

Comprehensive Catholic Lectiōnary

Nancy Corran, Dip. Theol., M.Div., RCWP

and

Jane Via, Ph.D., J.D., IHM, RCWP

This lectionary is the intellectual property of Nancy J. Corran and E. Jane Via.
Copyright pending.

Welcome to the Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary!

Thank you for considering our approach to contemporary lectionary.

What is the CCL?

The Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary (CCL) provides a three-year lectionary cycle and corresponds to the A, B and C cycles of the canonical Roman Catholic Lectionary for Sundays and Feast days.

Purposes of Lectionary

The first purpose of this lectionary is to include every significant story about women in the Bible *not* included in the canonical Sunday lectionary.

- Every gospel text about women not included in the canonical lectionary is added.¹
- Every New Testament text about women outside of the gospels *not* included in the canonical lectionary is added, i.e. from Acts, the Epistles, Pastoral Letters and Revelation/Apocalypse).
- Texts about significant women in the Hebrew Bible *not* included in the canonical lectionary are added.

The second purpose of this lectionary is to eliminate exclusive language for God and human beings. Masculine language for God is often substituted with gender neutral words for God and, when the original Biblical language warrants it, with feminine words for God.

The third purpose of this lectionary is to expose and/or familiarize believers with the entire spectrum of Biblical readings and history, from the foundational stories of the Hebrew Bible to the end of the New Testament period where doctrinal or dogmatic interests do not dictate text selection.

The fourth purpose of this lectionary is to educate believers to the broad spectrum of Biblical theologies.

¹ When we speak of canonical lectionary, we refer to the canonical Lectionary for Sundays and Major Feast Days.

The fifth purpose of this lectionary is to select passages from Biblical books which honor the most important literary and theological contributions of the writers², especially the Evangelists.

This lectionary is a comprehensively inclusive lectionary with texts rendered in inclusive language.

Guidelines for CCL Use

A lectionary is a living document for a worshipping community. As such, it should be used with some flexibility. Each year, national/international holidays and events may lend themselves to different readings than those otherwise scheduled in the CCL. Each year, parish or community events may lend themselves to different readings, such as the parish/community feast day, a Baptism during Mass, or a parish/community anniversary liturgy. We encourage the use of religious poetry, or poetry with religious implications, on special feasts such as Easter and Christmas. We encourage the use of sung psalms and/or sung psalm responses where desirable, especially during Advent, the Christmas season, Lent, the Easter season, Pentecost, and special feast days.

If the inclusive lectionary uses a gospel also used in the canonical Sunday lectionary, use of that gospel on the same Sunday is implemented whenever possible.

Gospel readings are coordinated thematically with the New Testament reading and the Hebrew Bible readings whenever possible.

When the language of the psalm is deeply exclusive or promotes violence, revenge, or other values in conflict with Jesus' teaching, the language may be edited or Nan Merrill's rendering of the psalm may be substituted. It is also possible to replace a psalm with other Biblical texts, e.g. a passage from Isaiah, read as a psalm with a refrain, as is done in the canonical lectionary.

In order to accomplish the goal of providing a broad exposure to the Scriptures, canonical gospels are sometimes lengthened or shortened to their essence, or

² We acknowledge the consensus of contemporary Biblical scholarship that the attributed authorship of many Biblical books does not accurately identify the historical writers, exclusive writers or final editors.

additional shorter gospels, which are thematically or contextually connected by the evangelist, may be combined.

Occasionally, parables with male protagonists are adapted to female protagonists.

Among the biblical readings included in the CCL are "terrible texts" about women, such as the rape Dinah, the rape and dismemberment of the Levite's concubine, the seduction of Jacob by Tamar, and the rape of David's daughter, Tamar, by her half-brother. Some of these texts are horrific. We include these texts in our lectionary because it's important that believers acknowledge the content of our Bible and because these texts tacitly provide a cultural prerogative for violence against women. For example, "rape must be acceptable because it appears in the Bible which is God's word." The impact of these Biblical texts is often culturally operative despite the ignorance of the text among most members of the culture. When such readings arise in the lectionary, we recommend that the homilist address these readings straightforwardly and connect the reading with contemporary issues (e.g. the rape of women in the U.S.). The canonical Catholic lectionary sometimes includes texts of terrible violence in ancient warfare or texts describing an anticipated ultimate conflict between good and evil. These texts tacitly, if not explicitly, affirm brutality and violence in war as acceptable. This lectionary tends to avoid such texts in order not to promote violence further as a path to God. When or if one of these texts is used, we strongly recommend the homilist address it.

Translations, Versions and Renderings

The Bible was not written in English or Latin. The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years. The books of the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly called the "Old Testament" in Christian traditions, were written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and occasionally, Greek. The earliest known compilation of them is called the Septuagint (LXX) and is a Greek translation of mostly lost manuscripts. Scholarship commonly dates the LXX to the 3rd Century BCE. The Masoretic Text (MT), codified in the 9th or 10th centuries of the CE, is the authoritative text for rabbinic Judaism. Many scroll sections discovered at Qumran, match precisely sections of the MT, a testament to the rich inherited oral and written traditions of Judaism.

There is no definitive translation from the original languages and the earliest manuscripts into English, although there are many translations and versions. Most English translations of the “Old Testament” draw upon either the Septuagint, the MT or both. Most current English translations of the New Testament depend heavily upon contemporary Greek New Testaments. Contemporary Greek New Testaments are constructed from 1st-2nd century fragments of Greek papyri and 2nd to 4th century manuscripts, none thought to be original.

