

Thursday in the Twenty-fifth Week after Pentecost

November 19, 2020

By the Reverend Stephen Gerth

Year Two, Proper 28: Revelation 3:1–6, 14–22; Psalm 149:1–5; Luke 19:41–44*

Though the present Prayer Book was adopted in 1979, Church Publishing has never published lectionaries for public celebrations of the Daily Office—I mean, large print—or any lectionaries for weekday Eucharists. So, Saint Mary’s Lectionary Project was born. All of the lessons are formatted to help all of us read the Word of God well. None of us miss marking a Bible for service lessons.

When Father Matthew Mead came to Saint Mary’s in 2004, he brought really good computer skills and a very strong background in Latin and Greek. After five years here, he was called to be rector in Granite Springs, New York, in 2009. Since 2015, he’s been rector of Christ Church in Pelham.

For a number of years, we always used the proper—the church term for the collect of the day and the appointed lessons—for the optional commemorations we Episcopalians call “lesser feasts.” We came to learn over time, that there is a lot of repetition in the propers for martyrs, missionaries, monastics,

theologians, and others. This week, on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday we have three days with commemorations. Today, tomorrow, and on Saturday, we will be using the lessons appointed for ordinary weekdays. Then we went through a period of many years when we put out the ordinary lectionary in Epiphany Season and in the Season after Pentecost—and if a celebrant wants an appointed proper, it too was available to be used. I am thinking about going back to that practice after Epiphany.

We didn't hear at our daily Eucharist the beginning of the Revelation to John or from Luke, the Story of the rich man Zacchaeus that is followed by Luke's Parable of, not Talents or Pounds, but of a coin called the Minas.¹ A day laborer's wage was one denarius. One Mina was worth one hundred denarii.² Then the lectionary skips the story of Jesus sending his disciples to find the colt on which he will ride and the acclamation of the crowd that follows him from the Mount of Olives to the gate of the city.

The rest of the gospel reading draws upon knowledge of the Great Jewish Revolt, that led to the siege,

¹ Luke 19:11–27. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 288–95.

² *Ibid.*, 289–90 n.13.

capture, slaughter or enslavement of survivors, and the destruction of the Temple and the city walls in A.D. 70.³ Matthew, a contemporary of Luke, also writes with this knowledge. Mark does not seem to know the details of the conquest.⁴ Luke writes, “And when [Jesus] drew and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, ‘Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes.’”⁵

We get the English word “pathos,” a noun referring to something that awakens feelings or grief pity, from Greek, where the root has a noun and a related verb. In John’s gospel, when Jesus is taken to his friend Lazarus’ tomb, the evangelist writes three words in Greek, which are two words in English: “Jesus wept.”⁶ In Luke, the sight of the walls of Jerusalem moves Jesus to weep.

Jesus had compassion for lost sheep and even more for women and men who, for whatever reason, had lost their way in this life. I can’t help but wonder what opportunities for compassion towards others may be

³ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (ODCC) 2ed. (New York: Oxford University Press 1978), s.v. “Jerusalem,” 732–33.

⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 163–64. See notes as well as text.

⁵ Luke 19:41–42.

⁶ John 11:35. In Greek, it is three words:

in plain sight with the challenges that this year has brought to all of us.

✠ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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