

Visual Images and The Exercises

Gauvin Bailey, *Jesuit Art Patronage before 1580* in
ed. Thomas McCoog SJ, *The Mercurian Project*

Bailey writes (p.745) that there is a paradox that while the visual arts were of great concern to Ignatius and his early companions, they would not play a consistent role in Jesuit life and ministry until most of them had died.

Like many of his contemporaries, Ignatius contemplated holy pictures every day, and was a strong advocate of religious imagery as a means of meditation, education and prayer.

His Spiritual Exercises give an important role to visual imagery: the composition of place, which is nearly always the first preparatory element, is like the opening of theatre curtains, the unveiling of the theatre where the action will take place.

Pierre Antoine Fabre

This writer suggests that Ignatius envisaged images as a purgative, something that can dislodge the existing mental images occupying a person's imagination. By replacing one image with another, this process was meant to create a place in the imagination completely devoid of images...purifying the mind of the need for images as it progressed beyond the visual while seeking to be one with Christ.

That this is an element in images is supported by this important vision of Ignatius as he comes to the end of his convalescence:

Reminiscences [Autobiography] 9-10

All he wanted to do, once he was better, was the journey to Jerusalem as mentioned above with all the acts of discipline and all the acts of self-denial that a generous spirit, fired with God, generally wants to do. [10] And now he was coming to forget his past thoughts with these holy desires he was having. These desires were confirmed for him by a visitation as follows: being awake one night, he clearly saw a likeness of Our Lady with the Holy Child Jesus, at the sight of which, for an appreciable time, he received a very extraordinary consolation. He was left so sickened at his whole past life, and especially at matters of the flesh, that it seemed to him that there had been removed from his soul all the likenesses that he had previously painted in it.



Our Lady of Montserrat

Francis Borja, Third general

Bailey notes that Francis Borja made extensive use of images while preaching and also had a fascination for the visual arts, which he compared to spices at a meal, piquing one's own spiritual taste buds. Borja saw images less as a purgative and more a way to entice the viewer to ingest and digest a spiritual truth. He commissioned his own series of visual meditations, not published till 1675. These position the composition of place at the end of the meditation rather than near the beginning, making it the goal or the preludes, preparatory prayer and historical description, rather than the springboard.

The Icon in St Mary Major

Borja endorsed the icon supposedly painted by St Luke. And obtained permission from Pope Pius V in 1569 to have it copied. The icon and its copies alike were believed to possess miraculous qualities that aided spiritual conversion. The concern with accuracy in copying divine image had less to do with 'art' than with the medieval belief that such images possessed the presence of the original, and that copying extended its spiritual power.



The most substantial artistic legacy of the Society of Jesus in the early period was the work of another of the early companions, Jeronimo Nadal, and he nearly lived long enough to see it realised. The illustrated Gospels and meditations of Nadal entitled *Evangelicae historiae imagines* [Antwerp 1593] with its 153 lavish illustrations by the finest print makers of Flanders, was the most extensively illustrated “Gospel” of its day, and exerted an immeasurable influence over the arts in Italy and abroad. During the almost thirty years it took to design and publish it, the Society of Jesus demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to this volume, which was pushed to completion in spite of formidable financial and diplomatic obstacles.

The full text with the complete meditations came out in 1594 under the title *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*. [*Notes and Meditations on the Gospels*].

Very likely the brainchild of Ignatius himself, this volume links pictures and meditations to the texts of the liturgical cycle, a method used also in Borja's *Meditaciones*. Borja was also committed to publishing this extensively illustrated meditation book on the Gospels, as can be seen in his lengthy correspondence with Nadal.

The most compelling evidence for Ignatius's involvement in the original conception of the series appears in the introduction of the 1595 edition written by the secretary of the Society, Diego Jimenez:

“Father Ignatius one day said to Jeronimo Nadal that it would be a praiseworthy enterprise to propose for prayer and meditation to the students of the colleges of the Society some brief remarks on the Evangelists for feast days and Sundays; and not only that, but moreover to illustrate them by affixing images and through commentary.”

The images from the *Evangelicae Historiae imagines* are “action-packed” each one includes several scenes at once, full of narrative detail and surrounded by a luscious architectural or landscape setting, moreover labelled with letters keyed to text below in the picture. The viewer’s imagination is bombarded not only by the complexity of the original images but by the many repetitions of the same themes. The illustrations are related to the gospels read at Mass every Sunday [and feast days] and the second part of the book consists of learned exegesis about each lettered incident, followed by a meditation or prayer.

E.ADEM DOMINICA I. QVADRAG.

Secunda, & tertia tentatio.

Eisdem capp. Anno xxx.

13

xxv

- A. Portat per aera daemon IESVM Hic
rosolymam in templum.
B. Templum, & in hoc pinnacula, quasi
alce templi.
C. Statuit IESVM diabolus in supremo
pinnaculo templi, & tentat iterum;
Si Filius Dei es, mitte te, &c.
D. Respondet IESVS, Non tentabis, &c.
E. Rursus portat IESVM daemon in

- montem excelsum valde.
F. Idest, in montem Nebo.
G. Et eius verticem Phasga, trans Iordanem.
H. Ibi tentat IESVM Tertio. Haec omnia
tibi dabo, &c. Respondet, Vade Sathana;
scriptum est enim, &c.
I. Proripit se Sathan cum suis diabolis.
K. Christo triumphatori Sathanae, Epinici
on caeleste Angeli canunt.



