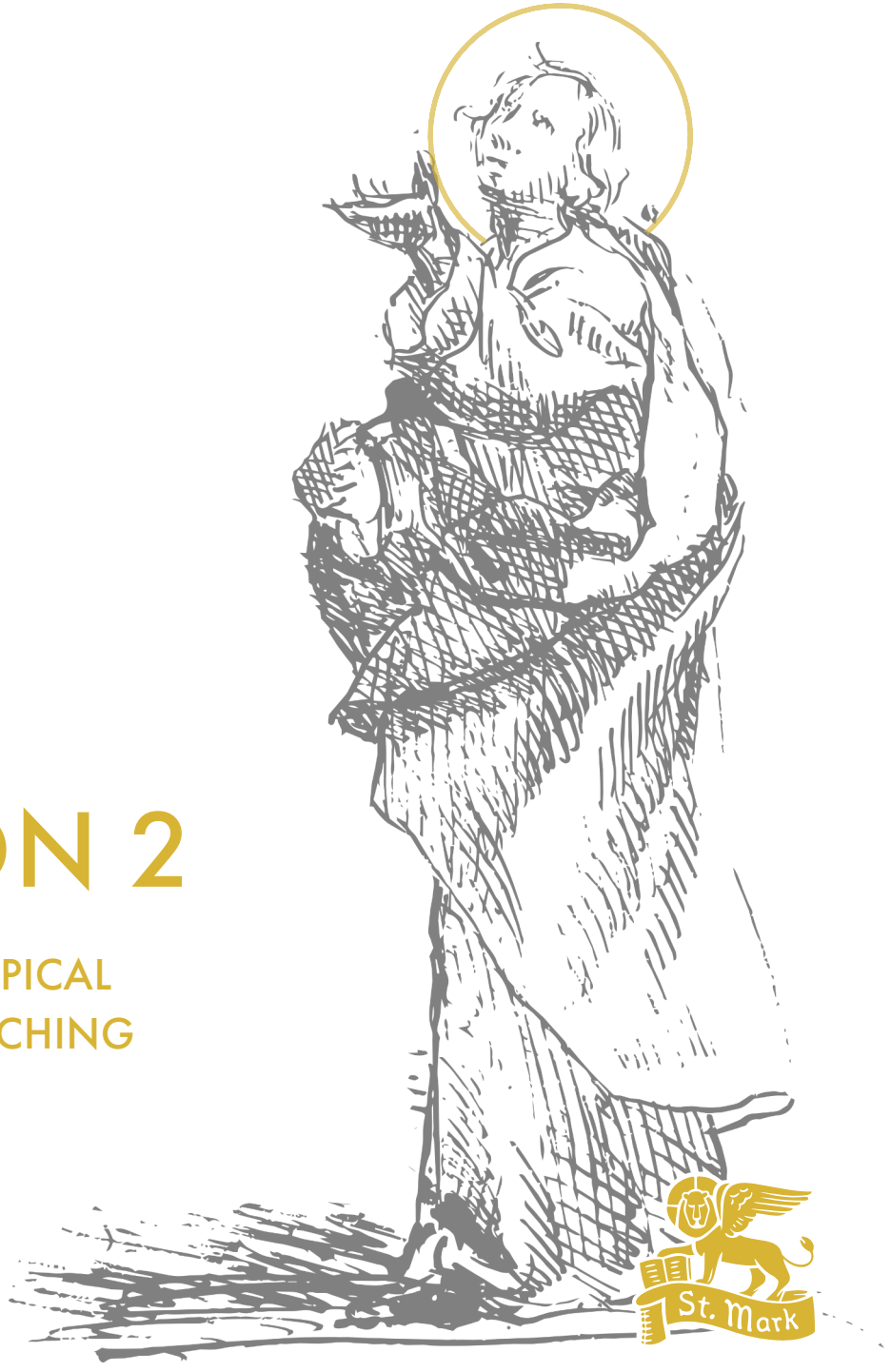
FALL 2026 BIBLE STUDY | CHURCH OF ST. MARK

