminds us that we must rely on God, and have no power to compel Him. We are entirely reliant on His love for us, with no means of enforcement. It cautions us about the dangers of the tongue, and how our words lead to sin. It reminds us to watch our company, and choose well. And of course, perhaps most importantly, it tells us that it can be a good thing to be rebuked, even violently. For such chastisement can also be love as well.

Then we have Psalm 146″

> Praise the Lord!
> Praise the Lord, O my soul!
> [2] I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

> I will sing praises to my God while I have being.

> [3] Put not your trust in princes,
> in a son of man, in whom there is no help.
> [4] When his breath departs he returns to his earth;
> on that very day his plans perish.
>
> [5] Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
> whose hope is in the Lord his God,
> [6] who made heaven and earth,
> the sea, and all that is in them;
> who keeps faith for ever;
> [7] who executes justice for the oppressed;
> who gives food to the hungry.
>
> The Lord sets the prisoners free;
> [8] the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
> The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
> the Lord loves the righteous.
> [9] The Lord watches over the sojourners,
> he upholds the widow and the fatherless;
> but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

> [10] The Lord will reign for ever,
> thy God, O Zion, to all generations.
> Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 146)

This Psalm is hopeful, but also contains some important warnings. It reminds us not to trust too much in human beings, who are weak and prone to error. After all, we are all doomed to die, and with that death our plans come to nothing. At the same time, if we trust in God, we will not be disappointed. For the Lord saves us, and protects those who are vulnerable.

Finally, a snippet from the Gospel of Matthew:

> [13] Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; [14] but Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” [15] And he laid his hands on them and went away.

(Matthew 19:13-15)

I find it funny, in a dark way, how many human beings act like children. But not in the way that Jesus meant. Rather than be trusting and innocent, like these children, instead people are immature and rebellious. It is a reminder that maturity is about more than just age- but how we act.

A Farewell And A Remembrance

October 6, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been two weeks now since I learned that Zippy Catholic, or Matthew to those who knew him outside this part of the web, had passed away. When I first learned about it I knew that I *had* to write a post in tribute to him. But for the past two weeks I have been unable to do so. Nothing I could think of seemed fitting. But I cannot put it off any longer. So here is my best attempt at my thoughts on Zippy/Matthew, unworthy as they are.

It is no joke that finding the 'sphere was a monumental point in my life. It began a series of changes within my life which radically altered the path that I have taken since. The 'sphere forced me to examine many, no, most of my core beliefs. And as a result many of those beliefs have changed (and I would like to think for the better). Others have become firmer, and my conviction more resolute. I could count on one hand the number of individuals who were part of the reason for that massive shift in world-view. And Zippy, no, Matthew, would be one of them.

Matthew forced me to examine everything I believed about politics. He forced me to examine core concepts like authority and power. He turned over rocks in my mind I didn't even know existed, and forced me to look at the things which crawled out from beneath them. I cannot look at the subject as I did before, because I cannot deny the truths he laid out in front of me.

Matthew's style was not for everyone. Many, many, *many* people found it quite off-putting. But they failed to understand his approach. Matthew was not some soft school-teacher who gently guided his students through lesson after lesson. No, Matthew was a wizened old *sensei*, a teacher who would not hesitate to slap a student who failed or was out of line. He didn't hold back his thoughts or his wit or his tongue. If there was anyone who fit the epitome of this proverb better, I don't know who:

> As iron sharpens iron,
> so one person sharpens another.

(Proverbs 27:17)

He expected his students to do their homework- to follow his points back to their origin and know where they started so they could understand where he was and why. Every lesson was not a repeat of what had gone before, but something new, either in angle or context or subject. Furthermore, he knew how to use examples to get at people in ways that upset them. I rather imagine that he and Jonathan Swift would have gotten along, at least in their style. Many missed the point, but that was on them and not Zippy.

I haven't met many people from the 'sphere, in truth only a couple, but there were some I hoped to meet in the future and Matthew was one of them. Now any meeting will have to be in the next life. But until then I will keep what he taught me in mind. Which is more

than just what to think, or even how to think, but start thinking in the first place- about everything. Before I ran across Matthew there were too many things I took for granted, and never thought about. Not so much any more. That is a gift I cannot repay him for. But if I learned anything about him, he would find payment in my using it to the best of my abilities.

I know there is more I should say, but I still cannot put it to words. I will leave it at this, and hope it is enough. Goodbye Zippy, you will be missed.

Selected Sunday Scriptures #146

November 12, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been a while since I posted, I know, but in my defense I have been very busy. And traveling. And dealing with family matters. Typical stuff. Today's scripture selections are chosen because they were the readings at a recent wedding I attended. The bride and groom are some former commenters here, who went by the names FeminineButNotFeminist/Cassie and (among others) Uberdeplorable Psychedlic Cat Grass. So they seem like fitting choices. The first is from the Book of Sirach:

> Happy is the husband of a good wife;
> the number of his days will be doubled.
> [2] A loyal wife rejoices her husband,
> and he will complete his years in peace.
> [3] A good wife is a great blessing;
> she will be granted among the blessings of the man who fears the Lord.
> [4] Whether rich or poor, his heart is glad,
> and at all times his face is cheerful.
>
> …
>
> [13] A wife's charm delights her husband,
> and her skill puts fat on his bones.
> [14] A silent wife is a gift of the Lord,
> and there is nothing so precious as a disciplined soul.
> [15] A modest wife adds charm to charm,
> and no balance can weigh the value of a chaste soul.
> [16] Like the sun rising in the heights of the Lord,
> so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.
> [17] Like the shining lamp on the holy lampstand,
> so is a beautiful face on a stately figure.
> [18] Like pillars of gold on a base of silver,
> so are beautiful feet with a steadfast heart.

(Sirach 26:1-4, 13-18)

There are a lot of valuable points in this passage. We see first, that a good wife is a valuable thing. In fact, elsewhere in this same book the author declares that a good wife is the greatest treasure a man can have. Second, we see some of the blessing that a good wife can bring: a longer life, a happier life, a healthier life, and a more peaceful life among other things. Third, we can see some of the virtues that make for a good wife (and woman): self-discipline, modesty, loyalty being some examples.

We can also see that a woman's beauty is in fact a good thing. It is compared to the Temple of God, a place frequently considered beautiful in the OT. And a place that *should* be beautiful. Contra those who say that beauty is only skin deep, it does have value as

well, and men are not shallow for considering it. Of course, those who read Proverbs and further in this book will know that beauty alone is no virtue, and can be quite deadly to a man.

Then we have St. Paul's well known (and infamous in some circles) Epistle to the Ephesians:

> [A]ddressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, [20] always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.
>
> [21] Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. [22] Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. [25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [32] This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church; [33] however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

(Ephesians 5:21b-33)

Few passages are more seemingly controversial than this passage from the New Testament. And yet, when you truly read it, few passages are as beautiful. St. Paul eloquently paints out the love that Christ for all of us, and explains that same level of love is expected of a Christian husband towards his wife. Of course obedience on the part of the wife is the part of this passage which is decried. But what can I say? I think most of my readers here already know that we live in an age of ugliness.

Finally, on to the Gospel of Matthew:

> [3] And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" [4] He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, [5] and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'?[a] [6] So they are no longer two but one.What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." [7] They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" [8] He

> said to them, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. [9] And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman, commits adultery.”

(Matthew 19:3-9)

Unfortunately this particular translation carries with it the error of many other translations of Scripture. Contra the popular understanding outside the Catholic Church, Jesus did not provide for an exception clause here. For those curious about this, blogfriend Deep Strength has an excellent analysis and summary located here.

But to get back on topic, here we see Jesus firmly lay out how marriage is: it is a permanent affair as long as two people are on Earth. God is what brings man and woman together (just as He did in the beginning), and man cannot undo this. Any attempt along these lines is inherently disordered, and thus, sinful. At the same time when one is not caught up in sin, one can see the beauty of it all. A man and a woman are no longer separate after marriage. They are bound up, in a mysterious way, into something new altogether. This is why the Catholic Church refers to it as a Sacrament, which is a translation of Mystery, which is how matrimony is referred to in the East. It is a beautiful and mysterious thing, just like God Himself.

God grant them both many blessed and happy years.

