

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 20 January 2019**

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.

For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Two

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

In the Liturgy:

21: St. Agnes (Memorial)

24: St. Francis de Sales (Memorial)

25: Conversion of St. Paul (Feast)

26: Australia Day – in Parishes this day is celebrated at Mass. At Jamberoo Abbey, the Liturgy is celebrated both at Mass and in the Liturgy of the Hours. This Liturgy was the first recording the community made, with the title: “Our Land Sings Praise”.

In the Australian Church:

23: Hobart – Dedication of the Cathedral (1881)

In the Social Justice Calendar:

26 1972 – Establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Isaiah 62:1-5

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

John 2:1-11.

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading from the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 62, verses 1-5.**

Read it in a reverent way. The Word of God is sacred. Let us give ourselves to the sacred text, and open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit calling us forth to respond. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you read. This is the true “oratio” (prayer) of *Lectio Divina*.

***Meditatio*: Understanding the text so that we can make an informed response.**

Zion and Jerusalem are the subjects of this text. Combined they are the “her” and the unfaithful “her”.

God is not going to tire of his people – He will forgive, and exhort them until “her integrity shines out like the dawn...and her salvation flames like a torch...” A “new name” is part of the process of renewal (a fresh beginning). “My Delight” and “The Wedded” are the new names.

The new names are opposed to the former names: “Abandoned” and “Forsaken”.

Now take time apart with this reading. Listen to the Holy Spirit placing unction on certain words and phrases. The prayer of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is the *oratio* of *Lectio Divina* – the true prayer which will lead to a lived response. After quietly

pondering over many hours (days), you will want to make your response. Maybe your response will be an immediate one. This does not mean that we cease to ponder on the text throughout the week. *Lectio Divina* is a way of *life*. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 1*.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95

The response is: PROCLAIM HIS MARVELLOUS DEEDS TO ALL THE NATIONS.

Psalm 95 is about the universal reign of the true God. It is a Psalm of 13 verses. We are given just four verses. But within these verses, the language of praise is dominant.

Lectio: Read the Second Text from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 4-11.

Pause. Read it again. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most authentic melody of your response...

Meditatio: Understanding the text in order to make an informed response to it.

This text written by Paul, is about unity, not so much about gifts. We could say that it is about unity in diversity. The focus is on unity. Gifts given are the “work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.”

Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, commenting on this text in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary states what most of us can see, reading between the lines: “He (Paul) discerned an egocentric competitiveness” within the Corinthian community – a competitiveness “that was detrimental to church unity.” Spiritual elitism needed Paul to help the Corinthian community return to Christian love.

The message is never more relevant than now. Within our own Christian communities, unity, harmony, both born of the love of God are the foundations of sincere Christian living.

It is a simple message, and a profound one at the same time. Spiritual elitism is alive and well in our Parish communities and prayer groups. We can all give examples.

Take time over this text before making your response. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt your response, by placing unction on a word or words. Or, if the Holy Spirit is not prompting you to make a response to this text, move on to the Gospel Verse.

I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

GOD HAS CALLED US WITH THE GOSPEL TO SHARE IN THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from John 2:1-11.

Meditatio: Some informed background to the text.

This text is full of symbolism. We need to understand the symbolic meaning in order to plunge into it as into a refreshing pool. The water jars symbolise the Old Covenant (Testament)

Mary's words, "They have no wine" means "They have no Saviour, and therefore no Salvation.

Mary's words, "Do whatever He tells you", lead to the inauguration of the New Covenant. The best wine is symbolic of the New Covenant, and it was Jesus who was sent to inaugurate it.

The Gospel ends by telling us that "this was the first of the signs given by Jesus...He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him."

Stand back from the Gospel and ponder. Hear the words: BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

***Evangelizatio* is my LIVED RESPONSE to the sacred scriptures given to me each week by the Church for my formation as a Christian. If I don't respond, they are merely texts on a page. When I do respond, they are my life.**

1. My response is to the pattern of unfaithfulness, followed by exile, followed by forgiveness and restoration. It is the same pattern for me. When I am unfaithful to God by slipping easily into other substitutes, I put myself in a place of exile. And then, God waits for me with open arms to welcome me back into his heart.
2. My response is to unity in diversity, or acknowledgment, and appreciation of, the gifts of others. Appreciation of the gifts of others is often overshadowed by jealousy. And jealousy is both destructive of one's own life and the lives of others. Parishes, classrooms, social clubs and family – unity in all these situations can often be destroyed by jealousy. Some of us may be fans of Shakespeare. In Othello, III.iii, we can focus on Shakespeare saying it as it needs to be said: "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-ey'd monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on." Jealousy is everywhere in this world. Let us guard our hearts against it and strive towards unity, appreciation and love.
3. My response is to the words: "Do whatever he tells you." These are the words of the Mother of God. And no, Jesus does not come physically into our midst and issue a series of commands. Rather, he has left us the legacy of the Gospel. In the reading of the Gospels we will find what we are to do. An example that springs to mind for me is from Luke's Gospel: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who persecute you. Give and it will be given unto you." Elsewhere the words of Jesus tell us to "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." And again: "Love one another as I have loved you." And on the cross:

“Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This week, I will take the time to recall the texts that come easily to mind, and I will search out other texts from the four Gospels and make a note of them. From then on, I can focus on just one text a month, and try to respond to it in my life. If one month is too crowded with other concerns, I will take longer over just one text. The temptation is to plunge in and do the lot. Unfortunately that is not real life. Life happens. Life is where it is at for us. In my own family relatives, I once helped a cousin whose husband was a gambler. We didn’t sit down and read the scriptures. I simply spent time with her, trying to see what was best for her and the children. This took 11 months. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

*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.*