Nadal's cycle of images was already well known before its publication, and by at least the early 1580s the pictures were being copied in Rome, where they circulated as sketches. Ignatius may have chosen the original subjects, and shortly after the painter Livio Agresti da Forli was commissioned to execute a cycle of drawings in the late 1550s or early 1560s that still survive in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome.

These early sketches were substantially reworked between 1579 and 1582 by Giovanni Battista Fiammeri (1543-1617), a Jesuit sculptor and painter from Firenze, before being altered in detail by Bernardino Passeri after 1587 and by Martin de Vos [1532-1603] as they were in the last stages of preparation for the press. The final appearance of the engravings is especially indebted to Fiammeri, who was put in charge of publishing the images after Nadal's death in 1580.

A considerable correspondence survives between Nadal and both Borja and Mercurian, showing that Nadal was busy writing the meditations and working with a set of drawings already in the 1560s and 1570s, at first in Spain and later in Germany. The book was ready to be printed in 1576 and gained the censor's approval in 1579, but external circumstances including a war in the Low Countries prevented this work from appearing during Mercurian's generalate or Nadal's lifetime.

Nadal's manual drew from the Spiritual Exercises the notion that the reader was to maximise the creative potential of his or her senses. Although the pictures act as a clear visual guide to the meditations and demonstrate a concern for setting and historical accuracy that is distinctly Ignatian, the meditations themselves are little more than outlines, allowing the reader to actively create his or her own meditations. The book is meant as a starting point and not as a comprehensive dogmatic text to be repeated by rote. This focus on the imagination of the viewer is one of the most characteristic aspects of the Jesuit approach to the visual arts in the early period.

Helping the imagination of the viewer deepen
their praying of the Biblical Text.

Principle and Foundation

We are created to share in God's love and life for eternity. The experience of this love is manifested in our response of praise, reverence and service, that is, loving God with all our heart, all our mind and all our will.

All of God's created order is intended to reveal this sharing of God's life and love. Therefore with all of humanity we are called to be one with the rest of creation; and with it, we are invited to move together into a deeper relationship with the loving Creator.

Whenever we are hindered, by another part of creation, from deepening this relationship, it becomes necessary to examine our connection with that part to ensure that we are not hindered in pursuing our call. Often we may need to choose to separate ourselves from such barriers.

It is true that we can only grow in our relationship with God by cooperating with other members of the human family in caring for each other and for creation itself. Nevertheless it is also true that we are not to become so dependent on any part of creation that we would be distracted or separated from our fundamental relationship with our God.

This means that whenever we make choices concerning any aspect of work and life, we are to be interiorly free with respect to those concerns that make obstacles of creation - long life or short life; health or sickness; riches or poverty; comfort or discomfort; being accepted or rejected; status or non-status. Therefore, our highest priority is to be this relationship with God shining through all our choices and everything that flows from these choices. (Fleming)

The Sacrifice/ Binding of Isaac [akedah]

Retreatants are routinely asked to take Genesis 22:1-20 to help them in their reflective consideration of the Principle and Foundation.

There is a lot that is immediately uncomfortable in this reading. In my own experience of the Spiritual Exercises, the giving up which is set in the fate of Isaac, the only Son and embodiment of the promise, I changed it. So I was speaking at the funeral of someone I loved more than anyone else, who had died young.



Micah

Micah 6:6-8 "With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

⁹ God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ ..and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

Freeing Gift of the First Week

Freedom from self-absorption

Freedom for the vanishing self

Luke 12:16-20 Then he told them a parable, "There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time."



The Rich Man from the Parable by Rembrandt

But God said to him, "Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?"

Mark 5:1-4 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. 3 He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; 4 for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him.

Day and night he was crying out and cutting himself with stones.



When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him;

⁷ and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."

⁸ For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." ¹⁰ He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

¹¹ Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; ¹² and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them."

¹³ So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

¹⁴ The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵ They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid.

¹⁶ Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it.