Saturday Saints- #138

November 24, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Inspired by my most recent post (which in truth is not recent), and also by Deep Strength's most recent post on divorce and marriage, I will continue a marriage theme. Rather than talk about a Saint, I will feature a Saint's writing on the topic of marriage. Specifically the epistle from last time. It is quite lengthy, just as a warning. So I will only include part 1. Hopefully part 2 next week. Thus, today's post is St. John Chrysostom's homily on Ephesians 5:22 :

> Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church: being Himself the Saviour of the body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything.
>
> A certain wise man, setting down a number of things in the rank of blessings, set down this also in the rank of a blessing, *A wife agreeing with her husband.* Sirach 25:1 And elsewhere again he sets it down among blessings, that a woman should dwell in harmony with her husband. Sirach 40:23 And indeed from the beginning, God appears to have made special provision for this union; and discoursing of the two as one, He said thus, *Male and female created He them* Genesis 1:27; and again, *There is neither male nor female.* Galatians 3:28 For there is no relationship between man and man so close as that between man and wife, if they be joined together as they should be. And therefore a certain blessed man too, when he would express surpassing love, and was mourning for one that was dear to him, and of one soul with him, did not mention father, nor mother, nor child, nor brother, nor friend, but what? *Your love to me was wonderful,* says he, *passing the love of women.* 2 Samuel 1:26 For indeed, in very deed, this love is more despotic than any despotism: for others indeed may be strong, but this passion is not only strong, but unfading. For there is a certain love deeply seated in our nature, which imperceptibly to ourselves knits together these bodies of ours. Thus even from the very beginning woman sprang from man, and afterwards from man and woman sprang both man and woman. Perceivest thou the close bond and connection? And how that God suffered not a different kind of nature to enter in from without? And mark, how many providential arrangements He made. He permitted the man to marry his own sister; or rather not his sister, but his daughter; nay, nor yet his daughter, but something more than his daughter, even his own flesh. And thus the whole He framed from one beginning, gathering all together, like stones in a building, into one. For neither on the one hand did He form her from without, and this was that the man might not feel towards her as towards an alien; nor again did He confine marriage to her, that she might not, by contracting herself, and making all center in herself, be cut off from the rest. Thus as in the case of plants, they are of all others the best, which

have but a single stem, and spread out into a number of branches; (since were all confined to the root alone, all would be to no purpose, whereas again had it a number of roots, the tree would be no longer worthy of admiration;) so, I say, is the case here also. From one, namely Adam, He made the whole race to spring, preventing them by the strongest necessity from being ever torn asunder, or separated; and afterwards, making it more restricted, He no longer allowed sisters and daughters to be wives, lest we should on the other hand contract our love to one point, and thus in another manner be cut off from one another. Hence Christ said, *He which made them from the beginning, made them male and female.* Matthew 19:4

For great evils are hence produced, and great benefits, both to families and to states. For there is nothing which so welds our life together as the love of man and wife. For this many will lay aside even their arms, for this they will give up life itself. And Paul would never without a reason and without an object have spent so much pains on this subject, as when he says here, *Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* And why so? Because when they are in harmony, the children are well brought up, and the domestics are in good order, and neighbors, and friends, and relations enjoy the fragrance. But if it be otherwise, all is turned upside down, and thrown into confusion. And just as when the generals of an army are at peace one with another, all things are in due subordination, whereas on the other hand, if they are at variance, everything is turned upside down; so, I say, is it also here. Wherefore, says he, *Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

Yet how strange! For how then is it, that it is said elsewhere, *If one bid not farewell both to wife and to husband, he cannot follow me*? Luke 14:26 For if it is their duty to be in subjection *as unto the Lord,* how says He that they must depart from them for the Lord's sake? Yet their duty indeed it is, their bounden duty. But the word *as* is not necessarily and universally expressive of exact equality. He either means this, *'as' knowing that you are servants to the Lord*; (which, by the way, is what he says elsewhere, that, even though they do it not for the husband's sake, yet must they primarily for the Lord's sake;) or else he means, *when you obey your husband, do so as serving the Lord.* For if he who resists these external authorities, those of governments, I mean, *withstands the ordinance of God* Romans 13:2, much more does she who submits not herself to her husband. Such was God's will from the beginning.

Let us take as our fundamental position then that the husband occupies the place of the *head,* and the wife the place of the *body.*

Ver. 23, 24. Then, he proceeds with arguments and says that *the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, being Himself the Saviour of the body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.*

Then after saying, *The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is of the Church,* he further adds, *and He is the Saviour of the body.* For indeed the head is the saving health of the body. He had already laid down beforehand for man and wife, the ground and provision of their love, assigning to each their proper place, to the one that of authority and forethought, to the other that of submission. As then *the Church,* that is, both husbands and wives, *is subject unto Christ, so also ye wives submit yourselves to your husbands, as unto God.*

Ver. 25. *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church.*

You have heard how great the submission; you have extolled and marvelled at Paul, how, like an admirable and spiritual man, he welds together our whole life. Thou did well. But now hear what he also requires at your hands; for again he employs the same example.

Husbands, says he, *love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church.*

You have seen the measure of obedience, hear also the measure of love. Would you have your wife obedient unto you, as the Church is to Christ? Take then yourself the same provident care for her, as Christ takes for the Church. Yea, even if it shall be needful for you to give your life for her, yea, and to be cut into pieces ten thousand times, yea, and to endure and undergo any suffering whatever — refuse it not. Though you should undergo all this, yet will you not, no, not even then, have done anything like Christ. For thou indeed art doing it for one to whom you are already knit; but He for one who turned her back on Him and hated Him. In the same way then as He laid at His feet her who turned her back on Him, who hated, and spurned, and disdained Him, not by menaces, nor by violence, nor by terror, nor by anything else of the kind, but by his unwearied affection; so also do thou behave yourself toward your wife. Yea, though thou see her looking down upon you, and disdaining, and scorning you, yet by your great thoughtfulness for her, by affection, by kindness, you will be able to lay her at your feet. For there is nothing more powerful to sway than these bonds, and especially for husband and wife. A servant, indeed, one will be able, perhaps, to bind down by fear; nay not even him, for he will soon start away and be gone. But the partner of one’s life, the mother of one’s children, the foundation of one’s every joy, one ought never to chain down by fear and menaces, but with love and good temper. For what sort of union is that, where the wife trembles at her husband? And what sort of pleasure will the husband himself enjoy, if he dwells with his wife as with a slave, and not as with a free-woman? Yea, though you should suffer anything on her account, do not upbraid her; for neither did Christ do this.

Ver. 26. *And gave Himself up,* he says, *for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it.*

So then she was unclean! So then she had blemishes, so then she was unsightly, so then she was worthless! Whatsoever kind of wife you shall take, yet shall you

never take such a bride as the Church, when Christ took her, nor one so far removed from you as the Church was from Christ. And yet for all that, He did not abhor her, nor loathe her for her surpassing deformity. Would you hear her deformity described? Hear what Paul says, *For you were once darkness.* Ephesians 5:8 Did you see the blackness of her hue? What blacker than darkness? But look again at her boldness, *living,* says he, *in malice and envy.* Titus 3:3 Look again at her impurity; *disobedient, foolish.* But what am I saying? She was both foolish, and of an evil tongue; and yet notwithstanding, though so many were her blemishes, yet did He give Himself up for her in her deformity, as for one in the bloom of youth, as for one dearly beloved, as for one of wonderful beauty. And it was in admiration of this that Paul said, For scarcely for a righteous man will one die Romans 5:7; and again, *in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:8 And though such as this, He took her, He arrayed her in beauty, and washed her, and refused not even this, to give Himself for her.

