

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

Sunday 13 February 2022

6th 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 & NZ Church.

In the Liturgy:

14: Sts Cyril and Methodius.

In the Australian and New Zealand Catholic Church:

13: Christchurch – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Barry Philip Jones 2016

13: Hamilton: Episcopal Ordination of the most rev. Stephen Marmian Lowe (2015)

Syro-Malabar Eparchy: Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Bosco Puthur (2010)

14: Dunedin – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1886)

19: Day of Prayer and Penance for the Victims of abuse and violence.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

13: (2008) Apology to the Stolen Generations by the Australian Government.

13: (2015), Death of Faith Bandler A.C., activist for Indigenous and South Sea Islander Rights.

17: (2014) – Murder of Iranian Asylum-seeker Reza Barati in offshore Immigration detention on Manus Island.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Jeremiah 17:5-8

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Luke 6:17 and 20-26

***Lectio:* Read the first text from the Prophet Jeremiah 17:5-8.**

Meditatio: This is very obviously a comparative description of one who puts trust in human beings and one who puts trust in the Lord. The imagery for the first is dry and parched – a salt land. The imagery for the second is one of a tree growing by the waterside, thrusting its roots to the water and always bearing fruit. No worries in a time of drought. In this comparative study, nature is the foundation: dry arid land versus the fresh green nature of a fruit-bearing tree.

Jeremiah is preaching before the fall of Jerusalem, trying to warn a stubborn people about the consequences of those who don't trust in the Lord, but rather trust in idols.

Read the text again and maybe a third time. Read it slowly, marking some of the words, phrases, sentences which may cause you to stop and recognize that the Holy Spirit is calling you to a word, a phrase, a sentence, or to the whole text. Ponder for a while. Maybe a day or more! Make your response.

I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 1

The response is: HAPPY ARE THEY WHO HOPE IN THE LORD.

Psalm 1 is about the two ways of living. It is “a study in black and white, as a prelude to the whole Psalter. The sharp contrast between the virtuous and the wicked is characteristic of Hebrew thought and literary expression. The Psalmist was conscious of the good and bad to be found in self and others.” (Grail Psalter).

And this ought to remind us of the tension within us. Paul will express it much later: “Though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not.” Once when Mother Benedicta wanted to change the horarium (timetable), so that we would arise very early for the Hour of Vigils at 3.30 a.m., an elderly nun said: ‘Mother, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ I guess we’ve all heard that said at some stage of our lives or felt like saying it!

Lectio: Read the second text: 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20.

Meditatio: Some background to help us understand the text and make an informed response to it.

This text fits into a longer text: 15:12-28. Here, we have another black versus white situation. Verse 12: Paul points out to the Corinthians that if their argument (no resurrection from the dead), is correct, then four conclusions follow:

1. Christ has not been raised
2. Paul’s preaching is in vain and he is open to the charge of misrepresenting God.
3. The faith of the Corinthians is meaningless and they are all still sinners.
4. Those who died as Christians are definitely lost. (Summary from the New Jerome Biblical Comm. 49:67).

The very Creed of the Church is at stake. There is a note in 49:7 which may explain some of the difficulties: “More data is available on the social make-up of the Corinthian Church, than of any other. The names of 16 members are known from Acts 18, 1 Cor. 16 and Romans 16.”

All the more people to write letters of complaint to Paul. At least Paul dealt with the problems and didn’t shelve them.

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you and prompting you to respond to words, phrases, sentences which call you forth and challenge you. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is from Luke 6:23.

REJOICE AND BE GLAD; YOUR REWARD IS GREAT IN HEAVEN.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text: Luke 6:17 and 20-26.

Meditatio: Some background to the text to help us respond with understanding.

This text completes the theme of today's first text from Jeremiah and that of the Responsorial Psalm.

How happy are you who are poor. Yours is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Happy are you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now: you shall laugh.

And then comes the comparison:

Alas for the rich

Alas for those who have their fill now.

Alas for those who laugh now.

Alas for those whom the world speaks well of now.

Fr. Thomas Keating is profound on the text of the Beatitudes, saying: "Divine empowerment is more present in those who climb the ladder of the beatitudes than anywhere else in creation. The power of the stars is nothing compared to the energy of a person whose will has been freed from the false-self system and who is thus enabled to co-create the cosmos together with God...God's top priority is the creation of a world in which the goods of the earth are equitably distributed, where no one is forgotten or left out, and where no one can rest until everyone has enough to eat, the oppressed have been liberated, and justice and peace are the norm among the nations and religious of the world."

(The Mystery of Christ, page 104).

Read the Gospel a few times. Take time for quiet and listening to the Holy Spirit praying within you. After a while (day or days), make your response to this text. 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.

1. In regard to those who trust in humans and their idols, Sr. Joan Chittister says: "Dependence on God may be what is lacking in a society where consumerism and accumulation have become the root disease of a world in which everything is not enough and nothing satisfies (The Rule of Benedict – Sr. Joan Chittister). Fr. Kevin Ryan, in his column for the Catholic Leader many years ago shared the following wisdom: "The rich man who wanted more (bigger barns), is a sad figure in the Gospel story, a story which taps into our most basic urge, and that urge is greed."

Greed has been with us since the beginning of time. Within us is the desire to do better. Letting that desire get out of hand is where greed comes in. Greed and power-seeking go together. We can exercise power through our strengths, our weaknesses, or our tantrums. Whatever it is, we still want more.” (Pages 147-148 – “Read Life – A Collection of Columns, Volume 1, July 1997- December 2001).

2. My response: In “The Resurrection of the Messiah: What does it mean?”, Francis J. Moloney, SBD, says: “On the basis of the genuine human, but indescribable, experience of the encounter between the risen Jesus and the earliest witnesses, resurrection faith was born.” (Page 148). From those encounters, vividly described in John’s Gospel, Resurrection faith was preached by the evangelists and by Paul. It was the very essence of life in Christ. And from these first encounters, faith in the resurrection of Jesus has come down to all of us and keeps us alive. May we claim it and walk in freedom.
3. At the moment, our best and safest means of communication is a mobile phone or email. As we communicate with others, we share that the Supermarket shelves are empty of some products, and fruit/vegetables are more expensive and so on. The sister in charge of supplies in our monastery had to spell out for us what is no longer available – what she can’t get. Some of us have needs that aren’t being met. However, I see that it is good for me to go without things or to use a different product. One of my siblings, a sister, is living very simply and is not complaining. In fact, many of us are all living much more simply. And in doing so, we hope that we will be freed from what Fr. Keating describes as “the false-self system”, so that we can be enabled to co-create the cosmos together with God. In our choice to eat simply, we pray that everyone has enough to eat.

*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.*