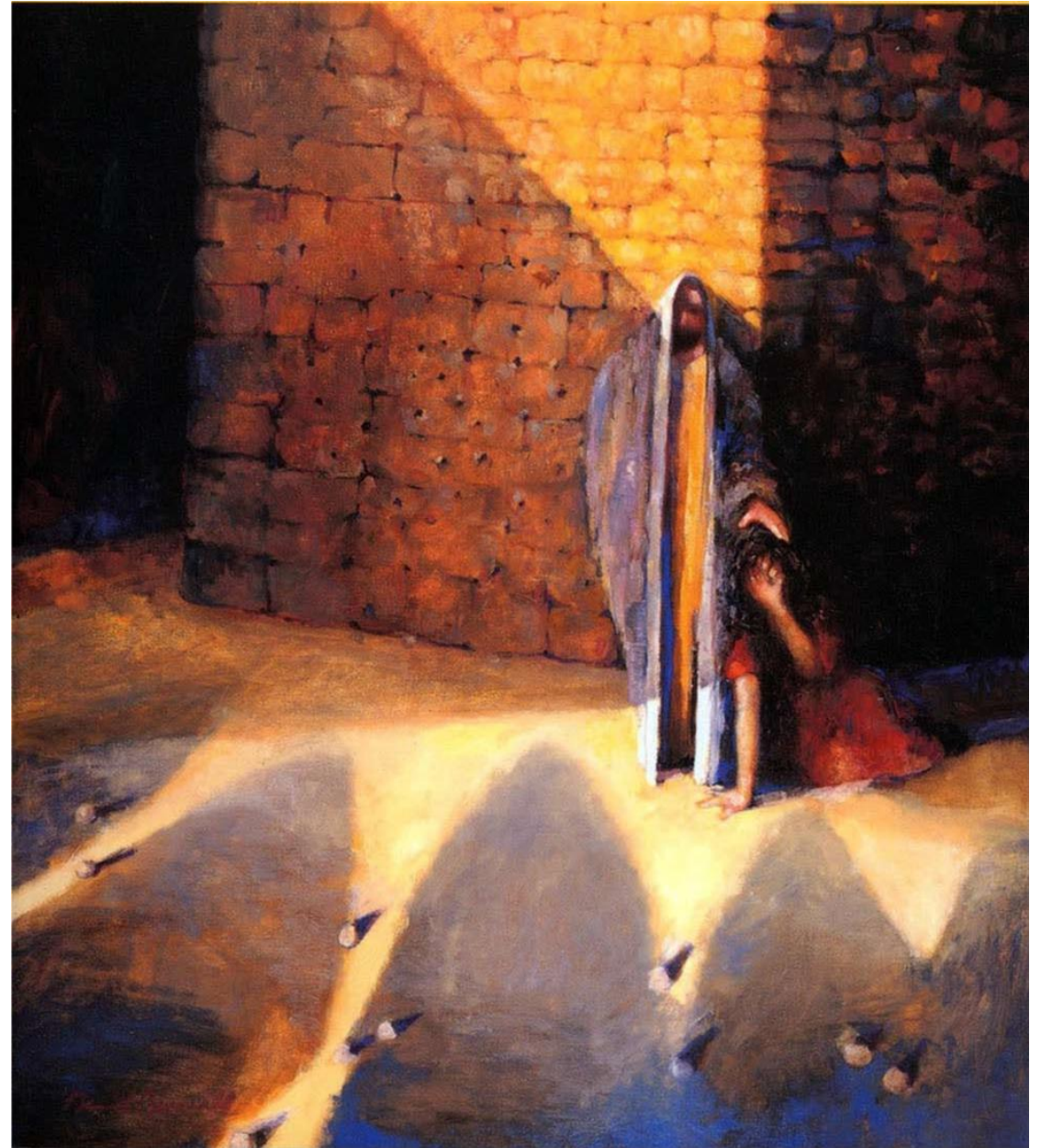
¹⁷ Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood.

¹⁸ As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him.

¹⁹ But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you."

²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Freedom from the mess.



The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in the middle they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and in the Law Moses has ordered us to stone women of this kind. What have you got to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for an accusation to use against him



What is written on the stones meant for
you?

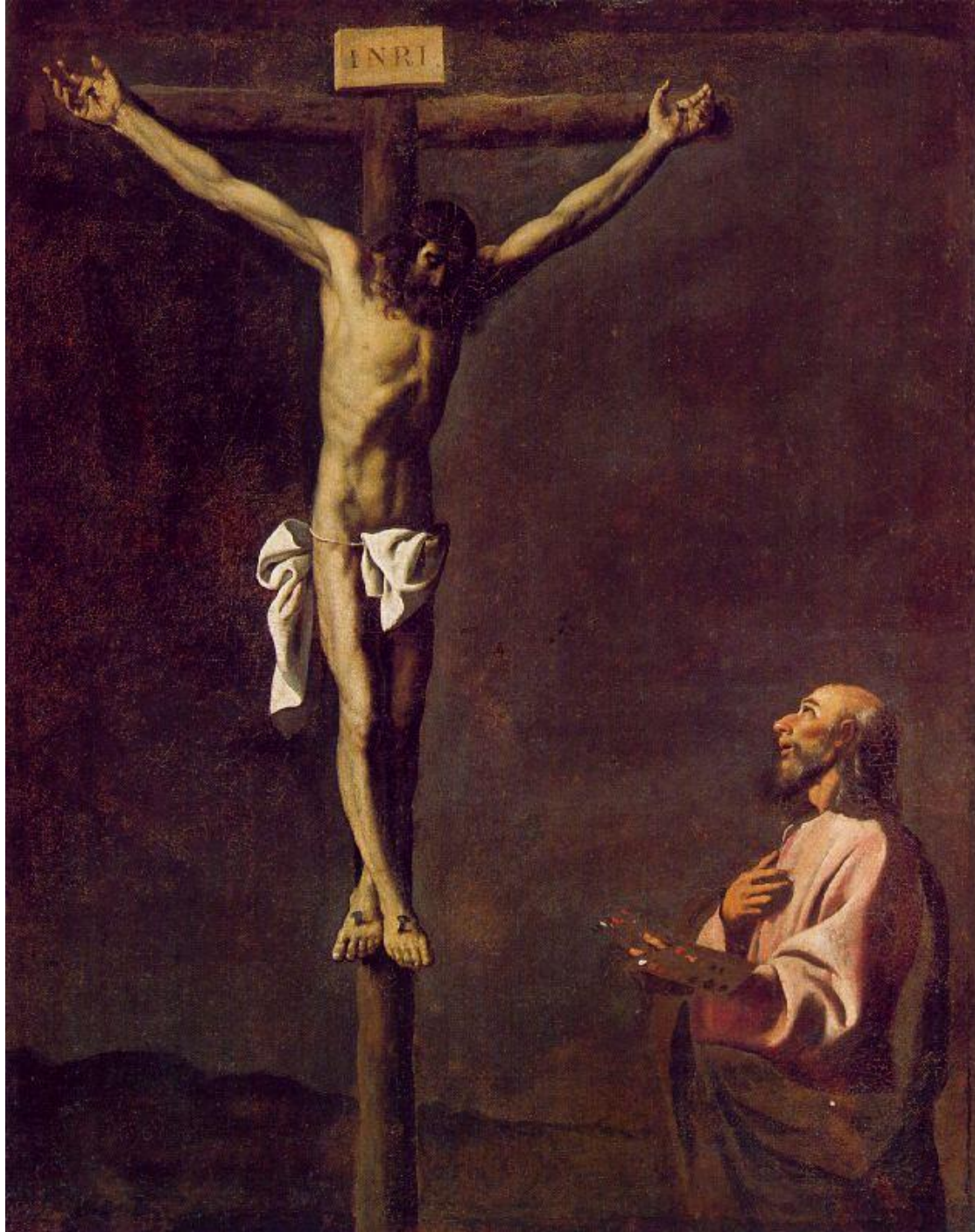
What does Jesus write in the sand about you?