Ver. 26, 27. *That He might sanctify it having cleansed it,* he proceeds, *by the washing of water with the word; that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

By the washing or laver He washes her uncleanness. *By the word,* says he. What word? *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Matthew 28:19 And not simply has He adorned her, but has made her *glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.* Let us then also seek after this beauty ourselves, and we shall be able to create it. Seek not thou at your wife's hand, things which she is not able to possess. Do you see that the Church had all things at her Lord's hands? By Him was made glorious, by Him was made pure, by Him made without blemish? Turn not your back on your wife because of her deformity. Hear the Scripture that says, *The bee is little among such as fly, but her fruit is the chief of sweet things.* Sirach 11:3 She is of God's fashioning. You reproach not her, but Him that made her; what can the woman do? Praise her not for her beauty. Praise and hatred and love based on personal beauty belong to unchastened souls. Seek thou for beauty of soul. Imitate the Bridegroom of the Church. Outward beauty is full of conceit and great license, and throws men into jealousy, and the thing often makes you suspect monstrous things. But has it any pleasure? For the first or second month, perhaps, or at most for the year: but then no longer; the admiration by familiarity wastes away. Meanwhile the evils which arose from the beauty still abide, the pride, the folly, the contemptuousness. Whereas in one who is not such, there is nothing of this kind. But the love having begun on just grounds, still continues ardent, since its object is beauty of soul, and not of body. What better, tell me, than heaven? What better than the stars? Tell me of what body you will, yet is there none so fair. Tell me of what eyes you will, yet are there none so sparkling. When these were

created, the very Angels gazed with wonder, and we gaze with wonder now; yet not in the same degree as at first. Such is familiarity; things do not strike us in the same degree. How much more in the case of a wife! And if moreover disease come too, all is at once fled. Let us seek in a wife affectionateness, modest-mindedness, gentleness; these are the characteristics of beauty. But loveliness of person let us not seek, nor upbraid her upon these points, over which she has no power, nay, rather, let us not upbraid at all, (it were rudeness,) nor let us be impatient, nor sullen. Do ye not see how many, after living with beautiful wives, have ended their lives pitiably, and how many, who have lived with those of no great beauty, have run on to extreme old age with great enjoyment. Let us wipe off the *spot* that is within, let us smooth the *wrinkles* that are within, let us do away the *blemishes* that are on the soul. Such is the beauty God requires. Let us make her fair in God's sight, not in our own. Let us not look for wealth, nor for that high-birth which is outward, but for that true nobility which is in the soul. Let no one endure to get rich by a wife; for such riches are base and disgraceful; no, by no means let any one seek to get rich from this source. *For they that desire to be rich, fall into a temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, and into destruction and perdition.* 1 Timothy 6:9 Seek not therefore in your wife abundance of wealth, and you shall find everything else go well. Who, tell me, would overlook the most important things, to attend to those which are less so? And yet, alas! This is in every case our feeling. Yes, if we have a son, we concern ourselves not how he may be made virtuous, but how we may get him a rich wife; not how he may be well-mannered, but well-monied: if we follow a business, we enquire not how it may be clear of sin, but how it may bring us in most profit. And everything has become money; and thus is everything corrupted and ruined, because that passion possesses us.

Ver. 28. *Even so ought husbands to love their own wives,* says he, *as their own bodies.*

What, again, means this? To how much greater a similitude, and stronger example has he come; and not only so, but also to one how much nearer and clearer, and to a fresh obligation. For that other one was of no very constraining force, for He was Christ, and was God, and gave Himself. He now manages his argument on a different ground, saying, *so ought men*; because the thing is not a favor, but a debt. Then, *as their own bodies.* And why?

Ver. 29. *For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it.*

That is, tends it with exceeding care. And how is she his flesh? Hearken; *This now is bone of my bones,* says Adam, *and flesh of my flesh.* Genesis 2:23 For she is made of matter taken from us. And not only so, but also, *they shall be,* says God, *one flesh.* Genesis 2:24

Even as Christ also the Church. Here he returns to the former example.

Ver. 30. *Because we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*

Ver. 31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*

Behold again a third ground of obligation; for he shows that a man leaving them that begot him, and from whom he was born, is knit to his wife; and that then the one flesh is, father, and mother, and the child, from the substance of the two commingled. For indeed by the commingling of their seeds is the child produced, so that the three are one flesh. Thus then are we in relation to Christ; we become one flesh by participation, and we much more than the child. And why and how so? Because so it has been from the beginning.

Tell me not that such and such things are so. Do you see not that we have in our own flesh itself many defects? For one man, for instance, is lame, another has his feet distorted, another his hands withered, another some other member weak; and yet nevertheless he does not grieve at it, nor cut it off, but oftentimes prefers it even to the other. Naturally enough; for it is part of himself. As great love as each entertains towards himself, so great he would have us entertain towards a wife. Not because we partake of the same nature; no, this ground of duty towards a wife is far greater than that; it is that there are not two bodies but one; he the head, she the body. And how says he elsewhere *and the Head of Christ is God*? 1 Corinthians 11:3 This I too say, that as we are one body, so also are Christ and the Father One. And thus then is the Father also found to be our Head. He sets down two examples, that of the natural body and that of Christ's body. And hence he further adds,

Ver. 32. *This is great mystery: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church.*

Why does he call it a great mystery? That it was something great and wonderful, the blessed Moses, or rather God, intimated. For the present, however, says he, I speak regarding Christ, that having left the Father, He came down, and came to the Bride, and became one Spirit. *For he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.* 1 Corinthians 6:17 And well says he, *it is a great mystery.* And then as though he were saying, *But still nevertheless the allegory does not destroy affection,* he adds,

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband.*

For indeed, in very deed, a mystery it is, yea, a great mystery, that a man should leave him that gave him being, him that begot him, and that brought him up, and her that travailed with him and had sorrow, those that have bestowed upon him so many and great benefits, those with whom he has been in familiar intercourse, and be joined to one who was never even seen by him and who has nothing in common with him, and should honor her before all others. A mystery it is indeed. And yet are parents not distressed when these events take place, but rather, when they do not take place; and are delighted when their wealth is spent and lavished upon it.— A great mystery indeed! And one that contains some hidden

wisdom. Such Moses prophetically showed it to be from the very first; such now also Paul proclaims it, where he says, *concerning Christ and the Church.*

However not for the husband's sake alone it is thus said, but for the wife's sake also, that *he cherish her as his own flesh, as Christ also the Church,* and, *that the wife fear her husband.* He is no longer setting down the duties of love only, but what? *That she fear her husband.* The wife is a second authority; let not her then demand equality, for she is under the head; nor let him despise her as being in subjection, for she is the body; and if the head despise the body, it will itself also perish. But let him bring in love on his part as a counterpoise to obedience on her part. For example, let the hands and the feet, and all the rest of the members be given up for service to the head, but let the head provide for the body, seeing it contains every sense in itself. Nothing can be better than this union.

And yet how can there ever be love, one may say, where there is fear? It will exist there, I say, preëminently. For she that fears and reverences, loves also; and she that loves, fears and reverences him as being the head, and loves him as being a member, since the head itself is a member of the body at large. Hence he places the one in subjection, and the other in authority, that there may be peace; for where there is equal authority there can never be peace; neither where a house is a democracy, nor where all are rulers; but the ruling power must of necessity be one. And this is universally the case with matters referring to the body, inasmuch as when men are spiritual, there will be peace. There were *five thousand souls,* and not one of them said, *that anything of the things which he possessed was his own* Acts 4:32, but they were subject one to another; an indication this of wisdom, and of the fear of God. The principle of love, however, he explains; that of fear he does not. And mark, how on that of love he enlarges, stating the arguments relating to Christ and those relating to one's own flesh, the words, *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother.* Ephesians 5:31 Whereas upon those drawn from fear he forbears to enlarge. And why so? Because he would rather that this principle prevail, this, namely, of love; for where this exists, everything else follows of course, but where the other exists, not necessarily. For the man who loves his wife, even though she be not a very obedient one, still will bear with everything. So difficult and impracticable is unanimity, where persons are not bound together by that love which is founded in supreme authority; at all events, fear will not necessarily effect this. Accordingly, he dwells the more upon this, which is the strong tie. And the wife though seeming to be the loser in that she was charged to fear, is the gainer, because the principal duty, love, is charged upon the husband. *But what,* one may say, *if a wife reverence me not?* Never mind, you are to love, fulfill your own duty. For though that which is due from others may not follow, we ought of course to do our duty. This is an example of what I mean. He says, *submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.* And what then if another submit not himself? Still obey thou the law of God. Just so, I say, is it also here. Let the

wife at least, though she be not loved, still reverence notwithstanding, that nothing may lie at her door; and let the husband, though his wife reverence him not, still show her love notwithstanding, that he himself be not wanting in any point. For each has received his own.

