

THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church
Livingston, Alabama

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September 2013

This Month's Cover

In honor of the Feast of Saint Matthew the Evangelist (9/21), our cover this month is Bernardo Ciuffagni's monumental statue *Saint Matthew*. It was the last of four sculptures commissioned for the façade of the Duomo in Florence. The first three were commissioned in 1408, and are Nanni di Banco's *Saint Luke*, Donatello's *Saint John*, and Niccolò Lamberti's *Saint Mark*. *Saint Matthew* was commissioned in 1410 and completed in 1415. All four seated figures are in marble. They were in niches on either side of the main doors of the cathedral. In 1587 they were moved inside the cathedral, and since 1936 they have resided in the Museo del'Opera del Duomo in Florence.

Bernardo di Pietro di Bartol Ciuffagni was born in Florence in 1385. Little is known of his training or early years. The first record of him is a mention in a Florentine document of 1409. There were two rich and powerful wool guilds in Florence that had dealt in wool for centuries. They were the Arte della Lana, the woolen cloth makers, and the Arte del Calimala, the wool merchants. The Arte del Calimala commissioned Ghilberti to sculpt the great bronze doors for the Baptistery. Not to be outdone, the Arte della Lana commissioned the statues of the four evangelists to grace the façade of the Duomo itself.

Apparently Ciuffagni's talent was well appreciated by 1410, because that year he was commissioned to sculpt *Saint Matthew*. To have been considered along with such giants as

di Banco, Donatello and Lamberti attests to how highly he was regarded. The statue is a display more of his eclecticism than his originality. It shows the stiff, almost puritanical attitude of early fifteenth century Florence, as opposed to the vibrant, life-like (and often nude) sculpture that was emerging in Venice and Rome, and would eventually typify Florence as well. He was obviously strongly influenced by the work of the other three sculptors, and records indicate that they were suspicious of this newcomer. His reputation quickly spread, and he was commissioned for a number of important statues in Florence.

In 1415 he left Florence, probably for Venice, where it appears that he worked with Niccolò and Piero Lamberti on the façade of San Marco. In 1422 he returned to Florence, where he sculpted *Isaiah* for the Campanile. When it was finished in 1427, however, it was placed inside the Duomo.

The records of Ciuffagni's works are incomplete and riddled with legends and myths, so it is difficult to catalogue and attribute his works accurately. Suffice it to say, however, that he was one of the giants of Renaissance sculpture. He died in Florence in 1457.

Richard R. Losch

*Many of us need the prayer of the old saint,
"Lord, keep me alive while I'm still alive."*

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A Word from the Editor

In the last issue we mentioned the failing “mega-churches,” those huge organizations that seat and preach to literally thousands of people every Sunday. Most of them, once rooted, grow like mushrooms—they start out in parking lots or abandoned movie theaters, and within a couple of years are laying the cornerstone for a 3,000-seat auditorium. But also like mushrooms, they generally decay and die just as rapidly. I submit that there are two reasons for this. First, they are usually built not on a theological base, but around the personality of a charismatic preacher who is at the center of the church’s ministry. The once mighty Crystal Cathedral was approaching bankruptcy within three years of Robert Schuller’s retirement. Similarly, there is little doubt that Houston’s Lakewood Church would collapse in months without Joel Osteen. Secondly, the mega-churches have no solid foundation in theology, tradition, liturgy or discipline. They preach a “feel-good” self-help message—positive thinking, possibility thinking, you can love yourself because God loves you—but their message is built on emotion, not on the love and joy that are at the heart of the Christian gospel. These messages may serve a very salutary purpose in encouraging people to aspire to higher goals, but regardless of how much they may be couched in religious terms like love and joy, they are secular messages. They are not the Gospel.

Despite the way we often use the terms, love and joy are not emotions.

They are states of being. They are often expressed through emotion, but they themselves are not emotions.