But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he straightened up and said, 'Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and continued writing on the ground.

When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until the last one had gone and Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained in the middle.

Jesus again straightened up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus. 'Go away, and from this moment sin no more.'



Colloquy. Imagining Christ our Lord present and placed on the Cross, let me make a Colloquy, how from Creator He is come to making Himself human, and from life eternal is come to temporal death, and so to die for my sins. Likewise, looking at myself, what I have done for Christ, what I am doing for Christ, what I ought to do for Christ. And so, seeing Him such, and so nailed on the Cross, to go over that which will present itself. The Colloquy is made, properly speaking, as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant to his master; now asking some grace, now blaming oneself for some misdeed, now communicating one's affairs, and asking advice in them. OUR FATHER.

Call of the King

This consideration which bridges the first and second weeks of the Exercise can be helped by focussing on the call of Peter and Matthew.

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God,

² he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."

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⁶ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.

⁷ So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

⁹ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken;

¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

¹¹ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. (Lk. 5:1-11 NRS)

After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me."

²⁸ And he got up, left everything, and followed him.

(Lk. 5:27-28 NRS)





Pedro Arrupe

Nothing is more practical than finding God,
than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and
what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.



To be with him

- **Mark 3:13-16** He now went up onto the mountain and called those he desired. So they came to him and he appointed twelve; to be with him and to be sent out to proclaim the message, with power to drive out devils. And so he appointed the Twelve,

and to be sent out
to proclaim the message,

- **Matthew 11:28**

²⁸ "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Do not be afraid

Those who love are capable of speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation, and encouragement.

These were the words that Jesus himself spoke:

“Take heart, my son!” (Mt 9:2);

“Great is your faith!” (Mt 15:28);

“Arise!” (Mk 5:41);

“Go in peace” (Lk 7:50);

“Be not afraid” (Mt 14:27).

The Two Standards

Judges 9:6-15 NRS

⁸ The trees once went out to anoint a king over themselves. So they said to the olive tree, 'Be King over us.'

⁹ The olive tree answered them, 'Shall I stop producing my rich oil by which gods and mortals are honored, and go to sway over the trees?'

¹⁰ Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come and reign over us.'

¹¹ But the fig tree answered them, 'Shall I stop producing my sweetness and my delicious fruit, and go to sway over the trees?'

¹² Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come and be king over us.'

¹³ But the vine said to them, 'Shall I stop producing my wine that cheers gods and mortals, and go to sway over the trees?'

¹⁴ So all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come and be king over us.'

¹⁵ And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk. 4:30-32 NRS)

³⁰ He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?"

³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;

³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,

²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.

²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.

²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

EG 22. God's word is unpredictable in its power. The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps (*Mk 4:26-29*).

The Church has to accept this unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking.

Three Classes of Persons

I have always found this difficult to get hold of. I think when I did the full exercises, I rewrote the scenario to feature a painting by Vermeer. At that time, I didn't know he was connected with the Jesuits in Delft.

So I'm not absolutely sure if my three pieces of Scripture align perfectly with the three classes of persons.....

153] The persons of the first class would like to be free of the attachment they have to the required possession, so as to meet God in peace and be saved, but they take no means to bring this about until the hour of their death.

Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly.

¹⁷ And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?'

¹⁸ Then 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; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'

²⁰ But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

(Lk. 12:16-20 NRS)

154] *Those of the second class* would like to be free of their attachment, but they want to be free of it that they retain the thing itself. Thus God is to come to what they themselves want, and there is no determination to relinquish the acquired possession in order to go to God even if that were the better course for them.

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. (Matthew 19:16-22 NRS)

155] *Those of the third class want to get rid of their attachment, but they want to be rid of it in such a way that they also have no inclination either to keep the acquisition or not to keep it. Their desire is to want the thing or not to want it only according as God our Lord shall move their will, and as might appear to them personally to be **more** for the service and praise of the Divine Majesty.*

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.

⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.

⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.

⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

- (Mark. 12:41-13:1 NRS)

Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,

⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table.

⁸ But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste?"

⁹ For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor."

¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me.

¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

¹² By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial.

¹³ Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

(Matthew 26:6-13 NRS)

Desire

Words

Actions





Jesus and the Samaritan Woman



*The Samaritan Woman comes to the well for water.
She thirsts for it, she desires it.*

Jesus moves her from the centre and puts himself there.

"Give me a drink."

She resists, and puts herself back in the centre.

"How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"

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."



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Desire reformulated

Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well?

Jesus said to her, those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

"Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."