This then is marriage when it takes place according to Christ, spiritual marriage, and spiritual birth, not of blood, nor of travail, nor of the will of the flesh. Such was the birth of Christ, not of blood, nor of travail. Such also was that of Isaac. Hear how the Scripture says, *And it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.* Genesis 18:11 Yea, a marriage it is, not of passion, nor of the flesh, but wholly spiritual, the soul being united to God by a union unspeakable, and which He alone knows. Therefore he says, *He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.* 1 Corinthians 6:17 Mark how earnestly he endeavors to unite both flesh with flesh, and spirit with spirit. And where are the heretics? Never surely, if marriage were a thing to be condemned, would he have called Christ and the Church a bride and bridegroom; never would he have brought forward by way of exhortation the words, *A man shall leave his father and his mother*; and again have added, that it was *spoken in regard of Christ and of the Church.* For of her it is that the Psalmist also says, *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father's house. So shall the king desire your beauty.* Psalm 45:10-11 Therefore also Christ says, *I came out from the Father, and have come.* John 16:28 But when I say, that He left the Father, imagine not such a thing as happens among men, a change of place; for just in the same way as the word *go forth* is used, not because He literally came forth, but because of His incarnation, so also is the expression, *He left the Father.*

Now why did he not say of the wife also, She shall be joined unto her husband? Why, I say, is this? Because he was discoursing concerning love, and was discoursing to the husband. For to her indeed he discourses concerning reverence, and says, *the husband is the head of the wife* Ephesians 5:23, and again, *Christ is the Head of the Church.* Whereas to him he discourses concerning love, and commits to him this province of love, and declares to him that which pertains to love, thus binding him and cementing him to her. For the man that leaves his father for the sake of his wife, and then again, leaves this very wife herself and abandons her, what forbearance can he deserve?

Do you see not how great a share of honor God would have her enjoy, in that he has taken you away from your father, and has linked you to her? What then, a man may say, if our duty is done, and yet she does not follow the example? *Yet if the unbelieving departs, let him depart; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases.* 1 Corinthians 7:15

However, when you hear of *fear,* demand that fear which becomes a free woman, not as though thou were exacting it of a slave. For she is your own body; and if you do this, you reproach yourself in dishonoring your own body. And of what nature is this *fear*? It is the not contradicting, the not rebelling, the not being

fond of the preëminence. It is enough that fear be kept within these bounds. But if you love, as you are commanded, you will make it yet greater. Or rather it will not be any longer by fear that you will be doing this, but love itself will have its effect. The sex is somehow weaker, and needs much support, much condescension.

But what will they say, who are knit together in second marriages? I speak not at all in condemnation of them, God forbid; for the Apostle himself permits them, though indeed by way of condescension.

Supply her with everything. Do everything and endure trouble for her sake. Necessity is laid upon you.

Here he does not think it right to introduce his counsel, as he in many cases does, with examples from them that are without. That of Christ, so great and forcible, were alone enough; and more especially as regards the argument of subjection. *A man shall leave,* he says, *his father and mother.* Behold, this then is from without. But he does not say, and *shall dwell with,* but *shall cleave unto,* thus showing the closeness of the union, and the fervent love. Nay, he is not content with this, but further by what he adds, he explains the subjection in such a way as that the two appear no longer two. He does not say, *one spirit,* he does not say, *one soul* (for that is manifest, and is possible to any one), but so as to be *one flesh.* She is a second authority, possessing indeed an authority, and a considerable equality of dignity; but at the same time the husband has somewhat of superiority. In this consists most chiefly the well-being of the house. For he took that former argument, the example of Christ, to show that we ought not only to love, but also to govern; *that she may be,* says he, *holy and without blemish.* But the word *flesh* has reference to love— and the word *shall cleave* has in like manner reference to love. For if you shall make her *holy and without blemish,* everything else will follow. Seek the things which are of God, and those which are of man will follow readily enough. Govern your wife, and thus will the whole house be in harmony. Hear what Paul says. *And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home.* 1 Corinthians 14:35 If we thus regulate our own houses, we shall be also fit for the management of the Church. For indeed a house is a little Church. Thus it is possible for us by becoming good husbands and wives, to surpass all others.

Consider Abraham, and Sarah, and Isaac, and the three hundred and eighteen born in his house. Genesis 14:14 How the whole house was harmoniously knit together, how the whole was full of piety and fulfilled the Apostolic injunction. She also *reverenced her husband*; for hear her own words, *It has not yet happened unto me even until now, and my lord is old also.* Genesis 18:12 And he again so loved her, that in all things he obeyed her commands. And the young child was virtuous, and the servants born in the house, they too were so excellent that they refused not even to hazard their lives with their master; they delayed not, nor asked the reason. Nay, one of them, the chief, was so

> admirable, that he was even entrusted with the marriage of the only-begotten child, and with a journey into a foreign country. Genesis 24:1-67 For just as with a general, when his soldiery also is well organized, the enemy has no quarter to attack; so, I say, is it also here: when husband and wife and children and servants are all interested in the same things, great is the harmony of the house. Since where this is not the case, the whole is oftentimes overthrown and broken up by one bad servant; and that single one will often mar and utterly destroy the whole.

(Source)

Those Who Really Get It And Those Who Really Don’t

December 15, 2018 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

One of the things that I have noticed over the years, but haven’t really addressed in this blog, is how certain professions seem to be rather extreme in their “red pill” or “blue pill” viewpoints. By that I mean that members of this profession are rarely “in the middle” when it comes to their understanding of human nature. They either really get it, or they are completely clueless about it. The two that come to mind right away are cops and priests.

I have a few friends who are police officers, or are otherwise connected to law enforcement, plus some I know through church. And they fit this profile perfectly. There is one former cop whom I am familiar with who, to best of my knowledge, has never heard of the ‘sphere. And yet he gets women better than almost any non-Spherian I have ever met. Correct observations, correct analysis. The works.

At the same time I have encountered cops who were the biggest White Knights you would ever encounter outside works of romantic fiction. Always blame men and defend women? Check? Pretend women aren’t running wild? Check. And the list goes on. The messed up aspect of all this is that they often would make correct observations. Or at least be exposed to events which should show the truth.

With priests I have noticed the same. Some are very much attuned to “real” human nature, especially of women. And others are the biggest excusers of it that you can find.

I am curious what my readers, if there are any of you left, that is, think of all of this. What are you theories?

My own theory is that people like cops and priests, since they are exposed to the nittiest and grittiest of human behavior, can’t really ignore everything they are exposed to. They have to try and make sense of the madness of it all. But for many, the conclusions reached by a “red pill” analysis are too bitter a pill to swallow. They don’t want to accept everything that comes with a full recognition of reality. So they retreat to the mental and emotional safety that “blue pill” thinking provides. Say what you will, but that kind of mentality demands much less of a man than acknowledging the truth does. At least, that is my operative theory.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #147

January 14, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Its been a while since I posted. We find ourselves in a new year, but to me, nothing has changed. Things are just as stagnant as they were before. Which leads me to this particular part of scripture:

> 22 And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses,
> they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in
> the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the
> Lord”) 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “a
> pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem,
> whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the
> consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been
> revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had
> seen the Lord’s Christ. 27 And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and
> when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the
> custom of the law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,
>
> 29 “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
> according to thy word;
> 30 for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
> 31 which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples,
> 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
> and for glory to thy people Israel.”
>
> 33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; 34 and
> Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

> “Behold, this child is set for the fall[d] and rising of many in Israel,
> and for a sign that is spoken against
> 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also),
> that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.”

(Luke 2:22-35)

Simeon had been long awaiting that day. We can only imagine how many years, how many decades, he had waited for the Lord’s anointed to be revealed. That takes an impressive amount of patience, of endurance. But of course, Fortitude is one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. But it also takes Hope. Simeon had hope that he would live to see that day. And he did. Where so many before him had not, he himself was able to see it- to see Him.

Hope can be a powerful force. But we must be careful what we place our hope in. Our hope should be placed in God, not in the works or words of men.

> Praise the Lord!
> Praise the Lord, O my soul!
> [2] I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
> I will sing praises to my God while I have being.

> [3] Put not your trust in princes,
> in a son of man, in whom there is no help.
> [4] When his breath departs he returns to his earth;
> on that very day his plans perish.
>
> [5] Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
> whose hope is in the Lord his God,
> [6] who made heaven and earth,
> the sea, and all that is in them;
> who keeps faith for ever;
> [7] who executes justice for the oppressed;
> who gives food to the hungry.
>
> The Lord sets the prisoners free;
> [8] the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
> The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
> the Lord loves the righteous.
> [9] The Lord watches over the sojourners,
> he upholds the widow and the fatherless;
> but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

> [10] The Lord will reign for ever,
> thy God, O Zion, to all generations.
> Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 146)

I have found myself increasingly adopting an attitude of resignation in my life. Even as most aspects of my life continue to improve, I continue to fail to fulfill my vocation. To say this is vexing would be the understatement of the year. And it puts my in a position where I am not sure what to do. Do I continue to hope for the best? Or should I put that hope aside and reorient my life with the expectation I never marry? Unlike Simeon, I don't have the Lord telling me what will happen, one way or the other. I only have human beings. And I know better than to place my trust or hope in them.

