

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 30 June 2019
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week One

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

In the Liturgy this week:

July 3: St. Thomas (Feast).

In the Australian Church:

July 3: Willcannia-Forbes – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green (2014).

July 5: Broome – Anniversary of the death of Bishop John Jobst (2014).

The Social Justice Calendar:

June 30: 1945 – Introduction of unemployment benefits in Australia.

July 1: 2012 – Commencement of the Fair Work Amendment Act, ensuring fair pay and conditions for outworkers in the garment industry.

July 2: 2016 – election of Linda Burney as first Aboriginal woman member of the Australian Parliament.

July 6: 1859 – Massacre of Aboriginal people at Chimney Pots, Grampians, Victoria.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

1 Kings 19:16 & 19-21

Galatians 5:1 & 13-18

Luke 9:51-62.

***Lectio:* Read the First Reading from 1 Kings 19:16 and 19-21.**

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:* A little background to the text, so that we understand it and can make an informed response to it.**

These verses are taken out of 19:1-21. Elijah is escaping from danger. In verses 13b-19a, Elijah desires to resign his mission. The Lord answers by naming Elijah’s successor. Verses 19-21: Elijah begins his return journey and soon encounters Elisha in an agricultural setting: the field, the plough, the oxen and paid labour. Elisha’s investiture (the cloak), recalls the Lord’s investiture of Elijah (vs 19) and he commands him, “Go, return.” Compare this with verse 15.

Elijah’s return to the ordinary world of food and companionship coincides with Elisha’s abandonment of family and previous life, in order to follow Elijah. (Notes summarized from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary 10:33). We might think

about this simple call from God and the investiture, as compared with the elaborate liturgical ceremonies which have gained more and more trimmings over the last two thousand years. Jesus called his twelve apostles, and they left all to follow him. There was no elaborate ceremony. Just something to think about. Have we complicated what was once a simple investiture?

Take time to reflect on this text with its challenge. When the Lord calls us to do anything in his name, he will be there beside us. Build into each day some quiet time. Be still before the Lord. After pondering over many hours (days), you will want to make your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 15

The Response is: YOU ARE MY INHERITANCE O LORD.

Psalm 15 is a Psalm of confidence.

Lectio: Read the Second Reading, from Galatians 5:1 & 13-18.

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, so we can make an informed response to it.

Paul wrote this letter to the Churches of Galatia after his second visit to the Galatian churches, when “he learned in Ephesus that some agitators in Galatia were impugning his authority as an apostle (1:1, 12 – apparently on the grounds that his commission did not come from Christ); they further claimed that he was not preaching the true gospel (1:7), because he did not insist on observance of Mosaic regulations.” (NJBC, 47:7).

Verse 1 is not difficult to grasp: For freedom, Christ has set us free. So: “Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.”

Verses 13-18 are part of verses 13-26: “Walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Verse 18 is an interesting verse. It means that, “under the influence of the indwelling Spirit, the Christian has an interior principle to counteract the ‘flesh’ and is no longer merely confronted with the extrinsic norm of the law.” (NJBC 47:30). How freeing is that, and yet we still struggle. Why not claim that “interior principle”, and walk in freedom and peace?

At the same time, we are to be vigilant concerning our freedom. Christ’s freedom is a beautiful gift to us, and it is too precious for us to become complacent. When we do, we easily slip into uncharitable talk, or exerting power and control over others. Paul reminds us of the one golden commandment: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Take time over the text before making your response to it in the days ahead.

I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is from 1 Samuel 3:9 and John 6:68. A powerful combination!

SPEAK O LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING;
YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 9:51-62.

Meditatio: A little background to the text, so that we may gain an understanding, and make an informed response.

It is a text which needs some scholarly help. Robert Karris names verses 51-56, “the Samaritan rejection and nonretaliation.” The Samaritans wouldn’t receive Jesus because he was going to Jerusalem. Jesus did not want the disciples to retaliate. Why would he? His message was one of peace. We might stop at this point, to think of a world without retaliation of any kind. Having prayed with the Gospels for most of our lives, we already know that the Jews and Samaritans did not extend friendship to one another (one of those historical tragedies that never healed). It is interesting that 2 Kings 1:10,12 narrates “how Elijah twice called down fire to destroy his enemies.” So, the disciples are doing the Old Testament “stuff” – retaliation, revenge, battle, slaying of one’s enemies.

Verses 57-62 pose just as great a challenge.

Jesus uses what is known as “hyperbole or exaggeration to jolt listeners out of their staid way of ordering their universe and to view existence from an entirely new angle – that of discipleship in response to the kingdom of God.

That should hurt us. Who wants to be jolted out of a staid way of ordering the universe? It is awfully comfortable when one remains in a “staid way of ordering the universe”. Robert Karris doesn’t advise analysing each hyperbole to the point of stripping each of power.

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 reflect on what I call, “the procession of continuity”. It is as certain as the dawn. Recently we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Blessing and Opening of our Abbey (Trinity Sunday, 1989). One of my contributions as Archivist was to find and display a photograph of every sister who had died since the historic event in 1989. I was just getting on with this task when two people emailed asking for information on a relative who had been a member of our community in the 19th and 20th centuries respectively. Two people are researching their own family story, - their procession of continuity. The important thing for all of us to realise is that we are just passing through, in a procession which began long before us and will go on long after us. At some point along the way we will be an Elijah passing on to the next in line, what we have learned in life – the wisdom we have gained, the skills we have and the ministry where we have served God. This procession of continuity, this passing on to those who will come after us – is about movement not stagnation. It is about passing on the gifts we have been given by God, not guarding them jealously or in a locked cupboard. It’s up to us to be free about this spirit of continuity.

2. The commandment, “Love your neighbour as yourself”, calls forth my response. While I’ve never understood what it is to love myself, apart from acceptance, I do understand one thing, and this one thing steers me in all situations. It has become a way of life. It is: “Would I like to be on the receiving end of slander, calumny and detraction?” Of course I wouldn’t. So, I don’t indulge in it and direct it at others or another, like a poisoned arrow. Would I like it if someone bashed a shopping trolley into my car? No I wouldn’t, so I must take things slowly and not let a trolley run away with me, scraping another car because I can’t control it. It’s all basic knowledge. As we say these days: “It’s not rocket science.” It is just charity. Some people kick other people when the others are down. I would not want that done to me. If I live alone, have I thought about the volume of the sound on my television? Have I considered the peace of my neighbours. Why not use any one of a hundred fancy headphones, so that I am the only one who hears it? I wouldn’t like it impinging on my privacy, so why do it to another. There are a million examples. Note some of them down – the ones that apply to you.
3. Once in my life, the third hyperbole was quoted at me, when I wanted to leave religious life and go home. I was 18 after all! The nun who took me into her office and gave me a talking to was elderly. She just couldn’t get her mind around the fact that having put my hand to the plough I would want to go home to my family. At the time it was a painful experience. In retrospect I’m glad she challenged me. God was with me and guiding me, even though I wanted to retaliate.

*Lectio Divina is Holy Reading -
reading of the Sacred Scriptures
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.
It is about reading (and listening), reflecting,
praying in tune with the Holy Spirit within me, resting in God,
and responding in the way I live.*