Openness allows challenge

Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

Challenge deflected

"Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."





true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."



Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman,



Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

This is a story which moves from a desire through a conversation to an action.

The woman begins by desiring a basic essential-water. She finds herself engaged in a conversation with Jesus.

This conversation moves through raising of prejudice, a curiosity about another kind of water, living water. It raises issues about the woman's way of life which she would rather avoid talking about. She proposes a theological argument as a way of avoiding the spotlight being turned on her.

But as the conversation goes on, the living water refreshes her so that she no longer needs her jar. Even as she is trying to avoid the light, there is enough receptivity in her for growth to take place, for energy to be kindled, for generosity to move her to take the news to her village. The transformation of an outcast to a proclaimer of the gospel is motivated by gratitude.



Catching the echoes

"Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!
He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (Jn. 4:29 NRS)

John 1:35-39

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."

⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." (Jn. 1:43-46 NRS)

John 11.31 When those who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying 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 deeply moved in spirit and troubled; ³⁴ and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"



⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Imagination and Words

Cain and Abel

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." ² Next she bore his brother Abel.

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground.

Genesis 4:1-2

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

Genesis 4:3-5







Genesis 4:5-7 So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

[the word for "master" is from the same root as mashal/parable]

Genesis 4:8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

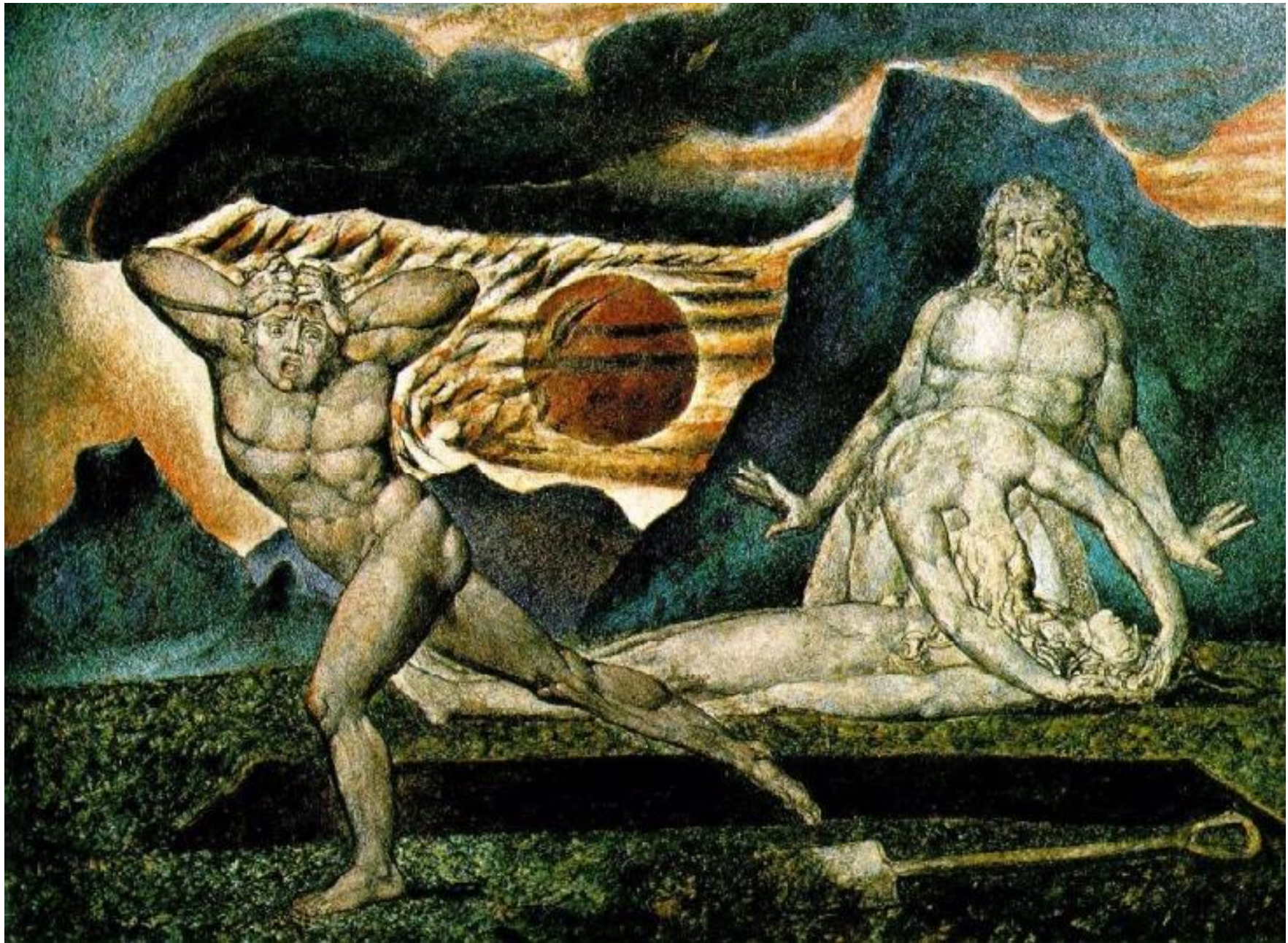


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Genesis 4:9-11 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ And the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.



Genesis 4:12-15 When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."
¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!" ¹⁴
Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me." ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.

Is Abel's death a tragedy?

²⁵ Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him." ²⁶ To Seth also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to invoke the name of the LORD.

Through whom is humanity's survival?

