

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 19 July 2020**  
**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**  
**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:**

July 22: St. Mary Magdalene (Feast)

July 25: St. James. (Feast)

**In the Australian Church:**

July 21: Archdiocese of Brisbane – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Francis Rush, 2001.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

July 20: Fiftieth anniversary of the first Moon Landing (1969)

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

**The readings are:**

Wisdom 12:13 and 16-19

Romans 8:26-27

Matthew 13:24-43

***Lectio:* Read the first text from Wisdom 12:13 & 16-19**

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.**

The theme of 12:9-22 is that “God is just and lenient because he is master of his own might.”

“God has no need to be afraid. He governs with justice and lenience.” (Jerome Bib. Commentary, 33:38 & 39).

Make your response in the days ahead. Something in this text will leap out and secure your attention, even probe the thoughts and motives of your heart (Hebrews).

What first leapt out and confronted me was: “...you are mild in judgment, you govern us with lenience...you have taught a lesson to your people, how the virtuous must be kindly to others” (in the human family).

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 85

**The response is:** LORD, YOU ARE GOOD AND FORGIVING

Psalm 85 is a Psalm of true loyalty in God's service. There is a very beautiful commentary on this Psalm in the Grail Psalter – used for the Liturgy of the Hours at the Abbey: *This is a gentle Psalm, a little muted in tone, without cries for help or loud shouts of anguish. There are enemies about, - there always are – but God is not asked to destroy them (a refreshing change!). God is asked only to turn and take pity on the persecuted.*

**Lectio:** Read the Second Mass Reading: Romans 8:26-27.

**Meditatio:** We probably don't need an explanation, but it is better to know the depth of the text: *Human aspirations risk being inefficacious because of the natural weakness of the flesh, but the Spirit adds its intercession, transcending such weakness. The result is that the Spirit utters what would otherwise be ineffable, (Inexpressible).* Verse 27 takes us on a journey. God is described as the one who searches hearts and minds.

We can refer to 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; Psalms 7:11; 17:3 139:1.

*It was part of God's plan of salvation that the Spirit should play such a dynamic role in the aspirations and prayers of Christians. (NJBC 51:26).*

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 Matthew**

BLESSED ARE YOU FATHER, LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH;  
YOU HAVE REVEALED TO LITTLE ONES THE MYSTERIES OF THE  
KINGDOM.

**Lectio:** Now read the Gospel text from Matthew 13:24-43

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

This week, we have another parable and another explanation. So, let's revise Crossan's definition once again: *It is one thing to communicate to others conclusions and admonitions based on one's profound spiritual experience...it is quite another thing to try to communicate that experience itself, or better, to assist people to find their own ultimate encounter. This is what the parables of Jesus seek to do: to help others into their own experience of the Reign of God and to draw from that experience their own way of life.*

Fr Thomas Keating says that the Reign of God is what the Divine Action does within us. So – we need to listen like disciples, to the explanation of this parable.

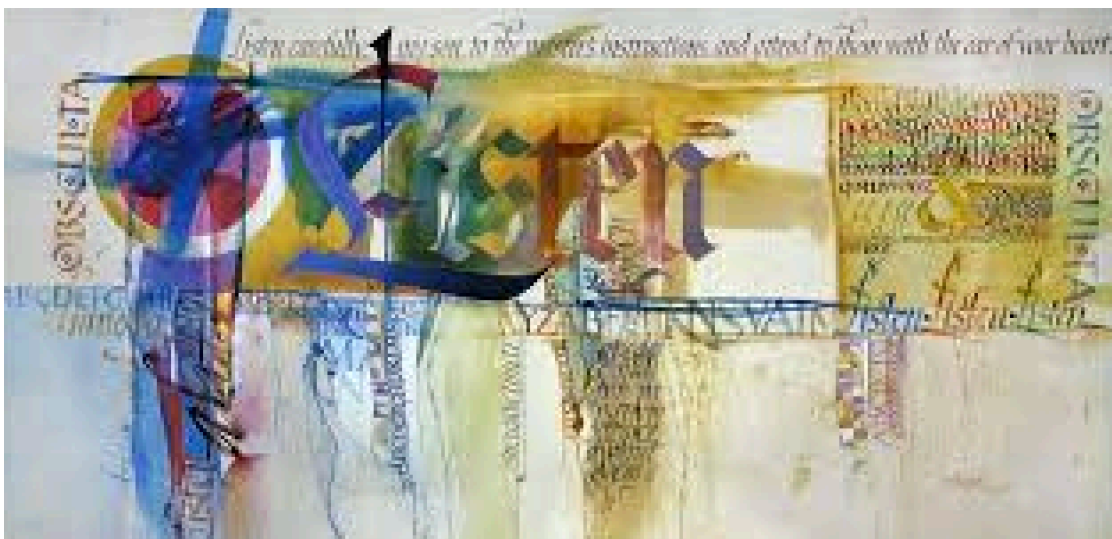
Stand back and ponder on the text – every aspect of it – over a few days. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you. This is the true *oratio* of *Lectio Divina*. Allow your spirit to rest and be still. Finally, make your response to the text and keep it in your prayer journal, and in your heart.

