

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 1 September 2019
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Two

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:

Sept 1: World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

Sept 3: Feast of Pope St. Gregory the Great.

In the Australian Church:

Sept 1: Toowoomba – Patronal Feast, Mary of the Southern Cross.

Sept 2: Sydney - Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1928).

Toowoomba: Anniversary of the death of Bishop Edward Kelly (1994).

Sept 3: Armidale - Anniversary of the death of Bishop Kennedy (2003)

Hobart: Episcopal Ordination of Julian Porteous.

Sydney: Episcopal Ordination of Anthony Fisher.

Sept 6: Spring Ember Day

Sept 7: Wilcannia-Forbes - Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1960).

The Social Justice Calendar:

Sept 1: Beginning of National Child Protection Week.

Fathers' Day

National Wattle Day

1815: Founding of the Sisters of Charity by Mary Aikenhead.

Sept 2: 1991 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act passed by Parliament.

Sept 5: St. Teresa of Calcutta. International Day of Charity.

On this day in 1913 Convention Concerning Decent Work conditions for domestic workers.

Sept 7: National Threatened Species Day.

1936: Death in Hobart Zoo of the last Tasmanian Tiger in Captivity.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Sirach 3:17-20, and 25-29

Hebrews 12:18-19 and 22-24

Luke 14:1, and 7-14

***Lectio:* Read the First Reading from the Book of Sirach, Ch 3 v's 17-20 & 25-29.**

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:* Some informed background so that we can honour the text in its original meaning.**

On a first reading of the text, it is fruitful for us to select the words that beckon to us, calling us to prepare our hearts for the banquet of *Lectio Divina*. The following list is a start:

Sacred text	Fruit
Gentleness at work	better loved than a lavish giver
The greater you are	more humility is called for
The power of the Lord is great	the Lord accepts the homage of the humble

The second part of the text is more in the form of a warning. First of all, pride is an evil growth.

The last two lines of the text describe a sensible person as one who will reflect on parables, and one who is a “listener” as opposed to a “know-it-all”. So:

Gentle	THIS IS THE
Loved	TEXT THAT
Humble	BECKONS
Listener	US

With this background, read the text again, and take a long time to ponder on the overall message. 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 67

The response is: GOD, IN YOUR GOODNESS,
YOU HAVE MADE A HOME FOR THE POOR.

Psalm 67 is simply a hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

***Lectio:* Read the Second text from Hebrews 12:18-19 and 22 – 24.**

Meditatio:

This text is comforting, exhortative, compelling and beckoning. The commentary in the New Jerome Bib. Comm. 60:29 describes the text as follows: 18-21 is the first part of a contrast between the assembly of Israel when the Old Covenant was made, and that of those who entered into the new covenant. The former took place on earth. (Ex. 19:2-13; Ex 16-19 and 20:18-21). The Assembly of the people of the New Covenant is in heaven.

PAUSE. Read the text 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. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from John 6: 51-52.

I AM THE LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN, SAYS THE LORD; WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOR EVER.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 14:1 and 7-14.

Pause and ponder.

Meditatio: Some background to the text so that we can better respond to it.

The first part of the text is in the form of a parable, with the key verse being, “Those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

In the first text, from Sirach, we read: “The Lord accepts the homage of the humble”, and, “The heart of a sensible person will reflect on parables.”

Back to the Gospel: The second part of the text is about banquets, earthly banquets and whose name should be on the invitation list.

It is a “tough” text, one that’s not always welcome!

Stand back from this text. Later, read it again, until something leaps out, and stay with that. Go to a quiet corner of your garden or a nature reserve, or your own home, or a church which is open for prayer. 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 to this Wisdom text is to share first, the words of Gerald Brenan: *Wisdom means keeping a sense of the infallibility of all our views and opinions, and of the uncertainty and instability of the things we most count on.* The “uncertainty and instability of the things I most count on”. When they are taken away as they are one by one, it needs a good dose of wisdom to follow a God who beckons me. Dame Freya Stark said in 1993: *It is the beckoning that counts, not the clicking of the latch behind you.* May we follow the beckoning of a God of love. When I was studying gardening and landscaping, I was advised that when planning a garden, integrate the pathways so that visitors will be curious as to what’s at the end of the path – like a hallway in a house and rooms off the hallway. We were advised to put rooms in our gardens. Each room beckons us on. If we don’t go forward, we will miss the beauty of the next garden bed. These are important lessons for our prayer. Enter, click the gate closed and follow a beckoning God.
2. My response to this text is to heed its beckoning power: “Come, come, come, heaven awaits you.” The author speaks to those who are still on the

journey there. Yet, since they already possess the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice, he can speak of them as having already arrived. We have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the entire assembly of the Christian faithful. Wayne Teasdale, in his book "The Mystic Heart", calls chapter nine the "Promised Land of the Spiritual Journey". Wayne Teasdale quotes the Persian Mystic Rumi, who has the following description of "the Promised Land", - can we say "the heavenly Jerusalem"? *People won't find their way to paradise until they are annihilated...They are their own shadows. Become annihilated in the rays of the Sun (God)! How long will you look at your shadows? Look also at the Divine Light...come into the garden of annihilation and behold: paradise after paradise within the spirit of your own subsistence (union with God).* Once again may we follow a beckoning God into a garden!

3. Some of the entries in the Social Justice Calendar for this week give me the clue as to who should be on the invitation list to attend the banquet of my heart. Whom do I invite into my heart? The Sisters of Charity were founded on 1 September 1815. They were in Australia by 1838. Their first banquet was the terrible "Female Factory" at Parramatta. St. Teresa of Calcutta went out into the streets to invite the desperately poor to the banquet of her heart: the sick the dying, the orphans. 1 September is the beginning of National Child Protection Week. We are challenged to invite victims of sexual abuse to our banquet table. On 5 September, we are made aware of the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic workers (1913). Domestic workers can be mums and dads, trying to pay school fees and feed their families. Maybe they are working two jobs. They may be on the lowest income. Is there room for them at my banquet? And what of mother earth, crying in terrible pain because of the way she is being destroyed by us, by me? I may need to extend the banquet table within, if all are to be included. Jean Vanier once said: "The poor and the weak have revealed to me the great secret of Jesus. If you wish to follow Jesus you must not try to climb the ladder of success and power, becoming more and more important. Walk down the ladder to the poor. When you enter into a relationship with the poor, you enter into an intimate relationship with Jesus."

*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.*