

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 29 September 2019**  
**26th 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:**

September 30: St. Jerome (Memorial)  
October 1: St. Therese of Lisieux.  
October 2: The Guardian Angels  
October 4: St. Francis of Assisi

**In the Australian Church:**

No Anniversaries to note this week.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

September 29: Social Justice Sunday  
September 30: Ratification by Australia of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. (1975).  
October 1: International Day for Older Persons.  
October 1: (2005) – Second Bali bombing. 20 people killed & more than 100 injured.  
October 2: International Day of Non-Violence  
October 5: World Teachers Day

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

**The readings are:**

Amos 6:1 and 4-7  
1 Timothy 6:11-16  
Luke 16:19-31

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Prophet Amos, Ch. 6, verse 1 & verses 4-7.**

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.**

We saw last week that Amos was chosen by God and given a definite assignment, and within a definite time frame. He prophesied in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Chapters 3 – 6 record his sermons.

The message this week is more passionate: “The almighty Lord says this”:  
And then come the images of “lying” and “sprawling”.

An image of tender food and the best of food is accompanied by those “pub” voices, raucous voices of those who sing when they’re drunk.

There is no end to the wine, and no end to the finest oil for the use of “self”. Their fate is sealed. “The sprawlers’ revelry is over. The picture Amos paints of the detestable rich persons is like that scene in “Ben Hur” – I think. The Emperor Nero is on his couch, surrounded by dancing girls, fine foods. He holds up a bunch of grapes, and slowly eats a grape, one by one. We don’t have that kind of thing in our present Australian society, but it is there in the casinos, in the hotels which cost a \$1,000 a night. The majority of people work for a living, and save as much as they can, while they raise a family and educate them.

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.

**The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145**

**The response is: PRAISE THE LORD MY SOUL!**

Psalm 145 is a prayer of praise to God for God’s faithfulness to us. As we pray this Psalm may we call to mind God’s fidelity in our lives and keep our gratitude in the foreground. Our last Abbess, Mary Barnes, suggested we keep a gratefulness book, or journal. The suggestion was that we would enter into that journal just one thing (each day) that we are grateful for and stay with that in stillness for a while.

***Lectio:* Read the second text from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter 6, verses 11-16.**

***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.”

This text, from a written letter of Paul to Timothy. Is part of a longer unit, which begins with verse 3, and concludes with verse 21.

With these verses Paul calls Timothy back to the time of his first promise Timothy made, and “...when you made your profession and spoke up for the truth in front of many witnesses.”

There are reminders (final reminders) to do “all that you have been told, with no faults or failures, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

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 2 Corinthians, chapter 8, verse 9.**

**JESUS CHRIST WAS RICH BUT HE BECAME POOR,  
TO MAKE YOU RICH OUT OF HIS POVERTY.**

**Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 16:19-31.**

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 is the terrible text we all want to run from. That poor man, Lazarus, covered with sores, the street dogs licking the sores. And it gets worse!

Lazarus dies – at the gate of the rich man’s house and is carried away to the bosom of Abraham – heaven and eternal rest.

Then the rich man sees the dirty old Lazarus in heaven, while the rich man was parched and exhausted from the flames of hell. He wanted Lazarus to bring water, but Abraham gave him a homily, - the homily he deserved. Then he wants someone to go and warn his brothers, and again he gets a homily: They’ve had Moses and the Prophets, and still they didn’t hear the message.

This Sunday, we’ve had Amos with a strong message, Paul giving Timothy serious advice, and now Jesus trying yet again to help present a Gospel which “lifts up the lowly”. 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. I am called to respond to this prophecy personally, and in particular to the images of security and safety: Food, rest, a warm bed and an electric blanket. While I don’t come face to face with an electricity bill, I have appliances that are always available for me. With a heart of gratitude, I thank God for these gifts, and promise to use them wisely, not wastefully. St. John Chrysostom, who was born in 354. As a preacher, he secured the title, “golden mouth”. His writings on the sacred scriptures were numerous. His words are always challenging. I believe Amos would be in agreement with the following words: “It is folly, it is madness, to fill our wardrobes full of clothes and to regard with indifference a human being, a being made in the image and likeness of God, who is naked, trembling with cold and almost unable to stand.” So, once again, when we get into that warm bed, after a meal of food that we like, may we spare a thought for the homeless, the hungry, the farmers living day to day with this terrible drought, the firefighters who are giving their all to saving, lives, homes, livestock, and our native fauna.
2. The second half of life, says a Benedictine monk (teacher and writer), is about giving up and saying goodbye. This text to Timothy, a letter, appears to have those final reminders. I put myself into the shoes of Paul, and ask: “What advice, or reminders would I give to my son, daughter, friend, colleague, if I was dying, or growing old. The freedom to “give up”, detach from, or let go of – comes through prayer and an abundance of the grace of God. I

remember, that when my father was dying, the nurse on duty, organized for him to ring me. His words were: “Goodbye Mary – I love you.” So, what about those final words we will all have to speak one day? I am also called by the Holy Spirit to do as Paul advised: Go back to that day when I made my promises to give my life to God. Or, depending on our calling, go back to that day when I stood at the altar of God, and pronounced my wedding vows. Go back to that time when it all began or fell into place – the time when I found love and purpose in my life.

3. My response is to Lazarus at the gate of my heart, and me inside by the fire keeping warm. We might never be in a position to meet the poor and homeless like Lazarus, but we can keep our hearts pure, by not casting out those whom God has given. Every time I reach out to another sister in my community, I am taking the hand of a Lazarus. No, my sisters are not dirty, covered in sores and surrounded by street dogs, but all of us carry interior wounds, and the memory of terrible things that have happened to us. Our wounds are for the most part, hidden from others. We can put on a good front, and keep ourselves busy, but in the end, we still have to do our inner work, which will lead us to embrace those who don't feel that they belong, those who are on the fringe. May God give us more and more compassion. Sr. Joan Chittister tells a story about hospitality of the heart and the grace of compassion. She writes about an Indian greeting and its meaning for all persons who want to reach out in love and compassion. She quotes Ram Dass; “In India, when people meet and part they often say, ‘Namaste,’ which means: I honour the place in you where the entire universe resides; I honour the place in you of love, of light, of truth, of peace. I honour the place within you where if you are in that place in you and I am in that place, in me, there is only one of us.

*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.*