SCRIPTURE TRANSLATIONS - FR. DON PACHUTA
ECC HOP NEWSLETTER, March 2026

1. ***Did you know that fearing God does not exist in the Bible. No one in their right mind would have "their delight be the fear of the lord."***

FROM JOY TO TERROR – FEAR OF GOD – FEAR OF LOVE
RESISTING TRANSFIGURATION – FEAR OF LOVE – UNWORTHINESS

Perhaps the apostles at the Transfiguration were stuck in their own feelings of unworthiness, drummed and brainwashed into their heads since childhood, and could not accept being loved by God (or Yeshua for that matter). With their concrete low level of consciousness, they could not even imagine in their wildest dreams, Transfiguration and sharing in the divinity that Yeshua brought humanity. Do you still harbor those same feelings of unworthiness? Do the disciples fear being God's beloved, loved with unconditional love? Do you? Yeshua, as he wishes for he and God to be in you, completely one; said that God loves you as much as God loves him (John 17:23). Last week, as we often do, we quoted the late Professor Virgil Elizondo, from the University of Notre Dame, who put it stunningly: ***"There is no greater enslavement than when you consider yourself inferior, worthless, no good, or put yourself down. As humans we are imago Dei, the image of God from creation."*** We heartily agree! Henri Nouwen wrote that self-loathing, not getting that you are the beloved one of God, is the core problem of humanity and the source of all others. Former Jesuit Paul Coutinho fully concurs. He says that there is only one grace (virtue) from which all others flow; namely that you are the beloved one of God. God calls you to intimacy like his beloved David. Conversely, there is only one error (he says "sin") from which all others flow; not getting that you are the beloved one of God. Do you hear the voice of God within? Do you seek it, this Lent and always, as Yeshua did, on wherever your mountain lies, or in your heart? Do you welcome it?

We grow up holding ourselves as unworthy of a miracle, success, or good fortune. Fr. Richard says: "We resist love. I will prove that I am unworthy." We resist ecstasy more than anything else. And yet, the great mystics describe ecstasy, as a natural state and mystical union with God, as the ultimate experience of it; and they urge us to seek that mystical union as our life's work – the theme/mantra of our weekly reflections. It is a strange and curious thing that we all say we want to go to heaven, which means the Beatific Vision, seeing God, being in the presence of God, and yet we tremble in fear at that prospect here and now. A great swami once said, that if God were to offer us that union, and ecstasy, right now, we withdraw from it in fear and panic, even if we have been seeking God all our lives. No wonder

Yeshua says: "Do not be afraid," more than any other statement. Even Yoda recognized fear as the path to the dark side. We have many vernacular sayings that illustrate how undeserving we feel of good things happening to us. For example: "Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it." As Rabindranath Tagore declares "I quake in fear lest my prayer be granted." You fear what you want most! Thomas Merton emphasized this very point: ***"The way to deliverance is what we fear most."*** Perhaps the ancients hardwired unworthiness into our DNA. Yeshua came to overturn all that, and to unite us with him, and God. In your Lenten Vision Quest, working on the issues in reflections, including the Lenten and Life Reflections, along with the lifetime and weekly mantras and questions, offers a good start to abandoning, fear and unworthiness, and welcoming the presence of God. The cosmic joke is you are already in the all-pervasive, presence of God, who is in you, and all creation. All you need to do is wake up – the call of Buddha and Yeshua. The fish needs to stop searching for the sea; it already immerses him. ***You need to stop looking for God; you are already immersed in God. God pervades you, breathes for you!***

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2. *Did you know that the word "sin" was not written in the Bible*

> *In Hebrew and Greek these are archery terms – to miss the mark, as in going off the road/path to God; a path described by Isaiah. Fr. Richard Rohr has begun a discussion of sin in his daily meditations beginning March 8. Augustine invented the fiction of original sin.*
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> Fr. Richard: "The "image of God" in us is absolute and unchanging. It's pure and total gift, given equally to all. But this picture was complicated when the concept of original sin entered the Christian mind.

In this idea—first put forth by Augustine in the fifth century but never mentioned in the Bible—we emphasized that human beings were born into 'because Adam and Eve 'offended God' by eating from the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' As punishment, God cast them out of the garden of Eden. Original sin wasn't something we did at all; it was something that was done to us (passed down from Adam and Eve). In this understanding, we're all off to a bad start.

By contrast, most of the world's great religions start with some sense of primal goodness in their creation stories. The Jewish and Christian traditions beautifully succeeded at this, with the Genesis record telling us that God called creation 'good' five times in Genesis 1:10–25, and even 'very good' in 1:31."

