

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.**  
**Sunday 6 June 2021**

**Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)**  
**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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

**In the Liturgy:**

- 11: The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- 12: The Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**In the Australian Church:**

- 07: The Ukrainian Eparchy: Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Mykola Dychok, 2020.
- 08: Melbourne: Episcopal ordination of Archbishop Peter Comensoli, 2011.
- 11: Townsville: Anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral - 2006.
- 12: Wollongong: Patronal Feast, Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

- 08: World Oceans' Day.
- 10: The Myall Creek Massacre (1838)
- 11: 1975 – Enactment of the Racial Discrimination Act.
- 12: World Day Against Child Labour.  
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 24:3-8
- Hebrews 9:11-15
- Mark 14:12-16 and 22-26

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Book of Exodus, chapter 24:3-8.**

Read it aloud. 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.**

Exodus 20-24 presents the giving of the Law to God's people. 20:22-23:33 is the preamble to 24:3-8. In 24:3-8, Moses tells the people what the Lord has said and

they promise obedience. Moses wrote the words of the Lord in a book. This was the first obstacle for me – a book? And at that time in history. Wanting to know the meaning, I searched and found that the Hebrew word for book is “sēper”. It denotes a book, a document or a writing. It appears 187 times in the Old Testament.

After Moses had written the words in a “book”, he arranges a covenant liturgy between the people and the Lord. It is ratified by sacrifice and sealed by blood. Already, our minds may be with Christ on Calvary. In the Old Testament it has been described as a “blood-bond” between Israel and the Lord. (Charles Gore).

We are referred to Mark 14:24, which is part of the Gospel text for this Sunday.

Read the text over a couple of times. And you will hear the Holy Spirit prompting you to respond. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio 1*.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 115

**The response is:** I WILL TAKE THE CUP OF SALVATION  
AND CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Psalm 115 is a “promise in gratitude to God”. (The Grail Psalter, England, 1963). There is no doubt that it has been chosen both as a response to the covenant of the first reading, and as an expression of the essence of the Eucharist in the New Testament: “How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me? The cup of salvation I will raise, I will call on the Lord’s name.”

**Lectio:** Read the Second Mass Reading from Hebrews 9:11-15.

**Meditatio:**

The essence of the text is “blood”. From the blood of the Old Testament sacrifice, through “the cup of salvation” in the Psalm to a call to faith: How much more effective than the Old Testament offerings of goats’ blood and bulls’ blood, is the blood of Jesus Christ shed on Calvary once and for all. It is a new covenant, an eternal covenant. Blood is life. Christ shed his blood for the life of all.

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 6:51-52.**

I AM THE LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN SAYS THE LORD.  
WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER.

**Lectio:** The Gospel is from Mark 14:12-16 and 22-26.

**Meditatio:** Some background to the text, so that we can understand it in its original meaning and make an informed response to it.

We need to look first of all at the lack of perception of the disciples: “it is noted in the episode of the boat and in connection with the predictions of suffering and

death which are ingredients of a general theme in Mark. The disciples' lack of comprehension is practically unrelieved throughout the Gospel. It will even be heightened in the Passion narrative with betrayal by Judas, denial by Peter, and flight by the rest of the Twelve. It comes as no surprise that this theme is present in the Supper account." (Jerome Kodell, "The Eucharist in the New Testament", 90).

And what of the cup? Jesus said: "Can you drink the cup that I must drink?" Unless one can do this, it's all a waste of time. "The cup Jesus offers to his disciples is a share in his messianic suffering." (Kodell, 91) On page 91 of his book, Kodell states the obvious: The phrase "blood of the covenant" is a direct allusion to the Sinai covenant, when Moses splashed the blood of the offerings on the altar and the people (Exodus 24:5-8). Hence the connection between the first reading and the Gospel.

Listen for the message you are to hear in this Gospel text, and be still, as you receive the visitation of God into your life through God's Sacred Word. When you feel called to do so, make your response to the text. I share mine in Evangelizatio 3.

***EVANGELIZATIO.* Evangelizatio is about the evangelization of the "self". It is that part of *Lectio Divina* where we make our lived response to the text. First of all, we pray with the text, take time to ponder and understand the text, be still with the text and listen to the response we are being called to make.**

1. My response is a direct one: to the Covenant Moses organized between God and God's people, after the giving of the Law. This can be read in chapters 20-24 of the Book of the Exodus. The chapters following, 25-40 concern the building of the tabernacle by God's people. Can we see that baptism, whenever we receive it is the giving of the law – God's law. The building of the tabernacle, all those chapters represent the living out of the sacrament with the help of parents, grandparents, other family members and teachers at school is. In the case of adult baptism, encouragement comes from husband, wife, or sponsors. It is a life-long journey. At some stage, the decisions are ours. Sponsors, parents and others drop off, as we make our way home to God. In the words of the poet Robert Frost: "And I? I took the road less travelled by." There are glorious times and challenging times. The key in all of this is acceptance, taking responsibility for the choice we made. In the case of families – well, I'm the eldest of 6, and I am the only one who still believes in God. Times are tough, and the institute we call Church has crumbled. When it comes to my siblings, all I do is love them, and communicate that love. GOD IS LOVE.
2. My response is one of gratitude that I live after the time of Christ, and I am not alive in the era of Old Testament sacrifices – the time of animal sacrifice. I am reflecting on the meaning of "blood", not just in the sacrament of the Eucharist but in all of life. And I know that no matter what the colour of our skin may be, or the wealth or poverty of our station in life, or whether we are

young or old, we all have the same colour blood. Do we remember the words of Sir Henry Parkes in his in one of his pre-Federation speeches: “The crimson thread of kinship runs through us all”? Do we feel inclined to add, “...unless you are a woman, or an Indigenous person, or a disabled person, or Muslim or gay?”. We are just like Sir Henry Parkes when we discriminate. Some historians will say to you: “That’s just how society was structured in those times.” But that doesn’t make it right. And it isn’t right now. In fact, it is against the law. Racial slurs! Of course, we also remember the “White Australia Policy”, or our relatives talking about the “yellow peril”.

3. Bl. Columba Marmion has a beautiful reflection on this Gospel: “It is as if Jesus said: *My desire is to communicate my divine life to you. I hold my being, my life, all, from my Father and because I hold all from Him, I live only for Him. I desire with an intense desire that you, likewise, holding all from me, live only for me. I am the Living Bread, the bread of Life which gives everlasting life, of which grace is the dawn.*” Something we missed with Covid 19 was the ability to receive the bread of the Eucharist. Attending Mass by u-tube or “streaming” did not suffice for a Eucharistic minister saying to you: “The Body of Christ.” And your response in faith: “Amen.” A very vital part of the Communion Rite.

*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.*



*Image ~ Sieger Koder*