

## CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)

Week of 13 April, 2003

To my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Corps:

You may never have thought much about it, but most of us spend a good portion of our lives trying to “find ourselves”.

Deep in our hearts, we need to come face-to-face with the person we really are. It can be a fearsome experience, but it can also bring us great peace.

In order to do it right, we need God:

Holy One!

Help me to find myself.

I am

a mixture of motives and excuses,

a blur of memories,

a quiver of hope,

a knot of fear,

a tangle of confusion,

a restless wanderer.

I wander somewhere between

gratitude and grievance,

wonder and routine,

high resolve and undone dreams,

generous impulses and unpaid bills.

Help me to accept what I am

so I can begin to be Yours.

Make me

small enough to snuggle,

young enough to question,

old enough to forget,

foolish enough to act for peace,

skeptical enough to doubt the sufficiency

of anything and anyone

but You.

Let the power of Your presence

empower me,

heal me,  
lift me up.

Hang in there...and may the God of healing and strength change your lives and make you whole.

And let's remember our soldiers:

Praise to You, ever-watchful God,  
for You are our refuge and strength  
in every time and place.  
Send Your blessing on those  
who are serving our country  
in the Armed Forces.  
By Your powerful Spirit,  
shield them from all harm.  
Uphold them in good times and bad,  
especially when danger threatens.  
Let Your peace be the sentry  
that stands guard over their lives,  
so they may return home safely.  
Look with compassion on all victims of war.  
Ease their sufferings, and heal their wounds.  
Put an end to wars all over the earth,  
and hasten the day when the human family  
will rejoice in lasting peace.  
We ask it through Jesus, the Prince of peace.  
Amen!

May God send us peace...and quickly.

THINGS CATHOLICS CAN DO:

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK (13-20 April):

PALM SUNDAY (13 April)

- Regular schedule of Sunday Masses  
(Blessed palm will be available at all Masses)

Note: the customary Palm Sunday Procession  
of the Religious Ed classes will begin at  
1030 at Thayer Hall and will proceed  
to the Chapel to arrive for the 1100  
Mass.

MONDAY (14 April)

- Mass in Chaplain's Office (0630).
- Mass at the Chapel (1205).

TUESDAY (15 April)

- same as for Monday.

SPY WEDNESDAY (16 April)

- same as for Monday.

HOLY THURSDAY (17 April)

- No morning or noon Masses.
- EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER  
at the Chapel at 1900.

GOOD FRIDAY (18 April)

- No morning or noon Masses.
- GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY at the Chapel  
at 1900.

HOLY SATURDAY (19 April)

- No morning or noon Masses.
- No 1715 Mass.
- EASTER VIGIL at the Chapel at 2000.

EASTER SUNDAY (20 April)

- Easter Masses at 0900 and 1100.
- Mass in WH5300 at 1715.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday of Lent at 1800, there will be Stations of the Cross at the Chapel. Each week, the ceremony will be followed by a simple supper of soup...to preserve the spirit of fasting.

CHECK OUT A PRAYER SITE: [www.liturgyhours.org](http://www.liturgyhours.org)

DID YOU KNOW?

IRAQI PRIEST:

Like many Iraqis living in the USA, Iraq-native Father Noel Gorgis is following the war in his homeland with special interest.

Father Gorgis is a priest at St. Paul Assyrian Chaldean Catholic Church in North Hollywood, CA, and he had to serve with the Iraqi Army during the Gulf War in 1991.

He was stationed at the H3 Airfield, the suspected SCUD Headquarters in western Iraq that allied special forces seized in the early hours of the war to expel Iraq from Kuwait.

As a priest, he was given no special status in the Iraqi Army: "The Iraqi Army has no chaplains; I was a regular soldier," he said recently.

He endured air bombardments and, as the war continued, he fled to Turkey and then made his way to the USA.

He also remarked that "among Muslims, there is much hostility toward Christians".

Christians make up only about 3% of Iraq's population. They include Assyrians (an Orthodox Church), but the majority of Christians are Chaldean Catholics who left the Assyrian Orthodox 450 years ago to join themselves to the Catholic Church.

As many as 250,000 Iraqi Christians now live in the USA.

#### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

...Catholic cadets who are on Retreat this weekend.

...CPT Jimmy Adamowski '95 – killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq.

...1LT John Fernandez '01 – seriously injured in a mortar attack in Iraq.

...all our graduates and relatives serving in Iraq (and other places, too)...and their families.

...all our military personnel in harm's way...and their families.

...the POWs and their families.

...the casualties on both sides...and their families.

...the innocent non-combatant victims...and their families.

...the intention of peace and a just settlement.

#### GOT A QUESTION?

Q: Father, what specific role did women play in the Early Church?

A: There is no reliable evidence (that I've been able to find) that women functioned as what we now call "bishops" or "priests" (it was a pretty "male-oriented" society)...but there are indications that women may have functioned as what we now call "deacons, although there's lots of disagreement on this, too..

There have been some studies that attempted to show that women did function as "priests"...but these have not been widely accepted as accurate at this point.

The digging is still going on...and it's really pretty hard to get hard-and-fast information about those early times.

But we do know that in St. Paul's thought, there wasn't supposed to be any distinction based on gender. Look at what he said to the Galatians (3:27-28):

As many of you as were baptized into Christ  
have clothed yourselves with Christ. There  
is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male

or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

So then, you'll probably ask: "Well, if that's what he thought, how come it didn't catch on? The Church has been patriarchal ever since its beginning."

And I don't have an answer to that question, except perhaps to guess that the early Christians just accepted the set-up of Roman society at the time and never really thought about it.