If only Noah his wife and their children and wives survive, and if Noah is descended from Seth, then it is from Seth and not Cain that all humanity derives.

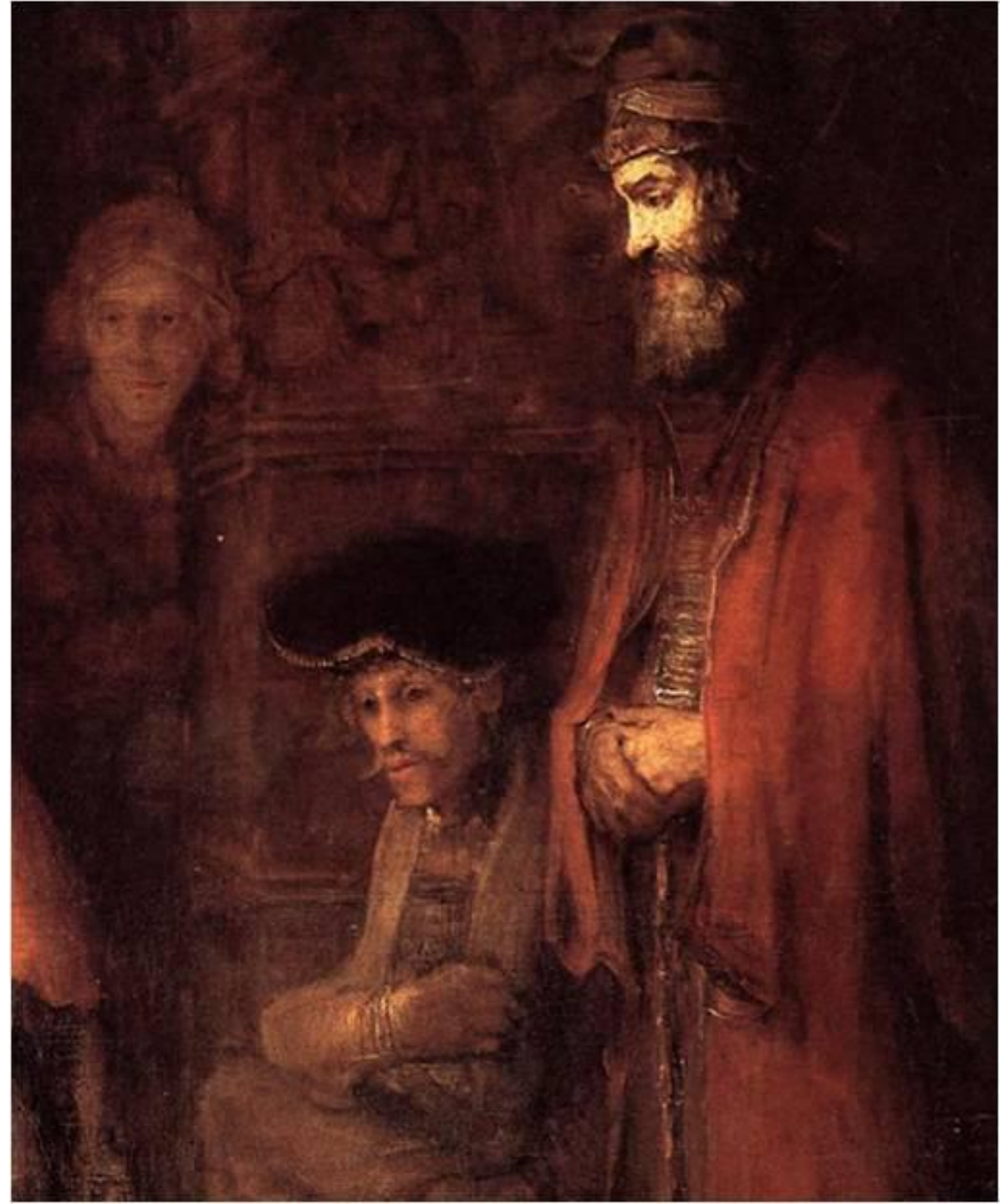
Abel does not die without descendants, for through the line of Seth, the dead brother comes into existence. God's favour at the altar leads to more than fratricide: it leads also to the survival of the human family through Cain's younger brother.

Echoes:

The parable of the Lost Son Luke 15:11-32

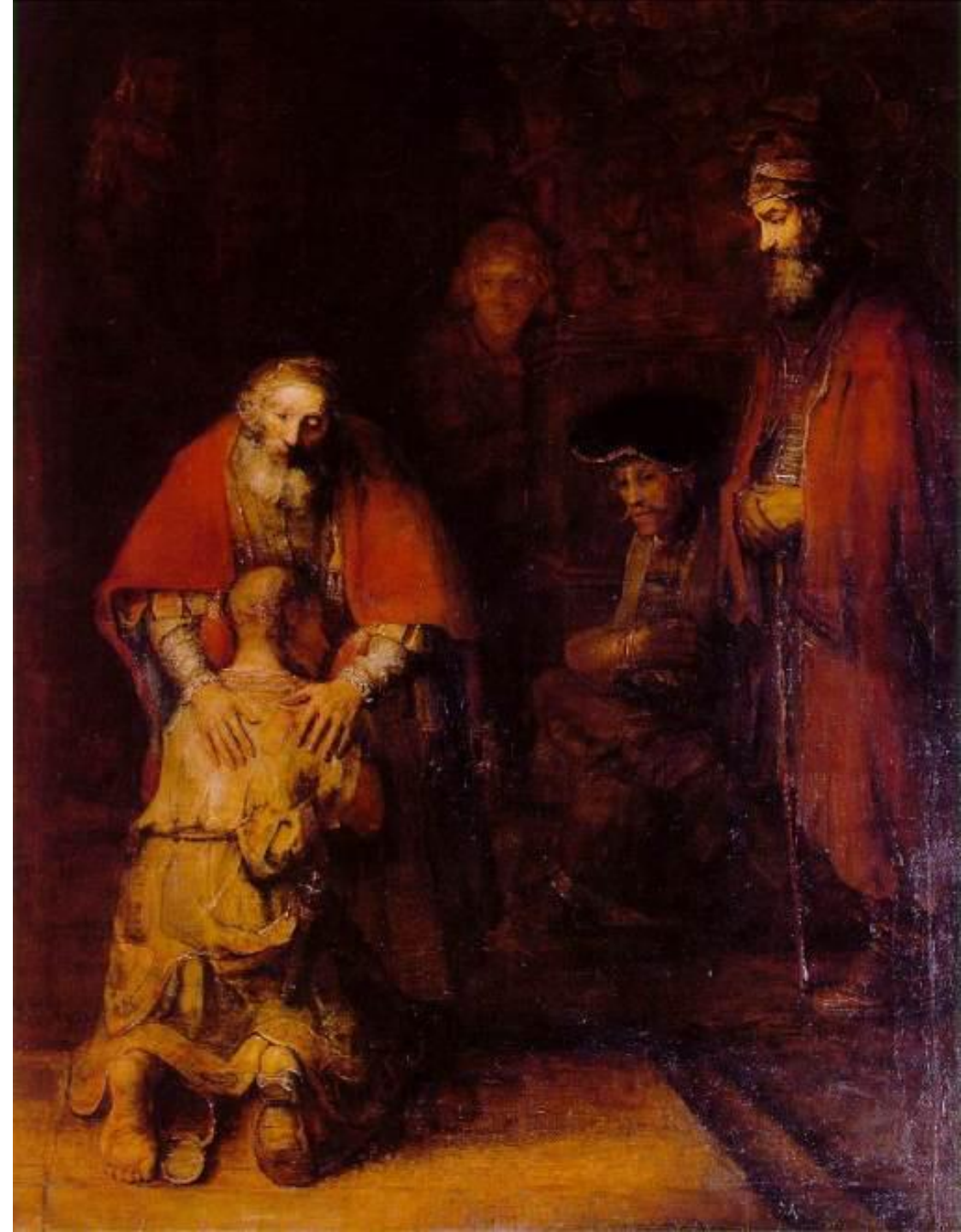
'The Prodigal Son' is the most used title for this parable which only appears in Luke's Gospel. In the gospel itself, the parable does not have a title. Its opening line is, 'A man had two sons'. It is the third in a series of parables; the other two have similar beginnings: 'What if a man had a hundred sheep?'; 'What if a woman had ten drachmas?' Each parable proceeds by telling us of a loss: one sheep is lost, one coin is lost, one son is lost. Each parable tells us of a searching: the shepherd leaves the 99; the woman turns the house upside down; the father sees the prodigal while he is a long way off and there is at least a suggestion that he is out looking for him.

The totality of what is broken has been restored. There is a call for celebration: the sheep are one hundred again; the coins are ten again; the two sons are back together again – but they are not, for the elder one refuses the reconciliation. As in the story of Cain and Abel, where God goes out to Cain and challenges him to retell his story, so the father of the two sons goes out to the firstborn, and offers him the words which give an alternative account of the experience:



'But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!'

Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.' (Luke 15:30-32)



Notice how the elder brother says, 'this son of yours' and how the father says, 'this brother of yours'. The firstborn denies his relationship to his brother, but the father calls him to remember it: 'This brother of yours..... was lost and has been found'. He is acting as though he has lost something, when he has found something.

The elder brother in the parable is like Cain; sin is crouching at the door ready to overcome him. Fratricide remains a possibility. What happens when the father dies?

The Parable of the Invisible Mother

Once upon a time there was a woman who was married with two sons. She loved her husband and her children dearly, and maybe as many mothers do had a special feeling for her younger son, but she did not let it show. But as the younger son got older, she could see that he really wanted to leave the nest. Of course this meant there were a lot of arguments between him and his father, because he needed money. After many fights and many post-mortems on the fights with her husband, she said to him. You must let him go, and find a way of financing him; we will be able to manage. So the son received a share of the house which he could borrow on and his own future inheritance. And he went a long way off.

The way the world is, somebody always knows somebody else and bad news is passed quicker than good news. So the woman heard that her son had become a bit of a waster. Of course the Father heard nothing until one day, he opened an official-looking letter which was from a finance company telling him that they now owned the part of the house that the younger son had had as a back-up to borrow on. His wife watched as he hit the roof, but as the days went on, she could also see the sadness growing in him. 'He won't dare show his face again here' he said angrily. But his wife watched as he looked down the long road every evening to see if anyone was coming.

Then one evening as he was coming in for his meal, he took that last look over his shoulder, and saw an exhausted young man staggering up the road. There was something familiar about him, and as his excitement rose, he shouted and ran down the road to meet him. He got his arms underneath the boy, and as he shouted for a special cloak, there was his wife in front of him with the clothes and the ring, and somehow already the servants were getting a big fire going for a party. Someone must have told them.

