

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

**Sunday 15 May 2022**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter Year C**

**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week One**

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:**

No memorials, feasts or solemnities this week.

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

15: Australia: Sandhurst – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1977).

19: Australia: Canberra-Goulburn – Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Most Rev. Christopher Prowse (2003)

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

15: International Day of Families

16: International Day of Living Together in Peace

21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

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

**The readings are:**

Acts 14:21-27

Revelation 21:1-5

Gospel – John 13:31-35.

**Lectio:** Read the first text from the Acts of the Apostles, 14:21-27.

As always, it is best to read the Word of God slowly. Be 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 to it.

This is an “on the move” text and one which is full of hope and encouragement. If you have a map in your bible, trace the route taken by Paul and Barnabas. There are five towns mentioned in this account.

Antioch is very much a return home. This is where they were prayed over, for God’s grace on their journey of evangelization. They give their account to the assembled church. They are accountable to their elders, to those who missioned them and the account they give completes the missioning process.

We need to think about this, because there are Christian leaders whom we refer to as a “one-man band”. They set out to evangelize on their own with their own rules

and are accountable to no one. Their mission fails, because they lose Christ's flock, the flock who can't see Christ clearly because the "would-be-evangelist" is blocking their sight.

If we take nothing else from this reading, let us take the message of accountability. St. Benedict of Nursia says, in his Rule for Monasteries, that there are monks like this. He calls them "the most detestable kind...who with no experience to guide them, no rule to try them as gold is tried in a furnace (Proverbs 27:21), have a character as soft as lead. Anything they believe in and choose, they call holy; anything they dislike, they consider forbidden."

*Lectio Divina* is a way of life – allow God's word to travel with you. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 144

**The response is:** I WILL PRAISE YOUR NAME FOREVER, MY KING AND MY GOD.

Psalm 144 is a psalm in praise of God's grandeur – a chance to reflect on the kindness and compassion of God.

**Lectio:** Read the Second Mass Reading, from the Book of Revelation, chapter 21:1-5.

**Meditatio:** A brief explanation to help us understand this text.

From chapters 19:11 – 22:5 John presents visions of the last things.

19:11-16 – The second coming of Christ

19:17-18 – Call to the banquet.

19:19-21 – The final battle.

20:1-3 – The binding of Satan

20:4-10 – The 1000-year reign

20:11-15 – The last judgment.

21:1-8 The new heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem.

The text we are given is 21:1-5 and is part of the seventh vision. The theme of Vision 7 is found elsewhere in the Sacred Scriptures, especially in Third Isaiah: "Behold, I am doing a new deed."

If you have a Concordance in your *Lectio Divina* Library, it is a worthwhile exercise to note a few of the Old and New Testament texts which refer to "a new deed", or simply "new" as opposed to the "old".

Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 2.

**The Gospel Verse is from John 13:34**

I GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

**Lectio:** Read the Gospel from John 13:31-35.

**Meditatio:** A little background to help us respond.

The living out of this commandment is the distinctive mark of a Christian among non-Christians of that time in history. Like the “new” of the second reading, the commandment to love one another as Christ has loved us is also new.

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 – this is one’s lived response to the texts given us by the Church each Sunday. It is about the evangelization of the “self” and pins me down to be who I am: A Christian who prays with the Word of God and responds to the call of the Word of God in my everyday life.**

1. My response: A different kind of journey is a journey of the heart. Cardinal Walter Kasper, in his book on “Mercy”, gives the example of St. Edith Stein (Sr. Benedicta of the Cross), who “entered the gas chambers of Auschwitz as a substitutionary representative for the Jewish people...” (p. 154). She didn’t go out on a long journey. She set out on a journey of the heart. And all those who proclaim Christ to the world take up different journeys. Bl. Columba Marmion taught: “All that matters [for a Christian] is God and what is done for God, - all the rest is trifles, trifles, trifles.” Whatever journey is ours; we need to make sure that Christ in God is the focus, and that we are accountable to Christ’s representative. We have an Oblate who is a priest of the Sydney Archdiocese who is missioned to Peru. One of his strongest characteristics is his reverence for authority. I can’t help noticing that his vicariate is alive and successful. A very pastoral bishop is in the lead. Priests, pastoral workers and catechists are accountable to the bishop, and encouraged by his brotherly relationship with them all. When our Oblate comes home to Australia every few years, he sees the Archbishop of Sydney and gives an account of his missionary work in Peru. This meeting takes place before he is appointed to Peru for another term.
2. This text brings me comfort, great comfort – the knowledge that God and eternity are new. We’ve all shed tears in our lifetime: tears of joy and tears of sorrow. A friend told me that her tears are enough to water her gardens. She doesn’t need the hose. Her husband is in palliative care with cancer. Her eldest daughter doesn’t speak to her. Her youngest daughter has just come through a marriage break-down and is in the process of dividing the children between her and her husband. At the moment, she is living at home with her mother, as are the children. Her eldest son lives in America. She needs some help so that she can have a couple of days off each week – days when she doesn’t have to be with her husband. But she can’t get the help she needs. I suggested asking in the parish if someone can relieve her. And our text says: “He will wipe away all tears from their eyes...there will be no more mourning or sadness.” Most times, when we are in the depths of distress, it is hard to imagine that God will wipe away all tears...and take away all mourning and sadness. It is hard to imagine that our own desperate situations will one day

be over, and a new day will dawn. But we go on hoping and believing –  
“Faith is the bird that sings while the dawn is still dark.” (Tagore)

3. My response: recently we celebrated Anzac Day. Bishop Peter Ingham was here at the Abbey with a number of pilgrims (Harvest Pilgrimages) and celebrated Mass with us. His homily on the Anzacs giving their lives in war so that we can be free today was epic – a passionate outpouring of thanksgiving. Jesus gives us a new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” This means the laying down of his life so that we can be free. One of our nuns who is a member of the present abbey community, says that she joined our community because she believed God was calling her to monastic life. What clinched the decision for her was the witness we gave in our care of a nun with Alzheimer’s disease, and the general care of the elderly nuns. She is now one of the most helpful sisters with care of the elderly.

*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.*



*“Love one another as I have loved you.”*

*Image by He Qi*