In any case, the ideal that Paul was talking about meant that by Baptism into Christ, every member of the Church is equal before God and has equal access to salvation. In the Galatian passage, Paul's primary point was to underscore the equality between Jews and Gentiles; still, his insistence on the equality of male and female is of great significance.

At the time of Paul (50s and 60s AD), some women were very prominent in Church communities. Prisca and her husband Aquila were mentioned several times (Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Acts 18:2,18 and 26; 2 Timothy 4:19).

Paul refers to two women - Euodia and Synteché - as "having labored side by side with me in the Gospel" (Philippians 4:2-3).

His "Letter to the Romans" acknowledges the great assistance given him by Phoebe "a deacon of the Church at Cenchreae" (the eastern seaport of Corinth – see Romans 16:1-2).

A woman named "Chloe" was also associated with the Church at Corinth (see I Corinthians 1:11), although what her precise role was hasn't been clear.

The Church at Rome also had several women of importance in the community there. In mentioning Prisca and Aquila (above), Paul asks his readers to "greet the church in their house" (16:5), which suggests that together, as owners of the house, they would have functioned as "presbyters" or "presidents" of a eucharistic community there.

Paul also mentioned Mary, "who has worked very hard among you" (16:6), and then Andronicus and Junia, relatives of Paul, who were "prominent among the apostles" (16:7 – Junia was the female, Andronicus was the male...although some early versions of the Greek have "Junias" rather than "Junia", which would make a difference: "Junias" would be a man's name...you see how confusing it can get).

He conveys greetings as well to Tryphena and Tryphosa, two women whom he calls "workers in the Lord" (16:12); also, greetings to the mother of Rufus (16:13), to Julia and to the sister of Nereus (16:15)...as well as various other "sisters" (16:14).

These are the only specifics we have. By and large, we don't know who these women were, nor do we know what "official" position they may have had in the group.

Biblical study cannot give us the precise answers to every historical and sociological question about those early days of the Church, but in the case of these women, it certainly indicates that they played a crucial and pivotal role in establishing and nurturing those early communities.

The scarce information available in Paul's Letters is a tantalizing reminder that there is so much about those early times that we just don't know.

## THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

### INERRANCY:

Perhaps you've never used the word in everyday speech.

Still, if you've ever studied the Bible in any depth, you know that the word gets lots of use in that context.

And it has caused controversy between some Protestants and Catholics over the years.

The word means "having no errors or mistakes".

And some Christians believe that the Bible is "inerrant" in the literal sense...that there are no errors of ANY kind in it.

It's easy to see why the word (and the idea behind it) has caused some heartburn.

So the discussion is about the question: "Is there error in the Bible?" or "Can it correctly be said that the Bible is 'inerrant'?"

It's complicated by the fact that there are indeed obvious errors in the Bible. These can be considered under four headings:

a) Biblical self-contradictions:

for example, Genesis 7:17 says that Noah's Flood lasted for 40 days, but later on, in the same chapter (verse 24), it lasts for 150 days.

b) Errors in natural science:

for example, the whole Jewish concept of the Universe; the ancient Jews believed that the Universe was surrounded by waters held back by a solid bell-shaped barrier called "the firmament" (see Genesis, Chapter 1).

c) Historical errors:

for example, in Daniel, Chapter 5, the story of the "Fall of Babylon" is substantially different from what other historical documents have preserved.

d) Moral errors:

for example, in Joshua (11:10-15), the total destruction described there is presented as "God's will", but generations of Christians have been uncomfortable seeing God as the author of slaughter.

These are not new problems.

In the tradition of the rabbis, it was taught that one of the blessings to be received at Elijah's return would be an explanation of the discrepancies between the prophet Ezekiel's writings and the Torah itself. The ancients themselves understood that discrepancies existed.

Within Christian tradition, the Early Church realized that there were discrepancies in biblical history, geography, chronology, topography, predictions of events, etc...all within the text of the Scriptures.

And yet, several Catholic Church councils have made it clear that if Catholics believe that the Bible is "inspired", that means they expect the Bible to be truthful.

So how does one deal with the obvious discrepancies and errors in the texts of the Scriptures?

To answer the question, the Catholic tradition has always made a distinction between the “purpose” of the Scriptures and the methods and vehicles used to achieve that purpose. The purpose of Scripture is to teach “salvation”...not to teach history, geography or anything else.

Note what the most recent general Church Council (Vatican II) says about that idea:

...the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error the truth which God wanted to put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.

Dei Verbum 11

So for a Catholic, the “inerrancy” of Scripture refers to the message of salvation. It doesn’t refer to geographical accuracy or historical chronology. These are “methods” or “vehicles”, and it doesn’t matter whether they happen to be perfectly “factual”...because “fact” and “truth” are not always one and the same.

What the Bible teaches is the doctrinal matter that God wishes to convey to us as a part of our salvation-equipment., truths about God and his purposes.

So it doesn’t matter whether Noah’s Flood lasted 40 days or 150 days – or even if it happened as Genesis described it, and it doesn’t matter whether details about the fall of Babylon differ substantially when you compare the Book of Daniel to other historical documents.

What matter is to take ALL of the Scripture, to ponder and study it, and to understand the “Big Picture” of the history of our salvation that finally came to its highest point in the death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus of Nazareth.

That, and that alone, is the “truth” of Scripture.

That’s where “inerrancy” makes sense.

#### UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

“Do not let SUNDAY be taken from you,  
either through sports activities  
or through anything else.  
If your soul has no SUNDAY,  
you become an orphan.”

Albert Schweitzer

And that’s the way it is, a day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our time...

and YOU ARE THERE!!

Best wishes for HOLY WEEK.  
May you find time to walk with Christ  
through his final week of life on earth

and share in the happiness of  
RESURRECTION!

Woodie