

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 12 May 2019**  
**4th Sunday of Easter, Year C.**

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

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:**

May 14: St. Matthias (Feast)

**In the Australian Church:**

May 15: Sandhurst – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral, 1977.

May 15: Wagga Wagga – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Gerard Hanna, 2002.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

May 12: Mother's Day.

May 15: International Day of Families.

May 15: On this day in 1891, 1931, and 1961, there were three Encyclicals launched by Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius XI and Pope John XXIII. (in that order)

May 16: World Debt Day

May 17: Sydney – death of Fr. Ted Kennedy, apostle of the city's Indigenous people.

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

**The readings are:**

Acts 13:14 and 43-52

Apocalypse 7:9, and 14-17

John 10:27-30

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 13, verse 14, and verses 43-52.**

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.**

This text is a type of journalistic recounting of a major event. The event is the proclamation of the word of the Lord and the beginnings of a mission to the whole world by the first missionaries. Jesus said: "I have made you a light for the nations, so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth." This event meets with the expected opposition. Jesus had warned his disciples that this would happen. Jesus had also told them that if they were rejected in one place, "shake the dust from your feet and go elsewhere". And this is exactly what they did.

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 99

**The response is:** WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, THE SHEEP OF HIS FLOCK.

Psalm 99: “The Psalm bids us rejoice in God because we are utterly his. Its repetition is ecstatic: He made us; we belong to him; we are his people.

From God, the relationship draws forth a steadfast love, for God cannot but love what is his own.” (This is a short excerpt from the commentary in the Jamberoo Abbey Psalters). Note what words, attitudes, or aspirations of the Psalm are capable of a deeper meaning in the light of the Gospel, This is the way we break open the Christology of the Psalm and discover the permanent value of each Psalm. If you find the word “Christology” daunting, then simply ask the question: “Where is Christ in this Psalm.”

**Lectio:** Read the second text from **Apocalypse 7:9 and 14-17.**

**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.”

Is this simply a panorama of eternal life?

1. People of every nation, race, tribe and language
2. Dressed in white (the colour of purity, cleansing, freshness).
3. Holding green palms (the colour of new life.)
4. The privilege of serving God day and night in the sanctuary of the Holy of Holies.
5. They will never hunger or thirst again.
6. The lamb is there, at the throne of God. The Lamb is shepherd.
7. Because of this reality, they will never be hungry or thirsty again.
8. No sun, nor scorching wind will ever plague them.

Read the text again, ponder on it. What phrases, what sentences are to change your life? I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

**Lectio:** The Gospel Verse is from **John 10:14.**

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD, SAYS HE LORD;  
I KNOW MY SHEEP, AND MINE KNOW ME.

**Lectio:** Read the Gospel text from **John 10:27-30**

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:** This Gospel text from John 10, is connected with the second reading from the Apocalypse.

The “They will never...” motif is present throughout both readings.

They will never hunger or thirst

Neither the sun nor scorching wind will ever plague them.

And then – in the Gospel:

They will never be lost

No one will ever steal them from me.

These last two lines can be misread, misunderstood, and misleading. We have our part to play. We will never be lost or stolen from Christ, if we respond daily by living in the presence of Christ, praying some or all of the “Liturgy of the Hours”, and praying with the Word of God. This is what we need to do in order to maintain our relationship with Christ.

