

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 7 June 2020**

**Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Year A.**  
**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:**

11 June: St. Barnabas (Memorial)

13 June: St. Anthony of Padua. (Memorial)

**In the Australian Church:**

8 June: Melbourne – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Peter Comensoli (2011).

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

8 June: World Oceans' Day and anniversary of the Queensland Bishops letter "Let the Many Coastlands be Glad!" – A Pastoral Letter on the Great Barrier Reef in 2004.

10 June: Myall Creek Massacre, N.S.W., 1838.

11 June: 1975 – Enactment of the Racial Discriminations Act.

12 June – World Day Against Child Labour.

12 June: 1988 – Presentation by Aboriginal leaders of the Barunga Statement to Prime Minister, Bob Hawke.

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

**The readings are:**

Exodus 34:4-6 and 8-9

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Book of Exodus, Ch. 34, verses 4-6 and 8-9.**

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.**

The text is laden with symbols.

The cloud, when mentioned in the sacred scriptures, is symbolic of the presence of God. (God led the people out of Egypt, and across the barren desert, with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.)

The mountain is also a symbol of the divine – Moses goes **up** to meet the Lord. Moses and the Lord are not equal. They do not sit around the campfire and chat together.

The early morning also holds a rich story: the break of day, the light upon the world, the new day – and the setting is complete. Moses has the tablets of stone. Moses comes to plead before the Lord, and what the presence of the Lord proclaims will

reach the ears of believers until the end of the world: Lord, Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness. Moses bows down in worship, then pleads on behalf of his “head strong people.”

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:** is taken from the Canticle of Daniel 3:52-56

**The response is:** GLORY AND PRAISE FOREVER.

(This is effective when done with a cantor and a congregation. The Cantor prays: “You are...”, and the congregation prays “Glory and praise forever.”)

Our appreciation of this canticle may strengthen if we know that Daniel, the Daniel of this canticle and the prophet of the Lord, was in exile in Babylon. His name was changed when Daniel began the three-year program of training for those who would enter King Nebuchadnezzar’s service. He was given the name ‘Belteshazzar’ which means something like ‘Bedl’ (a Babylonian god) who would protect his life. The name is not merely the Babylonian form of Daniel; it specifically incorporates the name of a Babylonian deity in place of that of the Jewish God (i.e. the ‘El’ suffix in Daniel). The re-naming was part of a systematic, comprehensive reorientation of the students to embrace fully all aspects of the dominant Babylonian society.” (The Who’s Who of the Bible, ed. Paul Gardiner).

**Lectio:** Read the second text from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 11-13.

**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.

This text from Second Corinthians is nothing more than the conclusion to the letter, and therefore Paul uses final words, and gives a greeting. We are warned of something “not to do” when we read the Trinitarian formula: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* This is described as a “triadic benediction” by Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, commenting on this Letter in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary. This Letter consists of two letters.

Letter A covers chapters 1-9.

Letter B covers chapters 10-13.

The text we are given for prayer is situated at the end of the second letter.

The triadic benediction (blessing), is not about the dogma of the church which has taken shape as the centuries moved on (after the times of the apostles and Paul). The triad is: the Lord Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus Christ who gives us the grace to do good. It is a God of love who will be faithful forever. We can go back to the first reading from Exodus to find out just how loving and faithful is our God. It is

the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that gives us the “breath” we need to meet the demands of community.

In this brief text, what phrases, what sentences, what words are to change your life? I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

**The Gospel Verse is from Apocalypse 1:8.**

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT:  
TO GOD WHO IS, WHO WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME.

***Lectio:* Read the Gospel text from John 3:16-18.**

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:***

Summing up this brief text, we are told the truth: God sent his son to give us life. John’s gospel does not focus on the death of Jesus as a sacrifice; the words, “gave his only Son” are understood as a reference to Jesus being given up to death. Read and compare Gal.1:4 and 2:20; Romans 8:32. Read the text again and ponder – carry it with you.

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 No. 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. The trouble with the proclamation in this text is that for more than two thousand years, many people have been trying to tell us differently. God is not tender. God is not compassionate; God is an angry God. God is not kind and God is not faithful. And the tapes in our heads: *If you are not a good girl, God will punish you. God will be angry. If you have to get a court order to keep someone away from your house, God will not understand, because God is not kind. And if we think God is faithful, don’t be fools – God will let you down.* How do we destroy these tapes to which we have been listening since our childhood? A friend said to me just recently. *If God is kind and faithful, why would he let my boy be sexually abused?* And other friends have taken out a court order against their son, after taking his three small children into their homes. They are grandparents starting another family while their son deals in drugs. Often, when the problems loom large before us, we can’t even think of God – we need others to do that. We can’t pray – we need others to pray for us. Kate McCann, in her Book “Madeleine”, says surprisingly that in the twenty-four hours after Madeleine was abducted, she knelt beside her bed and turned to the rosary, a prayer that is comforting. The beads are something we can hold.

2. My response is to the words: “Try to grow perfect”; and my response is one of sadness as none of us will even be perfect. As one who attended a Catholic School, all discipline seemed to aim at perfection. Then I entered a religious novitiate at the age of 18. One of our textbooks was “Perfections” by Rodriguez. Fortunately, this was opposed to the kindness, patience and a certain humour that characterised the life of our novice-mistress. She is still alive at the age of 103, and not because she was perfect but because she was real. Our confessor, an Augustinian priest, does his best to get rid of the “perfect” syndrome from those of us who grew up in the Catholic church of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. In actual fact the word which is translated originally from Greek to Latin and from Latin to English, means “compassionate”. That rather changes things!
3. From the Wisdom of St. Hildegard of Bingen: *It is easier to gaze into the sun, than into the face of the mystery of God. Such is its beauty and its radiance.*

*Lectio Divina is Holy Reading -  
reading of the Sacred Scriptures  
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.  
It is about reading (and listening), reflecting,  
praying in tune with the Holy Spirit within me,  
resting in God and responding in the way I live.*



*The Trinity by Andrei Rublev*