Love is not romantic attraction, nor is it a physical desire for another (“making love”)—that is lust. Love is a concern for another’s welfare and feelings. It involves compassion and empathy, and it leads one to have a genuine desire to help another. This is what Paul is talking about when he refers to faith, hope and love.

Joy is also not an emotion. It is the happy state of well-being that rises from a confidence in the loving presence of God. Saint Paul described it as “the peace of God that passeth all understanding.” It can be found not only in times of happiness, but also in times of suffering if we truly feel God’s presence. Nero was terrified when he saw that so many of the Christian martyrs in the arena had died smiling. Despite their physical pain, they died in the joy of knowing that God was with them.

This kind of love and joy cannot be generated by whipping up a congregation into an emotional “high” that is gone by the time they get home to Sunday dinner. This is why the mega-churches wither away along with all the other churches that depend on feel-good social messages instead of preaching the Faith of Christ Crucified. The “Church of Nice” is built on sand. The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is built on the rock of the Faith, and is sustained by the Truth of the Holy Spirit.

Father Rick Losch+

Fr. Joe M. Chambers

We regret to announce that the Rev. Joe M. Chambers, Rector of St. James' from September 2004 to February 2006, died in an automobile accident in July. +May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, by the mercy of God, rest in peace.+

Richard R. Losch+

Be Wordly Wise

The Word

The word “word” may be small, but it is a powerful little thing with many different meanings and uses. For example, this sentence is made up of many words. But when we say, “I’ll give him the word,” we mean that we will inform him—or perhaps that we will warn him. A man’s word is his bond and guarantee of sincerity. If we capitalize it, usually in the context of the Word of God, we may be referring to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, or we may mean the Holy Bible. The term may refer to many words, as in the “seven last words of Christ,” which (in the KJV) were in fact fifty-four words.

“Word” derives from the Old High German *Wort*, which has the same basic meaning. In English, however, the meanings and uses of “word” have been strongly influenced by the Greek *logos*, which has a plethora of meanings and uses. From ancient times *logos* has been an important term in philosophy, rhetoric, linguistics, psychology and religion. It derives from the Indo-European root *-leg*, “to collect” (in the sense of “to select and

gather words”). This is the source of an immense number of Latin, Greek and thus English words, such as legislation (literally “law worship”), legitimate, legal, lecture, logarithm, logic, logophile, logorrhea, and a myriad of others, including all the words that end in the suffix -logy.

In ancient Greece, the meaning of *logos* depended on the context. It could be used to mean simply a grammatical unit, but for that meaning they more often used *lexis*. Most of the philosophers used *logos* to mean “reasoned discourse,” while the Stoics used it to refer to the divine animating force that pervaded the entire universe—in a loose sense, God.¹ Saint John the Evangelist, who was well versed in Greek culture and philosophy, used it to refer to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Christ—“In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

We have only scratched the surface here—this is by no means the final word on the use of the word “word.”

Richard R. Losch+

Sic!

The June 9 *Baltimore Sun* had an article about Baltimore socialite Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte, the wife of Napoleon’s brother Jérôme. The article stated, “Napoleon refused to allow his husband’s new bride to set foot in France.” Kinky!

¹ The Stoic concept of divinity was rather like the concept of “the Force” in *Star Wars*.

“The Epistle” Online

We now have *the Epistle* online in pdf format. Go to <http://rlosch.com>, click on the “Saint James’ Church” tab, then on the “Epistle” sub-tab. If you want to share an article with your friends, this is an easy way to do it. You can send them to the website, or download the pdf and sent it as an email attachment.

Richard R. Losch+

Evening Prayer and Parish Supper

Our September service of Evening Prayer will be on Wednesday, September 18th, at 6:00 p.m. with a “Tail Gate Dinner” following in the parish house. Signup sheets are posted in the parish house kitchen for attendance, for volunteers to assist with setup and cleanup, and for various food items. Make your plans to attend, bring your friends, and wear your favorite school’s colors.

