Gospel Interpretation and Christian Life

Francis J Moloney, SDB
Scholars Collection

1. *Opening the Scripture*, 2014, Antony Campbell SJ

Gospel Interpretation and Christian Life

Francis J Moloney, SDB

Adelaide
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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry
Creator: Moloney, Francis J. (Francis James), 1940- author.
Title: Gospel interpretation and Christian life
/ Francis J Moloney.

ISBN: 9781925643091 (hardback)
9781925643107 (ebook : epub)
9781925643114 (ebook : pdf)
9781925643084 (paperback)

Series: Scholars collection.
Notes: Includes bibliographical references and index.
Subjects: Bible. Gospels--Criticism, interpretation, etc.
Christian life.
Theology, Practical.

Cover art work DUCCIO DI BUONINSENGNA, The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew (1311). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA. Cover design by Raghava Rao Tulluri.

Layout, in Minion Pro 11, by Extel Solutions, India.

Published by:

An imprint of the ATF Press Publishing
Group owned by ATF (Australia) Ltd.
PO Box 504
Hindmarsh, SA 5007
ABN 90 116 359 963
www.atfpress.com
Making a lasting impact
For my many colleagues

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Catholic Theological College

# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td></td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Story Behind the Book</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gospel Interpretation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Following Jesus into Radical Discipleship: A Reading of Mark 8:14-9:29</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Literary Strategies in the Markan Passion Narrative: Mark 14:1-15:47</td>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “He is going before you into Galilee.” Mark 16:6-8 and the Christian Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. God’s Gift of Servant Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark</td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Matthew 5:17-18 and the Matthean Use of “Righteousness”</td>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When is John Talking about Sacraments?</td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium: A Restless Relationship?</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sacred Scripture at Vatican II</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>The Word in the World: Then and Now</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**

**Indices**

- Index of Authors 399
- Index of Biblical References 405
Foreword

The introduction to this collection ("The Story Behind the Book"), sharing something of the story that generated exegetical and pastoral reflections from 1983 till the present, offers me the possibility to explore something of the personal and academic journeys that lie behind the essays that make up this volume. I am thus able to limit this foreword to expressions of gratitude, some technical clarifications, and an explanation of the dedication.

I am most grateful to the editors, editorial boards and publishing houses that published the original versions of the following essays. Without exception, they generously and enthusiastically supported further publication. They are indicated in detail in the list of acknowledgements that follow. Reflecting my recent scholarly activity, these publishers are located in Rome, India, the USA, Australia, and the Philippines. On the whole, the essays appear almost exactly as they were originally published.

The major alteration made to the typescripts has been the unification of the scholarly style-sheet. I have used the current Society of Biblical Literature Style-Sheet (2014), with two notable exceptions. In the first place, I have avoided scholarly abbreviations for journals and series that are normally found in scholarly essays. My reader need not search in a list of abbreviations to find my sources; they are reproduced in full in the text and in the footnotes. Secondly, only since 2014 has the Society of Biblical Literature asked for the full Christian name of authors and editors. All essays published prior to that date have maintained the use of initials. Here and there I have retouched, and sometimes updated, an older essay. Such alterations are very few, always obvious, and never change the course of the original argu-
ment. As I will explain in my “Introduction,” I have undertaken some major rewriting for the oldest essay in the collection “When is John Talking About Sacraments?” (1982). But even there the argument pursued remains unchanged, however much updated.

I am very grateful to Hilary Regan, the Chief Executive Officer of ATF Theology Press, who suggested this collection. It is one of several such collections of the work of Australian scholars that Hilary has initiated. Such volumes are a source of recognition and personal satisfaction for Australian theologians and biblical scholars. We often receive considerable acclaim overseas, but go unnoticed in our native Australia. This experience is largely due to the secular nature of Australian society, and the well-established local tradition of the “tall poppy syndrome.” Hilary Regan and ATF Theology offer an important service to Australian theological activity. We are all grateful to Hilary and the quality publication house he directs at the Australian Theological Forum Limited. I am personally grateful that Hilary approached me, enabling the further publication, in a book form, of a number of articles that are regularly sought after, but sometimes difficult to locate.

