

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 16 January 2022
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Two

Before moving into prayer with the Sacred Scriptures, let us look at the week ahead in the Liturgy, the Social Justice Calendar and the Australian Church.

In the Liturgy:

17: St. Antony of Egypt, Desert Father.

21: St. Agnes, Martyr for the Faith. A Basilica was built in 350 A.D. on the site of her remains.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church.

17: Adelaide, Wollongong: Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Philip Wilson, 2021.

20: Auckland – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. John Mackey, 2014.

In The Social Justice Calendar:

From: “Ten steps Towards Genuine Human Encounter in our Digital World”.

We must always remember that each person we communicate with on social media, is a real person – made in the image and likeness of God.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Isaiah 62:1-5

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

John 2:1-11

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Prophet Isaiah, 62:1-5.**

Read it slowly and prayerfully, 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.**

This is a text from third Isaiah (Trito-Isaiah) – the return of the exiles. We heard much of the Book of Comfort in Advent and Christmas. Third Isaiah, while containing quite a number of themes from the Book of Comfort, contains definitive imagery used to bring the power of God out of silence, out of weariness and into the light of dawn, where all will see the integrity and glory of a people crowned with splendour and held by the hand of the Lord. The wedding imagery towards the end is used to denote the intimacy between God and his people.

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 95

The response is: PROCLAIM HIS MARVELLOUS DEEDS TO ALL THE NATIONS.

Psalm 95 is about the universal reign of the true God.

Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading, from 1 Cor. 12:4-11.

Meditatio: Background to the text to assist our understanding and response.

Verses 1-11 are about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor O.P., commenting on this text, notes that the introduction indicates a question *raised* by the Corinthians. Paul's response which runs to 14:40, suggests that it concerns the hierarchy of spiritual gifts. He discerned an egocentric competitiveness that was detrimental to Church unity; since all the gifts have a common origin, they should serve a common purpose. (New Jerome Biblical Commentary 49:59).

Ponder on the text and make your response. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

GOD HAS CALLED US WITH THE GOSPEL,
TO SHARE IN THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Lectio: The Gospel is from John 2:1-11.

Meditatio: Brief background to the text, so that we can understand it and respond.

This text is full of symbol. Water is turned into wine.

The jars of water symbolize the Old Covenant (Testament). When changed into wine, they become the jars of the New Covenant (Testament).

There are several sentences which form foundations for gospel living:

1. Mary: They have no wine (they have no future, no salvation!).
2. Jesus: Woman, why turn to me? As the commentary in the Glenstal Bible Missal notes: "Mary symbolizes humanity turned towards the Saviour." And Mary (Woman) is the New Eve.
3. Mary: Do whatever he tells you.
4. Jesus: Fill the jars with water.

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. The great speeches of Moses are truly great because they were delivered with his own voice. There were no microphones, no technology of any kind, just persons and the human voice as teacher. Jesus taught like this too: in the Sermon on the Mount, and every opportunity that came his way the spoke of love. Those who took the Gospel to the world also used the meeting (the church assembly) outdoors or in the houses of Christians and the human voice. St. Augustine was also an enthusiastic preacher. He said: “We will receive from God the amount of indulgence we have given to our neighbour.” We need to remember this – it comes out of “you must love your neighbour as yourself.” And St. John Climacus, in “Stairway to Paradise”, has an interesting little piece on crabs: “Just as crabs always stay in the same place, because first they go forwards and then they go backwards, so does the soul if it vacillates, now laughing, now crying, now plunging into unrestrained merry-making.” And we are reminded that the soul is the seat of religious and moral sentiment, the inner self. As a former teacher, and now a prayer companion to our Oblates, I like the personal approach to teaching monastic theology. However, I have had to adjust to “virtual” mode in order to bring the Gospel teaching to those entrusted by St. Benedict to our care.
2. My response is to the egocentric competitiveness. When practicing Christians begin to compete in the area of gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit, trouble and turbulence begins: “I’m more gifted than you are!” “I’ve been chosen to play a much more prominent part than you have.” No one should be excluded from ministry within the Church if they are gifted in an area. I’ve shared with you before that my colleague who had overall responsibility for the school orchestra in the last school where I worked, could always find a place for the “not-so-talented” musician. Even if it meant playing eight notes at the right time – those eight notes did more for children than a pot of gold - probably because those notes were a pot of gold, giving a child that feeling of importance, confidence to go on! I have a great-great niece who begins school later this month. Her Day Care Centre held a graduation ceremony for all the 4- to five-year-olds, congratulating them on the skills they have acquired. A big fuss was made of each child. Negative comments were also made: “This is ridiculous, treating four-year-olds like university graduates.” Let’s turn our backs on negativity. So, whatever a person’s gifts may be, let us rejoice in each gift, from intercessory prayer, to gardening, cleaning, writing, arts and crafts. It never hurts to say to another: “Well done!” “Congratulations!” You’ve made such a difference to our world.”

3. My response is to the words of Mary: “Do whatever he tells you.” How do I know what Jesus is asking of me? Is it about doing or about being? Am I to do something, or be someone? I tend to think it is about being.

We are offered some Scripture texts for prayer this week:

Isaiah 54:4-8; Isaiah 62:4-5; Amos 9:13; Hosea 2:24; Joel 4:18; Isaiah 29:17; Jeremiah 31:5.

“Wine is one of the most ancient cultural benefits known to humankind.” (Bauer, Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology). In Gen. 9:20 Noah begins with vine-growing and therefore brings relief to the earth.

*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.*



Image ~ Water into Wine by Hyatt Moore