Hiram Patrenos

Sunday School

Sunday School resumes on Sunday, September 8th at 10.00 a.m. Fr. Losch will be teaching the adult class and volunteers are needed to teach (on a rotating basis) the primary class. Please prayerfully consider the importance of Sunday School for our children and our Parish and speak with Hiram Patrenos if you would like to help.

Hiram Patrenos

Altar Flowers

Volunteers are needed to provide Altar flowers through the season of Pentecost. A sign-up chart is located in the sacristy. You may use flowers from your yard or, if you wish, make arrangements with a florist to provide them. For more information, please speak with Carolyn Patrenos.

Hiram Patrenos

Community Fifth Sunday Service

The fifth Sunday Community Service this month will be hosted by the First Presbyterian Church on September 29th at 11:00 a.m. This will be our first service with the Rev. Barrett Abernathy, their new pastor. Please make your plans to attend and help to continue this old Livingston tradition, and welcome Mr. Abernathy.

Hiram Patrenos

What a Relief!

On July 23 the BBC website announced, “The Duchess of Cambridge has given birth to a child, Buckingham Palace announces.” That’s a relief. We know her name isn’t Rosemary, but it’s still a relief.

Hmmm. . .

On August 12 the Australian Parliament’s Liberal opposition leader Tony Abbott said in a speech, “No one—however smart, however well-educated, however experienced—is the suppository of all wisdom.”

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School classes will resume on Sunday, September 8 at 10:00 a.m. Because so many of the members of the class often have other responsibilities at that time, it is not practical to try to have a specified course or curriculum. The purpose of the class will be to discuss any appropriate questions that you bring to the class. We will discuss anything that deals with the Church and its teachings and practices, or matters of ethics and morals. This is not the place to bring politics or personal problems. All adults are welcome, so feel free to invite your friends even if they are not members of St. James'.

People will often have a question as they are reading the Bible, and then can't remember what it was when they get to class. We recommend that you write down your questions as they arise, and then bring them to class.

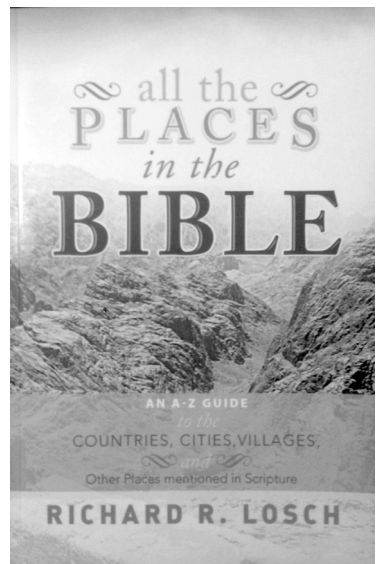
Richard R. Losch+

When you lose one sense, your other senses are enhanced. This explains why people with no sense of humor have such an enhanced sense of self-importance.

Men's Breakfast

Our monthly Interfaith Men's Breakfasts will resume on Sunday, September 8 at 7:45 a.m. at the Livingston United Methodist Church. This one will be on the second Sunday because of the Labor Day weekend, but thereafter they will be each first Sunday.

Richard R. Losch+



Now available from Fr. Losch,
Amazon.com or
BarnesandNoble.com.
(A shameless self-promotion)

Did you hear about the cow that grazed in an añil patch? It mooed indigo.

Health Care Cost

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 50% of the American population accounts for only 2.7% of all health care expenditures. This means that the other 50% accounts for 97.3% of them. Also, 5% of the population are chronic users, accounting for 49.5% of health care expenditures.

Richard R. Losch+

Using Women Sailors

An NBC website article on a Navy practice retrieval of downed spacecraft reported that instead of using a helicopter, "a wench will pull the spacecraft into the well deck."

