

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

Sunday 24 April 2022

Second Sunday of Easter Year C

It is also the Octave Day of Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday

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:

25: ANZAC DAY.

26: St. Mark

28: St. Peter Chanel, first Martyr of Oceania.

29: St Catherine of Siena

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

26: Dunedin: Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Michael Dooley, 2018.

27: Australia – Cairns and Sandhurst celebrate their Patronal Feast, Mary Mother of Good Counsel.

28: New Zealand celebrates St. Peter Chanel as Patron Saint of Oceania and the city of Hamilton celebrates its Patronal Feast

In the Social Justice Calendar:

25: 1945 – Opening of the First United Nations Conference.

26: Nuclear accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine, causing thousands of deaths and widespread contamination in Europe (1986)

28: World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

28: 1841 – Death of St. Peter Chanel, first martyr of Oceania, in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu).

28: 1998 – Australia, - death of Shirley ‘Mum Shirl’ Smith, Aboriginal community leader.

29: Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Acts 5:12-16

Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19

John 20:19-31.

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 5, verses 12-16. Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud. This is about our on-going conversion.

Meditatio: Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it and make our response. Chapters 1-7 of the Acts of the Apostles covers the Jerusalem ministry.

Verses 12-16 of chapter five also denote a period of growth, and a moving outside of the Jerusalem Ministry. This short text is uncomplicated.

The overall message is that the sick needed healing. Firstly, the Apostles met in a public place, the Portico of Solomon. Solomon's Porch (Portico or Colonnade) was a colonnade or cloister located on the eastern side of the Temple's outer Court (the Women's Court). Stop and read the references to the Portico of Solomon: 1 Kings 6:2-3; John 10:23; Acts 3:11, and Acts 5:13, today's text.

People other than Apostles did not intrude. But – they brought the sick. They sought even the shadow of Peter for their healing. The sick came from many places to be healed. Leprosy was the most common illness. We can presume from the cures Jesus carried out, that demon possession was another, or maybe it was just epilepsy. There were other illnesses like the woman with the hemorrhage. There would have been cancer. Whatever the illness, people were desperate for healing when there were no hospitals, no medical science to speak of, no ICU, no Florence Nightingale to make things clean and free of infection. Everywhere Jesus went, it was the sick who were cured. And now, the sick flock to the Apostles, expecting to be healed. Their need is desperate.

Take time to ponder on this text from the Acts of the Apostles in the days ahead. May we all allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of our hearts and bring forth the melody of our response to this text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 117

The response is: GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD, HIS LOVE IS EVERLASTING.

Block 2 contains the Easter proclamation – “The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.”

Lectio: Read the second text from the Book of Revelation 1:9-13 and 17-19.

Meditatio: Patmos is a small island about 40 miles out from Miletus. It is mountainous and volcanic, with a rocky shore and these distinctive descriptions of the island may have affected the symbolism of the Book of Revelation. (T.W. Crafter).

Verse 10 is about a prophetic ecstasy.

The seven – branched candlestick had already featured in Zechariah's vision (chapter 4, verse 2).

Here there is a difference. Here the lampstands are separate, as in Solomon's Temple, (1 Kings 7:49).

There are seven churches, but they form one church (Matt. 5:14-16).

In verse 19, Jesus' authority is manifested by his resurrection and present glory. Everything is grounded in this reality. Faith is the call of this text, and it is, as we know well, an exhortation for his churches, to remain firm in faith through persecution. Persecution was already a reality for Christians. Every vision and wonder of the Book of Revelation is for those who need strengthening as they struggle against the hatred of others.

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 John 20:29

YOU BELIEVE IN ME THOMAS, BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN ME;
HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN ME BUT STILL BELIEVE!

Lectio: Read the Gospel text: John 20:19-31

Meditatio: The resurrection account in John 20, places the appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem. Raymond Brown (Reading the Gospels with the Church) presents the fact that “John’s Gospel narrates a series of encounters as character after character comes to meet Jesus in center stage and reacts to him. I would prefer the word “responds”, not “reacts”. In John 20, “sequentially, Peter, the Beloved Disciple, Mary Magdalene, the disciples and Thomas encounter the mystery of Jesus’ Resurrection.”

Breaking open chapter 20, we can see that verses 19-23 narrate Jesus’ appearance to the disciples and that the disciples are recreated by the power of the Holy Spirit. The breath of Jesus is the breath of new life.

John 20:24-29 tell the story of the doubting Thomas. Brown says that: “From the lips of “doubting Thomas” comes the highest confession of faith in all the Gospels: ‘My Lord and my God’.”

Read the Gospel again take quiet time. 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 gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian. 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. It is now 2022, and medical science is advancing all the time. We have a sister in our community whose Ph.D. was in stem cell research relating to breast cancer. Not everything can be healed, and some people who are ill don’t show outward signs, but we know that many illnesses, including mental illness can be healed. We have the Lord Jesus, doctors, specialists, psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, and loving friends. Henri Nouwen said: “Who can take away suffering without entering into it?” Elisabeth Kubler Ross in her work on the stages of grief speaks of people who don’t find their way out of defeat, suffering, struggle, loss, without a helping hand. Do you know someone who needs a friend at the moment? Someone who needs a helping hand to get up after being defeated, or someone who has lost a loved one in death? If we can, let us be that helping hand and in so doing spread the peace and joy of the Risen Lord.
2. At this time, atrocities are being committed in the Ukraine daily. One that has impacted on me more than others is the rape of a child, posted on social media by the man who committed the crime (a war crime). Secondly, it was the women kept in a basement for

25 days who were raped. So, just as in the second text from the Book of Revelation, a “people” is being persecuted. Among them there are Christians. May we hold our arms up in prayer for the people of the Ukraine.

3. I’m responding to the reality of war in a time of Resurrection – I am doing this because I can’t forget Ukraine. And this story always brings it back: “O Lord, remember not only people of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they inflicted on us. Remember the fruits we have borne thanks to this suffering: our comradeship, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of this; and when they come to judgment let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.” (Written on a piece of wrapping paper found near the body of a dead child in Ravensbruck where 92,000 women and children died in the Holocaust). And yet, the lessons have not been learnt. May we not forget the Holocaust, The Killing Fields, the Rwandan Genocide, the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, the Salvadoran people, the Mayan Indians, slaughtered in Guatemala, the Ukraine. And this won’t be the last! We can only rise above it all because of our Risen Saviour.

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.



Pysanky - ~Decorated Easter eggs from Ukraine