

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 10 October 2021
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:

15: St. Teresa of Avila (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:

13: Wagga Wagga – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1928).

16: Ballarat- Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Paul Bird

16: Sandhurst – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay, 2019. Canberra-Goulburn, Sydney – Anniversary of the death of Cardinal Edward Clancy, 2014

In the Social Justice Calendar:

10: World Mental Health Day

11: International Day of the Girl Child.

15: International Day for Disaster Reduction.

15: International Day of Rural Women

16: World Food Day

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Wisdom 7:7-11

Hebrews 4:12-13

Mark 10:17-30

Lectio: Read the First Reading from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 7:7-11.

The Word of God is sacred. Let us give ourselves to the sacred text and open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit calling us forth to respond. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you read. This is the true “oratio” (prayer) of *Lectio Divina*.

Meditatio: Some informed background so that we can honour the text in its original meaning.

This is a text which speaks to us with ease: a prayer.

“I prayed and understanding was given to me; I entreated, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.”

In order to deepen our spirit of listening let’s revise the meaning of wisdom, as it is in the sacred scriptures. Wisdom, as Vine explains it, consists of wisdom and understanding. Hence the first two lines of our text. Wisdom (Sophia) is the insight into the nature of things.

Understanding (phronesis and prudence) – these give the ability to discern modes of action with a view to their results.

While Sophia is theoretical, phronesis is practical. Particular applications of Sophia would be a critical faculty born of intelligence, understanding; the ability to stand back from an issue and make the wise decision.

After pondering over many hours or longer, you will want to make your response to this text. Of course, the Holy Spirit may draw forth a response immediately. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 1*.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 89

The response is: FILL US WITH YOUR LOVE, O LORD, AND WE WILL SING FOR JOY.

Psalm 89 is a prayer which ponders on the brevity of life.

Lectio: Read the Second text from the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 4:12-13.

Meditatio: This text is one of the foundational texts for *Lectio Divina*. “The Word of God is living and active. It can judge the secret emotions and thoughts.” Everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account of ourselves. The sacred scriptures do not lie. They deal with us, sort us out. There’s nowhere we can hide, and we can’t run from them. We especially can’t run away from the Gospel of Jesus.

PAUSE. Read the text again. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most authentic melody of your response...

I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from Matthew 5:3.

HAPPY THE POOR IN SPIRIT; THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Mark 10:17-30.

Pause and ponder.

Meditatio: Some helpful background in order to understand the text and make our response.

This text is about the call or invitation Jesus gives each of us.

“Jesus looked steadily at the young man and loved him and said: *There is one thing you lack: Go sell everything you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.*

His face fell, and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.”

Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman has a lengthy commentary on this text. He focuses on those who are called by God saying: *All through our life Christ is calling us. He called us first in baptism, but afterwards also; whether we obey his voice or not, he graciously calls us still.*

If we are striving to fulfil our calling, he calls us on from grace to grace, and from holiness to holiness while life is given us - Abraham from his home, Peter from his nets, Matthew from his office, Elisha from his farm, Nathanael from his retreat; we are all in the course of being called – on and on, from one thing to another, having no resting place but mounting towards our eternal rest. He calls us again and again – and again and again, and more and more, to sanctify and glorify us. (Parochial and Plain Sermons).

Stand back from this text. Later, read it again. Go to your “quiet” place. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

***Evangelizatio* is my LIVED RESPONSE to the sacred scriptures given to me each week by the Church for my formation as a Christian. If I don't respond, they are merely texts on a page. When I do respond, they are my life.**

1. My response to this text is to ask a question: “How many times in my life, have I wished someone in a leadership position would act wisely in any situation, weighing the consequences of a decision which will affect the lives of others?” In my lifetime I have lived with many a school principal. In two schools I found wisdom – in another school, a mess through a lack of wisdom and its practical application. Looking back in Australian history, so many explorers perished because they didn't take enough food, water or horses. We may remember the tragedy of Burke and Wills. Big business corporations have long meetings to help them make wise decisions before they act on certain matters. Too often though, the decisions are about how to make a bigger profit at the expense of others. So, we are confronted with a text about wisdom and understanding, framed within prayer. Call to mind a situation which will require a decision from you. What decision will you make? Weigh the pros and cons. What is wise and prudent? Are there a number of ways you can act? And most importantly, which of these will help you “grow into your own authentic selfhood”? (Parker Palmer). St. Hildegard of Bingen said: “The soul that is full of wisdom is saturated with the spray of a bubbling fountain – God himself.”
2. I am responding to listen, receive, watch. Cardinal Basil Hume, in *Searching for God*, offers a reflection on Mary (VII, page 160-163). “The mother of Jesus pondered all these things in her heart (Luke 2:51). A woman in the crowd called out: ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that gave you suck’ (Luke 11:27). And Jesus said: ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.’ Mary heard the Word of God and lived by it – she who listened, then pondered in her heart and kept on responding in all the events of life with her Son Jesus. Listening is difficult. Listening to Jesus in the Gospels is more difficult because a response from our heart is expected. St. Hildegard of Bingen once said: ‘The soul is kissed by God in its innermost regions.’ This is the power of the Word of God. She also says: ‘When a forest does not green vigorously, then it is no longer a forest. When a tree does not blossom, it cannot bear fruit. Likewise, a person

cannot be fruitful without the greening power of faith, and an understanding of Scripture.”

3. My response is to the “call”. Christ is calling me, always calling me. And in Cardinal Newman’s commentary, I see all the people throughout Biblical history – all called from where they were and from their comforts and securities, leaving behind what they knew and embarking upon the unknown. Wisdom and understanding were needed by all who responded to the call of God and of God’s son. I must pray for wisdom and understanding to continue to hear the call, answer the call and remain vigilant on the journey which is made along a road mostly unfamiliar. My armchair is very comfortable, as is my bed. I have my house or apartment or small flat, just the way I want it. Everything is in place as I want it to be. And my garden? Just right! So, when I hear God’s call to help someone, can I respond or will I pretend I can’t hear it, so as I can get on with pruning before the summer sets in? I have a friend who has every day of the week typed up and which jobs she does on which day. In this way, everything is covered. Nothing left undone. And there is nothing wrong with this, except that she doesn’t like being interrupted!

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

