

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.**  
**Sunday 28 August 2022**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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 Australian & NZ Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

**In the Liturgy:**

29: The Passion of John the Baptist.

03: Pope St. Gregory the Great.

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

30: Bathurst: Anniversary of death -Most Rev. Patrick Dougherty (2010).

Geraldton: Anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral, 1988.

31: Wagga Wagga – Anniversary of death - Most Rev. William Brennan (2013).

01: World Day of Prayer for Creation and Spring Ember Day.

Toowoomba, Personal Ordinariate – Patronal Feast, Mary of the Southern Cross.

Anniversary of - death - Most Rev. Edward Kelly, 1994.

Sydney – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral, 1928.

03: Hobart: Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Julian Porteous, 2003

Sydney: Episcopal Ordination of the most Rev. Anthony Fisher, O.P. 2003.

**In The Social Justice Calendar:**

28: Australia – Social Justice Sunday.

29: International Day Against Nuclear Tests.

30: International Day of the Victims of Forced Disappearances.

01: World Day of Prayer for Creation and National Wattle Day.

Beginning of Biodiversity Month.

Founding of the Sisters of Charity by Mary Aikenhead (1815).

02: Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act was passed by Parliament.

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

**The readings are:**

Sirach 3:17-20 & 28-29

Hebrews 12:18-19 & 22-24

Luke 14:1 & 7-14.

***Lectio*: Read the first text from Sirach 3:17-20 & 28-29.**

Read it slowly and prayerfully, 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 help us understand the text and make a response.

This text is part of six sections which form an introduction about the origin of wisdom.

A: Introduction – the origin of wisdom 1:1-10

B: Fear of the Lord as Wisdom for humans 1:11-30. If you have trouble with the word “fear” interpret it as respect or reverence or revere.

C: Trust in God 2:1-18.

D: Honour due to one’s parents 3:1-16

E: Humility 3:17-24

F: Docility, Almsgiving, social conduct. J3:25-4:10.

So, our text today is part of E and part of F.

Be gentle in carrying out your business, and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.

The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly...great though the power of the Lord is, the Lord accepts the homage of the humble.

The heart of the sensible person will reflect on parables.

An attentive ear is the sage’s dream.

Read the text over a couple of times, and you will hear the Holy Spirit prompting you to respond. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio 1*.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 67

**The response is:** GOD IN YOUR GOODNESS,  
YOU HAVE MADE A HOME FOR THE POOR.

This psalm is about the journey of God’s people, and is a triumphant hymn of praise: Father of the orphan, defender of the widow, such is God in his holy place. God leads the prisoners forth into freedom.

**Lectio:** Read the Second Mass Reading, from Hebrews 12:18-19 &22-24.

**Meditatio:** This is initially about a contrast “between the assembly of Israel when the old covenant was made and that of those who have entered into the new. The former took place on earth. For its awesome circumstances read Exodus 19:12-13, 16-19; 20:18-21.” (New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 60:68).

The comparison is between earth and heaven. The Covenant of old took place on earth. The covenant which is new takes place in heaven. The author of Hebrews “speaks to those who are still on the journey there, yet since they already possess the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice, he can speak of them as having already arrived.”

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 Matthew 11:29.**

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU; LEARN FROM ME,  
FOR I AM GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART.

(Some translations have “gentle and humble in heart”).

**Lectio:** Read the Gospel from Luke 14:1 and 7-14.

**Meditatio:**

This story is about the inclusive nature of Jesus’ kingdom. No one is excluded.

Yes, it is about looking for the first place and honours. It is about the lowest place and humility. Who should be invited to Christian meals? Luke gives the radical answers people don’t want to hear.

We need to be aware that Luke “builds on a theme that was a set piece in literature...places of honour.

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.** *Evangelizatio* is about the evangelization of the “self”. It is that part of *Lectio Divina* where we make our lived response to the text. First of all, we pray with the text, take time to ponder and understand the text, be still with the text and listen to the response we are being called to make.

1. From “humus” the earth, comes a number of words: humour, humanity, humankind. Yevtushenko wrote in his book “The Spirit of Elbe”, 1966, that: “In the final analysis, humanity has only two ways out – either universal destruction, or universal brotherhood.” And we know which one we would choose. Because there is not enough of universal brotherhood there is war, and disrespect for our brothers and sisters, racial prejudice, rash judgment and poverty. The text from Sirach also speaks about humility and honouring one’s parents. We have an anniversary to note this week. 29 August is the International Day Against Nuclear Tests. Weapons of destruction – the destruction of humanity! September 1 is the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. We need so many reminders in these times. We even have a day when we are reminded that Elder Abuse exists in our society. This is another form of destruction. We all have to answer the question: Universal destruction or universal reverence for our brothers and sisters – what’s it to be?
2. I am responding to “what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival with the whole church in which everyone is a firstborn...” Being a fan of Brother Xavier Kelly’s poetry, I am sharing “Presence Ten”:  
“Presence, never one for full commitment,

I've sorted through my options and fallen for a caravanned existence,  
a wanderer's life among the sideshows.  
Your special invitation to the big arena still crumples in my pocket,  
but I delay the answer,  
in order to scrounge re-cycled novelties around the tents.  
Yet, the echo of Your whisper across my dailiness  
urges me to sift a mental debris, cluttering up my hours,  
and highlight to clear awareness,  
that dwelling in Your Spirit is true home."  
As the author of Hebrews says, I am already there.

3. My response is to: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." Everything else will take care of itself if I can take these words into my heart. And more than that if I can allow them to be written on my heart. In monastic spirituality, "vainglory", the opposite of humility, is a vice. It is "a love of our own excellence. It gives birth to self-exaltation, disobedience, irreverence, and very often to factions, the words of plagues. To avoid these things, we must glory in the Lord and not in ourselves." (from the Rule of John Trithemius). About humility, Thomas Merton writes: "...humble people are not disturbed by praise. Since they are no longer concerned with themselves, and since they know where the good that is in them comes from, they do not refuse praise, because it belongs to the God they love, and in receiving it they keep nothing for themselves but give it all, with great joy, to their God." (New Seeds of Contemplation). This next quotation from the writings of Sr. Joan Chittister is like a spiritual missile, especially if you have experienced others being belittled! She says: Benedict wants us to realize that accepting our essential smallness and embracing it, frees us from the need to lie, even to ourselves, about our frailties. More than that, it liberates us to respect, revere, and deal gently with others who have been unfortunate enough to have their own smallness come obscenely to light."

*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.*

