

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 21 October 2018
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week One.

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:

No Solemnities, Feasts or Memorials this week.

In The Australian Church:

October 27: Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral, 1897.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

October 21: World Mission Sunday

October 24: United Nations Day.

Beginning of Disarmament Week.

On this day in 1945, the United Nations was established.

October 26: On this day in 1985, Uluru was returned to its traditional owners, the Anangu people.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Isaiah 53:10-11

Hebrews 4:14-16

Mark 10:35-45

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 10-11.**

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 is for us, most obviously a Messianic text. As Christians we can relate it immediately to the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The other text from Isaiah comes to mind: "He bore our sicknesses and carried our sufferings." These texts are read in Holy Week, and at other times of the year, such as on this 29th Sunday.

The text, we are told by the experts, is textually disturbed. And so, I don't believe it will help us to become involved in the detail of this disturbed text. Our call is to pray with the text. In order to do this, let us keep the Saviour of the world in focus. Let us keep the suffering Saviour (servant) in focus.

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 32

The response is: LORD, LET YOUR MERCY BE ON US AS WE PLACE OUR TRUST IN YOU.

Psalm 32 is a joyful song to the Creator. “The word of the Lord is faithful.” This opening line may cause us to ponder on the prayer of *Lectio Divina*. If the Word of the Lord is faithful, it will not let us down. It will not abandon us, but will continue to plant its seeds in the garden of our hearts.

Lectio: Read the second text from Hebrews 4;14-16.

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

This reading from Hebrews follows on from Isaiah. Here we see the Saviour, Jesus, who has become our “supreme high priest”, and more than that, one who is took on our human condition, felt the weaknesses of human nature, and tempted in every way like us. This is our confidence, that “in approaching the throne of grace, ...we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.” We couldn’t ask for more than this.

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 Mark 10:45

THE SON OF MAN CAME TO SERVE,
AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR ALL.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Mark 10:35-45.

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?

First of all, it’s a wonder Jesus didn’t take them by the shoulders and give them a good shake. He is the Son of God. They are pecking the ground. His focus is on God, their focus is on human success, promotion. They have missed the whole point. I feel comfortable in saying, “He must have been utterly frustrated.” A similar Gospel was read on 25th Sunday, four weeks ago. Obviously we need to hear it again. Jesus said to the two disciples testing his patience: “You do not know what you are asking.” And they didn’t know or even understand. But one thing seems to be clear – they think that positions of power enable them to lord it over others. Jesus then

speaks to this kind of thinking. So, this Gospel text is a model text for all who bear authority in the Church – any Church – any Christian assembly, any workplace, any school. There are no positions of power, only positions of service. The day we forget this is the day we've lost what it's all about.

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. When it comes to illnesses which have been carried by our Saviour, it occurs to me that there are many more Social Justice Calendar entries which speak of a growing awareness of mental illness. We have a World Mental Health Day, a World Suicide Prevention Day, and World Alzheimer's Day. This reveals that we are more comfortable talking about mental health than we once were. We say "depression" more easily than we would have done thirty years ago. Sometimes a mental illness can be passed down through a family. Sometimes, situations can trigger it. Sometimes, as in my own case, brain surgery left me with depression. I was assured by a psychiatrist at the Prince of Wales Hospital, that this is an expected legacy of brain surgery. And so, I think about a Saviour who bore our sicknesses of mind and spirit, along with cancer in all its ugly forms. Most mental illnesses are managed now with medication. And we are privileged to live in our present age, rather than in a time when these illnesses were not understood – indeed when a range of illnesses were not understood. Let us thank God for this.
2. My response to this text is to remind myself that there is someone I can go to, when I need to talk about temptation, and the ups and downs of life. There is someone who has been there and done that. This is my Lord Jesus Christ. One day, about twenty-four years ago, I went into our Church unexpectedly, in the middle of the afternoon. There on the sanctuary was a woman, an elderly woman touching the feet of Jesus on our large cross. She didn't know I was there because she was lost in prayer. I felt like an intruder. When she noticed me, she turned to me and said: "He knows what it's like. He can help me." A prayer of profound faith and simplicity of heart.
3. My response to this text comes from reading "Justice Trends" for September 2018. The heading was that Governments are asleep at the wheel on housing emergency. Toby Hall quotes New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who committed her government to spending an extra \$100 million on emergency housing so that no citizen need sleep rough over the winter. While recognizing that the housing was transitional, Ardern said: "We couldn't stand by and see people in cars or

completely unsuitable housing in the meantime.” This attitude speaks of service – an authority figure serving the homeless. In Australia, “budget night came and went with barely a whisper on the housing crisis or the crisis of homelessness.” (Toby Hall is Group Chief Executive Officer, St. Vincent’s Health Australia).

***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.***