

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 14 October 2018
28th 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:

October 15: St. Teresa of Avila (Memorial)
October 17: St. Ignatius of Antioch (Memorial)
October 18: St. Luke (Feast)

In the Australian Church:

October 16: Ballarat – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Paul Bird, CSSR (2012)

In the Social Justice Calendar:

October 14: Beginning of Anti-Poverty Week.
October 15: International Day of Rural Women
October 16: World Food Day
October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.
October 19: 2001 – Sinking of the Sievs.X

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Wisdom 7:7-11
Hebrews 4:12-13
Mark 10:17-30.

Lectio: Read the first text from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 7, verses 7-11. Read slowly and prayerfully, really listening to the text as you read aloud. This is about our on-going formation as Christians.

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

The radiance of wisdom never sleeps.

The radiance of wisdom lights up the darkness.

While most study of the Old Testament Literature includes the Book of Wisdom, one course in particular has been the most formative for me – a course from the Biblical Institute of Toulouse. It was available to monastic women in the 1980s and so I took the chance and completed it. The first sentence which impacted on me was: “For the one who wishes to master life instead of abandoning self to blind and uncontrollable forces, wisdom is an innate need, and therefore sapiential reflection is a universal human phenomenon.”

1. In wisdom literature, the emphasis is on the individual.

2. Reason or reflection is the medium of divine revelation in wisdom.
3. A third distinctive characteristic of wisdom literature concerns the international or cosmopolitan flavour of wisdom. Wisdom is not the sole domain of Israel but belongs to every human being from whatever national sphere.
4. Wisdom depends on each human being and his or her ability to accumulate knowledge, enabling them to live the good life.

In this text, (7:7-11), wisdom is an entity, is personified, is light, is part of most ancient Religions, and part of Indigenous traditions across the world. Wayne Teasdale presents wisdom as follows: “The mystic character expresses an almost infinite sensitivity to all beings, human and otherwise. A mystic or contemplative person is animated by Wisdom, understands life, its pitfalls, its heights and its great potential.” I prayed and understanding was given to me.

A person who has been blessed with the gift of wisdom is gentle, patient and kind. (The Mystic Heart, by Wayne Teasdale, page 121). In her company all good things came to me.

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 89

The response is: FILL US WITH YOUR LOVE O LORD,
AND WE WILL SING FOR JOY.

Psalm 89 is a psalm of pondering – pondering of the brevity of life in this world. And so, it is a prayer for wisdom, and for understanding. “Make us know the shortness of our life, that we may gain wisdom of heart”.

Lectio: Read the second text from Hebrews 4:12-13.

Meditatio: This part of *Lectio Divina*, is about explaining the text and reflecting as we hear the explanation (like the monks of the early centuries).

Be aware, that we can easily read too quickly, or be distracted.

About *Lectio Divina*, Blessed Columba Marmion says: “We read under the eye of God until the heart is touched and leaps into flame.”

This short text from Hebrews is one of three key texts for an understanding of *Lectio Divina*. The word of God is the focus of this text. The word of God is described as:

- something alive and active.
- something which cuts like a double-edged sword but more finely.
- something which can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow.
- something which can judge the secret emotions and thoughts.
- something from which no created thing can hide.
- a force which uncovers everything and exposes everything to God, to whom we must give an account.

After consulting three commentaries on this text, it appears that the text means exactly what it says. It is speaking about the word of God (the Sacred Scriptures). Only a few scholars believe it is also referring to the Word Incarnate – Jesus Christ.

If we pray daily with the Sacred Scriptures, allowing the word to work with the soil of our hearts, then we can be sure that the word of God will affect us in the way this text explains it.

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. What words, what phrases, what sentences are to change your life? I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from Matthew 5:3.

HAPPY THE POOR IN SPIRIT, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS.

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from Mark 10:17-30.**

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: Mark's Gospel was most probably written in 70 A.D., and was written to deepen the faith of the members of his community. This long text contains three units on wealth and the kingdom: the story of the rich man (10:17-22; Jesus' instruction to the disciples (10:23-27; and his teaching about rewards for giving up riches (10:28-31. (Cf.NJBC 41:64). Jesus does not say a person can't have riches, but addresses the problem of one's riches getting in the way of discipleship. It is about being a disciple of Jesus, which affects every part of our lives, especially the choices we make on a daily basis. Riches, things we don't need, can surround us and consume our time and attention.

As we read the Gospel again a number of times, may we ponder on the things that surround us and consume our time and attention. I am using the word "things" to describe anything from too many cars to too many pairs of shoes; too many garden statues, or too many wall hangings; too many cushions or too many brooms.

Anything surrounding us as a "too many" thing needs dealing with.

As we read, may we listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of our heart, to bring forth the melody of our response.

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. The Word of God is life-changing for me, when I respond to it in a practical way.

1. My response to this Wisdom text is to share a little of the wisdom sayings which have guided me from time to time. We all have these helpful sayings in our journal. Theodore Roosevelt said: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Teilhard de Chardin always speaks to my soul: "Someday, 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.”

2. My response to this text is to share how painful the Word of God is, as it cuts through the motives and thoughts and expressions of my heart, and sorts out the only ones that matter – those born of love. When the “cutting” begins it usually throws me into an emotional whirlpool. The other word for this process is “purification”. The thoughts and motives of my heart are purified. They are plunged into boiling water to be purified like medical instruments used to be; they are thrown on the fire, of Divine Love and there purified by the fire of fires; and there banged into the right shape. And then there is the image of the potter’s wheel, and the clay being thrown back on to the wheel until the right shape appears. All these processes can take place when we allow the word of God to open our hearts and go to work on us. The ride is rough – we need to hang on.
3. By nature I am a collector, hence I am the right person for Archivist in my community. I don’t throw things away as being irrelevant. However, on a more personal level, I collect lots of other things which I don’t need. Thomas Merton, in “Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander”, said that: “In losing touch with being and thus with God, we have fallen into a senseless idolatry of production and consumption for their own sakes.” And my dear friend and wisdom model, Sr. Joan Chittister says: “Dependence on God may be what is lacking in a society where consumerism and accumulation have become the root diseases of a world in which everything is not enough and nothing suffices.” I have shared both these quotations with you before.

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.