A myriad of possibilities fill my mind. Perhaps I am missing the signals, perhaps I am screwing up somewhere, and so on. However, I prefer to think that this is a test of faith. God continually tests us, as though we were gold or silver in a crucible. One such way of doing so is not telling us what will happen next in our lives. To have us walk forward boldly without knowing where we are going. It requires true faith to keep going without knowing for sure. *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things*

not seen. [2] For by it the men of old received divine approval. [3] By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear. (Hebrews 11:1-2).

The assurance I have is not as to any specifics of what will happen with me, only that God loves me and wants what is best for me. Which of course is not the same thing as what I want. And so I keep walking forward on that path, not knowing where my next step will place me- but with the assurance that at the end of the path is my Father's House, where He is waiting for me.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #148

January 21, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been reading through St. Paul's letter to the Romans the last few days. While he has some other letters which cover a lot of theological territory, I feel safe in saying that this epistle is special- it has a little something for everyone and everything. Whatever your theological pursuit, you can find an answer here. Part of it, I think, is because it is written more as a primer on Christian faith than as a response to specific questions or problems in the Church in Rome. A few passages have stood out to me so far, but I want to dedicate today's post to Chapter 5.

> Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. [3] More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

As I mentioned in my previous post, hope is a difficult thing for me. Yet Saint Paul lays it out clearly here why we should have hope, no matter what. God has already fulfilled a promise by the Gift of the Spirit. And he has promised yet more still, and we know his promises are sure.

> [6] While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man—though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. [8] But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. [11] Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation.

This passage always brings a tear to my eye. It is one thing to *say* that God loves us. But it is another thing to actually *know* God loves us. But we do know- because of what he has sacrificed on our behalf, despite our utter unworthiness. There is no room to ever say that God doesn't care for us- He does, more than we can ever express.

> [12] Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned [13] sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Even the righteous figures of the Old Testament were still trapped by death. With the exceptions of Elijah and Enoch, they were waiting the savior to free them from the prison of Sheol.

> [15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. [16] And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. [17] If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.
>
> [18] Then 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. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. [20] Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, [21] so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We see here the contrast between the "first" Adam and the "second" Adam. Both of them, by their actions, made significant impacts on humanity and our fate. This should comfort us greatly. After all, it is obvious to anyone who looks that the magnitude of Adam's effect on the world was terribly great. So Saint Paul reminds us that the effect of Jesus, by his redemptive sacrifice, is just as great, if not greater. For good is greater than evil, and so the effects of grace and righteousness must dwarf those of sin.

Different Room, Same Building

January 25, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

[Or otherwise called “Different Faith Tradition, But Same Culture”]

Reader and Commenter Patrick recently left a link to a Catholic blog which goes by the name Traditional Catholic Femininity. The link was for a post titled “Shortage of Marriageable Prospects Among Traditional Catholics.”

To warn everyone, it is a long post. Too long even to even just cut quote from. So I will make an effort to summarize it, if only poorly. All the same, it would be best to read the whole thing. Here is my attempt at a TLDR version:

First off, we have the quotes from another post that are the foundation-

- Too many Catholic women cannot marry, or at least marry well, because there is a real shortage of good, marriageable Catholic men.
- This shortage is because Catholic men think they are ready but are not, and need to seriously up their game.

At this point the proprietress of the blog chimes in, and offers the following:

1. The solution to the problem is for Catholic women to marry older men, preferably 10-15 years older and at least 35.
2. Because women mature faster than men women will find men their age to be immature, so to find mature men they need to look at older men.
3. All of this means that men are just not ready to be married before their 30s in any way.
4. If you marry an older men he will love you more for it, and be less likely to cheat/abandon you, etc.
5. Men choose mates based on youth and beauty, and women chose mates based on the physical and material security he can provide.
6. This dynamic is proven to work! Look at Joseph and Mary! And see what happened with Adam and Eve!
7. Don’t marry a man just because he is hot, marry because he is able to provide, otherwise don’t marry at all
8. Younger men need to work hard, build themselves up, become leaders, etc.
9. If you are a younger man and you think you are ready for marriage, you are fooling yourself. You just want a housekeeper you can have sex with.
10. Only a handful of men who are young are there. Most of the rest of you are losers. Fix yourselves up.
11. If you are concerned about sexual sin, that just means you are weak and lack self discipline. Learn to control yourself. If you can’t then you are just basically a sexual predator.
12. Oh, and women are attracted to a disciplined and self-controlled man.

That is gist of it.

So what do I think of the post? Well, I think that Elspeth, in her comment to that post, said it well: “This whole screed is filled with bad logic and inconsistencies.”

It is bad. Really, really bad. I mean, where to begin?

You have the standard men bad, women good trope. It disguises itself somewhat by saying it is merely about younger men being immature, but really, it is

You have a misunderstanding about the maturation rates of women and men. The author seems to think it simply means men are slow- rather than understanding it means that men can continue to mature past where women do.

You have a misunderstanding about what women find attractive in men, in a bad way. All of the focus on “Beta traits”, while completely ignoring or down-playing the “Alpha” or Attractive traits.

You have a misunderstanding of both Mary and Joseph’s marriage, as well as Adam and Eve’s.

The author takes time to repeatedly trash younger men. I don’t know about my readers, but I sensed real disdain here. Like visceral disdain.

Oh, and of course a complete misunderstanding of, and a downplaying of, male sexuality.

And did I mention that none of this is founded in Scripture or the writings of the Fathers of the Church or Saints?

So yeah, bad.

Mind you, the advice for women to marry older men is well-intentioned, so there is that. Unfortunately, few will actually listen to this advice, so it doesn’t accomplish much. Instead this post, rather than coming across as advice to women, seems much more like an exercise in bashing men.

And that is where the post’s title comes from. Not that there was ever any doubt, but Catholics, even Big T “Traditional” ones, still swim in the same culture as other Christian faith traditions. And that culture carries with it some of the things I mentioned above. The particular expression might vary, but the ingredients are the same, if you will.

Of course, my readers might have their own thoughts on the subject. I encourage them to off their ideas in the comments below.

Pulled Every Which Way

February 19, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

One of the points I have made on this blog before is the following:

~Women live in a perpetual state of contradiction~

It isn't a unique claim, other bloggers have made similar statements before. But it is still an important point to make, because men do not grasp this at first and need to in order to truly understand women.

In today's post I want to explore one dimension of this crucial aspect of female behavior: that Mate "Idealism" versus Mate "Pragmatism." You see, women have two opposing natures which are always fighting against each other when it comes to selecting a mate. I don't think I am going to cover any new ground here, but if anything I hope this post will serve as a bit of a recap.

The first of these is what I will call "Idealism." This is expressed in the female desire for the best mate possible. Sometimes this is called Hypergamy, but that isn't really an accurate descriptor of the behavior involved. Rather, what women experience is a sort of "Ruthless Idealism" which screams for the best possible man possible, compromises be damned. They will ignore the good or even the great in a mad desire for the perfect.

On the other end of the spectrum we have what I will call "Pragmatism." This can be summed up by the expression "any port in a storm." Otherwise stated, women can experience a "Ruthless Pragmatism" which will find that any acceptable man (and that can be very generous indeed) will do and try and lock him down as swiftly as possible.

These two… forces… are naturally opposed to one another. And as a general rule a woman is guided by either one or the other at any given time. However, there is usually still some "play" or flexibility. After all, the other force is still there, even if suppressed. Also, I suppose it is possible that a woman might fall somewhere in the middle for some reason or another, but I believe this to be a temporary state. Given any appreciable period of time she will revert to one of them.

My personal belief is that while genetics likely plays some role in where a woman falls on this spectrum, the primary guide is the environment. The environment that a woman lives in will shape her perceptions and beliefs, and possibly the deep seated neurological functions which control her mating behavior. Some environments will naturally favor Ruthless Idealism, and other environments will favor Ruthless pragmatism. My educated guess is that a forgiving environment with plentiful resources and a great deal of safety will encourage a woman to favor the Ruthless Idealism force. On the other hand, an environment which is unstable, or has limited resources, or is dangerous will likely cause her to favor Ruthless Pragmatism.

Now, because of changes both in herself and in the environment, a woman will not be stuck in one direction forever. It is possible for her to favor one most of her life, and then to move to the other and stay there. Or she could shift back and forth several or even

many times. It all depends on the particular woman, and the environment she finds herself.

This can be very problematic if one supports lifetime monogamy, as it means a woman's perception on what men are "acceptable" mates or not can shift over time. This means that she might marry a man while she finds him acceptable, and then later when she shifts he is no longer acceptable- meaning of course she will want to dump him.

