

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 20 May 2018**  
**Pentecost Sunday Year B.**

**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Three**

Pentecost means “the fiftieth day”. The name was first given to the Jewish feast of Weeks, which fell on the fiftieth day after the Passover, when the first fruits of the corn harvest were presented (Deut. 16:9). In later times, the giving of the Law to Moses was commemorated. For the Church of today, it is the feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter. At Compline (night prayer) on Pentecost Sunday, Eastertide (Paschaltide), comes to an end. The Paschal Candle is moved from the Sanctuary of the Church, to the side or in a less prominent position. It is used throughout the year for Funerals which carry a Requiem Mass. and at Baptism ceremonies.

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:**

May 22: St. Rita of Cascia.

May 24: OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, Australia’s National Patronal Feast.

May 25: St. Bede the Venerable (Optional Memoria).

May 26: St. Philip Neri

**In The Social Justice Calendar:**

May 20: Jubilee Sunday.

On this day in 2002, the Timor-Leste Constitution came into force.

May 21: World day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

May 22: International Day for Biological Diversity

May 23 International Day to end Obstetric Fistula

May 24: 1948 – Foundation of the World Council of Churches.

On this day in 2015, Pope Francis’ encyclical was launched - *Laudato Si* “On care for our common home”.

May 25: Beginning of a Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self Governing Territories.

May 26: National Sorry Day

**In the Australian Church:**

May 22: ROCKHAMPTON – Dedication of the cathedral (1982).

May 24: BROOME, BUNBURY, CANBERRA-GOULBURN, MILITARY ORDINARIATE OF AUSTRALIA, SYDNEY, TOWNSVILLE – PATRONAL FEAST.

May 25: The Maronite Diocese – Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Antoine Tarabay, OLM, 2013).

## LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

### **The readings are:**

Acts 2:1-11

Galatians 5:16-25 or 1 Corinthians 12:3-7 and 12-13

John 15:26-27, and 16:12-15, or alternatively, John 20:19-23.

### ***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, ch. 2, verses 1-11.**

Read it aloud. Read it slowly. Be aware of the Holy Spirit placing unction on the message of this text. When your heart responds to a word or a line, or a phrase, this is the Holy Spirit touching your heart and calling forth your response.

### ***Meditatio:* A little background to the text will help us understand it and make a response to it.**

This text from the Acts of the Apostles is the story of the first Pentecost. First of all, the upper room is the focus, the place where the apostles were at prayer with Mary, the Mother of God. The context is prayer. So, we have the upper room and prayer. Then the miracle of Pentecost takes place in the upper room, while they are at prayer. The next focus is the tongues of fire, one flame over each person. Then comes the focus on language. They were given the gift of speaking to all who would hear them, in the language of the hearers.

The scene in Jerusalem is cosmopolitan. In verse 5, “a startling change of scene from the ‘house’ to some unnamed arena where this vast throng could gather, signals the shift of the argument from its theophany to the effects of the theophany.”

The reference is to foreign-born Jews who have returned to reside in Jerusalem. One or two commentaries note that they were visiting Jerusalem for the Festival of Weeks. Their ethnic universality portends the gathering of Israel from their dispersion amongst all the nations.(NJBC, 44:21). It is a story we are reading, and we need to focus on the details of the story, while not losing sight of the miracle (theophany) of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Speaking all languages, and the reaction of the crowd to this miracle, keeps the story at boiling point.

After pondering, take time to respond to the text. You may want to ponder for a day or more, as you rest, work, walk, garden...sit and watch the ocean, the lake, the river. Just take time. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

### **The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103**

**The response is:** LORD SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT, AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

Psalm 103, is A Psalm of 35 verses, a prayer of worship. The theme is God’s boundless care for his creation.

### ***Lectio:* Read the Second Mass Reading: Galatians 5:16-25.**

### ***Meditatio:* A little background on the text, so we can best respond to it.**

While we don’t need a commentary to tell us that this text is a reminder of the fruits of the Spirit, just a few notes may help. It is part of Galatians 5:13-26. The whole

text is a warning to walk according to the Spirit, rather than according to the flesh. Paul exhorts the Galatians to walk by the Spirit, or conduct themselves by the Spirit. Vss. 19-21 is a catalogue of vices.

Verses 22-23 is a catalogue of virtues.

The Christian, crucified with Christ in faith and baptism, has died not only to the law, but also to the flesh of self, with its earthbound degrading tendencies.

Make your response in the days ahead. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

**The Gospel Verse** is a prayer:

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, FILL THE HEARTS OF YOUR FAITHFUL  
AND KINDLE IN THEM THE FIRE OF YOUR LOVE.

**Lectio: The Gospel is from John 15:26-27 and 16:12-15.**

Read it aloud and listen to your own voice. Be aware of the unction placed on parts or all of the text – this is the Holy Spirit speaking within you and touching your hearts – calling forth the most beautiful and faith-filled response to these words of the Sacred Scriptures.

**Meditatio: Some background to the text which will help us respond.** In the first reading this Sunday we hear the event of Pentecost. In this Gospel, we go back to the Last Supper Discourses of John's Gospel, with the promise that the Holy Spirit (the Advocate).

The Advocate is described as the Spirit of truth.

The commentary notes that the first two verses (26-27), coordinate "testimony" by the Paraclete with the "testimony" that the disciples will be required to give about Jesus. Chapter 16, vers 12-15, explains that the Paraclete must guide the disciples in the future, because Jesus has not been able to tell his disciples everything they must know. Nor have they been able to understand his words and actions prior to his glorifications. (cf. NJBC 61:192 and 196). Ponder over this text. Listen for the message you are to hear, and be still, as you receive the visitation of God into your life through God's Sacred Word. When you feel called to do so, make your response to the text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 3*.

**EVANGELIZATIO. Evangelizatio is about the evangelization of the "self". It is that part of Lectio Divina where we make our lived response to the text. First of all, we pray with the text, take time to ponder and understand the text, be still with the text and listen to the response we are being called to make.**

1. My response to this account of Pentecost Sunday reaffirms me again, that all manifestations of God's Presence are at the heart of prayer. The Apostles and Mary were at prayer in the upper room – actually AT PRAYER! As promised, the Holy Spirit came upon them. The miracle of Pentecost began with prayer – thus the birth of the Church on earth began with prayer. Will the rebirth of our Church begin with prayer? I believe this is the only way it will be reborn. Once when Bishop Peter Ingham was here for our foundation day, February 2, he preached on the vital vocation of Anna, the old lady who was at prayer in the Temple when Jesus was taken there by Mary and Joseph. Simeon and

Anna, both elderly, both faithful to prayer, both privileged to behold the Son of God. He spoke about all those unknown people who go on praying, no matter what. It is the only way forward.

2. “Self-control” is the fruit which stands out for me. There seems to be so little of it in society today, as those affected by the drugs they can’t resist, steal and murder, as politicians slam one another in public, as gambling escalates as the great addiction of this era, and as sexual and physical abuse goes on, even in the face of the media and its graphic reports. Self-control is not talked about. There appears to be no self-control, and just open slather. However, I have to look at my degree of self-control, especially control over my thinking and speaking. In 1944, Aldous Huxley wrote, “There’s only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that’s your own self.” (Time Must Have a Stop).
3. My response to this magnificent Solemnity in the Church’s Liturgical Calendar is to take the Sequence which proceeds the Gospel, and pray with it throughout the week ahead.

*Lectio Divina is prayer with the Sacred Scriptures.  
We read,  
we seek to understand with the help of a commentary,  
we ponder,  
we take time for stillness  
and we respond.  
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.  
Take the Mother of God as your model.*

