

Adult Education – St. Luke’s Church – Sedona, AZ – Class 20
Introduction to the Doctors of the Church – Jerome
November 3, 2019

Note: for ease of accessing the web sites referenced in this handout, download your own PDF copy here: <http://www.episcopalnet.org/DBS/Sedona/AdultEducation2019.html> and click on the live links in that copy. Questions or comments? Email me at dmc89az@gmail.com. Follow St. Luke’s on Facebook: “St. Luke’s Church Sedona AZ”.



Pinturricchio: Saint Jerome in the Desert, c.1475-1480
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_the_Desert_\(Pinturicchio\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_the_Desert_(Pinturicchio)))

I. Opening Prayer

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we remembering with gladness the righteousness of thy Saints, may at all times and in all places feel the effectual succor of their intercession. Through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord. Who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.** (*Secret, Common of a Confessor Bishop, Anglican Missal, p. F23.*)

II. St. Jerome – Overview

- Jerome (Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius) was born c.342 in Stridon in the Roman province of Dalmatia, somewhere in present-day Slovenia or Croatia.
- His parents were wealthy, and he was educated in Rome where he studied grammar, rhetoric and philosophy.
- Like Augustine, he initially led a dissolute life, but his experimentation with carnal pleasures was relatively short-lived, and the remainder of his life was led as a celibate ascetic
- Early on, the ascetic life was not easy for Jerome. In 384 (while in Rome), he wrote:

- How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome! I used to sit alone because I was filled with bitterness. Sackcloth disfigured my unshapely limbs and my skin from long neglect had become as black as an Ethiopian's. Tears and groans were every day my portion; and if drowsiness chanced to overcome my struggles against it, my bare bones, which hardly held together, clashed against the ground. Of my food and drink I say nothing: for, even in sickness, the solitaries have nothing but cold water, and to eat one's food cooked is looked upon as self-indulgence. Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid beehives of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead. Helpless, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair: and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence. I do not blush to avow my abject misery. (Letter 22 – To Eustochium)
- Bishop Paulinus, Jerome's scholarly and monastic gifts, ordained Jerome as a priest, but Jerome accepted only on the condition that he would never be required to carry out his priestly functions
- In 382, he was summoned to Rome, where he served as secretary for Pope Damasus I and was even viewed as his possible successor
- To put it mildly, Jerome was irascible. His sharp tongue and irascible personality offended many in Rome, and he clearly had no future as a Pope
- After Damasus died, he fled "Babylon" and eventually took up residence for over 30 years in a cave in Bethlehem adjacent to the reputed birthplace of Jesus
- Even as an ascetic, Jerome maintained a close relationship and correspondence with a group of wealthy women originally from Rome, most famously with Paula and her daughter Eustochium (<http://satucket.com/lectionary/paula&eustochium.html>)
- Much of Jerome's voluminous correspondence is addressed to Eustochium, instructing her and advising her on spiritual advancement
- In Bethlehem, Jerome and Paula established a "double monastery" – one for Paula and her nuns and one for Jerome and his monks – and, as a source of income, a hostel for the many pilgrims who came to see them
- Bethlehem is where Jerome completed most of his work on his new translation of the Latin Bible (see Section III)
- Jerome died on September 30, 420 at age 78
- He is commonly listed as the patron saint of Bible scholars, librarians, students and translators. His Feast Day is celebrated on September 30

III. The Vulgate Bible

- Prior to Jerome, there was no standard, reliable Latin version of the Bible
- In 382-385, at the urging of Pope Damasus I, Jerome translated the Gospels from Greek into Latin
- It is unclear whether he translated the remainder of the New Testament
- He translated the entire Old Testament from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) and Hebrew, 391-406

