

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 17 April 2022**  
**Easter Sunday**

**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes the Octave of Easter**

Sunday of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday) is a Solemnity and takes an Octave. This means One Week of Solemn Liturgy. During this week, no other Memorial Feast or Solemnity can be celebrated.

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 this week:**

The Octave of Easter

**The Social Justice Calendar:**

18: World Heritage Day

23: World Book and Copyright Day

24: International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

**Anniversaries in the Australian and New Zealand Catholic Church**

23: Australia – Lismore remembers the death of the Most Rev. John Satterthwaite in 2016. We remember the people of Lismore and the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales who have lost everything in the floods. We give them the gift of prayer.

23: Australia – Port Pirie, Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Peter De Campo, 1998.

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

**The readings for Easter Sunday (not the Vigil) are:**

Acts 10:34, 37-43.

Col. 3:1-4 or 1 Cor. 5:6-8.

John 20:1-9 or Luke 24:1-12.

**Lectio:** Read the first text from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10:34 & 37-43.

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.

The setting for Chapters 8-12 is Judea and Samaria. There the Gospel is preached. The text is about the breakdown of exclusiveness. The climax of the text is verse 44. In this verse we read: “While Peter was still speaking, God took the matter out of his hands (a lesson for Peter), and by the visible sign that he had bestowed the Spirit, demonstrated that he had called these uncircumcised Gentiles to be members of the

new Israel, just as they were – i.e., without circumcision. No wonder that the Hebrew Christians who had not yet advanced to the position of Peter were astonished. The phrase “they of the circumcision” here appears for the first time. Later it is used to denote the strict Jewish party. Though God has revealed his hand, baptism is not omitted. It still remains the outward sign and formal means of admission into the Church. There is no laying on of hands since power to live the new life has already been received. Overall, it is the repercussions of what Peter has done which led to anger from the Jews of the Christian fellowship. For a start, many of their customs relating to food were repugnant to Jewish Christians, therefore, how could they share a fellowship meal?

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 117**

**The response is:** THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE;  
LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE.

Psalm 117 calls out: God’s love has no end; the Lord’s right hand raised me up. I shall not die, I shall live. I shall recount his deeds. **The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone! – The corner stone of my life, of our lives, of our Christian communities, our parishes.**

**Lectio:** Read the second text from Colossians 3:1-4

**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.”

We could well label this text: TIME TO MOVE ON.

The statements are clear:

- You have been brought back to life with Christ, so
- You must look for the things that are in heaven.
- Christ is in heaven, at God’s right hand.
- Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things of the earth.
- The life you have is hidden with Christ in God.
- Christ is your life.

This text is for adult Christians. It is difficult text to explain to children who haven’t yet lived the Christian life. So, as adult Christians we need to remain focused on the movement we are to embark upon: Look up to heaven. Let your thoughts be on

heavenly things, not on the things of the earth. Look towards eternal life when you will be revealed in all your glory with Christ.

While we are reading, pondering, listening to the Holy Spirit praying within us, we need to note what phrases, sentences or just single words are leaping out at us because the Holy Spirit is causing us to respond. What, in this text, is life-changing for us? I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

**The Gospel Verse is from 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.**

CHRIST HAS BECOME OUR PASCHAL SACRIFICE;  
LET US FEAST WITH JOY IN THE LORD.

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from John 20:1-9.**

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***: A reflection which may help us: “The resurrection is repose after the painful tension of the Passion. It is the stone rolled away from the tomb, it is the joyful cry of Mary Magdalene, it is the other side of death, become luminous. It is the certainty that life is already triumphant and that it will triumph in the end: the fundamental force that sustains the world and history is love and love is stronger than death...the risen Jesus is the first fruits of love; we will follow him, for through faith his Spirit dwells in us, that Spirit who by his divine power has raised him from the dead. In that sense I am, we are, already risen; a seed of indestructible life is sown in our hearts...” (From Advent to Pentecost, Carthusian Novice Conferences, written by a Carthusian Monk).

It is interesting that no details are given of the Resurrection, but the evidence is given: the empty grave, the undisturbed graveclothes and later, the appearances. Read the text a number of times and listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth the melody of your response. I share my response 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. My response is to the anger of the Jews. Prejudice is everywhere in our world. Unfortunately! But instead of pointing the finger at someone else, I need to look into my own heart first. During Lent this year Sr. Antonia gave an online retreat entitled: “High Horses, Scapegoats and Donkeys.” We were invited to attend the retreat. In the fourth conference Sr. Antonia said: “There are two kinds of deaths before us, and God leaves us free to make the

choice. We are free to choose death to our self or death to our self-centered ego. When we choose the latter, we are free for the bowing, bearing, peace and suffering that is the way of Christ and the way of true freedom – the suffering whereby the breakthrough of the Holy Spirit can infuse us from within and without. The Spirit breaks down the walls and ramparts and bruises our hearts. The Holy Spirit pulls us out of the saddle, as happened to St. Paul on the road to Damascus. This is the road to Redemption.” Let us reflect on these words now that we are on the other side of the Passion and the Cross and looking upon an empty tomb and a Risen Saviour.

2. Raymond Brown (Reading the Gospels with the Church) has managed to combine the academic and the spiritual, to educate and challenge us. He says of the Resurrection Narratives: “Stories Told it Best”: “Our Christian ancestors spoke about the Resurrection long before they wrote about it. The first believers proclaimed the truth by word of mouth. John’s Gospel narrates a series of encounters, as character after character comes to meet Jesus in center stage...” Let us keep in mind that the four Evangelists “shaped the Resurrection narratives to be meaningful to audiences of differing lifestyles and backgrounds in the first century. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever; but the world addressed by God’s revelation in Christ is varied indeed.” (Raymond Brown, “Reading the Gospels with the Church”, notes taken from pages 72-75). As we respond to today’s Gospel, let us hear it as we are – living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with all its conflicts and challenges.

*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.*

