

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

Sunday 18 April 2021

Third Sunday of Easter, Year B

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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:

No memorials, feasts or solemnities this week.

In the Australian Church:

21: Wollongong – anniversary of the death of Bishop William Murray, 2013.

23: Lismore – Anniversary of the death of Bishop John Satterthwaite, 2016.

Port Pirie: Anniversary of the death of Bishop Peter De Campo, 1998.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

18: World Heritage Day.

22: International Mother Earth Day.

23: World Book and Copyright Day

24: International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Acts 3:13-15 and 17-19

1 John 2:1-05

Luke 24:35-48

***Lectio:* Read the First text from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 3, verses 13-15 and verses 17-19. Read it slowly, with mindfulness.**

Meditatio: Some background so that we understand it and can make a response. Revising briefly,

- The titles Peter applies to Jesus all serve to bring out the truth of his Messiahship.
- The title 'Prince' belongs to the vocabulary of Messianic hope.
- Jesus is interpreted in terms of the heroes of Jewish history. He is the new David, fulfilling the prophecies of the ideal king of David's line.
- Verse 17 preserves an indisputably primitive trait, the allowance that is made for the people's ignorance. Peter says: "Now I know...that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing." However, the "apostolic kerygma marks the end of ignorance." (NJBC 44:32) On the cross of our salvation, Jesus cried out: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

- Verse 19 affords a clear expression of primitive belief. Jesus is enthroned in heaven waiting to return in full Messianic glory.

Read the text again and maybe a third time. Read it slowly, marking some of the words, phrases, sentences which may cause you to stop and recognize that the Holy Spirit is calling you to this word, this phrase, this sentence, or the whole text. Ponder for a while. Maybe a day or more! I share my response in *Evangelizatio 1*.

The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 4

The response is: LORD, LET YOUR FACE SHINE ON US.

Psalm 4 is a night prayer. The Grail Psalter has the following exposition: “To forget to thank may be bad, but to forget to ask is a thousand times worse, indeed fatal, and this Psalmist will not make that mistake. The happiness and peace known to the psalmist are lasting and satisfying.” Verse 3 reinforces the truth that only God can bring happiness and peace to us. Verse 4 is very definitely a night prayer.

Lectio: Read the Second Reading from 1 John 2:1-5.

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

Perkins, breaking open the Johannine Epistles, says that this short text is part of John 2:3-11, keeping the commandments. The whole unit emphasizes “the biblical view that to know God means to keep God’s commandments.” If we go back to the Gospel of John, we will remember that “knowing God separated those who believed in Jesus from the hostile world (1:10-13; 14:7).” Pause here to read those texts and make the connection with the present text from 1 John 2:1-5. The word “liar” simply means the truth is not in that person. (New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 62:18).

Take time to ponder on this reading. This is done as we go on with each day’s work, or rest. *Lectio Divina* is a way of life. Once it becomes so, then we can ponder anywhere. Write your response to the text. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from Luke 24:32.

LORD JESUS, MAKE YOUR WORD PLAIN TO US;
MAKE OUR HEARTS BURN WITH LOVE WHEN YOU SPEAK.

Perhaps this would be a suitable prayer to begin *Lectio Divina* every day this week.

Read now, the Gospel: Luke 24:35-48.

Meditatio: Some background to the text to help us respond with understanding.

Peace is the message of the Risen Lord.

“Why are you so agitated?” asked Jesus. Everything written about me in the law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms had to be fulfilled.”

He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. We can add our own prayer each time we begin our Lectio - “Lord, open my mind to understand the Scriptures and especially your message of peace”.

Jesus went on to say that repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city over which Jesus wept, the place of his agony, crucifixion, and resurrection. This same Holy City will be the place of Pentecost, and the place from which the Christian Gospel goes out to all the world. All roads lead to Jerusalem. All roads lead out from Jerusalem.

Read this Gospel text again. Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine 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. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Jesus). Do you get sick of the word “forgiveness” and its implications? If you do, then you too are a member of the human race! If you have been told to “go and say sorry!”, you will know what it feels like not to be ready to say “sorry”. We automatically teach children to say “sorry” when they have bullied another child, their brother or sister and maybe had a punch up with them. They sort it out and then it’s over. Then as we grow and strike the years 12-90, we struggle to say “sorry”, rather than just spit it out! We need to mean it when we say it. And there are a million ways of saying “sorry” without using words. We may hear someone say: “That’s the closest she will come to saying ‘sorry’ and I have to accept that’s all she can manage.”
2. I am responding to the words, “To know God is to keep God’s commandments.” On the subject of “law”, Sir Edmund Burke said in a speech in 1794: “There is but one law for all, namely, that law which governs all law – the law of our Creator, the law of humanity: justice, equity, the law of nature, and of nations.” The keeping of God’s commandments is the law that governs all law. When the commandments of God are broken, then a spiritual cancer eats away at humanity. The commandments of God are about love. God is love. This love is manifest in justice, compassion, kindness, truth, forgiveness, prayer for one’s enemies, generosity, sacrifice, abstaining from greed, which includes corporate greed. We can add to that: feeding the hungry, providing a place for the street dwellers to have a wash. Pope Francis has done this inside St. Peter’s Square providing toilets and showers for the homeless. The spiritual cancer is at home in revenge, destruction of

human beings in any country and any situation. It also resides in hatred, constant negativity and negative criticism about other persons. We should be aware, as the monastics of the desert tradition have taught us that when a thought tries to enter your heart, ask first where it comes from: God or the devil. Positive or negative. Constructive or destructive. We are in charge. We can choose to let in a positive or negative thought, a constructive or destructive thought. It's up to us!

3. I am responding to the message of the Risen Lord: "Peace be with you." Peace is the Lord's message, his greeting to me. So, how am I this Eastertide? It is the Third Sunday of Easter. Am I at peace? Or am I agitated, in break-down mode? How is my family at this time? Peaceful or troubled? Are we keeping the peace for the sake of it, or is our peace an authentic one? Albert Einstein said, in his "Notes on Pacifism", *Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.* Peace is a very hard road. Can I actually make the constant effort to receive the Lord's Easter greeting and live it out?

*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.*