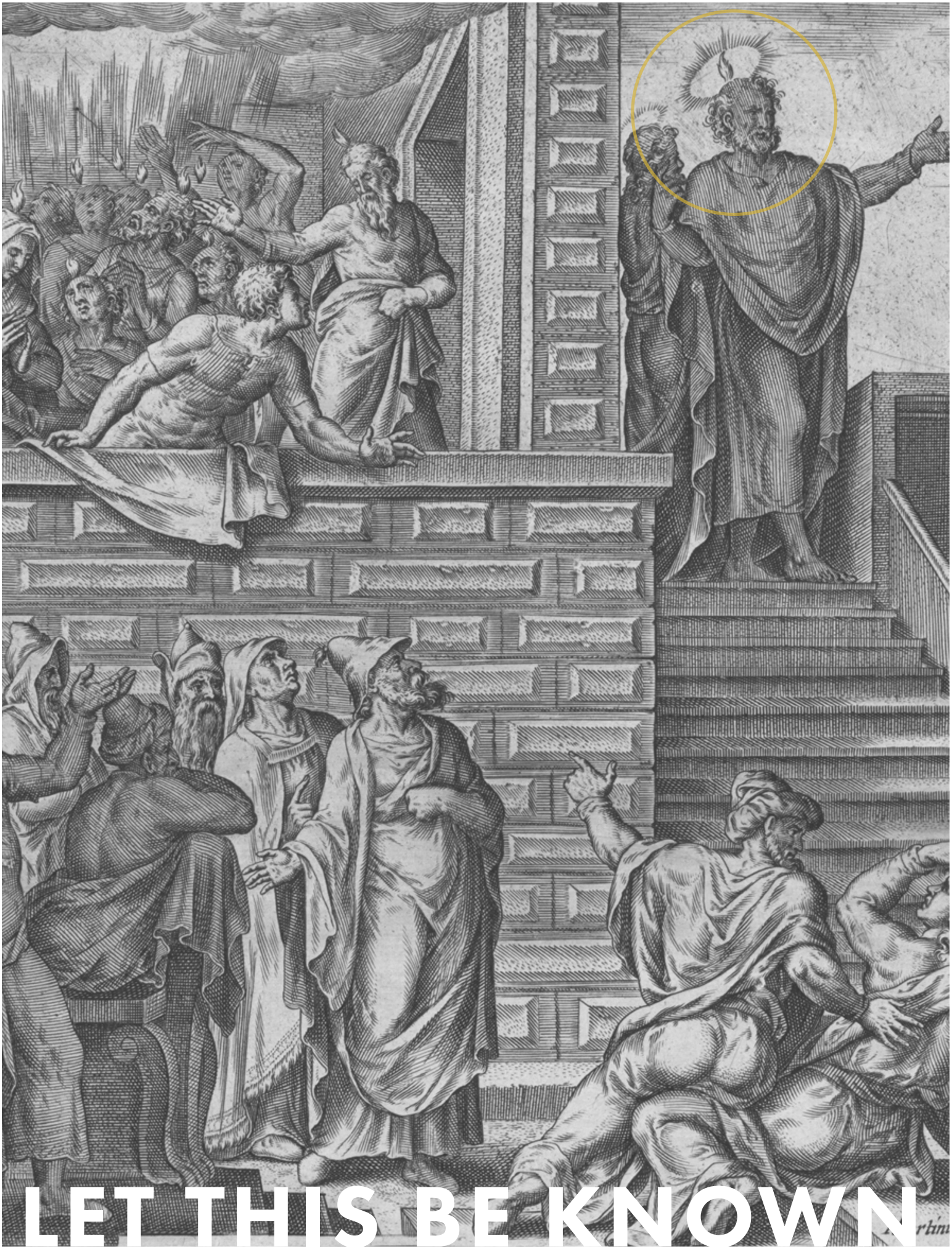
THE ACTS
AND PREACHING
OF THE APOSTLES

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST PROCLAIMED THROUGH THE FIGURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



SESSION 2

PETER'S PROTOTYPICAL PENTECOST PREACHING



LET THIS BE KNOWN

SESSION 2

PETER'S PROTOTYPICAL PENTECOST PREACHING

OPENING HYMN

Lord Jesus Christ, be Present Now

Lord Jesus Christ, be present now,
And let your Holy Spirit bow
All hearts in love and truth today
To hear your word and keep your way.

Give us the grace to grasp your word,
That we may do what we have heard.
Instruct us through the Scriptures, Lord,
As we draw near, O God adored.

May your glad tidings always bring
Good news to men that they may sing
Of how you came to save all men.
Instruct us till you come again.

To God the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit, three in one;
To you, O blessed Trinity
Be praise throughout eternity.

MISSED A SESSION
OR WANT TO REVIEW?

Session Booklets

Session videos



FALL 2026
BIBLE STUDY

SESSIONS

Oct. 13 - Carolyn Hall

Oct. 20 - Carolyn Hall

Oct. 27 - Carolyn Hall

Nov. 3 - Carolyn Hall

Nov. 10 - Carolyn Hall

Nov. 17 - Carolyn Hall
with potluck dinner

FORMAT

7pm | Opening

Lectio Divina

Study

Q & A

Small group discussion

8:30 pm | Closing

LECTIO DIVINA

ACTS 2:1-42

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly
a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where
they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting
on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in
other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem
Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came
together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own
language. 7 And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking
Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Par'thians
and Medes and E'lamites and residents of Mesopota'mia, Judea and Cappado'cia, Pontus
and Asia, 10 Phryg'ia and Pamphyl'ia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyre'ne, and
visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling
in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed,
saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled
with new wine." 14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed
them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear
to my words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour
of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
18 yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days
I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth beneath,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
20 the sun shall be turned into darkness
and the moon into blood,
before the day of the Lord comes,
the great and manifest day.
21 And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with
mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you
yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and
foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 But God
raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be
held by it. 25 For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.
27 For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades,
nor let thy Holy One see corruption.
28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;
thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.'