A common trope in the 'sphere is the former carousel rider who gets close to the Wall, develops Baby Rabies and then tries to lock down a nice, pliable Beta. In that example, we have a woman who was riding the Idealism train for years, only for the environment (featured in her fading looks and fertility and possible social cues) telling her she needs to settle, and fast. She then switches over to a Pragmatism mindset, during which she tries to lock a "good man" down. And she succeeds, only for her to divorce him a number of years later. My speculation is that she has switched back to an Idealism mindset, perhaps guided by the fact that she has a few kids now and so can afford to be more reckless (after all, her genetic future is now relatively secure). Also, her financial status and security are likely much better than they were before marriage.

In the past, the general layout of society was to create an environment which fostered the Pragmatism force within women. A good example was ancient Israel, which was no favorable towards unmarried women in its economics or laws. Given that kind of environment, it isn't shocking that the writer of the Book of Sirach might note that for a woman, any man will do. After all, the alternative to having a man is to be a social nobody with basically no rights or power. That kind of environment would naturally encourage a Ruthless Pragmatism.

In the present age, however, the environment has changed dramatically. Women have financial and political and social power on a mass scale they have never experienced before. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that they are guided by Ruthless Idealism. The risks to them are relatively low, and the potential gain of locking down a top notch male, or at least bearing children by him, are great. One might go so far as to say that this is the default setting for women these days, and only certain factors will push them towards Ruthless Pragmatism- and that only for a limited time.

I will try and wrap this post up by noting that men *must* understand this feature of women if they are actively trying to find a wife. Marrying a woman who is in the Ruthless Pragmatism phase is dangerous. After all, that pragmatism is bound in desperation, and desperate people do stupid things. Not to mention, that her "attraction" to you is bound up in a perceived pragmatic need. If she no longer feels that need, than any prior feelings towards you are likely to disappear. Unless you have managed to meet the expectations of her Idealism, she will reject you as a possible mate. This means, at best, a miserable marriage, and at worst adultery and/or divorce. So my advice is simple: men need to avoid women driven by that force.

Of course, that leads to the question of how one determines whether a woman is driven by Idealism or Pragmatism. But that is a subject for another post.

And I Just Can’t Contain This Feelin’ That Remains

February 21, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I was reading through Ace of Spades most recent post, and came to an epiphany:

Solomon was an addict.

Every woman he added to his harem was yet another attempt to chase the dragon.

And every temple he built to a foreign god was a payment made to his dealer.

All to ensure he always had his fix.

Like many an addict, his addiction eventually led to the point where it brought to ruin everything he had built up in his life.

In his desire to take the edge off, he ensured that the pain only increased.

And that is because no drug, whether the kind ingested, injected, smoked… or welcomed into ones arms, can ever *fix* the pain.

It can only numb it.

There is only one cure to the pain.

And that is Death.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #149

March 17, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have tried to make it a practice to pray out a Psalm every day. A few days ago I was praying Psalm 11, and it caught my attention.

> [1] In the Lord I take refuge; how can you say to me,
> "Flee like a bird to the mountains;[a]
> [2] for look, the wicked bend the bow,
> they have fitted their arrow to the string,
> to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.
> [3] If the foundations are destroyed,
> what can the righteous do?"

> [4] The Lord is in his holy temple;
> the Lord's throne is in heaven.
> His eyes behold, his gaze examines humankind.
> [5] The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked,
> and his soul hates the lover of violence.
> [6] On the wicked he will rain coals of fire and sulfur;
> a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.
> [7] For the Lord is righteous;
> he loves righteous deeds;
> the upright shall behold his face.

(Psalm 11)

In particular I was caught by this:

> "If the foundations are destroyed,
> what can the righteous do?"

My understanding is that the foundations referred to there are the public order. So what David is saying here is that when society has been turned upside down, what can a just person do? Which leads to my next interesting observation- there is no answer given. No advice is offered here for the one caught in such a position. Probably because there is no advice that can be offered other than wait on the Lord.

Sometimes we just have to persevere- to hold out until God comes to our rescue. At least, that is how I see it. That message seems to be repeated in the New Testament as well:

> [11] When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. [12] Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; [13] and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who

> endures to the end will be saved.

(Mark 13:11-13)

My readers are of course invited to off their own thoughts.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #150

April 7, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

In the Eastern Catholic Churches the liturgy today celebrates the life of St. Mary of Egypt. For those unaware, she was a harlot who underwent a conversion in Jerusalem and then went to the desert for the rest of her life, living as an ascetic until she died.

Here is the wiki article about her.

In honor of her, here is some scripture about women in similar positions who became children of God.

First, we have this account from the Book of Joshua:

> And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went, and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. [2] And it was told the king of Jericho, "Behold, certain men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." [3] Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring forth the men that have come to you, who entered your house; for they have come to search out all the land." [4] But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them; and she said, "True, men came to me, but I did not know where they came from; [5] and when the gate was to be closed, at dark, the men went out; where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." [6] But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. [7] So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords; and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.
>
> [8] Before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, [9] and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. [10] For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. [11] And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God is he who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. [12] Now then, swear to me by the Lord that as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign, [13] and save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." [14] And the men said to her, "Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you when the Lord gives us the land."
>
> [15] Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she dwelt in the wall. [16] And she said to them, "Go into

> the hills, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned; then afterward you may go your way.” [17] The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours which you have made us swear. [18] Behold, when we come into the land, you shall bind this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down; and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household. [19] If any one goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we shall be guiltless; but if a hand is laid upon any one who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. [20] But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath which you have made us swear.” [21] And she said, “According to your words, so be it.” Then she sent them away, and they departed; and she bound the scarlet cord in the window.
>
> …
>
> [22] And Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the harlot’s house, and bring out from it the woman, and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.” [23] So the young men who had been spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her; and they brought all her kindred, and set them outside the camp of Israel. [24] And they burned the city with fire, and all within it; only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. [25] But Rahab the harlot, and her father’s household, and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive; and she dwelt in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

(Joshua 2:1-21, 6:22-25)

Rahab is an ancestor of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. So one can fall far, and yet achieve greatness in the eyes of God. Then we have this story from Luke:

> [6] One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat at table. [37] And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, [38] and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. [39] Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.” [40] And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “What is it, Teacher?” [41] “A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42] When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?” [43] Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave

> more.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” [44] Then turning toward the
> woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you
> gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped
> them with her hair. [45] You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has
> not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has
> anointed my feet with ointment. [47] Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many,
> are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”[d]
> [48] And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” [49] Then those who were at table
> with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?”
> [50] And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

(Luke 7:6-50)

Mary had sinned much, and being forgiven that, loved our Lord all the more. Let us then, who hopefully have not fallen as far as she, love greatly too. For much has been given to us that we can never deserve or repay.

He Is Risen!

April 22, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Christ is Risen from the dead! By dying he trampled death, and to those in the tombs he granted life!

St. John Chrysostom's Homily on Pascha (Easter), or the Hieratikon, is always a great read on this most holy of days:

> Is there anyone who is a devout lover of God? Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival! Is there anyone who is a grateful servant? Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!
>
> Are there any weary with fasting? Let them now receive their wages! If any have toiled from the first hour, let them receive their due reward; if any have come after the third hour, let him with gratitude join in the Feast! And he that arrived after the sixth hour, let him not doubt; for he too shall sustain no loss. And if any delayed until the ninth hour, let him not hesitate; but let him come too. And he who arrived only at the eleventh hour, let him not be afraid by reason of his delay.
>
> For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, as well as to him that toiled from the first. To this one He gives, and upon another He bestows. He accepts the works as He greets the endeavor. The deed He honors and the intention He commends.
>
> Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord! First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor, rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day!
>
> You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!
>
> Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Death of Our Saviour has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it.
>
> He destroyed Hades when He descended into it. He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh. Isaiah foretold this when he said, "You, O Hell, have been troubled by encountering Him below."
>
> Hell was in an uproar because it was done away with. It was in an uproar because it is mocked. It was in an uproar, for it is destroyed. It is in an uproar, for it is annihilated. It is in an uproar, for it is now made captive. Hell took a body, and discovered God. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.
>
> O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?

> Christ is Risen, and you, O death, are annihilated! Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down! Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is Risen, and life is liberated! Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
>
> To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!

These words by King David also are fitting on a day such as this:

> The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof,
> the world and those who dwell therein;
> [2] for he has founded it upon the seas,
> and established it upon the rivers.

