

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)  
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES  
Sunday 11 November 2018**

**32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.**

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

**Before moving into prayer with the Sacred Scriptures, let us look at the week ahead in the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.**

**In the Liturgy:**

November 12: St. Josaphat, Memorial

November 13: All Benedictine and Carmelite Saints.

November 14: All Souls Benedictine and Carmelite.

November 16: St. Gertrud of Helfta, Benedictine Nun, and Mystic of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Memorial. (Feast in some Benedictine Communities).

November 17: St. Elizabeth of Hungary. (Memorial)

**In the Australian Church:**

November 15: SALE – Patronal Feast – Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

WILCANNIA-FORBES, Anniversary of the death of Bishop Barry Collins (2000)

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

November 11: Armistice Day. Armistice Day this year celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War 1 (1918).

November 12: 1991 – Dili Massacre, Timor-Leste. More than 271 People killed.

November 14: World Diabetes Day

November 16: International Day for Tolerance.

1989: Murder of six Jesuit priests and two co-workers in El Salvador.

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

**The readings are:**

1 Kings 17:10-16

Hebrews 9:24-28

Mark 12:38-44.

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the First Book of Kings, ch. 17, verses 10-16.**

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.**

Just four verses long, but food for a lifetime.

Zarephath was a Sidonian town – territory acknowledged by all as Baal's, not the Lord's. Yet the power of the God of Israel causes drought even there, and protects those the Lord favours with miraculous food, similar to manna (cf. "cakes baked with oil," in Numbers 11:8). (New Jerome Biblical Comm.10:29). It is a story of

desperation and of faith. Although the prophet speaks on the Lord's behalf, the woman does not recognise this because the upper-most reality is where the next meal is coming from. She and her son are close to death by starvation. When in faith, she does as Elijah asks, the miracle which takes place is her reward. It is a miracle on the part of Elijah who is acting in the Lord's name.

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.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 145

**The response is:** PRAISE THE LORD MY SOUL.

Psalm 145 is a psalm in praise of God's fidelity. We are called in this Psalm to ponder on the Lord's fidelity to us. The Lord is just to the oppressed, gives bread to the hungry, sets prisoners free, gives sight to the blind, upholds the widow and orphan. We can make the appropriate links to the Gospel, and find the many examples of where Jesus, Son of God, carried out the work of God on earth. This exercise, as part of one's psalm journal, looks at the Christology of the Psalm. Where is Christ in this Psalm?

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, Hebrews 9:24-28.

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

Readings from Hebrews have been with us for the last few Sundays. This Sunday's reading takes the same theme as we have been exposed to. Indeed it is not a theme, but a divine event which confronts us. Jesus "has made his appearance once and for all, now at the end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself." Bl. Columba Marmion says that "the crucifix is the most vivid revelation of sin."

Christ's tortured twisted and bleeding Body on Calvary, is the most vivid revelation of sin. One of the intentions of the Letter to the Hebrews is to show that Jesus Christ is greater than the prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua and **the Jewish Priesthood**. (cf. Hebrews 4:14-10:18). These are the chapters we have been following for a number of weeks. Jesus Christ died once and for all, to do away with sin and death. No need for any further Calvaries. It has been done ONCE AND FOR ALL.

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* No 2.

**The Gospel Verse is adapted from Matthew 5:3.**

HAPPY THE POOR IN SPIRIT; THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS!

**Lectio:** Now read the Gospel text from Mark 12:38-44.

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

*The poor widow has put more in than all who contributed.*

Paulinus of Nola, commenting on this text says: “*What have you*’, asks the apostle, *‘that you have not received?’*. We have nothing that does not come from God. We are dependent upon him for our very existence. Call to mind the widow who forgot herself in her concern for the poor, and, thinking only of the life to come, gave away all her means of subsistence as Jesus himself bears witness.”

In the first reading from 1 Kings 17:10-16, a widow, on the point of death, and with a child also on the point of death, did, in faith, what Elijah had asked her, and the same amount of meal and oil remained as if it hadn’t been used. The two widows are faith-filled women. As opposed to the faith of these poor widows, Jesus presents the scribes: liking to walk about in long robes, having people bow in reverence to them, taking the front seats in the synagogues, and places of honour at banquets. These are the people who steal the property of the poor (symbolized by the widow). They say lengthy prayers aloud for all to hear. They are Show People – out front, always well off. They are the ones who are not dependent on God because they don’t need to be – they are complacent and contented.

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 evangelisation 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. My response is to the woman’s faith, and to the reward for her faith. Jesus said: “Give and it will be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” And here we have: “Jar of meal was not spent, jug of oil was not emptied.” In giving, with gentleness, patience, and freedom we will find a miraculous amount of “time” left over. In John Ortberg’s book, “God is closer than you think”, he suggests to the reader that “Tomorrow may be the most dangerous word in the English language. What matters most is this: God is present in this instant, offering to partner with us in whatever we face. The failure to embrace “the sacrament of the present moment” will keep us from being fully present to God right here, right now.” (page 71). And Psalm 94 reminds us: “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” The call of faith comes to us at any given moment of our day. The result is always a miracle. Faith calls to us to give without counting the cost. The woman in today’s first reading responded in faith, not the first time, but the second time. It was blind faith in the request of Elijah, and it meant that starvation would follow. She and her son would have no food. She didn’t ask Elijah to come back tomorrow – she responded today. For any of us, the call to give in a spirit of faith is most often difficult. We have a lot to do around the house and gardens. We have a run of committee meetings, and just can’t possibly give to others in their various needs. However, when

we do stretch, the result is a miracle: we are free, at peace, and filled with God's grace.

2. My response to this text from Hebrews is in the form of a prayer which I have in my journal and prayer now and then: "My Lord and Master, by your loving acceptance of pain, give me the courage to accept all I have to suffer. By your meekness, extinguish the natural disturbance of my heart against those who injure me. By your silence, help me to cease murmuring and complaining. O Jesus, touch my heart with your love, that I may learn to pray in the hour of my sorrow and pain. Lord Jesus, when my heart is without love, give me strength to bear my afflictions with patience. In the hour when the thorns of others pierce my sensitive nature, give me strength, O Lord, to welcome them and to grow through all these trials into deeper love for you and for one another. The prayer is from the "Retreat Discourses of Bishop Cuthbert Hedley, OSB". He advises that we pray this prayer with the crucifix in our hands, and then we will know peace and acceptance – "for it is as if Jesus laid His hand upon us and healed us with the anointing of his presence."
3. The widows speak to me of the poverty, starvation, neglect, irreverence for human life – all of which we are familiar in this present age. George Bernard Shaw said in 1907: "The greatest of our evils and the worst of our crimes is poverty."

*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.*