29 "Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was
buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that
God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his
throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not
abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of
that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having
received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you
see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says,

'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand,
35 till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.'

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord
and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to
the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38
And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus
Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39
For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom
the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other words and exhorted
them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his
word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they
devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and
the prayers.

NOTES

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles,

"BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?"



PRELIMINARY ISSUE:
THE HISTORICITY OF THE SPEECHES IN ACTS



BASIC QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PETER'S SPEECH AS LUKE CONVEYS IT AND THE HISTORICAL EVENT?

Textual "Clues"

- *Prologue to Luke's Gospel* | "Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, [2] just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, [3] I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, [4] so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received."

- *Acts 2:40* | "He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.""

- *Acts features three tellings of Paul's conversion story (Acts 9, 22, and 26)* | The accounts, while in substantial agreement, differ in some details (for example, in Ch 9, Luke's narration says that Paul's companions "heard the voice but could see no one," but when Paul retells in Ch 22, Paul says that they "saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke")
  → What is Luke saying to us with this?

Scholarly Opinions Vary

- *The Critics* | Speeches are "free compositions" by Luke.

  Richard Pervo: "Luke's achievement as a historian lies more in his success at creating history than in recording it," *A Commentary on the Book of Acts, 17–18.*

  C. K. Barrett: "No one will maintain that this speech contains the very words used by Peter on a specific occasion in the life of the earliest church." *Acts of the Apostles I, 131.*

- *The Sympathetics* | Luke is faithful to sources but supplements them with "plausible influences"

  Craig Keener: "This … does not mean that Luke or most other historians … made up 'events.' It does mean that, where necessary, they had the generic freedom to fill in a missing detail to make sense of their sources, to flesh out a speech . . . In such situations, plausible and probable inferences were acceptable." *Acts, 245.*

  C. H. Dodd: "There are indications that the author of Acts used his historian's privilege with considerable restraint. . . . We conclude that in some cases at least the author of Acts gives us speeches which are not, indeed, anything like verbatim reports . . . but are based upon a reminiscence of what the apostle actually said." *The Apostolic Preaching, 19-21.*



More Than Just the Gist? A Catholic Approach

- *Vatican II, Dei Verbum*

  Paragraph 12: "God speaks in Sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, the interpreter of Sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words. To search out the intention of the sacred writers, attention should be given, among other things, to "literary forms." For truth is set forth and expressed differently in texts which are variously historical, prophetic, poetic, or of other forms of discourse. The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances by using contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture. For the correct understanding of what the sacred author wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the patterns men normally employed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another.

  Paragraph 19: The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus. For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who "themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" we might know "the truth" concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2-4).

- *Gregory Vall on the act of narration/emplotment*

  What Scripture Says About Inspired Storeytelling | Genesis 24: [T]he servant's job is to convince Rebekah's family, specifically her older brother Laban, that this is indeed a match made in heaven. He makes his pitch by way of a lengthy renarration of the sequence of events that led him to this juncture, in the course of which he takes quite a few liberties with the details (vv. 34–49). He tactfully omits anything that may have given offense to the Mesopotamian family, rearranges the order of events slightly, and even modifies Abraham's instructions in such a way as to give the impression that it was the patriarch's intention all along for Isaac to marry a close relative . . . [T]aking into consideration the lower theological proficiency of his polytheistic audience, the servant tempers his narrative to meet them at their level of understanding and leads them to recognize that Yahweh, the god of Abraham, has manifested his will for Isaac and Rebekah in a remarkable confluence of events. As Sternberg phrases it, "the servant, like many novelists after him, resorts to invention in order to give the truth a more truthlike appearance," for "the unvarnished truth would not have carried enough weight to induce the family to part with Rebekah."

  The servant has employed mythos, or "emplotment," which always includes a fictive dimension, in order [to] give the providential and revelatory event a new verbal mode of existence. The word-event has become an event-word. When narrative artistry is used in this way by someone whose mind has been illumined by the Spirit of Truth to judge concerning the action of God in history, narration is a prophetic act.[1]

  [1]Vall, Ecclesial Exegesis, 212. Quoting Meir Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985), 149-51.

  "Emplotment": "The act of emplotment or narration—the act by which an event is given a new verbal mode of existence—necessarily contains a fictive dimension. At a minimum, the author's selection, arrangement, and choice of words embody an interpretive judgment [and yet] *this fictive dimension does not necessarily compromise the truth of a real event.*"[1]

  [1] Vall, Ecclesial Exegesis, 214 (emphasis added).