> [3] Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?
> [4] He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
> who does not lift up his soul to what is false,
> and does not swear deceitfully.
> [5] He will receive blessing from the Lord,
> and vindication from the God of his salvation.
> [6] Such is the generation of those who seek him,
> who seek the face of the God of Jacob. *Selah*

> [7] Lift up your heads, O gates!
> and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
> that the King of glory may come in.
> [8] Who is the King of glory?
> The Lord, strong and mighty,
> the Lord, mighty in battle!
> [9] Lift up your heads, O gates!
> and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
> that the King of glory may come in.
> [10] Who is this King of glory?
> The Lord of hosts,
> he is the King of glory!

(Psalm 24)

A wonderful and blessed Easter and Paschal season to all my readers.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #151

June 17, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Since today is Father's Day, I think that some scripture concerning fathers would be appropriate. And yes, I am still alive. Just terribly busy from work, and also unmotivated as well. Trying to turn that around. Anyways, lets start with Sirach:

> Listen to me your father, O children;
> act accordingly, that you may be kept in safety.
> [2] For the Lord honors a father above his children,
> and he confirms a mother's right over her children.
> [3] Those who honor their father atone for sins,
> [4] and those who respect their mother are like those who lay up treasure.
> [5] Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children,
> and when they pray they will be heard.
> [6] Those who respect their father will have long life,
> and those who honor[a] their mother obey the Lord;
> [7] they will serve their parents as their masters.[b]
> [8] Honor your father by word and deed,
> that his blessing may come upon you.
> [9] For a father's blessing strengthens the houses of the children,
> but a mother's curse uproots their foundations.
> [10] Do not glorify yourself by dishonoring your father,
> for your father's dishonor is no glory to you.
> [11] The glory of one's father is one's own glory,
> and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mother.

> [12] My child, help your father in his old age,
> and do not grieve him as long as he lives;
> [13] even if his mind fails, be patient with him;
> because you have all your faculties do not despise him.
> [14] For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,
> and will be credited to you against your sins;
> [15] in the day of your distress it will be remembered in your favor;
> like frost in fair weather, your sins will melt away.
> [16] Whoever forsakes a father is like a blasphemer,
> and whoever angers a mother is cursed by the Lord.

(Sirach 3:1-16)

Then we move these words of St. Paul, wherein he explains he is a spiritual father to the Church in Corinth:

> [14] I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved
> children. [15] For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do
> not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the
> gospel. [16] I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. [17] For this reason I sent[c] you
> Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my
> ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church. [18] But some of
> you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant. [19] But I will
> come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these
> arrogant people but their power. [20] For the kingdom of God depends not on talk
> but on power. [21] What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with
> love in a spirit of gentleness?

(1 Corinthians 4:14-21)

Lastly, we have this passage from the Gospel of John, wherein Jesus talks about the role of father and son, and then more specifically His relationship with His Father:

> [19] Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own,
> but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father[e] does, the Son
> does likewise. [20] The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is
> doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be
> astonished. [21] Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so
> also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes. [22] The Father judges no one but
> has given all judgment to the Son, [23] so that all may honor the Son just as they
> honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father
> who sent him. [24] Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes
> him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has
> passed from death to life.

(John 5:19-24)

I hope my readers had a good Father’s Day.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #152

June 24, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I want to explore a connection between several selections from the New Testament. The first is from the First Letter of Saint John:

> 13 I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may
> know that you have eternal life. 14 And this is the confidence which we have in
> him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know
> that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the
> requests made of him. 16 If any one sees his brother committing what is not a
> mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not
> mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that. 17 All
> wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.
>
> 18 We know that any one born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God
> keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.
>
> 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil
> one.

(1 John 5:13-19)

Then we have First Timothy:

> 18 This charge I commit to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophetic
> utterances which pointed to you, that inspired by them you may wage the good
> warfare, 19 holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain
> persons have made shipwreck of their faith, 20 among them Hymenae′us and
> Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to
> blaspheme.

(1 Timothy 1:18-20)

Then we have this from First Corinthians:

> 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men; 10 not at all
> meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since
> then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But rather I wrote to you not to
> associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of
> immorality[g] or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber—not even to
> eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those
> inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. “Drive out
> the wicked person from among you.”

(1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

The common link I see here is that when a Believer gives themselves over entirely to sin

and commits a grave/deadly sin, then our attitude and actions towards them should change. We no longer are obliged to pray for them as before, and they should be removed from the Church- for their own good. We live in the Age of Grace, and they should spend some time outside the protection of the Church so they can begin to understand what they have lost. This paves the way for them to repent in genuine sorrow and once again join the Body of Christ.

As always, any readers are free to chime in with their own thoughts.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #153

July 7, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today I wanted to cover the same passage from two different perspectives- that of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Here is Matthew's perspective:

> [5] As he entered Caperʹna-um, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him [6] and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." [7] And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." [8] But the centurion answered him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. [9] For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." [10] When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I say to you, not even[c] in Israel have I found such faith. [11] I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, [12] while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." [13] And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

(Matthew 8:5-13)

Then we have Luke's version:

> After he had ended all his sayings in the hearing of the people he entered Caperʹna-um. [2] Now a centurion had a slave who was dear[a] to him, who was sick and at the point of death. [3] When he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his slave. [4] And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, [5] for he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue." [6] And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; [7] therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. [8] For I am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." [9] When Jesus heard this he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that followed him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." [10] And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well.

(Luke 7:1-10)

There are two significant differences between them, which I will mention below in bold.

Matthew: "**I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with**

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth."

Matthew includes an admonition by Jesus against the Jews, informing them that many Gentiles will make it to the Kingdom and many Jews will not. This fits in with the character of Matthew's gospel, which was clearly written with a Jewish audience in mind. It would make sense to use a passage which contains a righteous Gentile to give this message. I would not at all be surprised if Jesus said this at another time, but Matthew thought that this was the best passage to put that particular saying of Jesus. Or maybe he did say it here, and Luke omitted it because his primarily Gentile audience wouldn't need it.

Luke: **When he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his slave. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue."**

Here we have other individuals, Jews in fact, speaking on behalf of the centurion (who was probably a Gentile or maybe a monotheist "God-fearer"). What I find interesting is that these Jews speak highly of this non-Jew. They give him high praise indeed, which I cannot say I can recall seeing elsewhere regarding a Gentile in the gospels (readers feel free to correct me in the comments below). I think there are a couple of meanings to be drawn here. The first is the role of the Jews as the early messengers of the gospel. They helped bring Jesus towards the Centurion. The second is that intercessors can have a powerful effect, and should be used when one wants to petition God. Here the Centurion didn't come himself, but used others to reach out to Jesus. This ties in with Church teaching regards the saints, that they too can help intercede with God on our behalf. Jesus of course knew the centurion's need, just as He always knows our needs. But it never hurts to have others speak on our behalf. Especially if those individuals are highly favored in God's eyes.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #154

July 21, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been in a somber mood lately, and this passage from the Book of Wisdom inspired some deep but troubling thoughts:

> 12 “Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
> because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;
> he reproaches us for sins against the law,
> and accuses us of sins against our training.
> 13 He professes to have knowledge of God,
> and calls himself a child[a] of the Lord.
> 14 He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;
> 15 the very sight of him is a burden to us,
> because his manner of life is unlike that of others,
> and his ways are strange.
> 16 We are considered by him as something base,
> and he avoids our ways as unclean;
> he calls the last end of the righteous happy,
> and boasts that God is his father.
> 17 Let us see if his words are true,
> and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;
> 18 for if the righteous man is God’s son, he will help him,
> and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.
> 19 Let us test him with insult and torture,
> that we may find out how gentle he is,
> and make trial of his forbearance.
> 20 Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
> for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

(Wisdom 2:12-20)

I wonder if there is a corollary in life between how righteous someone is, and how much he or she will suffer in life. I mean, there is always suffering in life. Sometimes good people suffer a lot, and sometimes bad people suffer a lot. But at the same time I think that those who are really good people seem to suffer more. Looking through the people I know in my life, and others I have read accounts of, I just see that as a thing. Suffering and righteousness are just connected. I am also reminded of this passage from the Gospel of John:

> 18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.[c] 19 If you
> were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the
> world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
> 20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant[d] is not greater than his

> master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. [21] But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me. [22] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. [23] He who hates me hates my Father also. [24] If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. [25] It is to fulfil the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’ [26] But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; [27] and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.

