

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 9 June 2019

Pentecost Sunday

For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Two (from Monday onwards)

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:

June 10: The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. (Memorial)

June 11: Barnabas. (Memorial)

June 13: St. Anthony of Padua. (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:

June 15: Maitland-Newcastle Episcopal Ordination of Bishop William Wright (2011)

Perth: Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, SDB (2007)

In the Social Justice Calendar:

June 10: 1838 – the Myall Creek Massacre.

June 10: 1935 – Establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous in New York.

June 11: 1975 – Enactment of Racial Discrimination Act.

June 12: World day against child labour.

June 12: 1988 – Presentation by Aboriginal Leaders of the Barunga Statement to Prime Minister Bob Hawke.

June 14: World Blood Donor Day.

June 15: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Acts 2:1-11

Romans 8:8-17

John 14:15-16 and 23-26

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Acts 2:1-11**

As always, it is best to read the Word of God 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.**

The Acts of the Apostles is Luke's historical account of events following the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the spread of the Gospel to the then known world. Last Sunday we read the account of the Ascension of Jesus into heaven – his going to his

Father. Historically, Pentecost was celebrated 50 days after Easter. For the Jews it was the day they remembered the giving of the Law of God to Moses on Mount Sinai. For Christians it was the day the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles who had gathered together in one room. Luke doesn't give facts, - we might ask: "Which room? Which house?" Luke 24:46-53 says that after the Ascension, the apostles went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God." The text relating the historical Pentecost, doesn't provide details but goes straight to the event which took place, and which empowered the apostles to go out from that room and proclaim "the marvels of God." We could make a comparison here: They were together in one room and received the flames of fire – a fire that sent them forth to the world in the name of Jesus. We, when we go to our inner room, and remain there without looking for distractions, then we too will know the divine fire of the Holy Spirit, sending us forth into the whole world (whatever that world is), in order to proclaim the marvels of the Lord.

A Carthusian monk presents an in-depth teaching on the coming of the Holy Spirit: "It is the Holy Spirit, the bond of love between the Father and the Son, who infuses his love into our hearts and makes us like God, and capable of knowing and loving him." And: To "be a human being before God is to be straining towards the elusive. It is to drink and to be eternally thirsty. At times it is to feel the presence only in the emptiness of absence. It is to hope against all hope. It is never knowing if one possesses all or nothing. It is to be a mute cry." ("From Advent to Pentecost" by a Carthusian Monk, page 222.) Fr. Karl Rahner says that we "have to stop looking for [the Holy Spirit] only under explicitly religious labels of the kind to which our religious training has accustomed us." Instead, we have to loosen up in order to witness the way the Spirit is at work in our lives and the lives of others.

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. You will know when it is time to respond.

Lectio Divina is a way of life – allow God's word to travel with you.

I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103

The response is a prayer:

LORD, SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

Psalm 103 is very clearly a Psalm of worship. Pray with the Psalm throughout the week, marking the words, phrases or lines which speak to you and call forth prayer from your heart. When this takes place it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

***Lectio:* Read the Second Mass Reading, Romans 8:8-17**

Meditatio: This is a mammoth text. Many of us will have written those dreaded assignments on justification by faith, and gone round and round, walking the path it maps out. It is a bit like walking through a maze.

We have to ask: What is the main message of this text? And then we will find that there are several main messages.

There is the warning about “unspiritual things”.

There is the proclamation that the Spirit of God has made a home in us.

Then there is that “justification” thing! Does it ring a bell? Justification in the Letter to the Romans! Let us translate it and call it “freedom”. We have been set free and at rights with God, through the passion and death and resurrection of Jesus.

Sin is death. Christ is life.

The Holy Spirit lives within us because we have been set free from the unspiritual, from death and from sin.

Every believer moved by the Spirit is a child of God.

The Spirit within us is a Spirit which cements the relationship between us and God – it is the Spirit of children causing us to call God our Father.

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 2*.

The Gospel Verse is the prayer to the Holy Spirit which we pray not just at Pentecost but throughout the year:

*COME HOLY SPIRIT, FILL THE HEARTS OF YOUR FAITHFUL
AND KINDLE IN THEM THE FIRE OF YOUR LOVE.*

Lectio: Now read the Gospel text from John 14:15-16 and 23-26

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

The main message of this Gospel text is that the advocate, the Holy Spirit, is the one who will lead us to understand the sacred scriptures, to pray when we can't find words, to remember the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, and to lead us into the depths of Divine Love.

When we go to *Lectio Divina* each day, we read a text. While we read, a word or words will touch us deep within. This is the Holy Spirit. We describe it as the Holy Spirit placing unction (anointing) on a word, and causing us to respond. Usually we linger on that word and our hearts respond. Sometimes it is too tender, too intimate for us to talk about. When it happens it is a call from the Lord. The traditional term we use for this is *oratio*, (from *ora*, pray). Do we remember the Latin response to the Litanies: *Ora pro nobis*, pray for us.

In *Lectio Divina*, *oratio* is about the Holy Spirit working within our lives, praying to the Father, and helping each one of us to draw closer and closer to the Father and Son. 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 evangelization 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 reflections on the meaning of Pentecost by Fr. Karl Rahner. He understands the signs of the Spirit in the following way: “If someone succeeds, without knowing how, in really breaking out of the prison of egoism; If someone not only gets pleasures and delights in life, but

possesses a joy which knows no limit.” (The Great Church Year, page 216). This week, I will try to be aware of the Spirit at work in the women of my community. Karl Rahner says: “The Spirit gives life through death. All the deaths we die on our pilgrimage through life – all the deaths we die, are the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work within.” (page 217).

2. The writings of Jean Vanier have led me to respond to the reality that I am a “child of God” through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a long time since my confirmation, and since I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit through charismatic renewal. In other words it’s a long time since I have been reborn. Jean Vanier says: “The newborn child is totally weak. Without the protective love and tenderness of the parents the child will die. But if it is certain of love, it will be happy and at peace and will rest in the security of their love. The child will not fear its weakness...the child just knows that it is loved; it believes and trusts.” This surely is a mini biography of my relationship with God (my parent). I am weak, but loved and protected. I am weak, but at peace. I believe and trust in the magnificent gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit which casts out fear.
3. The Holy Spirit is the Advocate, the one who teaches me about the depths of God! St. John of the Cross said: “Before the divine fire enters the soul and becomes one with its depths, the Holy Spirit wounds it, destroying and consuming the imperfections of its evil habits. St. John said: “The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit He has given us.” LOVE, LOVE, LOVE. William Law, writing about the love of God says: “As the light of the sun has only one common nature towards all objects which can receive it, so God has only one common nature of goodness towards all created nature, breaking forth in infinite flames of love upon every part of creation and calling everything to the highest happiness it is capable of.” Are these infinite flames the flames of Pentecost?

*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.*