The book is dedicated to the many people who have accompanied me at my long-term academic home in Melbourne. It calls for some explanation to non-Australians, and indeed even to Australians who are not aware of the ever-shifting Melbourne theological scene. The explanation is best expression via a potted history. I returned to my home in Australia, after 11 years of study, research, and teaching, in 1976. I immediately took up my post as a Lecturer in New Testament at Catholic Theological College (CTC), then located in Clayton, Victoria, close to Monash University. The academic authority and setting of the College was provided by the ecumenical Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD).

The MCD was founded in 1910, authorized by Victorian State Parliament to grant degrees from undergraduate to doctoral level, largely to students from a number of Protestant traditions, although the Jesuit Theological College was established in Parkville in the late 1960’s, and Jesuit academics and students frequented the facilities there. In 1973 CTC (along with the Jesuit Theological College and the Yarra Theological Union) was admitted as an associated teaching institute within MCD. This was a major step in Catholic theological
education resulting from the post-Vatican II desire to improve the human, spiritual, and academic formation of the Catholic population, especially those preparing for ministry as Priests, or educators in Catholic schools. It had been approved by the Catholic Bishops in 1972. In those early days, CTC was closely associated with the many seminaries located in the city of Melbourne. Those early years were also marked by large numbers of lay students and Religious men and women. Most major courses were taught during the day for the seminarians, and in the evenings for lay people and Religious.

In 1994 I was appointed the Foundation Professor of Theology at the newly-founded Australian Catholic University. Located on the University’s campus at Chadstone, close to Clayton, I continued to teach and direct research at CTC until 1998. From 1976-1998 I was privileged to serve under five Masters of the College: Rev. Dr (now Professor) Austin Cooper, OMI (twice), Rev Dr Gerard Diamond, Rev Dr (now Professor) Norman Ford, SDB, Rev Dr John Begley, SJ (RIP), and Rev Dr (now Archbishop) Mark Coleridge.

In 1999 I took up the position of the Professor of New Testament at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. I returned from that ministry in the USA to assume the role of the Superior of the Australia-Pacific Province Salesians of Don Bosco in 2006. By this stage, CTC had relocated to its current fine facilities in East Melbourne, adjacent to the Melbourne campus of Australian Catholic University. In 2012 the Melbourne College of Divinity became part of the national tertiary education system as the specialized University of Divinity (UD). The Provincial Superior of my Religious Congregation, I resumed teaching and directing research at CTC in 2006. I have continued to do so since then, even though I was re-employed as a Senior Professorial Fellow at ACU from 2012-2016. Appointed a Senior Fellow of Catholic Theological College in 2009, in 2017 I resumed my presence at the College as a full-time member of CTC/UD.

I have already mentioned the Masters of the College from 1976-1998. But I wish to acknowledge here the many other people, past and present, academics, administrators, and students, alive and deceased, with whom I have shared my ministry at CTC. Among the deceased I would like to single out Barbara Stead, RSM, John Begley, SJ, Ian Murdoch, SDB, Margaret Brady, and Rod Doyle, CFC. Apart from the years in Washington, DC, I have been part of Catholic Theologi-
cal College, in one way or another, for almost 35 years. We are blessed by the ongoing presence of Professor Austin Cooper, OMI. Professor Norman Ford, SDB, has very recently been appointed an Emeritus Professor of the University of Divinity, and is still an important presence to the College. My long association with CTC has generated many reasons for the dedication of this book to the people who have been part of my life for such a long time. Not least among them is the warm reception I was given in 2017 as I resumed my full-time presence here, supported and encouraged by the current Master, Dr Shane Mackinlay, and Deputy Master, Dr Frances Baker, RSM.

*Francis J. Moloney, SDB, AM, FAHA*
*Catholic Theological College*
*University of Divinity*
*Melbourne, Victoria, Australia*
Acknowledgements

In order to provide a time-line for original publication of the essays gathered in this volume, the following acknowledgements are listed in chronological order, from the earliest (1982) to the most recent (2017). Their order as chapters in the volume depends upon the location of a text in the New Testament (Gospel Interpretation), or the relevance of a particular biblical-theological theme (Christian Life).