A Few Archaeological Snippets

Technology and the Curse of Canaan

The story of Noah's curse of Ham's son Canaan and all his descendants (Gen. 9:20ff.) has been a subject of discussion among biblical scholars for millennia.¹ In the story, Noah got drunk after the flood and lay naked in his tent (nakedness was an abomination to the ancient Jews). His son Ham saw him, and went out and told his brothers. Shem and Japheth backed into the tent with a cloak to cover him. When Noah awakened and found what had happened, he cursed Ham's son Canaan and all his descendants to be slaves to Shem and Japheth. This has always seemed a harsh punishment for a serious but relatively minor transgression. However, modern scholarship teamed with cutting-edge technology has cast a new light on this ancient enigma.

The Israel Antiquities Authority recently launched an amazing new technological tool: the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library.² It is available to the public, enabling scholars all over the world to see the Dead Sea Scrolls on the Internet much more clearly than they have ever been able to do by studying them directly since their discovery 60 years ago.

The process, originally developed by NASA, is called spectral scanning. The results are astounding. There are thousands of Dead Sea Scrolls fragments that are completely illegible due to the ravages of time. With spectral scanning, they can be read as clearly as the day they were written more than 2,000 years ago. The project is well under way, and the goal is to scan every one of the more than 30,000 fragments and make them available on the Internet to anyone who wants to study them. This not only removes all limits to the number of people who study the fragments, but it also reduces their physical handling to a minimum, guaranteeing their preservation for the future.

Last December three researchers, Elisha Qimron, Hans Ariel and Alexey Yudisky, recognized an unusual word usage in a previously illegible portion of the Qumran Genesis scroll. A unique name for God, in conjunction with an unusual use of a word usually translated "tent," indicates that Genesis 9:27 should be rendered "dwell in the *lands* of Shem" rather than "in the *tents* of Shem." This casts a new light on the meaning of the passage and on the implications of the whole story. If the researchers are correct, it would appear that the main issue here was not Ham's sin, but rather the allotment of land.

By ancient law the father had absolute unchallengeable authority to divide his possessions among his sons as he saw fit. An heir's challenge to

¹ Gen. 9:25-26 confuses the story by indicating that Canaan was Noah's son rather than his grandson. It is possible that Ham and Canaan were the same man. Such confusions are common in centuries-old oral traditions.

² <http://www.archaeology.org.il/DSS.html>

that allotment could be justification for disinheriting him altogether. It is entirely possible that Canaan, Noah's grandson, challenged the land allotment, and was thus cut off without any land whatever. In those days a man without land had little choice but to indenture himself as a servant.

Ancient tradition says that the descendants of Shem (the Semites) inhabited the Middle East, those of Japheth inhabited Europe and North Africa, and Ham's descendants through Canaan inhabited Central and South Africa. Their black skin, it was said, was the mark of the Curse of Canaan, which destined them to be slaves. This was used in the 17th to 19th centuries as the justification for the enslavement of black Africans.

The ancient Israelites claimed that the Canaanites (who were in fact a Semitic people) should be driven from their land because they bore the ancient curse of Canaan. This would be biblically justified far more strongly if the curse of Canaan were a matter of land rights rather than of punishment for a moral transgression—that is, as the descendants of the cursed Canaan, the Canaanites had no legitimate claim to the land they inhabited. It is quite possible that that is exactly how the ancient Israelites interpreted it.

Richard R. Losch+

E. T. in Egypt?

A longstanding enigma to Egyptologists has been the discovery of iron beads in royal tombs dating back to the fourth millennium B.C., thousands of years before the discovery of

iron smelting. Although there were some ceremonial iron weapons buried with royalty in the third millennium, it was not until the end of the second that smelting, and thus practical iron tools and weapons, came to Egypt. In about 1300 B.C. the Egyptians started calling the beads and ceremonial weapons *biA-n-pt*, "Metal from the Sky," and eventually that term came to be applied to iron in general. UFO buffs like to claim that they were brought by extra-terrestrials. They did in fact come from space, even though little green men did not bring them. Diane Johnson of Open University recently studied the nickel content and crystalline structure of the beads, and has found that they were made from iron-rich meteorites. Apparently they hammered the metal and folded it into tubes to make the beads, and then painted them with bright colors. They seem to have been a status symbol among royalty and the very rich.