- In performing this work, Jerome concluded the Apocryphal books were non-canonical, but he was ultimately overruled by Rome. But see:
 - “And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.” Article VI, *1928 Book of Common Prayer*, p. 604.
- The translators of the Authorized Version of the Bible (King James version) relied on the Vulgate, along with other Greek, Hebrew and Latin manuscripts
- The Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared the Vulgate to be the only official translation that could be used to resolve any doctrinal interpretation or dispute (even though there was no official, standard version then – or now):
 - “Hence this special authority or as they say, authenticity of the Vulgate was not affirmed by the Council particularly for critical reasons, but rather because of its legitimate use in the Churches throughout so many centuries; by which use indeed the same is shown, in the sense in which the Church has understood and understands it, to be free from any error whatsoever in matters of faith and morals; so that, as the Church herself testifies and affirms, it may be quoted safely and without fear of error in disputations, in lectures and in preaching.” Pope Pius XII (1943)
- A new Vulgate edition was issued in 1979

VI. Influence of Saint Jerome

- It is difficult to overstate the influence of the Vulgate Bible
- Strong defender of the perpetual virginity of Mary. Complete text: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3007.htm>
- His numerous letters serve as a rich source of historical evidence of life in the fourth and fifth centuries

VII. Closing Prayer

O GOD, who for the exposition of thy holy Scriptures didst bestow upon thy Church the wondrous teaching of blessed Jerome thy Confessor and Doctor: grant, we beseech thee; that by the intercession of his merits, we may of thee be enabled to perform those things which he taught in word and deed. Through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord. Who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.** (*Collect for the Feast of St. Jerome*, Anglican Missal, p. E119.)

VIII. Sources

Catholic Encyclopedia: St. Jerome (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08341a.htm>) .
 Rengers, C. *The 35 Doctors of the Church (revised ed.) Kindle Edition*. Charlotte, NC: TAN Books 2014.
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"...AND I MEAN TO BE ONE TOO"



This Sunday is in the Octave of All Saints' Day, so our Sunday liturgy will celebrate the feast, one of the greatest of the Church year. We've been observing this feast for 1,600 years. That's a while, even on the Church's timeline. The feast was "invented" because the Church's calendar was clotted (not the ideal, but sometimes the appropriate word) with too many saints. It's a good problem to have, and All Saints' Day is a good solution. All Saints' Day celebrates those saints, too many to number, that leave us here and crowd the gates of Heaven.

They didn't all wear togas and sandals; the vast majority of them didn't speak English. Some of them wore prison jump suits, heavy work boots and spoke Arabic. Four and a half years ago, 20 Coptic Christians (Egyptians) were trucked to a beach in Libya. Most of them were everyday laborers, part of a group of Copts who'd been kidnapped by ISIS and pressured to deny Christ. Some of them did; they saved their lives by becoming Muslims and weren't on the beach that day. Those who refused to deny the Faith had their throats slit and heads cut off with serrated knives. They are the Martyrs of Sirte, now among the saints we remember on All Saints' Day.

Mathew Ayairga was with those 20 Coptic Christians on the beach that morning. He was not a Copt, but a black day-laborer from Ghana, accidentally rounded up with the others during the ISIS raid. Though Mathew had been baptized as a child, he'd never practiced his faith. He was loaded on the truck with the others, not to be killed, but in hopes that he and some of the others marked for death would embrace Islam for the cameras. Mathew watched the others being threatened and saw their steadfast refusal to denounce Christ. When he was invited on camera to embrace Islam as an example for the others, Mathew, the faithless Christian, shocked everyone when he replied. "Their God is my God, too," he said. Those were his last words. Mathew Ayairga was pushed onto the beach with the 20 Coptic Christians and became the 21st Martyr of Sirte.

A few years ago, we purchased an icon of the 21 Martyrs of Sirte, blessed it, and hung it in St Joseph's. It's beside the large icon of the Blessed Virgin. When you come to church Sunday, take a look at it again. Look at the face right in the middle of all the others. It's black. That's Mathew, just before he took the last step to sainthood. The icon hangs in the church so we'll remember that saints aren't all from a long time ago. Some of them weren't much different from us. Not all were monks or nuns or bishops; some got paid minimum wage and had kids to support and cousins to put up with. God means for us all to be saints, and if you're willing to go along, He won't quit working on you till you're one, too. Remember what He did with Mathew Ayairga.

Fr. Gregory Wilcox

<https://stjosephsanglican.com/weekly-scribblings/f/and-i-mean-to-be-one-too> (November 1, 2019)