

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

Sunday 10 July 2022

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

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

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:

11: St. Benedict. (Memorial). Feast or Solemnity in Benedictine Houses of monks and nuns.

15: St. Bonaventure.

The Australian and New Zealand Church:

11: Australia – Adelaide (Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral), 1996.

11: Australia – Diocese of Toowoomba celebrates the Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Robert Mc Guckin, 2012.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

10: Australia – Apostleship of the Sea

New Zealand: Sea Sunday, Day of Prayer for Seafarers.

1985 – sinking of the Greenpeace ship, “Rainbow Warrior” in Auckland.

11: World Population Day

12: 1971 – Aboriginal Flag was first flown in Adelaide, S. A.

14: 1995 – Promulgation of Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag as official flags of Australia.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Colossians 1:15-20

Luke 10:25-37

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 30, verses 10-14.

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.

This is a treasured text for those of us committed to *Lectio Divina: the Word of God is very near to you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, and in your hands to do it.* By way of revision, the earliest version of the Old Testament Scriptures, of which we possess any certain knowledge, is the translation executed at Alexandria in the third century before the Christian era. This version is known to us as the Septuagint. It was translated into Greek at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285-247 B.C., by 70 Jewish scholars, or, according to later tradition, 72 scholars, six from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

This text poses a huge responsibility. It is not just a nice reading. It comes with a challenge. There is a custom that still seems to be around in the Catholic and Anglican Assemblies – that when the Gospel is announced, one makes a cross on the forehead, the lips and the heart, praying: “Cleanse my mind, my lips and my heart, so that I may freely receive the gift of the Gospel. May nothing block it out.” Or: your own prayer.

Some persons hear the challenge in a dramatic way, and their lives are changed. Two women who come to mind are St. Mary of the Cross and Caroline Chisholm. Most of us hear the challenge in a daily way, and our lives are changed slowly and thoroughly.

Take time to ponder on this text 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 68,

The response is: TURN TO THE LORD IN YOUR NEED AND YOU WILL LIVE.

This psalm is described as a cry from the depths of sorrow. (Grail Psalter).

“As for me in my poverty and pain, let your help O God, lift me up.

In your great love, answer me O God. With your help that never fails.

Lord answer, for your love is kind. In your compassion turn towards me.”

Lectio: Read the second text, from the Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians, chapter 1, verses 15-20.

It is about the supremacy of Christ. He, the Word made flesh, as image of the unseen God could fully reveal God to humanity. The Son of God is first in position in relation to the universe and is also first in time by virtue of his eternal existence.

St. Paul gives a list of powers in the spiritual world, beginning with the highest. These spiritual beings existed as mediators in the false teaching at Colossae. Spiritual beings were for those caught up in it, rivals for Christ. Paul shows, without accepting or rejecting the work of spiritual beings, that **their era ended with the atoning death of our Lord.**

Verses 18-20 addresses the headship of the universe. It has been claimed for the Son of God, the Son who is also the head of the redeemed creation. One can avoid all this background by simply staying with the first statement: the text is about the supremacy of Christ.

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 6:63,68.

YOUR WORDS, LORD, ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE;

YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

Look back now, to the first text: “the word of God is very near to you. It is in your hands to observe it, do it, make a practical response to it, a lived response.” And now Jesus will teach us how to do that by another story.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text: Luke 10:25-37.

Meditatio: Some background to help us respond to it. The danger with a Gospel like this is that we know it so well, we don't listen in a new way.

Who is my neighbor? Jesus answers the question with the story of the Good Samaritan. Read the story now. See if there is one detail which is new to your heart.

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. Doing the word of God, speaking the Word of God, thinking the Word of God, and treasuring the Word of God in my heart sums up my response to this reading. A continual walk with God is how Brother Lawrence describes it. Jean-Pierre de Caussade has some solid advice for we readers of the Word of God: "Begin by placing yourself in the presence of God and by begging God's help. Read quietly, slowly, word for word, to enter into the subject more with the heart than with the mind. At the end of each paragraph that contains a complete meaning, stop for the time it would take you to recite an 'Our Father', or even a little longer, to assimilate what you have read, or to rest and remain peacefully before God.
2. My response is to Paul's list of spiritual beings, whose reign ended with the atoning death of Christ. As Christians we have to be on sharp alert (vigilant for rival gods, those we call false gods). There are many spiritual beings, made so by false teaching, that challenge our truth. Eleanor Roosevelt said: "At all times, day by day, we have to continue fighting for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom from want – for these are the things that must be gained in peace as well as in war." Freedom of worship, freedom of speech, and freedom from poverty. Easier said than done! And the Gospel says: "Be on your watch, the Lord is near." Nothing must take the place of Christ in our lives.
3. My response is to the command: "Go and do the same yourself." Fr. Kevin Ryan, in his column for the Catholic Leader (14th June 1998) said, "The great call of every Christian, our vocation, is to lead people to Jesus. Realising God's love and passing it on is the only way." Henri Nouwen, on January 14, 1991, the eve of the first Gulf War, addressed 10,000 people in Washington DC, denouncing the impending war and calling Christians to take a stand for peace. "I have become more aware than ever of how hard it is to proclaim radically the peace of Jesus, in a world that so quickly gravitates to violent solutions to its problems." (Henri Nouwen to John Dear, "Peacework: Prayer, Resistance, Community). Page 10.

There's one truth about this text. It teaches me to see it through. Cultivate a responsible attitude in helping others. Val Dempsey, one of the Australians of the Year 2022, is campaigning to have every learner-driver do a course in first aid. She believes that more lives can be saved in road accidents, if young drivers know how to, for example, stop the

loss of blood while waiting for an ambulance. She has worked with St. John Ambulance for 50 years. This is a practical response to the needs of our times. How can I respond using my gifts to be a good Samaritan in my time and place?

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.



Image ~ The Good Samaritan by He Qi