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.**

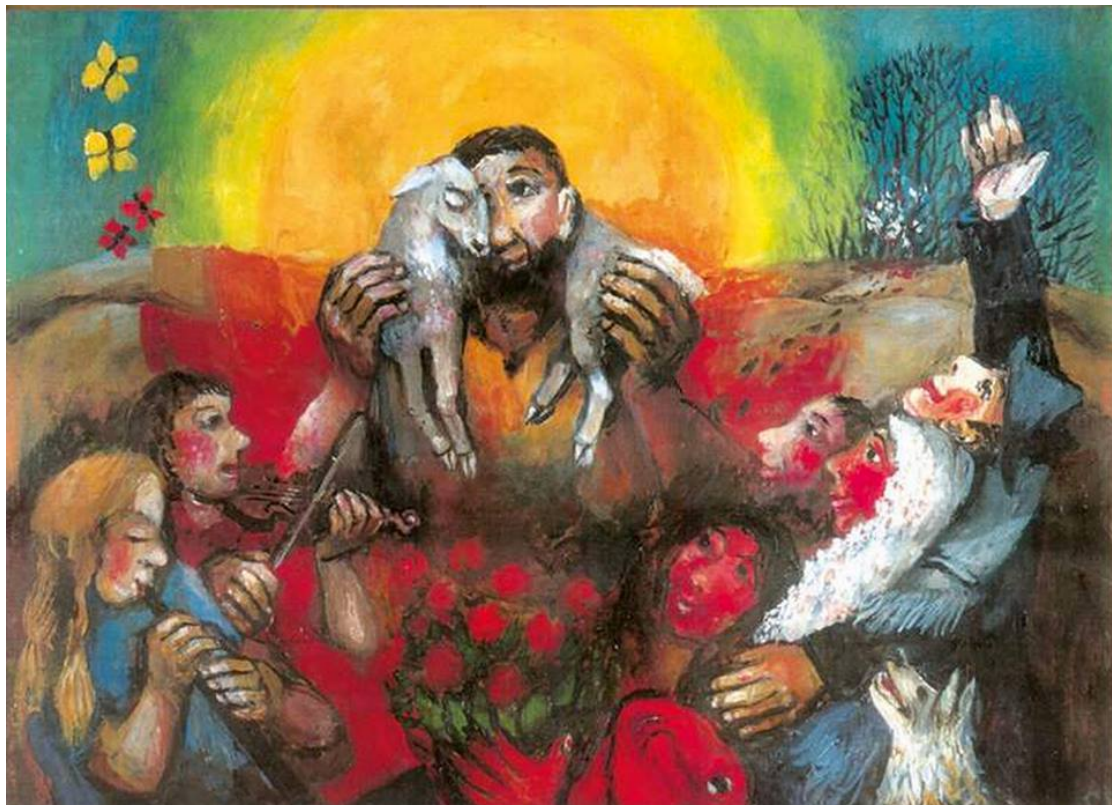
1. My response is to the words: “I have made you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth.” “Light”, Thomas Merton says, in his book, *Seeds of Contemplation*, leads the reader away from “the wrong flame”. He warns of life becoming “a concentrated campaign for ‘lights’ and ‘consolations’”. This is the wrong flame. The right flame which lights our being, is the flame that is intensely pure, the flame within a spirit liberated by God.” This is the flame which enables the Christian to be that “light for the nations, so that the salvation of God may reach the ends of the earth.”
2. My response is to the power of this text, keeping in mind that John wrote this book to encourage persecuted Christians not to lose faith. It is a magnificent and magnanimous panorama of a God who rewards his faithful followers! Christianity has been the object of persecution many times throughout its history. To date, Christians have survived the poison arrows and continued on in faith. But the persecution we live with today is that from within the Church – those who have brought shame upon all of us because they have moved away from a God of love, and committed crimes against God’s little ones. What we need to do with this text written by John is to hold on to hope, and go on believing that the Lamb of God, who gave his life for us, is also our shepherd, the one who continues to gather us inside the sheepfold. Psalm 22(23): “The Lord is my Shepherd”, is right as a prayer to begin *Lectio Divina* each day.
3. My response to this text is to the words: “The sheep who belong to me, listen to my voice.” I was led by the Spirit to the depths of this text 35 years ago.

My primary response has been to hear the voice of Christ in his people: all the voices of Christ, in all his people. St. Augustine said, speaking of the Psalms: “The voice of Christ is not strange to me. And as I pray the psalms seven times a day, I also hear the voices of God’s people on earth, those crying out for justice; those who at this moment are dying from starvation; those in detention centres and refugee camps and those who go daily to care for them; I can say also: “The voice of Christ is not strange to me.”

*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.*



*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. Jn 10:27*

*Image by Sieger Köder*