NOTES



CONCLUSION

HOLY NARRATION INVITES
"ARTISTIC LICENSE"
AT THE SERVICE OF THE TRUTH



IN SUMMARY, then, professor Vall argues that the deep structure of language, rooted as it is on man's being in the image of God, in whom Word and Spirit are distinct yet one, not only permits but demands creative license with regards to "the facts" in order to achieve a deeper fidelity to the truth and accommodate its expression to the limitations of the hearer. **The task of narration, which include selection, reordering, and even exaggeration, is analogous to the work of a caricature artist: his aim is not produce a photograph, but a truer, more knowing image of the one portrayed. The "fictive" elements of that portrayal (a larger nose, a balder head, bigger smile), rather than distort the truth of the person or distance the audience from it, actually make it more easy to recognize.** Indeed, the mystery of a person could never be reduced or adequately "recorded" with pen and ink. But a skilled artist will be capable of capturing something of that truth and "suggesting" it through the poetry of the lines and coloring. All the more so in the case of the Scriptures, whose aim is to reveal the Person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity who is made known by the economy of salvation.

Can it be said, therefore, that the Acts of the Apostles relates the "honest truth" about the history of the early Church and, in particular, the content of the apostolic preaching, even if that truth is presented within a selective synthesis composed for a particular audience, with particular concerns? In light of the above, one cannot consider Scripture to be sacred in the Catholic sense (inerrant, inspired, "living and effective") and believe that any of its contents are materially misleading when it comes to the truth that its authors seek to communicate. And whatever genre one consider the Acts of the Apostles to be written in, and therefore whatever the degree of conventional "fictive elements" it may be expected to contain; whatever amount of source material Luke may have been working with regarding Acts 2 in particular; and however much literary license or "inference" we posit Luke employed in composing his speeches—**those who receive Scripture as divinely inspired should receive his accounts of the same as truer than a verbatim transcript of those speeches, were one ever discovered.** As Mary Healy argues,

> For the evangelists to narrate in this way is not to disregard history, or "what actually happened," but to consciously interpret history in a way that is open to the invisible mystery revealed through it. This is why the events in Jesus' earthly life have traditionally been called "mysteries" (which is simply the Greek equivalent of "sacraments")—they have an interior depth and power to which we are led by the manner in which Scripture recounts those events. As the Gospel is proclaimed, especially in the liturgy, and as the hearer contemplates these mysteries in faith, "what was visible in [Christ's] earthly life" still today "leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission." (Healy, "Inspiration and Incarnation," 31).

ACT 2: SHARING A NEW KIND OF WINE

OUTLINING PETER'S MAIN ARGUMENT

1

2

3

4

PETER'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN HIS PENTECOSTAL PREACHING



Acts 2:17-21

17 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
18 yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days
I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth beneath,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
20 the sun shall be turned into darkness
and the moon into blood,
before the day of the Lord comes,
the great and manifest day.
21 And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'



Joel 2:28-32 (RSV) | Joel 3:1-5 (NAB)

Acts 2:25-28

25 For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.
27 For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades,
nor let thy Holy One see corruption.
28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;
thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.'



Psalm 16:8-11

Acts 2:34-35

34 For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says,

'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand,
35 till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.'

Psalm 110:1

Matthew 22:43-45

"What is your opinion about the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They replied, "David's." He said to them, "How, then, does David, inspired by the Spirit, call him 'lord,' saying:'The Lord said to my lord...If David calls him 'lord,' how can he be his son?



NOTES

PETER'S OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS IN THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF HIS ARGUMENT

1 **Peter's Reference to Recent Past (Life of Jesus) | vv. 22-24**

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

2 **Peter's Reference to the Present Moment (Jesus' is pouring out God's Spirit on His followers, fulfilling the prophecies) | vv. 15-16**

15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

3 **Peter Prophetically Reveals their Guilty Consciences (They put Jesus to death) |v. 23**

23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

4 **Peter's Pointing to a Salvific Future (Repent and believe in Jesus!) | vv. 38-39**

38 And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him."

THE PATTERN?

EVERYTHING POINTS TO JESUS!

WITH WHAT EFFECT?

The Audience...



IS CUT TO THE HEART



ASKS FOR GUIDANCE



RECEIVES BAPTISM

(and therefore the Holy Spirit!)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the historicity of the events of the Bible matter?
2. A narrator cannot relate all the details and aspects of a given event, but must select what is most relevant, and fit those elements into a narrative. Just as a painter or sketch artist represents reality by reducing it to a few brush strokes or pencil lines, so a narrator does so with words. What makes a story true? When does narration become falsification?
3. What is Peter's main point in his Pentecost sermon? How does his use of the Old Testament support it?