

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 19 August 2018**  
**20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.**  
**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Four**

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

**In the Liturgy:**

August 20: St. Bernard (Memorial)

August 21: St. Pius X, (Memorial)

August 22: The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Memorial)

August 24: St. Bartholomew (Feast)

**In the Australian Church:**

August 20: Darwin – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1972).

August 21: Cairns – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop James Foley, (1992).

August 22: Military Ordinariate of Australia – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Max Davis (2003)

August 23: Bunbury – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Peter Quinn (2008)

August 25: Broken Bay – Anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral (1991).

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

August 19: World Humanitarian Day.

August 21: 1939 – Election of Enid Lyons to the House of Representatives and Dorothy Tangney to the Senate – first women members of the Australian Parliament.

August 23: 1996 – Death of Margaret Tucker, Indigenous Australian, writer and activist.

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

**The readings are:**

Proverbs 9:1-6

Ephesians 5:15-20

John 6:51-58

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Book of Proverbs, chapter 9, verses 1-6.**

Be aware of the way you handle your bible. Take it up reverently and read the sacred text with deep reverence. This text is given to all of us on this Sunday, for our formation as Christians.

***Meditatio:* Some Background on the text, so that we can understand it more profoundly, and make our response to it.**

In this beautiful and challenging text, Wisdom is personified as “woman”.

Symbolically:

The house is the house of God.

The seven pillars represent fullness or completion – nothing more is needed.  
 The table is the table of God  
 Food and wine represent the banquet of God (on earth and in eternity).  
 The maidservants represent those who will call to humanity: “If you are ignorant, step this way (First of all, you have to acknowledge that you are ignorant).  
 Then the callers will call to the foolish: “Come and eat my bread (the Bread of God), and drink the wine I have prepared.”  
 In the New Testament, this will come to fulfillment in the body and blood of Jesus.  
 The last two lines present a further challenge: “Leave your folly and you will live, walk in the ways of perception.”  
 With this background in mind, read the text again. Ponder for a while. Maybe a day or more! Make your response.  
 I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

**Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33**

**The response is: TASTE AND SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.**

Psalm 33 is a psalm of praise and reverence of God. The last two blocks of this psalm are used by St. Benedict in his Rule for Monasteries: “Who are those who long for life? If you long for life and many days to enjoy your prosperity, then: Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from deceit. Turn aside from evil and do good; seek and strive after peace.”

***Lectio:* Read the second text from Ephesians 5:15-20.**

***Meditatio:* A little background to the text, so that we can make an informed response to it.**

Last week Paul gave us a list of “nevers”, such as “never call each other names, or raise your voice to another.” This week the same warnings prevail:

“Be careful about the sort of lives you live, like intelligent and not senseless people.”

This takes us back to the “ignorant and foolish” theme of the first reading from Proverbs. The words, “This may be a wicked age, but your lives should redeem it” can apply to any historical period in the world.

In the death camps of the Second World War, two canonized saints set out to redeem it: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), - feast day, August 9, and St. Maximilian Kolbe (feast day August 14). And Corrie Ten Boom is amongst the holy persons who set out to conquer evil with good.

Paul exhorts the Christians of Ephesus not to be thoughtless:

Recognize the will of the Lord.

Don’t over drink.

Be filled with the Spirit

Sing the psalms and hymns when you gather, and

Continue doing this in your hearts.

This will ensure that your life is one of gratitude to God.

Stand back from the reading and go about your work for a while. Maybe a day or two. Be alert to the grace of God. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist on the strings of the harp. The Holy Spirit will bring forth the

most beautiful response to this reading. You will be surprised by the Spirit. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

***Lectio:* The Gospel Verse is from John 6:56:**

ALL WHO EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOOD,  
LIVE IN ME AND I IN THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

***Lectio:* Read the Gospel text from John 6:51-58.**

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. Stand back from it and ponder.

***Meditatio:* Some background to help us understand the text and respond to it.**

This is another text from the Gospel of John on the Body and Blood of Jesus: “My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood, live in me and I live in them. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever.

The dominant words are:

Bread – occurring five times.

Blood – occurring three times.

The Body and Blood of Christ.

As we saw some weeks ago, chapter six of John’s Gospel is John’s teaching on the Eucharist.

Read the Gospel text again slowly. Stand back from the text and the commentary and go about your work quietly ruminating. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 3*.

**EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church exhorts me to pray. 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. For me, the challenge is in the word “perception”. How do I perceive things? How do I understand comments about people and events. My perception needs to be one of wisdom. I remember that exactly 48 years ago, my father asked me to come with him and try to talk some sense into one of my brothers who was shaping up to be ignorant and foolish. Like the rest of us, he was born into a Catholic family and was educated at a Catholic School which was a costly venture. The talking didn’t bring a change and he went off to the world of drugs and theft. Do you have a family member who is ignorant? Try, if you sense it’s right, to have a chat with him or her. Be what Sr. Joan Chittister calls “a truth-telling prophet”, one who speaks on behalf of God, one who speaks the truth in love. And – we must also look honestly at ourselves. Are we (am I) the ones who are ignorant and foolish? If so, we need to partake of the Bread of Life.
2. My response is to the word “intelligent”. I understand this word in this context as meaning “spiritually intelligent”. Some people are extremely intelligent within their own discipline: science, medical science, history, theology, scripture or archaeology. To be spiritually intelligent is much harder, especially for someone like me who escapes so easily into books

and study. Spiritual intelligence may require that I put the books aside now and then, and spend more time with the Sacred Scriptures. It requires great honesty, integrity, fidelity to prayer; a taking on the precepts of the Gospel of Jesus; walking day by day with my hand in the hand of Jesus. Finally, I believe that spiritual intelligence comes from the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This doesn't mean once at Confirmation – but over and over throughout our lives.

3. Recently, I watched an episode of “Compass”, featuring Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green, and his vast Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes. The episode looked at a new way of keeping the Church alive in such a vast diocese. It featured, in retrospect, the old Convent which housed the Sisters of Mercy for 100 years. It featured St. Teresa of Calcutta, and her sisters who worked there for many years. One of the most powerful aspects was watching a beautiful woman who is paid by the bishop to go to the vast outposts and sheep stations to bring the Eucharist to the elderly and those who are far from any town. There are few priests, no religious sisters, relentless drought, that can mean the end for the people on the land. Both this beautiful woman and the bishop grew up in this Diocese and therefore understand drought, hardship and the way of life in the “outback”. Scenes of the bishop talking to the Graziers, discussing drought and hardship with them, and encouraging them to keep going, which is predominantly what they want to do – stay on the land they have inherited from parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. A golden moment in this episode of Compass was the scene where one elderly couple, now confined to their home, were sitting around the kitchen table having a communion service. The man spoke for both of them, saying that they couldn't imagine life without the Eucharist. Can I? Can you? This edition of Compass is available on iview. It is so worth watching.

***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.***

***Lectio Divina is a way of life  
not a method of prayer.***