



Do not
let your
hearts be
troubled
JOHN 14:1

Girardian Lectionary Study Group
Easter 5A – May 4, 2020

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JOHN 14:1

Girardian Features in the Readings

- Acts 7:55-60 – Conclusion of the Stoning of Stephen
- There are two similes of the Passion among the Gospel writers: one before, the beheading of John the Baptist; and one after, the stoning of Stephen
- Stephen imitates Jesus by forgiving his persecutors while they are executing him
- He also imitates his use of the “Son of Man” figure from Daniel 7 – the story of the New Human Being whose rule subverts that of empires
- 1 Peter 2:2-10
- John 14:1-14

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Girardian Features in the Readings

- 1 Peter 2:2-10 – A Royal Priesthood from the Rejected Cornerstone
- It begins with the image of children who *desire* (*epipothēō*) spiritual milk – mimetically?
- Salvation is something we grow into – living into a new Way of being human
- Crucial quote of Psalm 118:22, that we follow Jesus into a royal priesthood through rejection by conventional culture
- *petra skandalon* – stone of offense in v. 8
- Girardian understanding of kingship and priesthood: the victim that manipulates an extension of his sentence by presiding over the sacrificial system

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Girardian Features in the Readings

- John 14:1-14
- The other mention of “Father’s house” in John is in 2:16, the prophetic action in the Temple, that concludes with Jesus intimating that his body is replacing the Temple
- V. 2, *monē*, “dwelling places” – the significant use in John of the related verb, *menō*, to abide or dwell (40 times! – especially in “vine and branches” of John 15)
- Later in 14:23 Jesus will say that those who keep his commandments will have the Father make their “dwelling place” with them
- Jesus as the image of the Father

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Girardian Features in the Readings

- John 14:1-14
- V. 10 – The Father abiding in Jesus does his works – harking back to John 5 and 9 where healing displays the work of the Father, i.e., creation and life
- V. 12 – disciples (imitators) of Jesus will do greater works – because Jesus goes to the Father who will make his dwelling place in them
- *pisteuō* occurs 6 times in this passage – “believe” in the head sense of assenting to certain propositions or “trust” in the heart sense of mimetically following the desire of a model”

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Preaching in the Key of New Reformation

- Salvation in the sense of living into a new way of being human
- Nourished by the recovery of contemplative spirituality that seeks openness to God’s loving desire in Jesus Christ dwelling in us
- We then become the royal priesthood who live in subversion of conventional culture – risking becoming the living stones who are rejected but whom God builds into a “spiritual house”
- Might be necessary to contrast with traditional readings that read this in the context of “going to heaven”

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Preaching in the Key of New Reformation

- Might be necessary to contrast with traditional readings that read this in the context of “going to heaven”
- Show how the wider context of John helps us to see that instead of Jesus talking about “going to heaven,” he is talking about God coming to dwell in us
- We are the “many dwelling places” of God’s house!!
- Jesus goes to prepare the way for this to happen by being the rejected cornerstone of 1 Peter 2, or the rejected *Logos*, Word, of John 1:11 and the continuing theme on the Farewell Discourse that they will follow him in being rejected
- To trust in this way and truth and life is to work on behalf of a flourishing, inclusive creation, not an exclusivist set of doctrinal beliefs – i.e., universal salvation

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Today’s Context

- Mother’s Day – I’ve used this passage to tell personal story of how coming to read this passage differently has brought my departed mother closer to me – a spiritual indwelling rather than her being off in another place, “heaven”
- Pandemic
 - Being with one another “virtually” as akin to spiritual indwelling?
 - Trump as the epitome of the *skandalon*
 - The opportunity to be a royal priesthood who helps our world respond to this pandemic on behalf of a flourishing creation and healing of tribalism, *skandalon*

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Conversation

- Questions about Mimetic Theory and these texts
- Other exegetical insights
- Where are you heading with the preaching of these texts?

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