3. Did you know that God did not create Lent, the Roman Church did?

St. Teresa of Avila, brilliantly captures Yeshua's calling and commission to you: and a reminder that we are all members, like arms and legs of the Body of Christ and each other. ***I have no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours. Yours are the eyes through which I look with compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which I go about doing good. Yours are the hands through which I now bless people. I have no body now on earth but yours.***

A few years ago, Sister Joan Chittister wrote: "Ash Wednesday signals the beginning of the church year that is most commonly associated with penance. But there is a danger lurking in that definition. **If penance is all that Lent is about, the season, if not almost useless, is at least somewhat trivial**. It makes the spiritual life some kind of arithmetical balancing act. I do so many penances for so much human misadventure and payback time is over. The important thing is that I remember to come out even." Sister Joan is being her usual kind self. Lent as a time of penance is grounded in a series of monster lies, made into dogmas, to maintain their hierarchical, imperial, control over people.

It seems nobody has listened to God repeatedly declare the nature of true fasting as in Isaiah 58. Yeshua clearly fasted, and knows its spiritual value, but not because it was a law. Countless people have grown up observing man made laws (yes, men made them), of Lenten fast and abstinence; imperial Roman Church authority, declaring that it was a mortal sin to do otherwise; and you would burn in the hell, they and Dante, invented. People drove themselves crazy, worrying if the two small meals, were greater or less, than the one large meal, and if a mistake bought them a ticket to hell. People imagined their loved ones burning in hell for all eternity for eating meat, or more than one full meal a day. God would never do something so diabolical. Thus, authority demands rigidly following a law in minute detail, all the while missing its spirit; just like the religious leaders. **This Yeshua simply refused to do.** Yeshua criticizes and condemns this, in his hypocritical opponents and would do the exactly the same today.

4. Did you know that you do not have to follow the Roman Lectionary?

Perhaps we might consider looking at criteria to decide whether to use a lectionary reading or not. Maybe establish a rating system of 5 individual characteristics (5 Stars) to critique the Readings. When a Reading meets the criteria, it receives a star. The ultimate goal is to use as many 5 Star rated Readings at Mass as possible.
If you read a passage and don't find love, ignore it and go on to another until you do. Of course we include many others focusing on hope, joy, peace, light, works of compassion and uplifting the downtrodden and oppressed.

A few ideas on the criteria:

1 – Does it meet the 6-8Year Old test – is it psychologically healthy for a 6-8 year-old or the 6-8 year-old in all of us to hear without psychological, emotional, or spiritual trauma?

How does this reading portray God? Does it portray the real God as spoken through the prophets, Wisdom books, and Jesus himself? Or does it portray the projection of men of a vengeful, murderous, puppeteer God.

2 – Does it instill and encourage Unconditional Love, Compassion, Kindness, Forgiveness, Boundless Generosity and Grace – who God really is?

3 – Does it respect and uphold the disadvantaged, the oppressed and the persecuted – Jews, Women, People who are Gay or Transgender, Immigrants, Foreigners, Muslims, People of Color, Outsiders, Enemies? Readings and translations that can be used to further oppress or persecute these groups are automatically rejected

4 – Does it honor Non-violence? The nature of discipleship is living and manifesting the Christ, the non-violence of Yeshua, a way of life on which all else rests. Non-violence is at the heart of Jesus' teaching and action, and a primary requirement of Christian discipleship.

5 – Does it inspire to do Good Works? Yes or no?

5. Did you know that an English word has multiple Greek words to express it? And a single Greek word can have multiple English meanings?

SOME TRANSLATION ISSUES/DILEMMAS
IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME EXCEPT WHEN IT ISN'T – MODERN IS NOT BIBLICAL

I thought it would be worthwhile to review this. In addition to the male, hierarchical, bias, and the emotions, and piousness of the translators rendering words into English, nothing can be more critical, in understanding scripture, than realizing when Greek is not Greek. Modern Greek differs vastly from the Koine Greek of the Bible; sometimes bearing no resemblance. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of words differ in meaning. We have pointed out many of them over the years. Yet, Bible translators persist in inserting modern words into a century where they did not exist; many of which have done incalculable harm – like Jew, and homosexual.

There are frequently multiple Greek words that have individual meanings, but are only rendered as a single English word; e.g. love, life. Eat, speak. In the Bread of Life Discourse we pointed out that there are multiple Greek words with different meanings, all of which get rendered “eat.” Mark (10:17-30) uses five different words (apokrinomai, eperotao, epo, lego, phemi,), all of which get translated as simply “said”.

In addition, one Greek word can have multiple meanings in English. E.g. “sarx” has five different meanings. Yet all too often it gets rendered flesh usually in a sexual connotation. Yet, for Paul, John, and Jesus the contrast is between the world and the Spirit. Thus we usually render it world.