

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 3 November 2019**  
**31<sup>st</sup> Sunday of 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:**

November 4: St. Charles Borromeo, Memorial.

November 9: The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (Feast).

**In the Australian Church:**

November 8: Rockhampton – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Bernard Wallace, 1990).

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

November 4: Day of Prayer for Anglican-Roman Catholic reconciliation.

November 5: World Tsunami Awareness Day. (Let us pray for the people of Japan in the aftermath of their recent losses.

November 6: International Day for preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.

November 8: 1907 - Harvester minimum wage judgement by Justice Higgins.

November 9: 1989 – Opening of the Berlin Wall.

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

**The readings are:**

Wisdom 11:22-12:2

2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

Luke 19:1-10,

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 11:22-12:2.**

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.**

Chapter 11:2 – 19:22 is a memorial text, a reminder of who they are, (the Old Testament community). The text we are given for prayer is part of the long unit from 11:2-19:22. The text an account (a reminder) of the glorious manifestation of God within the Exodus from Egypt. Verse 22 is about the mercy of God, as are verses 11:23-12:2. When God gave the promised land to his own people, he even offered the Canaanites a chance to repent and worship the one true God, not the idols in their shrines. The Canaanites too were God's children. (Cf. NJBC 33:32-41).

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.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 145

**The response is:** I WILL PRAISE YOUR NAME FOREVER,  
MY KING AND MY GOD.

This is an important prayer. It is a prayer in praise of God’s grandeur. The words “my king” are acknowledgment of the fact that there is only one king and that king is God. The challenge for us is to keep God, who is one only God, uppermost in our lives: greater than possessions, greater than money, greater than perfection by our standards, greater than the enclosure of the perimeter of our own homes (we saw this in those who had lost homes and possessions in the recent bush fires of Queensland and norther New South Wales). Their response was: “but we are still here, we haven’t lost each other”. This was said while husband and wife held hands or embraced. Since God is Love, they still had the greatest of gifts in this life: LOVE

***Lectio:*** Read the Second Mass Reading, from 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2.

***Meditatio:*** A brief explanation to help us understand this text. The first paragraph of this text is a profound prayer for the Christian community in Thessalonika. The commentary in the NJBC notes that moral fulfilment depends on God’s own power. It is his grace that will make the faithful worthy of the Father’s call. Accordingly, this fulfilment will amount to mutual glorification (mighty manifestation at the Parousia of their intimate personal relationship to the Lord Jesus).”

The second part of the text (2:2), concerns the Parousia, Christ’s second coming. There is an appeal for sober judgment about Christ’s triumphal coming, which he regards not as a date, but as the fulfilment of the Christian life. .

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 from John 3:16**

GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH, THAT HE GAVE US HIS ONLY SON,  
THAT ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

***Lectio:*** Now read the Gospel text from Luke 19:1-10.

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

This is always a delightful tale, but a tale full of challenges. The name “Zacchaeus” means “clean”. Can we stop now and look at other texts which throw light on the current text? The first one is 3:12-13, then 5:27-32, 7:29-30, and 15:1-2.

This story is only found in Luke. The commentary on Luke by Robert Karris, ofm, cites the fact that Luke straddles two symbolic worlds with this story.

1. Zacchaeus is a tax collector, one who responds generously to God's call.
2. Zacchaeus is also a rich man, and has great difficulty detaching himself from his possessions.

As usual, Jesus crosses the boundaries set by the religious practices of the Jews. The mixture of "clean" and "unclean" is forbidden.

**Today** – Jesus says: Now, now, now! Not tomorrow or next week. Now is the time for a visit to the house of Zacchaeus. In the time of Jesus, nature gave one the time of day. The sun and the moon, the stars and the galaxies. People did not wear watches or carry Ipads or mobile phones. Could we say the only time Jesus knew was "today", and later it would be another "today"? The response to the "today" of Jesus' invitation led to the repentance of Zacchaeus, who promised to give half his property to the poor and pay back four times the amount to any person he has cheated.

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 (or words) and our hearts respond. When this happens, it is a call from the Lord. The traditional term we use for this is *oratio*, (from *ora*, I pray). 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: "In your sight, Lord, the whole world is like a grain of dust that tips the scales, a drop of morning dew falling on the ground." I hear the comparison between me (us) and God. I also remember when I was younger and more able, that I was busy and sometimes important, making sure that others knew I was present. And after my first brain tumour surgery in 2006, I was doing a course in gardening and landscaping, and came across Hawkesbury sandstone which is the last deposit on the top of the Illawarra escarpment above the abbey and is more than 290 million years old. I stopped in wonder at the handiwork of God and the stupidity of me, running around and feeling important. I now understand the teaching of Columba Marmion: "All that matters in our lives is God and what is done for God. All the rest is trifles, trifles, trifles."
2. How would we be if we knew when Christ will come and take us home? Therefore, it is not about dates but about living each day as if it were my last day. Sr. Joan Chittister has some wisdom about this subject. She says: "Death [another's death] is what alerts the rest of us to life. Death is the call to look again at life – this time with a wiser eye...death gives us all the gift of time...It is time to plant spring in our hearts, to remember 'the light that no

darkness can take away.” St. Benedict said in his Rule for Monasteries: “Keep death daily before your eyes.” The RB 80 translation says: “Day by day, remind yourself that you are going to die.”

3. My response is to Zacchaeus – that delightful little man with ingenuity: to climb a tree, so that he wouldn’t miss the itinerant preacher who was the latest subject of conversation because of his miracles. I imagine that it was his curiosity that made him climb the tree to see for himself the preacher, teacher and miracle-worker. So, his own curiosity gave him the gift of salvation. I know from many experiences that God can visit me on any given day and use anything to remind me yet again that I have been given the gift of salvation. God can use anger, grief, a casual acquaintance, a minor accident, ANY SITUATION. One day in September when I was in Kiama, I had a fall. Unfortunately, it was outside the Leagues Club. Not good! A lady at least ten years older than me came and helped me up. Then others came. This kind of thing is very Australian. We are always ready to help. What a positive experience this was. God sent these beautiful people with their protectiveness, their concern.

*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,  
the one who pondered the Word of God in her heart  
and brought forth the Word made flesh,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.*