

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 1 July 2018
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week One

Before beginning *Lectio Divina*, let us look at the week ahead in Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:

July 3: St. Thomas (Feast)

In the Australian Church:

July 3: WILCANNIA-FORBES – Episcopal ordination of Bishop Coumba Macbeth-Green, 2014.

July 5: BROOME – Anniversary of the death of Bishop John Jobst, 2014.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

July 1: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday.

Beginning of Naidoc week.

International Day of Cooperatives.

2012: Commencement of the Fair Work Amendment Act, ensuring fair pay and working conditions for outworkers in the garment Industry.

July 2: 2016 – Election of Linda Burney as the first Aboriginal woman member of the Australian Parliament.

July 5: 1935, birth of the Dalai Lama in Tibet.

July 6: 1839, Massacre of to Aboriginal people at Chimney Pots, Gariwerd, Victoria.

July 7: 1945 – Blessed Peter To Rot was killed in Papua New Guinea. He is recognized as a Martyr of the Catholic Church.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Wisdom 1:13-15 and 2:23-24

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

Mark 5:21-43

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 1, verses 13-15, and chapter 2, verses 23-24.**

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.**

Five Books of the Old Testament are classified as Wisdom Literature: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach and Wisdom. Added to this are Tobit 4:3-21 and Tobit 12:6-13. The Prophet Baruch also has a wisdom text: 3:9-4:4.

Chapter 1, verses 1-15, is an exhortation to justice. The “author begins with an exhortation which the rest of the book will reinforce: Live a virtuous life and trust in God, because these qualities make possible union with God and with wisdom.

The text is about death and immortality.

It becomes clear in 2:24, that the author is speaking about spiritual death, the eternal separation from God.

Back to verse 1:15, the author proclaims that justice leads to immortality.

We may ask, “Who are the wicked in this text?” It is agreed upon (in at least three commentaries, that the wicked are apostate Jews, and that these Jews are understood to be a “type” of “wicked” in a generalized sense. (Cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary 33:13).

After much pondering, take time to respond to the text. You may want to ponder for a day or more, as you 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 29

The response is: I WILL PRAISE YOU, LORD, FOR YOU HAVE RESCUED ME.

Psalm 29 is a prayer of thanksgiving for recovery from sickness. It is suggested in the commentary of the Grail Psalter (1962), that “good health has its own unconscious arrogance and is even accompanied sometimes by a deceptive feeling of holiness. Sickness opens our eyes: we look back on our lives and [may be] frightened by the selfishness of our motives. The real sickness is of mind and soul, and if we ask God to cure us of this, the dawn will break.”

Pray with the Psalm throughout the week, marking the words, phrases or lines which speak to you and call forth prayer from your heart.

Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading, 2 Corinthians 8: 7-9 and 13-15.

Meditatio: A little background to help us understand the text and make our response to it.

This text is about our confidence before God.

It is also about a collection of money for the Jerusalem church.

“Using the example of Macedonian generosity, Paul deliberately challenges the Corinthians to move from eager acceptance of the idea of the collection, to actual giving.” (NJBC 50:34).

A lot more analytical notes can be found in the NJBC 50:34, but please remember this is *Lectio Divina* and not an academic assignment.

This is the Word of God thrown out to us as a challenge.

The Corinthians are not expected to give up their own necessities, but to give of their surplus.

Ponder on the text for a day or two, and then make your response. The Holy Spirit will lead you in this. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is adapted from 2 Timothy, 1:10.
OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST HAS DONE AWAY WITH DEATH
AND BROUGHT US LIFE THROUGH HIS GOSPEL.

Lectio: Now read the Gospel text from Mark 5:21-43.

Meditatio: Some background to the text which will help us respond.

This text narrates two stories of healing: the healing of the little girl, the daughter of Jairus, (verses 21-24), and then the healing of the woman with the flow of blood (25-34). Some background tells us that Jairus was a prominent member of the Jewish synagogue, “most likely one of the board of elders who exercised oversight for the community’s religious and social affairs.” (NJBC 41:36). Again, there is a lot of commentary, and it is not necessary for those of us who are responding to this text. The two stories of healing invite us to an immersion in the healing ministry of Jesus. Often immersion in these stories is the very best prayer we can undergo. Women may especially relate to the second story. Parents whose child has died may relate to the first story. But, we need to relate to either one.

Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 3*.

EVANGELIZATIO – this is one’s lived response to the texts given us by the Church each Sunday. It is about the evangelization of the “self”, and pins me down to be who I am: A Christian who prays with the Word of God, and responds to the call of the Word of God in my everyday life.

1. I am responding to the words “Live a virtuous life and trust in God.” Both are very hard to keep up. I don’t even like the word “virtuous”. It conjures up a religious code of past times, whereby virtues were supposed to make one holy, and often were more important than compassion and empathy. In a “virtuous religious code”, one was expected to do, more than to be (but not entirely). Under a code of virtuous living, one might actually walk past a homeless person, in order to be in Church for the beginning of Mass or a Sunday service. No time to bid “good morning” to the homeless person because we might be late for Church. However, this living of a virtuous life was very much the essence of Old Testament wisdom. To “trust in God” is something we can all relate to. I am not always good at it. But I have noticed that when I do trust that “all shall be well”, it does turn out that way. When I have allowed myself to be overcome by anxiety, I wonder later, why I didn’t trust in God – especially as I see that God was the one directing things. Why was I anxious?
2. In my response to the call of this text, something that Henri Nouwen said comes to mind: that more than material things, the greatest way of giving is the giving of ourselves to others. I will, this week, give of myself to others, or just one other. I will sit and listen, or offer help with something. And I will remember that Paul has asked us to give of our surplus. If we are running on empty, we are no good to anyone. If we empty ourselves in service of another or others, then we must return to Jesus for a refill, or a renewal of strength.

3. Something Sr. Joan Chittister says about healing speaks to me: “To be healed we need to want to be healed, to be larger than our pain, stronger than our woundedness.” (The Essential Joan Chittister, page 132). A priest of the Byzantine Church, commenting on the Jesus Prayer, shares from another aspect: “The sick person must step forward freely”, as did the woman who touched the hem of the garment Jesus was wearing. She came forward freely. Changing it to the present, the next part would read: “We must know that we are sick, we must desire to be healed, and we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Lord-is-Salvation. We must step forth out of the crowd, hobbling if we are lame, groping if we are blind, stinking and shunned if we are lepers. We must cry out, ‘Jesus Son of God, have mercy on us!’” (Reflections on the Jesus Prayer, A phrase-by-phrase analysis of the Prayer of the Heart, by a Priest of the Byzantine Church). The woman with the bleeding is an example to me. She was already “unclean” because of her bleeding. She would have been known to be “unclean”, and yet she courageously came close and touched the hem of the garment Jesus was wearing. She didn’t even demand that he look at her, give her the least attention. She knew that she would have been rebuked by the men of the story. Whatever healing each of us needs, may we have the courage to come to Jesus this week, and ask for healing, especially of the passions which give birth to emotional illnesses. These are often the most troublesome. Anger, for example, begets depression.

*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.*