

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 13 October 2019**  
**28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C**  
**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Four**

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 15: St. Teresa of Jesus. (Memorial)  
October 17: St. Ignatius of Antioch, (Memorial)  
October 18: St. Luke the Evangelist. (Feast)

**In the Australian Church:**

October 13: Wagga, Wagga – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral. (1928)  
October 16: Ballarat – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Paul Bird, Csr, 2012.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

October 13: Beginning of Anti-Poverty Week.  
October 15: International Day of Rural Women  
October 16: World Food Day  
October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

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

**The readings are:**

2 Kings 5:14-17  
2 Timothy 2:8-13  
Luke 17:11-19

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Second Book of Kings, chapter 5:14-17.**

Be aware of the way you handle your bible. Take it up reverently and read the sacred text with deep reverence. This text is given to all of us on this Sunday, for our formation as Christians. If you are praying with this text at home, you may want to light a candle as a symbol of the fire of God's word, and its power to speak to your heart

***Meditatio:* Some background on the text, so that we can understand it more profoundly, and make our response to it.**

Chapter 5, verses 1-27, is a powerful healing story from the Old Testament. The whole story needs to be read and pondered on. The story is powerful because it is about holistic healing. The commentary on this First Book of Kings, calls us to become involved in the story – a story relating the progression from death to life. These verses are the “final segment [of the verses 1-27], and they relate the sequels of healing, first for Naaman and then for Gehazi, contrasting their dealings with its central figure, Elisha.” (NJBC 10:46).

Verse 17 is interesting if we haven't met this kind of thing before.

Naaman “articulates the common ancient conception that linked and limited a deity to some particular territory” (NJBC 10:46) We are referred to Psalm 37:4  
So, if Naaman is to worship the Lord in Damascus, then he needs soil from the place of his conversion and physical healing.

With this background, read the text again. Read it slowly, marking some of the words, phrases, sentences and their textual meaning. Ponder for a while. Maybe a day or more! Make your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 1*.

**The Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 97

**The response is:** THE LORD HAS REVEALED TO THE NATIONS  
HIS SAVING POWER.

Psalm 97 is best described as an orchestra of praise to God as the king of the world. The first verse speaks of a new song. This is no accident. Every time we praise God for the gift of salvation, it is a new song. We haven't been in this place, on this day before. Every day is new day.

***Lectio:*** Read the Second Letter of St. Paul to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 8-13.

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

Some of the notes which throw light on the text are as follows:

- Chapter 2:1-19: is compiled of ethical instruction which enables the steadfast handing on of the Gospel.
- Paul's exemplary fidelity to Christ.
- The saying we can rely on. The reliable saying is just a portion of a hymn (creedal formula), used in the Liturgy of the Pauline communities. We are referred to Titus 3:8, and Romans 6:8.

Read the text again and be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist on the strings of the harp. The Holy Spirit will bring forth the most beautiful response to this reading. You will be surprised by the Spirit. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

***Lectio:*** The Gospel Verse is from 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

FOR ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS TO GOD,  
BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT HE EXPECTS OF YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.

***Lectio:*** Read the Gospel text from Luke 12:13-21.

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. Stand back from it and ponder.

***Meditatio:*** Some background to help us understand the text and respond to it.

This text is very familiar to all of us. It is the story of the ten lepers, who risked coming out of their holes in the ground, to kneel before an itinerant preacher, and ask for mercy. It was forbidden for them to come anywhere near a town or a city.; they

lived on the cities' out skirts, or in remote places and if coming near anyone they had to call out "unclean! unclean! unclean!"

Some of them would be in an appalling state from head to foot.

There were ten lepers in this story.

Only one came back to say "thank you". And that ONE was a foreigner. (from Samaria) – this event would really aggravate the Jewish Sanhedrin, the High Priest, the Roman authority figure. It is both a story of healing, and a story of gratitude. 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.**

1. My response is to a principle I have always known and believed: healing is a holistic event. Here in this story: Naaman was given something to do. He was told to go down into the Jordan River and immerse himself seven times. The number '7' in the sacred scriptures means "complete". The next part of the story is about the "gift" Naaman wanted to give to Elisha. Elisha's refusal has for its purpose, to focus on the real healer. Elisha was healing in the name of God. Of himself, Elisha did not have any power to heal. The final part of the healing process is the total conversion of Naaman to faith in the God of Israel. When I was seeing a psychologist after my second brain surgery, she listened to my tale each time, and suggested both physical healing and rest for the inner spirit. Among the practical things she suggested, was walking a couple kilometers each day, doing meditation (I chose to do *Lectio* instead), eating properly and surrounding myself with beauty. I took all of that on board and came through to the other side. The most important activity was doing *Lectio Divina* and allowing the sacred scriptures to speak to my inner spirit, and bring forth healing. I have remained faithful to the things suggested to me, and in doing so, I tend not to drown in my own woes, or feel sorry for myself. Holistic healing was practiced by St. Hildegard of Bingen. It was an overall healing, using the rhythm of monastic prayer, and the herbal medicines she used on so many persons who were sick: her own nuns, those who lived near the abbey, adults and children and then people in government and royalty. Prayer was combined with the gifts of the earth. Perhaps we need to look more closely at nature's gifts, in the light of "global warming". Recently, someone gave me a poem called "Hildegard of Bingen". The poem is from "The Singing Bowl" - Collected Poems by Malcolm Guite: "Mother from mother earth...your song revealed God's hidden gift to us; The greening glory of *viriditas*. 'Cherish this earth that keeps us all alive'. Either we hear you, or we don't survive'."
2. It is the last two lines of this text that speak to me. The words: "We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, for he cannot deny his own self." It is loud and clear – another reminder of who we are. We are people created in the image and likeness of God. The Son of God came down to earth. He became incarnate, so that we may find our way back to God – our destiny. He took on our human condition, so there is nothing that he does

not understand about human nature. Furthermore, he carried our sicknesses and bore our sufferings. This is my own version of what Paul calls “a saying that you can rely on.” We all need “a saying to rely on”. It would be worth our while this week to spend time with this “saying”. What is a saying (in the sacred scriptures) that I can rely on?

3. My response to this Gospel is to note that it is about two powerful messages: (1) Jesus does not differentiate between Jews and Samaritans. (2) Gratitude is a virtue we need to cherish and practise. The first of the two is well-known from Gospel living. The second, not so. Sr. Joan Chittister has something to say about “gratitude”. She shares: “When we bow our heads in gratitude, we acknowledge that the works of God are good...Thank you for new day. Thank you for this family. Thank you for the corrections that bring me to growth. Thank you for the pets that bind us to nature. Unstinting gratitude saves us from the sense of self-sufficiency that leads to forgetfulness of God.”

*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.*

*Lectio Divina is a way of life not a method of prayer.*