(John 15:18-27)

The world will always hate those who belong to God. It makes sense to me that the closer one is to God, the more the world would hate you. Perhaps my readers will feel like chiming in and offering their thoughts. Perhaps there are some other passages from scripture which would further illuminate the matter.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #155

August 4, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

I have been feeling somewhat forlorn lately, and while reading through scripture I couldn't help but get drawn in the by the story of Joseph. He is someone I can empathize with, given his life was filled for a long time with suffering. First we have his being sold into slavery:

> 12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. 13 And
> Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem?
> Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." 14 So he said to
> him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers, and with the flock; and bring me
> word again." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.
> 15 And a man found him wandering in the fields; and the man asked him, "What
> are you seeking?" 16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said, "tell me, I pray you,
> where they are pasturing the flock." 17 And the man said, "They have gone away,
> for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers,
> and found them at Dothan. 18 They saw him afar off, and before he came near to
> them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here
> comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the
> pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what
> will become of his dreams." 21 But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of
> their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed
> no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon
> him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand, to restore him to his father.
> 23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long
> robe with sleeves that he wore; 24 and they took him and cast him into a pit. The
> pit was empty, there was no water in it.
>
> 25 Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ish′maelites
> coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their
> way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it
> if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the
> Ish′maelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own
> flesh." And his brothers heeded him. 28 Then Mid′ianite traders passed by; and
> they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ish′maelites
> for twenty shekels of silver; and they took Joseph to Egypt.

(Genesis 37:12-28)

Then we have his temptation, and the price he paid for rejecting sin:

Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Pot′i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ish′maelites who had brought him down there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the

house of his master the Egyptian, [3] and his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. [4] So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. [5] From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, in house and field. [6] So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food which he ate.

> Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. [7] And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." [8] But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand; [9] he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" [10] And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her. [11] But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, [12] she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house. [13] And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, [14] she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; [15] and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house." [16] Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, [17] and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; [18] but as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out of the house."
>
> [19] When his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. [20] And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. [21] But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. [22] And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it; [23] the keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

(Genesis 39)

Then, when Joseph might have finally gotten out of prison, he was denied- at first.

> [20] On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief

> baker among his servants. [21] He restored the chief butler to his butlership, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand; [22] but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. [23] Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

(Genesis 40:20-23)

Joseph had to endure two more years in captivity before he was finally freed from his unjust imprisonment. Given this, I suppose when I look at my life, I don’t really have all that much to complain about. Or at least, it doesn’t add up to what he endured. Valuable perspective.

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #156

November 11, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

It has been quite a while since I've post. A lack of imagination, drive and general business led me to let this blog whither. I would rather not keep it that way, at least not *too* much, and so here is another scripture post.

The first passage is from the book of Samuel:

> [9] But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No! but
> we will have a king over us, [20] that we also may be like all the nations, and that
> our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." [21] And when
> Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of
> the Lord. [22] And the Lord said to Samuel, "Hearken to their voice, and make them
> a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."
>
> …
>
> There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abi′el, son of
> Zeror, son of Beco′rath, son of Aphi′ah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth; [2] and he
> had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man
> among the people of Israel more handsome than he; from his shoulders upward
> he was taller than any of the people.

(1 Samuel 8:9-9:2

I have been thinking lately about how what people want is not necessarily what is best for them. And so while scanning scripture I came across this. It is interesting that the handsomeness of Saul merited multiple mentions, not just once. Plus the mention of his height as well. It got me thinking about how Saul must have looked very much like what Israel imagined a king would be. Tall, handsome, probably covered in muscles. He would have been a very imposing and masculine presence. And yet of course God sees what us humans do not. Or perhaps, what us humans do not want to see. And this of course is part of the message here, as is explained not much later when we are first introduced to David.

> [6] When they came, he looked on Eli′ab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is
> before him." [7] But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on
> the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord sees not as
> man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the
> heart." [8] Then Jesse called Abin′adab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he
> said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." [9] Then Jesse made Shammah pass
> by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." [10] And Jesse made seven
> of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not
> chosen these." [11] And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said,
> "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And

> Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here.” [12] And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.” [13] Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

(1 Samuel 16:6-13)

Now it is interesting because David too was handsome. And yet that was not the reason why he was chosen. He wasn’t chosen because he looked the part of a king, but because as faulty as he was, David would always return to God when the time came. David always repented, unlike many of his descendants, even the ones who started out good. Of course, David was also very young at the time as well, and so probably wasn’t anywhere near the masculine presence of Saul. We see here how we must be careful about judging by appearance. Ultimately it is character and heart which matters. One might have both and be unattractive, or have them and be attractive as well.

The Israelites unfortunately never really lost this trait. Even to the time of Jesus, they did not understand. So it was well that Isaiah prophesied thus:

> Who has believed what we have heard?
> And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
> [2] For he grew up before him like a young plant,
> and like a root out of dry ground;
> he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him,
> and no beauty that we should desire him.
> [3] He was despised and rejected by men;
> a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
> and as one from whom men hide their faces
> he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

(Isaiah 53:1-3)

Merry Christmas!

December 26, 2019 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Merry Christmas to all of my readers! May you find joy in this time, even if otherwise all seems darkness.

> [16] For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

(John 3:16-17)

Selected Sunday Scriptures- #157

January 20, 2020 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today's mix is all over the place. A fitting thing, given my thoughts have been that way lately. We begin with a Psalm:

> I cry with my voice to the Lord,
> with my voice I make supplication to the Lord,
> 2 I pour out my complaint before him,
> I tell my trouble before him.
> 3 When my spirit is faint,
> thou knowest my way!

> In the path where I walk
> they have hidden a trap for me.
> 4 I look to the right and watch,
> but there is none who takes notice of me;
> no refuge remains to me,
> no man cares for me.
> 5 I cry to thee, O Lord;
> I say, Thou art my refuge,
> my portion in the land of the living.
> 6 Give heed to my cry;
> for I am brought very low!

> Deliver me from my persecutors;
> for they are too strong for me!
> 7 Bring me out of prison,
> that I may give thanks to thy name!
> The righteous will surround me;
> for thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

(Psalm 142)

As is often the case, David is someone I can relate to. I have been struggling against a feeling of hopelessness for a long time now, and I don't see it going away. But at the same time I am resisting giving in to it. Whatever his faults, and they were many, David was someone who never gave in to that despair in a final way. Neither did other suffering figures, such as Joseph, who I would argue had it worse. So whatever else, I resolve to do the same.

The following was the Gospel message today in my Eastern Rite parish:

> 35 As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging;
> 36 and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. 37 They told him,

> “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” [38] And he cried, “Jesus, Son of David, have
> mercy on me!” [39] And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be
> silent; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” [40] And
> Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came
> near, he asked him, [41] “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let
> me receive my sight.” [42] And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has
> made you well.” [43] And immediately he received his sight and followed him,
> glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

(Luke 18:35-43)

What really grabbed my attention with this reading today was the blind man’s reaction after gaining his sight- he glorified God. This is something we can take for granted, God’s favor. All too often we are showered with graces and we never even give it a second thought. How often do we stop to thank God for all he has given us? I know I have been particularly bad about this. Maybe this new year is a chance for me to be better.

Question For My Orthodox Readers

January 23, 2020 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Is the schism between Moscow and Constantinople still going on? According to this wiki it still it, but that of course isn't always the best source of information. No special reason, I am just genuinely curious.

A Day Like No Other

April 11, 2020 | by Donal Graeme | Link | Original Link

Today is Good Friday, a day which is unlike any other in the year. And yet, this year already seems like no other year as well. At least, it does for so very many people around the globe. But of course, isn't that true for some people all the time? There are always places in our world which are suffering- whether it be plague, famine or war. Places where people struggle to find a sense of normalcy.

If anything, the times we live in should remind us of how much we take for granted. Or rather, *have* taken for granted. We took for granted that we could work our jobs as normal. We took for granted that we could shop where we wanted. We took for granted we could meet up with friends or family whenever we wanted, or at least, when it was convenient. We even took for granted that we could worship together when we wanted to.

If all of this is not a wake up call, I don't know what could be. Perhaps total destruction of all we hold dear?

So where am I going with this? I guess it is to say that we shouldn't take this day, and what it represents, for granted either. God has given so much for our sake, and we constantly take it for granted. It seems we only can appreciate what we have when we have lost it. Let us remember, then, that what happened almost 2000 years ago gave us a a chance for life, and life eternal at that. Hopefully we won't take that any more for granted than we already have. Otherwise, we will only appreciate the gift of eternal life when we have already lost it.