

LECTIO DIVINA
HOLY READING – PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 6 October 2019
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Three

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:

October 7: Our Lady of the Rosary.

In the Australian Church:

October 7: ARMIDALE – Patronal Feast

In the Social Justice Calendar:

October 10: World Mental Health Day

October 11: International Day of the Girl Child

October 11, 1962: Opening Session of the Second Vatican Council

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Hab. 1:2-3 and 2:2-4

2 Timothy 1:6-8 and 13-14

Luke 17:5-10.

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Book of Habakkuk 1: 2-3 and 2:2-4.**

Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud.

This is about our on-going conversion.

***Meditatio:* Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it, and make our response to it.**

Habakkuk begins with a question: “How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?” This is a question “which the prophet dares to direct to God, raising doubts about divine justice and God’s treatment of the wicked. The question represents a first step in an attempt to deal with a breakdown of order and justice, a situation to which God seems implicitly to assent by silence and apparent inaction.” (New Jerome Bib. Commentary, 17:43).

Chapter 2, verses 1-5 contains the Lord’s Response. Chapter 2, 1-3 is a solemn introduction. This introduction notes the importance of the call to trust. The upright person, says Habakkuk, will live by faithfulness to God.

The interesting part about God’s answer is: “...this vision is for its own time only: eager for its fulfillment it does not deceive...if it comes slowly, wait, for come it will, without fail.”

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 94

The response is: IF TODAY YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS.

Psalm 94 is a call to praise and worship.

It is used as the first Psalm of the Office of Readings, (Vigils in Monasteries). The significant lines are “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert.” Both Massah and Meribah are places of testing. The people complained and tested the patience of God and Moses. (Exodus 17:1-7).

Lectio: Read the second text from 2 Timothy 1:6-8 &13-14.

Meditatio: Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.

The first part of this text is about rekindling the divine charism. It is well-known that a charism is a gift. A charism must be rekindled from time to time. We celebrate decade birthdays or wedding anniversaries, anniversaries of religious profession, the celebration when a person retires from a corporation or profession. We gather and recall what a person’s commitment to the job has achieved. Timothy is told to stop and rekindle the flame – keep it alive.

The last paragraph indicates that Paul is counting on Timothy to keep the flame alight: “Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. You have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you and prompting you to respond to words, phrases, sentences which call you forth and challenge you. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from 1 Peter 1:25.

THE WORD OF THE LORD STANDS FOREVER;
IT IS THE WORD GIVEN TO YOU, THE GOOD NEWS.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 17:5-10

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: What is it about?

Luke 17: 1-10 is Luke’s teaching on the inward renewal of the disciples of Jesus. The text we are given for prayer is 17:5-10. What Robert Karris calls Luke’s travel narrative (13:22 – 17:10, has been taken up with opposition to Jesus and his followers.

As Luke concludes this segment, he returns to the note on which he began in 13:22-7:10, RENEWAL.

Disciples need a deep faith as they follow Jesus and remain faithful to the Gospel. The next part of the Gospel is in the form of a warning, or an important and formative teaching, which takes us back to the fact that the Word of God is given to us for our formation. It is not information.

The mulberry tree is a large tree with an extensive root system. Those of us who had one in our back yard when we were growing up, remember the luscious mulberries. The point Jesus is making is that the extensive root system would make it difficult to pull out of the ground, and to replant – well-nigh impossible, just as it would be to plant it in the sea.

The message of clear. If only we can trust and live from day to day with trust in God, hanging on to the faith we have been given. If only.

The “servant” is the second part of the text. What is called for is responsible ministry on the part of church officials, who till the field of the church and shepherd its flock. Responsible ministry is called for.

And - the fact that the disciples have done their duty does not empower them to lay a claim upon God, that they are worthy of God’s graciousness. That graciousness is and remains sheer gift.

Read the Gospel text a number of times during the week. Sit with the text for many “quiet” times. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth the melody of your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian. 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.

1. I believe that there is an “Habakkuk” in each one of us. At some point in our lives - maybe today – we have all cried out to God because of a loved one who is being treated unjustly, or husband, wife, son, daughter, grandparent, friend, whose life has been taken from us by that dreaded thing we call “cancer”. Yes, we have cried out “oppression! In God’s ear, and God didn’t respond. And then there is the terrible domestic violence, and the resulting homelessness. A friend of mine had three babies who were stillborn, and one who died within six hours of birth. She screamed at God, and at her doctor, and at everybody and everything. She had to be heavily sedated until her husband and her parents could take her home from hospital. I’m sure our famers in the dust and dryness of the outback have spoken to God, or merely sat on the ground in the dust, after they have had to shoot more cattle or more sheep. I feel called to shout and cry with them. I will do this in the Psalms and in my personal prayer. Yes, - I will intensify my prayer for them, and become the one who cries to God

for help. I watched a documentary on the ABC recently. One of the episodes that brought me undone was a young man, one of the sons of the older man who runs the farm. This young man was saying how difficult it is for him to come home from work (he and his brother work, so that their parents can try and save the farm), and see his father crying.

2. My response is to the nature of God's gift: a Spirit of power, and love, and self-control, as opposed to a spirit of timidity. There are many meanings of timidity. It can be shyness, or fearfulness, reticence, apprehension or hesitancy. And Paul says these expressions of fear are not part of God's gift. The N.J.B.C. reminds us that Paul is not ashamed in the face of suffering, therefore Timothy is not to be ashamed. He is to join with Paul in suffering everything. And I am not to be ashamed in the face of suffering inflicted on me by those who aren't followers of Jesus.
3. After reading this Gospel, I went to the refrigerator and took out a jar of seeded mustard. I opened it and placed a little bit on a spoon, then took just one seed from the rest. And then I recalled the words of Jesus: "Were your faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree: "Be uprooted and planted in the sea" and it would obey you." And then I recall all the times I've prayed and prayed for someone to be healed, and it has taken years, or not at all. Some of the people I've prayed for, to be healed of cancer, have died instead. And I realize that death is a massive healing for them: no more tears, no more suffering, because death in itself has been destroyed by Jesus, or if one prefers, conquered by Jesus. Furthermore, I realize that what I want isn't always the will of God. What I want is probably not the will of God at all. God has only one will for each one of us – that we become who we are called to become; that we grow into God and be touched forever by the divine light. Timothy was called to keep the flame alight. Luke tells us to make our faith as big as the universe – the faith that moves mountains and is centered in God, not in 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.