The renderings we provide are mostly our own composite translations drawn from the following texts, translations and versions:

NAB (The Catholic Bible)
NASB
NRSV
NIV
NOAB (New Oxford Annotated Bible)
NABRE
The Jerusalem Bible
Priests for Equality Inclusive Bible
The Message (Eugene Peterson)

The above English translations of the Bible are standard translations or known translations which we review, consult and compare. We also consult the following critical biblical texts:

Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.
Nestle, Aland, *The Greek New Testament*
Aland, Aland, Karavidoupoulos, Martini and Metzger, *The Greek New Testament* (4th Edition)
Aland, Black, Martini, Metzger & Wikgren, *The Greek New Testament* (3rd Edition)

We consult other lesser known, contemporary, inclusive language texts, including *Praying the Psalms* by Nan Merrill and *Psalms Anew* by Nancy Scheck, OSF and Maureen Leach, OSF.

Where it is clear that one translation predominates in any given CCL reading, it will be noted.

All translation is interpretation. Our aim is to be inclusive in our language about God and humanity; to be true to the substantive meaning of the text, and to make it relevant for our time and place. Because we render these readings for liturgical purposes, they have a catechetical function in addition to fostering the prayer of the people. Over the three-year cycle, a regular worshipper should develop a cumulative foundation for Biblical narratives and theologies.

We recommend the *Inclusive Bible* by Priests for Equality for additional inclusive language versions of CCL lectionary readings. We also recommend Merrill's *Praying the Psalms* for contemporary, meaningful, prayerful rendering of ancient songs.

The Story of the CCL

The CCL evolved in an independent Roman Catholic parish and has been in use for over a decade.

In 2004, Jane Via was ordained a deacon on the Danube River in what became the Roman Catholic Womenpriest movement. In 2005, she met Rod Stephens, a recently retired canonical priest, in the Immaculate Heart Community of Los Angeles. Together, Jane and Rod realized Jane's dream of a Catholic parish for driven away Catholics, fallen away Catholics, remarried without annulment Catholics, LGBTQI Catholics and Catholics who can no longer worship with integrity in the canonical Roman Catholic Church. On November 27, 2005, they founded Mary Magdalene the Apostle Catholic Community (MMACC) structured on a traditional parish model along with about 40 progressive Catholics from the San Diego area.

As pastor of a newly founded Catholic community, Jane was responsible for Sunday liturgy. She was deeply committed to rendering Scripture readings in inclusive language, which required spending time with the canonical Roman Catholic Lectionary. As a former professor of Biblical Studies, with an emphasis in New Testament Studies, Jane quickly realized that gospel readings with women protagonists were frequently missing from the canonical lectionary. Jane began to modify the lectionary to include those narratives about women.

In June 2007, Nancy Corran - a founding member of MMACC - joined the MMACC pastoral team. Her graduate degrees and advanced studies in theology and ministry provided her with a strong Biblical foundation and tools of interpretation. As part of her duties, she took over the preparation of the lectionary readings and expanded them to include otherwise excluded readings about women from the wider New Testament and Catholic Christian Old Testament. In 2010, Nancy was ordained a priest and continued to be the primary writer and editor of the MMACC Lectionary. A three-year lectionary cycle unfolded which generally follows the Roman Catholic Lectionary but adds the "lost" narratives about Biblical women. These additions necessitated some reorganization of the canonical lectionary.³ Over time, Nancy and Jane discovered that Biblical narratives about women were systematically excluded from the canonical lectionary. Evidence of systematic exclusion includes the following important texts:

The canonical reading of God's visitation to Abraham and Sarah, which ends at Genesis 18:10a, eliminates Sarah's presence, words and her unmediated conversation with God. The CCL restores Sarah's part in the Biblical narrative by adding Genesis 18:10b-15. In the canonical reading (1 Samuel 20-22, 24-28) of Hannah's story (1 Samuel 1:1-2:21), Hannah's husband tells her to do what she thinks is best and remain home from a return trip to Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:23). This singular verse, in which Elkanah affirms Hannah's authority in their family, is excluded from the canonical reading which occurs on the Feast of the Holy Family. The entire Book of Ruth is excluded from the canonical Sunday and Major Feast Day Lectionary. In the resurrection narrative of John 20:11-18, Jesus makes his first resurrection appearance. He appears in the garden to Mary Magdalene. This passage is never read at any Easter service or on any Sunday in the canonical church.⁴ Luke 13:10-17, the Bent Over Woman, is excluded from the canonical Lectionary although the pericopes which precede it and follow it are included. The story of Lydia and the synagogue of women which Paul visited (Acts 16:11-15, 40) is excluded too.

³ When forced to move a gospel reading, we create space by eliminating a gospel reading which appears in more than one lectionary cycle or by combining a brief canonical gospel with another gospel reading. Some readings from the Hebrew Bible and wider New Testament are replaced.

⁴ John 20:11-18 is an optional reading if the Feast of Mary Magdalene falls on a Sunday.

Conclusion

These texts are but a sample of the extensive omissions of Biblical women we have discovered in the canonical Roman Catholic Lectionary. The CCL seeks to correct this major deceit, namely the implication of the canonical Lectionary that there were no important women in Biblical history whose lives matter with respect to the contemporary church, faith, or the contemporary believer.

We hope you will enjoy using the CCL. We hope that its content will expand your knowledge and appreciation of women in the Bible and of the potential roles of women in Christian ministry and life.

Perhaps the CCL can become a prophetic voice which will open the minds, and hearts, of all Christians to the full equality of women in the universal Church.