

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.**  
**Sunday 13 March 2022**  
**Second Sunday of Lent, 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:**

17: St. Patrick – a Solemnity in Australia. A Feast in New Zealand.

19: St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity).

**In the Australian and New Zealand Church:**

13: Anniversary of the election of Pope Francis, 2013.

16: Wollongong – Anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral, (2010).

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

18: (Australia) – 2019 – Anniversary of the death of Deacon Boniface Perdjert, respected Elder and first Aboriginal Permanent Deacon.

19: (2003). Invasion of Iraq by the USA and Allies.

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

**The readings are:**

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 9: 28-36

***Lectio:* Read the First Reading from the Prophet Genesis 15:5-12 and 17-18.**

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.**

The Book of Genesis is the first of five books of the Law. We also know these five books are called “The Pentateuch”. In this text we are dealing with crucial Old Testament History. If you stop now and read Genesis 15:1-21, you will find that in this chapter, God promises Abraham a son and a land: “To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River.” The promise is sealed in a covenant, a sacrificial covenant, involving beasts to be slaughtered and used as a burnt offering. This episode thrusts us forward to Good Friday – the sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. This text makes sense of Hebrews chapter nine. You may want to stop and pray with Hebrews chapter nine.

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

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 26

**The response is:** THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION.

Psalm 26 is a prayer of strong and lasting trust in God. Pray it each day this coming week, as you begin Lectio Divina.

**Lectio:** Read the Second text from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians, chapter 3:17-4:1.

**Meditatio:** Some background: Brendan Byrne, S.J. who does the commentary on Philippians in the New Jerome Bib. Comm., says that the enemies of the cross of Christ are those who preach against Christ's costly sacrifice on Calvary. He notes that the text: "They make foods into their gods" may refer to Jewish food laws or to selfishness in general.

"To boast of circumcision is to glory in something which otherwise one modestly covers. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:23).

Earthly things: all that belongs to the older ages is now superseded by Christ.

Our citizenship is in heaven: though not yet fully arrived in the new age, Christians are already enrolled as citizens of the "heavenly city". (Cf. Gal. 4:14-27; Eph. 2:19)

Transform our lowly bodies: The bodies of Christians now partaking in the mortality of the present life cannot enter the final glory without transformation.

The Risen Christ is exemplar as well as agent of the true humanity God intended for human beings from the start. (Cf. Romans 8:19-21; Romans 8:29-30).

For the Messianic reign of Christ, Cf. 1 Cor 15:25-28; Rom 8:20; Eph 1:22; 1 Peter 3:22.

Chapter 4, verse 1, is an exhortation not to be seduced away from the new existence now enjoyed in the Lord.

(Summarized from the New Jerome Bib. Comm. 48:27 & 28).

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 17:5**

FROM THE SHINING CLOUD THE FATHER'S VOICE IS HEARD:

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM.

The word "hear" carries the responsibility of an obedient listening, and thus an appropriate response to the life-changing words of Jesus.

**Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 9:28-36**

Pause and ponder.

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

This text is about the Transfiguration of the Lord, and the divine confirmation of the way of the cross. Just a few notes:

Luke uses symbols of the transcendent.

The topic of conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah, is mentioned only by Luke – that is, not by Matthew, Mark or John.

Peter did not understand the conversation of verse 31 and interprets the event in the light of the harvest festival of Tabernacles, the abundance of which came to symbolize God's consummation of history. This needs to be understood. My experience of it is that it is mostly misunderstood. I've attended scripture classes over the decades, and I've heard that: "Peter was just excited – carried away on Mount Tabor, wanted to make it comfortable for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Peter wanted to be the one to take charge of the situation." And so on.

(NJBib.Comm., 43:115).

The symbol of the cloud comes from Exodus: a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

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. In his book "Grace on the Journey to God", Michael Casey has an important offering on page 168: "If we set ourselves the task of really listening, we will often hear a word that touches us powerfully, whether as a comfort or a challenge." This is true of all Scripture. In this first reading the word that has touched me powerfully is the name "Abraham". In the "Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology", Bauer states that "Abraham was regarded, in the whole of the biblical tradition, and in a very real sense, as the bearer of revelation and of salvation, and was given the titles 'prophet' (Gen. 20:7), friend of God' (Is 41:8), and 'servant of God (Psalm 105:6). The Lord is the God of Abraham, and Abraham is the father of Israel, the rock from which the people is hewn. (Is. 51:1f)." It may not have crossed our minds that Jews, Christians and Muslims all agree that Abraham is the Patriarch of their religions and founder of monotheism (belief in ONE God). Christians, Jews and Muslims are to be like Abraham, who had courage, faith, a commitment to sacrifice, who was obedient, who trusted in the one supreme God – thus Abraham was a model of how human beings should live their lives. Today is the Second Sunday of Lent. It is time to take Abraham as a role model, in whatever way the Holy Spirit is leading us. We are all individuals and are responding to this text from our different backgrounds. But we must respond!

2. My response is to chapter 4:1 – Do not be seduced away from the new existence now enjoyed in the Lord. Or: Do not give way but remain faithful to the Lord. I like the two words: “seduced away”. It happens before we realize, doesn’t it? If you receive the Innovations booklet regularly or any of those online sales emails, you may sit up in bed at night and mark all the things you would like but don’t really need. Mostly, the things don’t last very long, so why go through it again? We buy trash and the trash becomes landfill. Why spend money on things that don’t last long, or on things we don’t need. The pictures seduce us! And then we are led away from the quality moments in our life: meeting with our prayer group during Lent, or the ‘holy hour’ at our parish church, where we gather to pray for the Ukraine. On the social justice wall outside our abbey church, is a picture of Benedictine nuns chanting the psalms in the basement of their Abbey, while the missiles and other weapons of destruction can be heard overhead. We have been in touch with the Abbot Primate by email and he will convey to the sisters our thoughts and prayer. We have also sent a donation – but with supermarkets destroyed and other essential services called to a halt – who knows? Families with small children, elderly persons, handicapped persons – we need to picture the scene and place ourselves there. Some elderly persons will fall! Some little girls and boys will tell their parents that they are cold, or hungry. Thank God for the soup vans in Poland, right on the border, welcoming the refugees into their country.
3. I am responding to the end of the text: “Jesus was found alone”. I believe that I need to find Jesus “alone”. I need to put my agenda aside, my many requests for this and that, and just be with Jesus alone.

*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.*

