

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

**Sunday 3 October 2021**

**27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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:**

04: St Francis of Assisi (Memorial)

07: Our Lady of the Rosary (Memorial)

**In the Australian Church:**

07: Armidale Diocese: Patronal Feast

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

05: World Teachers Day

09: World Post Day.

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

**The readings are:**

Genesis 2:18-24

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16.

***Lectio:* Read the first text from Genesis 2:18-24.**

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.**

This text relates God's observation that it is not good for the earth creature to be alone and so God creates a helper, corresponding to man. The use of the word "helpmate" in English is an incorrect translation. It should be "helpmeet" (fitting helper).

Not from the earth but from man's own self is the woman fashioned, an explanation at once of sexual attraction between men and women.

The deep sleep is from God. The man acknowledges the gift of the woman. (Notes summarized from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary on Genesis 2:18-24).

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, your own garden. Just take time. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 127

**The response is: MAY THE LORD BLESS US ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES.**

Related to the previous psalm, this one develops the idea of the second part of that Psalm. With sound instinct it asks God for a Jerusalem of god-fearing happy homes. Men and women have their own part in building it. (Grail Psalter, 1981 (The Grail, England).

**Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading: Hebrews 2:9-11.**

**Meditatio:** Most commentaries on this text set out to confuse us. A list of Biblical scholars with varying opinions try to help us make sense of the text, but the information is much more than we need for prayer. (NJBC 60:14). The text is about Jesus' exaltation through abasement.

Into a very long unit, is the text we are given for prayer – 2:9-11.

The Glenstal Bible Missal has an apt summary at the beginning of the text: "Jews converted to Christianity sometimes doubted whether the new covenant was better than the old. They were not assured by the very shameful death the high priest of their new religion had suffered. The letter to the Hebrews faces squarely this disarray. In order that women and men might truly be saved, really become children of God, and destined for glory, it was necessary that Christ take on the human condition in all its completeness, and experience death. (The Glenstal Bible Missal for Sundays and Sacraments. Texts approved for use in Australia and New Zealand. General Editor, Gerard MacGinty, osb. (London and Sydney: Collins Liturgical Publications. Imprimatur: Cardinal Edward B. Clancy).

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 1 John 4:12**

**IF WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, GOD WILL LIVE IN US IN PERFECT LOVE.**

**Lectio: Now read the Gospel text from Mark 10:2-16.**

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

This Gospel text has two sections:

Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce (10:1-12).

Jesus' blessing of the children.

In the first section a question is asked of Jesus. "Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?" We could add: "...or for a woman to divorce her husband?" This is more relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Daniel Harrington, commenting on this text in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary notes that “the question concerns the legality of divorce not the grounds for divorce, and suggests that the question may have been designed to draw Jesus into conflict with the much-divorced Herod family.”

It may surprise us to know that divorce in ancient Judaism was not a public legal action in a court. The husband simply wrote out a decree: “I release and divorce my wife this day.” And then he presented it to his wife.

Jesus regards the teaching of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as a concession to human weakness and a dispensation from the original plan of God for marriage. (NJBC 41:62 – Commentary by Daniel Harrington).

The second part of the text is about children: “I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” That’s clear – no need to confuse it. We are to behave like little children by our trust, our faith, our joy – allowing God to lead us into the Kingdom of eternal love.

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. I am responding to God’s generosity. In “Day by Day” by Sr. Stan of Dublin, she says: “True generosity gives what the other person needs and true generosity is a free gift” (114). Our generous God gives what we need, as God gave man a helpmeet when man needed a helpmeet. As God took a rib from man and created woman, so God who dwells within us, takes from our inner riches to meet us where we are at any given time and give us help. Wanda Fulton asks: “What is the best gift you have ever received?” Perhaps you will recall that the best gift was one that was tied with the heartstrings of the giver. God is love. (Wisdom for Life, by Helen Exley).
2. I am responding to part of the introduction in the Glenstal Bible Missal: “Jesus had to take on the human condition and experience death...” But death poses a big problem for so many people. It has been all around us now since the Covid virus has taken a firm grip on humanity. St. John Paul II wrote at some length on the fear of death: “Fear of death also concerns the great unknown which it represents. When on the island of Patmos Jesus addresses this exhortation to John, “I am the first and the last, the one who lives (Rev. 1:17), Jesus reveals his victory over the many fears that accompany human beings on their earthly existence and especially when they are faced with suffering and death. (Rising With Christ, Meditations on Living the Resurrection” by St. John Paul II. Eds. Jo Garcia Cobb and Keith E. Cobb, 2004, pages 57-58). The following words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer are a light for me: “After death, something new begins over which all powers of the world of death have no more might.” For Christians,

what begins after death is the beatific vision, the glory which has been promised to us because we are God's children and God's Son died for us.

3. In our society today, divorce is common enough. I have two siblings who are divorced, and both had valid reasons for bringing their marriages to an end. One sister was a victim of domestic violence and one brother was left with a child to raise alone. The mother, his wife, didn't want the child. So, none of it is straightforward. One sister, with her two small children, collected a few items (after another bashing by her husband – a drug addict)), went out on to the Pacific Highway and a kind truck-driver drove her to the Central Coast where the Salvation Army took care of her, and eventually helped her to find accommodation. She received the kindness of God firstly through the truck-driver, and then, through the dedicated workers of the Salvation Army. God is everywhere and uses whom God will to help us in our every need. Perhaps when the Covid virus eventually leaves us, we could spend time with someone who has had to walk away from a marriage. Are we in a situation where we could help with the children, or mind the child of a single parent, male or female? Raising a child alone has its "moments" – those moments when we say: if only there were two of us. Is there a victim of domestic violence we know – could we help to restore his or her faith in human beings once more? My sister is a positive person, and lives with a spirit of gratitude for all the kindness which has been shown to her over thirty to forty years. Her adult children are also positive and strong people who have taken jobs which involve helping others and building a better society.

*Lectio Divina is about reading the Sacred Scriptures and reflecting on them from an informed background.*

*It is allowing the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of my heart like a harpist, and bring forth the beauty of my response.*

*In responding to the text, my life is changed more and more into Christ.*



*Image ~ Susan Daily ibvm*