Richard R. Losch+

How Are the Mighty Fallen

In 876 B.C. King Omri ascended the throne of the northern Kingdom of Israel, following a series of corrupt and oppressive regimes. Recognizing that his kingdom needed a fresh start, he bought a large plot of land and built a new capital city from the ground up. He named it Samaria, after Shemer, the man who sold him the land. Six kings of Israel were buried there. It was a beautiful and mighty city until the Assyrians destroyed it in 724 B.C. When they did, however, the people of Israel rallied to build it even

greater than before. To their shame and ultimate demise, however, they determined to do it one their own, without God's help (Is. 9:10ff.). Two years later the city again lay in ruins, and the people were carried off to Assyria, never to be heard from again.

In 30 B.C. Herod the Great rebuilt Samaria and renamed it Sebaste, after one of the many names of the Roman emperor Augustus. It was an architectural masterpiece, including a long colonnaded avenue, a temple-lined acropolis, and a lavish lower city that contains the traditional site of the burial of Saint John the Baptist. After the slow decline of Rome the city began to decay, and by the time the Muslims gained control of it in the seventh century A.D., it was a place of no significance. All that remains of it today is the nearby Palestinian village of Sebastiyeh, which the Associated Press recently described as being "marred with weeds, graffiti and garbage." The once glorious capital of a nation that abandoned God is now nothing more than a filthy village.

Richard R. Losch+

4000-Year-Old Beer

One might expect beer to be a bit flat after 4000 years, but this is fresh and cold—although quite sour. The first written record of beer brewing goes back to about 3200 B.C. in ancient Sumer in Mesopotamia. Little is known about the process other than it involved the fermenting of grain malt that was richly flavored with spices. However, a recipe from 1800 B.C. has been discovered in a hymn to Ninkasi,

the Sumerian patron goddess of beer. The Great Lakes Brewing Company of Cleveland Ohio, with the help of archaeologists

from the University of Chicago, is producing beer from this recipe. They use only the kind of vessels available to the ancient

Sumerians—ceramic pots and wooden spoons. Despite being flavored with spices, the brew is very sour. They plan to sweeten future batches with honey or dates, but it still would probably not appeal to modern tastes. The company does not plan to sell the beer, but it will make it available at several exhibitions this year.

Richard R. Losch+



Cylinder seal from Ur (c. 2600 B.C.) showing two people drinking beer through straws from a large pot.

Starvation in Jerusalem

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote extensively about the first Jewish uprising against the Romans in A.D. 66-73 (*The Jewish Wars*, 5.524-528). During that rebellion the Romans blockaded Jerusalem. Thousands died of starvation, but also hundreds of Jews died at the hands of rebels in search of food. Josephus reports that the rebels, who were called *sicarii* ("daggers"), would break into houses and ransack them. If they found no food they would maltreat the occupants, and if they suspected that there was hidden food they would torture them until they revealed it. According to Josephus, food was scantily available on the black market,

and many exchanged their valuable possessions for a small measure of wheat or barley. They would hide in the most concealed recesses of their houses and eat it straight, or sometimes grind it and make porridge or bread. Cooking it was risky, though, lest the smell attract the rebels.

Recently the Israel Antiquities Authority announced the discovery of three intact cooking pots and a small oil lamp in a cistern near the Western Wall. They date to the time of the rebellion. The only reasonable explanation for their being there is that some family hid their food there, and went there to eat it in secret. They would have left the pots there in order not to reveal the evidence of their meals.

Richard R. Losch+



in war. When Caesar died his slaves were passed on to Octavian. Zoilos must have been an extraordinary man, because Octavian, who was very fond of him, gave him his freedom. He apparently then went to Aphrodisias, which may have been his original home, where he became a pillar of the community. The source of his wealth is unclear, but some slaves were allowed to have businesses of their own, and Octavian may have allowed Zoilos to do so. By the time he was established in Aphrodisias he had become very wealthy.