The older son, who had maybe been not quite so disappointed at the younger son's disgrace, was appalled at the party that was taking place. His mother went out to him, 'I'll send your father out, but you must tell him what is in your heart, but you too listen above all to the joy that is in his heart, and be sure it is a joy he wants to share with you.'





Jacob and Esau

Tomb Day

Between the Third and Fourth week.























Chora







A. Venit ad Pilatum Ioseph ab
Arimathia audacter; &
petijt corpus IESV.
B. Venit Nicodemus cum vnguen-
to, & Ioseph cum sindone

ad crucem.
C. Deponunt corpus IESV sum-
ma cum pietate ac dolore.
D. Arimathia oppidum.
E. Locus sepulcri cum vestibulo.

Contemplation for attaining love (Fourth Week)

The First Point is, to bring to memory the benefits received, of Creation, Redemption and particular gifts, pondering with much feeling how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He has, and then the same Lord desires to give me Himself as much as He can, according to His Divine ordination.

And with this to reflect on myself, considering with much reason and justice, what I ought on my side to offer and give to His Divine Majesty, that is to say, everything that is mine, and myself with it, as one who makes an offering with much feeling:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my intellect, and all my will -- all that I have and possess. you gave it to me: to you, Lord, I return it! All is yours, dispose of it according to your will. Give me your love and grace, for this is enough for me.

The Washing of the feet

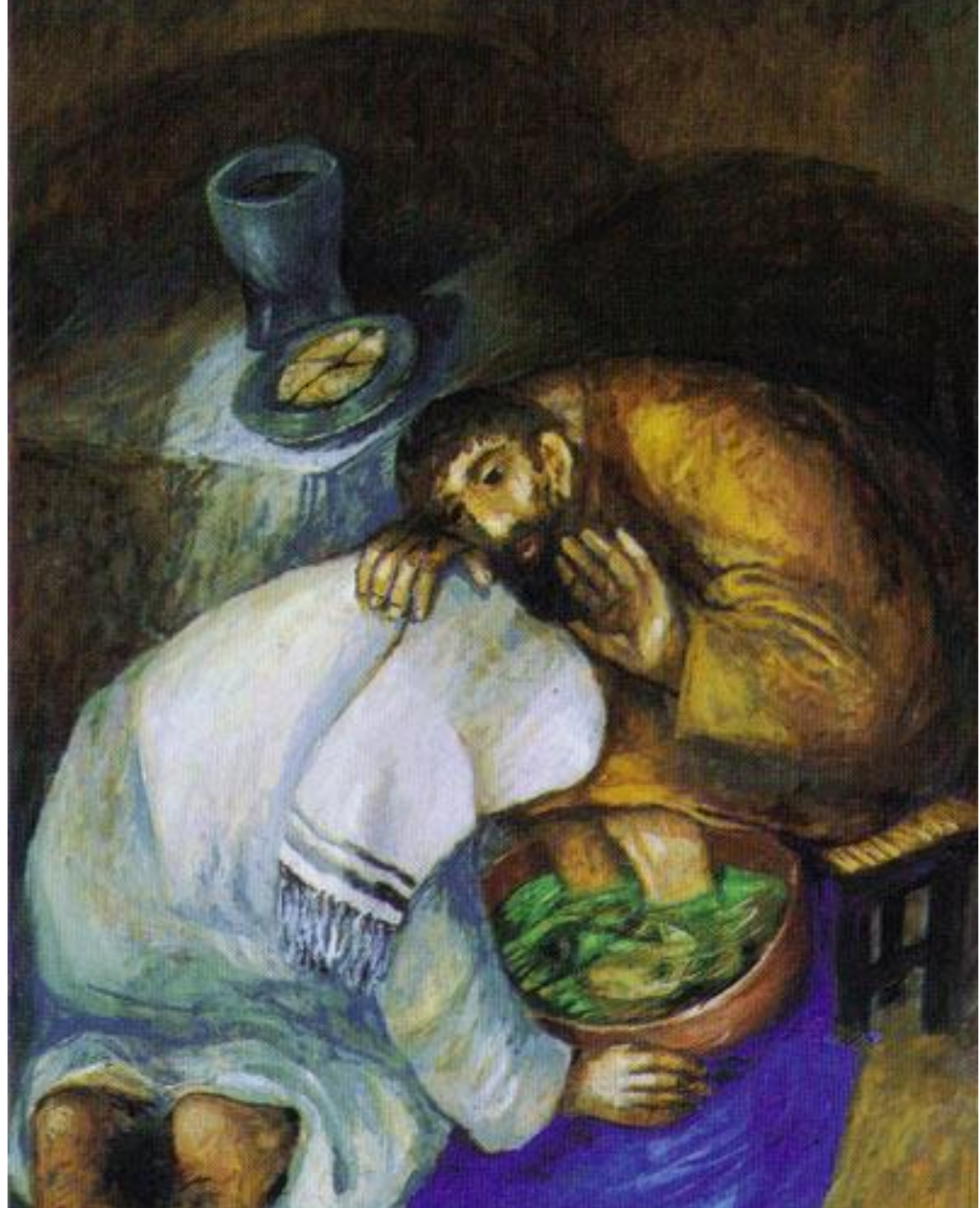
Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father.

Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."



John 14:1-6 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.



The washing of the feet is the acted out invitation to the home of Jesus. The crucifixion which is the exaltation is the acted out invitation to the home of Jesus. To the people with no home Jesus offers them a home, the imaged parable of this is the words to his mother and the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. The home that Jesus goes to prepare a place for us is his heavenly relationship with the Father.