

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 10 November 2019
32nd Sunday of 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:

November 11: St. Martin of Tours. (Feast)

November 11 is also Remembrance Day. If you are preparing your church or your meeting place, this is the day for red poppies. I have some from Flanders and already they are in bloom.

November 12: St. Josaphat, Memorial.

In the Australian Church:

November 15: SALE – Patronal Feast.

November 15: WILCANNIA-FORBES – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Barry Collins (2000).

In the Social Justice Calendar:

November 10: World Science Day for Peace and Development.

On this day in 1995, nine Nigerian environmentalists and activists were executed.

November 11: On this day in 1975, the Whitlam Government was dismissed.

Gough Whitlam is now with his beautiful Margaret, but his words linger: “May God save the Queen, for nothing will save the Governor General.” One of our nuns cooks a delicious Apricot Chicken. She learnt it at one of the many cooking courses, Gough Whitlam (the Whitlam Government) organized for Australian men and women.

November 12: 1991 – Dili Massacre, Timor-Leste. More than 271 people were killed.

November 14: World Diabetes Day.

November 16: 1989 – Murder of six Jesuit priests and two co-workers in El Salvador.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

2 Maccabees 7:1-2 and 9-14

2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Luke 20:27-38.

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Second Book of Maccabees, chapter 7:1-2 and 9-14.**

Read it 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.

In this historic text we are challenged to read between the lines and make associations with the New Testament. The spokesman for the seven brothers and their mother said: “We are prepared to die rather than break the law of our ancestors.”

The second brother gives witness to a personal resurrection: “...you may discharge us from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, since it is for his laws that we die, to live again forever.”

The third brother takes his example from the second brother: “It was heaven that gave me these limbs; for the sake of God’s laws I disdain them; from God I hope to receive them again.” This is a “between the lines” witness of the resurrection of the dead. The fourth brother carries on from the third, with reference to the Resurrection: “Ours is the better choice, to meet death at men’s hands, yet relying on God’s promise that we shall be raised up by him; whereas for you there can be no resurrection, no new life.” A comment in 26:72 of the new Jerome Bib. Commentary states that “Eleazar’s example to the young (6:28) was not wasted. The author now shows that women and children are also willing to die for the law (God’s law – God’s Word).

Read the text again and spend time with it as you go about your work and leisure. If you have the time in your week, take your reflection to a seat where you can watch the ocean, the lake, the river, the mountains. Just take time. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16

The response is: LORD WHEN YOUR GLORY APPEARS,
MY JOY WILL BE FULL.

In Psalm 16, God is appealed to as a judge. The three verses we are given, form a most beautiful and intimate prayer for the individual or for a larger gathering:

“Lord hear a cause that is just, pay heed to my cry.

Guard me as the apple of your eye.

Hide me in the Shelter of your wings”.

Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Meditatio: Understanding the text so that we can make an informed response.

Paul begins with a prayer, and building on this foundation, he then asks the Thessalonian community to pray for him and his fellow-apostles, carriers of the Good News to others.

He states that there are bigoted, evil people, because the faith isn’t given to everyone. We could recall the first Mass reading, where seven brothers and their mother were martyrs because they believed.

The Lord who is faithful will give strength to the Thessalonians, just as the Lord did to the seven brothers and their mother. The Lord will guard them from the evil one. The last prayer is powerful: “May the Lord turn your hearts towards the love of God and the fortitude of Christ”.

With this background, read the text again, and then ponder as you work or take time for leisure. Allow God to speak to you in the depths of your heart. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from the Apocalypse, chapter 1, verses 5 & 6.
JESUS CHRIST IS THE FIRST BORN OF THE DEAD;
GLORY AND KINGSHIP BE HIS FOR EVER AND EVER.

Lectio: Now read the Gospel text from Luke 20:27-38

Meditatio: Some background to the text which will help us respond.
Luke tells his community that there is no death. There is only life.

The Sadducees question Jesus, with trickery. It is not unlike a political meeting: what about this? What about that? What if this and what if that.

It could be called a hypothetical nightmare.

But Jesus answers their questions by giving a treatise on the resurrection from the dead.

He even uses the teaching of Moses as a foundation for teaching of the resurrection. So, all the superficial contest with words is counteracted by the truth. The truth is, there is no death.

Stand back and ponder on the text – every aspect of it – over a few days. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you. This is the true *oratio* of *Lectio Divina*. Allow your spirit to rest and be still. Finally, make your response to the text and keep it in your prayer journal, and in your heart. I share my response 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 to this text is mixed. While many members of family, friends, colleagues, are walking away from institutional religion, the boys and their mother are martyrs: they refused to break the law of their Jewish religion. The first brother describes it as the “law” of his ancestors. This week, we have two anniversaries of martyrs. November 10 is the day in 1995, when nine Nigerian environmentalist and human rights activists were executed because they chose to go against the status quo. On November 16, in 1989, six Jesuit priests and two co-workers were murdered in El Salvador. They were murdered because they dared to upset the status quo. Their deaths form part of the film “Romero”. In our own times too, 271 of our brothers and sisters were gunned down in Dili – it has come to be identified as the Dili Massacre. These people gave their lives for what they believed in.
2. My response is to the fact that all are welcome in God’s house. This truth cuts across any prejudices that we may have had against those not of the

Catholic faith, or white in colour, or from another nation. Sr. Joan Chittister says: *“We” and “they” are the hallmarks of an age awash in refugees, under siege from immigrants, and yet inseparably linked in a world in which there are no more natural boundaries.* Sr. Stan of Dublin also sheds light on the “we” and “they” when she writes about the need to belong, saying that it is one of the basic needs of humankind. People who don’t belong are usually those driven from their homeland and may be in detention centres, or refugee camps, - whatever is the situation, they are dispossessed people. Can we make the effort this week to include someone who feels “out of it”, someone of another culture, a colour other than white? There are no colours in the Gospel of Jesus. There is no “we” and “they”. Paul also says that there are bigoted evil people. And that is true. Some people are so bigoted that they need to be left. Nothing we may say will change them. And we can’t excuse every person who goes on a shooting spree, with the fact that he or she is mentally ill. When one’s loved ones are killed in another school or mosque or church massacre, we need to be aware of evil. It does exist and we must pray against it.

3. My response to this Gospel text is to reach for a homily of Fr. Karl Rahner. Keeping in mind the text from Luke’s gospel, I am also referring to Fr. Karl Rahner’s homily for All Souls’ Day. He describes those who have gone before us as, *“Hidden in the peace of the eternal God, filled with his own bliss, redeemed for eternity, **permeated with love for us that can never cease**, they, on their feast, utter the prayer of their love for us – *Lord, grant eternal rest to those whom we love, - as never before – in your love, . Grant it to them who still walk the hard road of pilgrimage...*”* May we take time this week to remember our dead, because they are not dead! We refer to them as our dead. But the truth is, there are no dead. Those who have gone before us are those who are truly alive.

*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.*