Roman slavery, unlike American slavery, had no racial or ethnic basis. Slaves were either war captives, indentured because of debt, or born into slavery. A slave, even a captured aristocrat or nobleman, was pure property and was not acknowledged as a human being. He had no human rights whatsoever, even to the extent that his master could abuse him or kill him with impunity. Sulla's wife had a slave crucified for dropping her baby, even though the child was not injured.¹ Many slaves, including children, were shackled, flogged, maimed and sexually abused. If a slave were freed, however, he was acknowledged as a human with full human rights. He could even become a Roman citizen.

Some household slaves lived very well, and were treated almost like

A Slave's Life

In the ancient city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor (now Turkey) there is a first century A.D. monument to a man named Zoilos. Several inscriptions indicate that he was very wealthy, and was a generous patron of the town. A newly discovered inscription, however, has cast a whole new light on him. It reads, "Gaius Julius Zoilos, freedman of the divine Julius's son Caesar." The epithet "the divine Julius" referred to Gaius Julius Caesar, whose adopted son Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus became the emperor Augustus. Sure enough, Roman records show that Julius Caesar bought a slave named Zoilos who had been captured

¹ Until the end of the first century B.C., crucifixion was a punishment used exclusively for slaves. Citizens were usually executed by beheading, although they were often offered the option of committing suicide.

members of the family. Educated slaves taught their masters' children, and often a child saw more of his teacher and "nanny" than he did of his own parents. In many cases the children, when they were grown and had inherited their parents' slaves, stated that they loved their teacher more than their father, and freed him. Cicero said that he loved his slave Tiro like a son. He offered to free him, and Tiro refused. At the other end of the spectrum, however, slaves who worked in the mines, on the galleys or in the heating chambers of the baths had a life expectancy of only a few months.

Most of Rome's great athletes, especially gladiators, were slaves. If they survived and fought bravely, they could earn their freedom. A top gladiator was a "rock star" in ancient Rome. Even as a slave, he was invited to the finest banquets as the star attraction. Having a champion at his table was a social coup for a patrician. Champion athletes could be freed and retire extremely wealthy, with empire-wide fame. Things haven't changed all that much in 2000 years.

Slaves who displayed unusual talent could become wealthy and very powerful. Two of the emperor Claudius' most trusted advisors were Pallas and Narcissus. They were Greek slaves owned by the lady Antonia, Marc Antony's daughter and Claudius' mother. It was they who secreted evidence to Tiberius that Sejanus had murdered Tiberius' son Drusus (Castor). For that service Antonia freed them. They eventually joined Claudius' court and became exceedingly

rich, and their influence over Claudius made them extremely powerful.

Although slaves like Zoilos, Pallas and Narcissus lived well, they were the exceptions. While thousands of Roman slaves were loved and well-treated, millions more suffered immeasurable misery. At the height of the empire over half the population of Rome and over a third of the population of the empire were in servitude. Slavery was such an integral part of every culture in the known world that it never occurred to anyone, even the early Christians, that it was not a part of the natural order of things. The few people who proposed abolition of slavery were ridiculed in the same way that we ridicule animal rights fanatics who want to grant human rights to squirrels.

It is a mistake to try to compare Roman slavery to that of the American colonies. While both were brutal and evil institutions, there was almost no opportunity for American slaves to rise above their station other than by escaping to a free territory, and even there their opportunities were few. In ancient Rome, on the other hand, there were few limits to what a talented slave under a kindly master could achieve. The vast majority of slaves lived in misery that by comparison made American slaves look fortunate, but some prospered and became free. While they could never attain social equality with the upper classes, some freedmen could achieve wealth and power far in excess of that of many well-born patricians.

Richard R. Losch+

Don't Forget
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MEN'S
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SEPTEMBER 8
7:45 A.M.
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JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



"And don't give my parents any more children. They can't handle the ones they already have."



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