

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 14 November 2021**

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week One

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:

17: St. Elizabeth of Hungary, (Memorial)

In the Australian Church

15: Wilcannia Forbes: Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Barry Collins, 2000.

Sale: Patronal Feast, Our Lady of Perpetual Help. (Solemnity).

19: Ballarat – Anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral, 1891.

Sale – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Jeremiah Coffey, 2014.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

14: World Diabetes Day

15: World Day of the Poor.

16: 1989 – Murder of six Jesuit priests and two co-workers in El Salvador

19: World Toilet Day

20: Universal Children's Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Daniel 12:1-3

Hebrews 10:11-14

Mark 13:24-32

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Book of Daniel, chapter 12, verses 1-3.**

This is how it is referenced in the Ordo but in the Sunday missal, it is a longer version - 12:11-13.

Read it slowly and pause for a while. Then read it a second time. In your prayer journal, note what has spoken to you in this text – a word, a phrase, a sentence.

***Meditatio:* Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it and make our response.**

Along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Daniel is classed as a major prophet. An outline of the book will help us.

1. Daniel's life in Babylon (1-6)
2. Daniel - a young man in Babylon (Daniel 1)
3. Nebuchadnezzar's dream: the great image (Daniel 2)
4. The fiery furnace (Daniel 3) Nebuchadnezzar's dream: a great tree (Daniel 4)

5. Belshazzar: the handwriting on the wall (Daniel 5)
6. Daniel in the lions' den (chapter 6)
7. Daniel's visions (chapters 7-12).

Daniel was taken to Babylon with other captives and became a prophet in exile.

12:1-3 is, in the commentary by Hartman and di Lella, a "magnificent poetic conclusion of the revelation given in chapters 10-11."

Stop for a while and read Chapters 10 and 11.

The commentary continues: "Despite the terrible sufferings...the elect of God, whose names are 'found written in the book' of life (cf. Exod 32:32-33; Psalm 69:29), will be saved.

The word "sleep" is a euphemism for the dead. (cf John 11:11-13; Acts 7:60; 1 Thess. 4:13).

Shall awake: We are told that this passage is remarkable as the earliest clear enunciation of belief in the resurrection of the dead." (summarised from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 25:34).

Take time to ponder on this text in the days ahead as you go about your work, rest, recreation. Allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of your heart and bring forth the melody of your response to this text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 15

The response is: KEEP ME SAFE O GOD, YOU ARE MY HOPE.

Psalm 15 is a Psalm of confidence in God. It has all the characteristics of peace which comes from those who trust in God.

Lectio: Read the second text from Hebrews 10:11-14.

Meditatio: This part of *Lectio Divina*, is about explaining the text and reflecting as we hear the explanation (like the monks of the early centuries). Be aware, that we can easily read too quickly, or be distracted.

About *LECTIO DIVINA*, Blessed Columba Marmion says: "We read under the eye of God until the heart is touched and leaps into flame."

Here we are again, with Hebrews, and the same message, as if God is not letting us off lightly.

Priests: stand at the altars every day offering sacrifices incapable of taking sins away. Christ has offered one sacrifice. Christ, in doing this, has taken his place at the right hand of his Father in heaven, and is now waiting until "all his enemies are made into a footstool for him

Who are the enemies of Christ? Those who put profit before people.
Those who grow and market drugs illegally, harming and killing human persons.
Those who commit murder.
Those who attack and rape human beings, either in war or peace.
Those who rash judge, and gossip.
Those who traffick in people.
Those who steal organs from children on the street: The child is left to die. The healthy organs are implanted in other people.
And we could go on.

The last two sentences of the text should make us think. "By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings."
In this text, what phrases, what sentences, what words are to change your life?
I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from Luke 21:36

BE WATCHFUL, PRAY CONSTANTLY,
THAT YOU MAY BE WORTHY TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from Mark 13:24-32.**

Read it slowly and reflectively, and maybe a second time. Try to read aloud rather than with the mind. Listen to the text as you read.

Meditatio: Daniel Harrington, S.J. comments on this text, saying: "The Old Testament language of cosmic signs and the Son of Man have been blended together in which the eschatological coming of JESUS as the Son of Man is the key event. His glorious arrival at the end of time will be the final proof of God's victory; expectation of it serves as the basis for the patient endurance recommended throughout the discourse." Cosmic signs, such as those preceding His coming.

Some texts to take for *Lectio* at this point are: Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Amos 8:9; Joel 2:10 and 31; Joel 3:15; Isaiah 34:4.

The second part is an exhortation to confidence and vigilance.

The parable of the fig tree: "The fig tree's natural process of growth in spring and summer is compared with the sequence of events leading up to the coming of the Son of Man." (New Jerome Biblical Commentary 41:87 and 88).

Read the Gospel slowly and reflectively, and maybe a second time. Listen to the text as you read. Stand back from it and ponder. 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. The Word of God is life-changing for me, when I respond to it in a practical way.

1. I am responding to something in the commentary: “despite the terrible suffering, the elect of God, whose names are found in the book of Life, will be saved.” Last week, Sr. Elizabeth had a visit from her cousin, who is a doctor and a teacher of doctors. He is based in the Wollongong Hospital and trains doctors who have graduated from the Wollongong University. He had much to share about the Covid virus, and its effect on society, on all professions and workplaces, on all families, on all those in nursing homes. It was very apparent to me that he is a committed Christian. He spoke confidently, saying: “We will get through this. We will get through this.” By the time he had finished, there was a feeling of renewed hope among us. Sr. Elizabeth, Sr. Agnes, Sr. Joanna and I were much more confident about getting on with our life of prayer and work. We felt we had been ministered to by Dr. John, Elizabeth’s cousin. The people (with Daniel) were in exile needing ministering. They needed “special pastoral care that respects their traditions and accompanies them to harmonious integration...” Those in exile did not get this. Daniel gave them his life in so many ways. Can I, this week, give my life to someone who is in exile: a homeless person, a friend whose marriage has just broken up? Let us help to bring someone out of exile, to be in the “elect of God” once again.
2. Jesus said: “Do not judge...” This is perhaps one of the hardest sayings of Jesus for all of us as we are all guilty of judging others at one time or another. And, all too often, in society today, we have to blame someone for everything that goes wrong. This week, can we stand back from situations we find ourselves and take the longer view, the more compassionate view? Can we give others the benefit of the doubt and not be so quick to judge or condemn?
3. My response to this Gospel text is to do as St. Benedict advises in his Rule for Monasteries: “Keep death daily before your eyes.” We don’t know when we will be called home to God. The message is to be alert and ready. Our preparation is always the Gospel. We must read the Gospel stories and absorb the teaching of Jesus. And more than that, we must put it into practice, not once, but all day, every day, until we have it off by heart, and we don’t even have to think.

*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.*