

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 28 January 2018
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Four.

Before beginning prayer with the Sacred Texts, let us take a look at the week ahead in Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:

January 31: St. John Bosco.

February 2: Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. (Feast or Solemnity).
Candlemas Procession and Solemn entrance. Blessing of Candles.

The Australian Church:

No Anniversaries this week.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

January 28: World Leprosy Day

February 1: Beginning of the World Interfaith Harmony Week.

February 2: World Day of prayer for consecrated life.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Mark 1:21-28.

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy, ch. 18, v's 15-20.**

Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud. This is about our on-going conversion.

***Meditatio:* Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it, and make our response to it.**

This text shows firstly that:

1. Prophecy is Israel's form of mediation.
2. Prophets will be raised up as the occasion requires.
3. The true prophet is called by the Lord, as a native Israelite, and continues the prophetic office of Moses.

Prophecy originated in the request for mediation at Horeb.

Verse 18 is reminiscent of the prophetic call of Moses. We can read Exodus 4:12 and verses 15-16 to verify this. We can also read Jeremiah 1:9.

The death penalty threatens prophets who do not speak on behalf of the Lord and who are not commissioned by the Lord.

(I have summarized this from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary 6:37).
The real meaning of prophecy is often misunderstood. A Prophet is one who speaks on behalf of God, and who in the Old Testament, challenged the Kings and other leaders when they abandoned the Lord and put their faith in earthly power.

Take time to ponder on this text in the days ahead as you go about your work, rest, recreation. Allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of your heart, and bring forth the melody of your response to this text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 1*.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 94

The response is: IF TODAY YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS.

Psalm 94 is a call to praise and worship. It is used in the Monastic Liturgy at the hour of Vigils. Massah and Meribah translate as “trial and dispute”. It was at Rephidim in Sinai where the people, “divinely led from Egypt, had disputed with Moses and tested God’s patience with their complaints.” (Jamberoo Abbey Psalter).

Lectio: Read the second text from 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.

Meditatio: Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.

Some notes:

Free from care - the opposite, which is anxious concern, is a characteristic of unredeemed existence.

The married man – Paul does not have in mind the love of husband and wife (Gal 5:13-14), but the complete absorption in one another of the newly married. Since the married man is a member of the community of Christian love, his wife has the first, but not the exclusive claim on his affection. Married couples and the unmarried are all part of a community of love.

Paul’s view of the equality of men and women is highlighted by the fact that he says the same thing to the woman.

Paul gives clear advice but does not impose solutions to the problems within the Corinthian community. (NJBC, 49:40).

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you and prompting you to respond to words, phrases, sentences which call you forth and challenge you. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from Matthew 4:16.

A PEOPLE IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT:
A RADIANT DAWN SHINES ON THOSE LOST IN DEATH.

Perhaps this verse is here at the end of January, so we don’t forget the miracle of Christmas.

***Lectio:* Read the Gospel text from Mark 1:21-28.**

Read it slowly and reflectively, and maybe a second time. Try to read aloud rather than with the mind. Listen to the text as you read.

***Meditatio:* What is it about?**

Capernaum was the center of Jesus' activities in Galilee. Mark has interwoven the exorcism story into the references to Jesus as one who teaches with authority. It is about the authenticity of the teaching and healing of Jesus. One might ask: "What is the authenticity of the teaching of Jesus, as compared with the teaching of others such as the Scribes and Pharisees?" Pope Francis says that it is "his way of dealing with the poor, his integrity...his complete self-giving..." Whenever we can say: "There is something new here", it means, in our times, that a teacher/preacher/religious leader is imitating the love, mercy, compassion, gentleness of Jesus.

There is an initial call and a final election and perseverance. (cf. NJBC 42:130)

Read the Gospel text a number of times during the week. Sit with the text for many "quiet" times. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth the melody of your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

***EVANGELIZATIO:* My lived response to the texts with which the Church gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian. St. James says "Be doers of the Word." And the Book of Deuteronomy tells us that the Word of God is in our hands to do it.**

1. My response is to the mission of prophets in our own time. St. Teresa of Calcutta was a prophet. She said, among many teachings, that: "We can cure physical diseases with medicine but the only cure for loneliness, despair and hopelessness, is love – There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread, but there are many more dying for a little love." The Dalai Lama is also a prophet for our times: "Without human community one single human being cannot survive." It is a worthwhile exercise to call to mind other prophets in our time, and on a personal level, a prophetic voice which has, at some stage, called us back from the mist and darkness, into the Light of Jesus.
2. My response is to "love", love between married couples, the love of the unmarried and the love of church community. An Irish proverb says: "It is in the shelter of each other that people live." A shelter is a form of accommodation, basic though it may be. Perhaps this week, we can offer just one person some shelter within our love. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said: "Some day, when, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love. Then for the second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire." More than ever we need to hear these words. In our local community of Jamberoo, we have authentic good people of different churches, whose love, grounded in Jesus, reaches out to widows, widowers, the elderly, the sick and young mothers and children. They are there in all the events which build local community. And this is true of so

many communities and parishes. Loving communities grow in the shelter of that one commandment which Jesus gave: “Love one another as I have loved you.” The building of a community born of love involves the laying down of one’s life after the example of Jesus.

3. I am responding to the words: “There is something new here.” It is new because it is about love. God is love, says St. John. Jesus is the Son of God, and the manifestation of God on earth. He said to Philip: “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” On the subject of Christian love, the authentic manifestation of the Gospel, Pope Francis said in 2013: “Is self-interested love pleasing to Jesus? No, it is not, because love should be freely given, like his is. What are the relationships like in our parishes, in our communities? Do we treat each other like brothers and sisters, or do we judge one another, speak evil of one another? Do we just tend our own vegetable patch, or do we care for one another? These are the questions of love.” (General Audience, October 23, 2013. From “A Year of Mercy With Pope Francis”. p. 280). So, I have work to do this week – where do I start? I will start with the teaching of St. Benedict on words and silence: “The tongue holds the key to life and death.” No negative words about others.

Lectio Divina is about reading the Sacred Scriptures and reflecting on them from an informed background.

It is allowing the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of my heart like a harpist, and bring forth the beauty of my response.

In responding to the text, my life is changed more and more into Christ.