**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. This text has challenged me in a most confronting manner. The words, “your sovereignty to all makes you lenient to all” have hit home. This is God giving me an example of how to live my life. A re-reading of “The Church of Mercy” (Pope Francis) would be an excellent support to this text and others which call for forgiveness. Sometimes I see a whole lot of little gods: in Government, in corporate business, in my parish, in a group home, among the carers, among the school staff, or in a school classroom. Little gods bully others. Wherever human beings live and work, the way to stand against power and bullying is to act truly, with justice, compassion, integrity. These are the only bulwarks which stand against ruthless power. Little gods buzzing with power and importance are everywhere. We need not to join their kingdoms. There is only one God and one Kingdom.
2. This text has been my rock for decades, because of intercessory prayer. I have always (as long as I remember), interceded for my community, my family, my students (when I was teaching). Intercessory prayer and fasting went hand in hand. But there are other things we could do. People may laugh at me, because when we are asked to intercede for someone, I go immediately (in work time), and get my bucket and window-cleaning gear. Once I used to do hard work on our property or in the Abbey gardens, but brain surgery and ageing have taken this away. I can still reach the windows and pray as I go. We all need a means of intercession and every family or community needs an intercessor. So, the sky is the limit – all we need do is find something that is a bit strenuous and take it on and focus as we go – focus on the person or situation we are praying for. I have been praying for Madeleine McCann since her disappearance. I have never given up, and now there is finally a glimmer of hope for her parents. I also know the story of a man who formed a prayer group during the Nazi Regime. The group met with great caution, on a certain night in the week and prayed for an end to war and ethnic cleansing. Eventually their prayers were answered, but not until one of the group gave his life for the others and for his fellow countrymen, by volunteering to keep watch outside. One night he was spotted. He was shot in the back, as he tried to run from the SS.
3. I am led to the words: *Listen, anyone who has ears to hear*. The first word of the Rule of Benedict is “listen”, *obsculta* in Latin, and in some of older

historic manuscripts, *ausculta* is used. Along with the Greek ακουετε, they all have the same meaning. It is a listening which is called for, and a listening that calls also for a response. The Greek ακουετε is used at the Lord's baptism, and again on Mt. Tabor. LISTEN TO HIM. The word calls for a response. This is where the challenge lies - listen to him. In case we think it is easy, it's not. How many times have we been having a difficult conversation with an employee, an employer, a family member or a friend and we feel that what we are saying is not being understood? If English is a second language, it is more difficult. Sr. Aqinata Böckmann, wrote a book called "A Listening Community, A Commentary on the Prologue of the Rule of Benedict, and chapters 1-3 of Benedict's Rule." (Published in 2011). She notes that "it is characteristic of Benedictine spirituality that receptivity is emphasized, before even mentioning activity. ..for Benedict, listening is the fundamental attitude from which all other attitudes flow. Wouldn't this be true of all life? The worst kind of person is the person who will not listen to others, who knows everything, who cannot be spoken to, who has 99 degrees or five doctorates. I have a friend who works in the Crime Investigation Department of the Police Force. She has often shared how hard it is when an interpreter is needed to help the person who is in custody, to communicate. It is very stressful for all concerned. So, why don't we try communicating well this coming week and beyond, and try listening to others without butting in with: "I know exactly how you feel"?"

*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.*



*LISTEN ~ Image from St John's Collegeville*