

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 7 August 2022

19th 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 Australian & NZ Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:

08: St. Mary of the Cross Solemnity in Australia. Feast in New Zealand.

09: St. Edith Stein.

10: St. Lawrence (Feast)

12: St. Jane Frances de Chantal (Optional Memorial)

13: It is optional today to celebrate a Votive Mass of Our Lady.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

08: Australia – National Patronal feast.

Brisbane, Parramatta, Port Pirie and Wagga Wagga – Patronal Feast.

Darwin – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Patrick Collins. (2014).

08: Australia – Vocations Awareness Week begins.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

07: Fair trade Fortnight begins.

09: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

On this day in 1945, Nagasaki was destroyed by an atomic bomb.

12: International Youth Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Wisdom 18:6-9

Hebrews 11:1-2, 18-19.

Gospel: Luke 12:32-48.

Lectio: Read the first text from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 18, verses 6-9.

Read it 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 will help us understand the text and make a response.

This text forms part of 18:5-19:22.

It begins with a general summary – the night of the Exodus.

While punishing Israel's enemies, God, at the same time, glorified His people.

The Egyptians who had killed the male children of Israel, lost their firstborn, and those who had used the Nile to drown Israel's children, were themselves drowned in the Sea of Reeds. (The Red Sea).

Verse 9 rounds off this strong unit: "sacrifice is the Passover which created a religious unity." "Institution" refers either to the law commanding the Passover or to the idea expressed in the next line – "praises of the fathers". The author pictures Israel singing the praise of the patriarchs, just as later, Israel sang the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113-118) at the Passover. (Summarized from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary). These are helpful notes and often prompt us to respond.

Read the text again and spend time with it as you go about your work and leisure. If you have the time in your week, take your reflection to a seat where you can watch the ocean, the lake, the river, the mountains, your own garden. Just take time to respond. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio 1*.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32

The response is: HAPPY THE PEOPLE THE LORD HAS CHOSEN TO BE HIS OWN

This psalm is a joyful song to God, the Creator of the world. And the response points to the fact that it was a "national hymn of thanksgiving for the Hebrew people." (Grail Psalter).

Ring out your joy to the Lord O you just, for praise is fitting for loyal hearts.

May your love be upon us O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.

Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading: Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Meditatio: A little background to help us understand the text and respond to it.

The patriarchal history began with Abraham the father of faith, who responded in faith and "set out without knowing where he was going". And the faith story went on from there: Isaac and Jacob, Sarah and her offspring.

All "died in faith, in search of their real homeland."

Make your response in the days ahead. I share my response to this text in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from Matthew 24:42 and 44.

BE WATCHFUL AND READY.

YOU KNOW NOT WHEN THE SON OF MAN IS COMING.

Lectio: Now read the Gospel text from Luke 12:32-48.

Meditatio: Some background to the text which will help us respond.

There is a long unit, chapter 12:1-59, which tells of the disciples meeting external and internal opposition. And then there is the text we are given within that long unit: 32-48. Let's deal with it verse by verse:

Vs 32: Jesus calls his struggling, opposed, and small group of disciples, his "little flock". Jesus promises them what is most important: their real treasure is in heaven.

Verses 35-48 are "servant" parables which are given an ecclesiological interpretation by Luke: community officials must be faithful and not create internal problems for the Church. If you read the Greek New Testament, you will notice the Greek "servant, or slave". It is used in verses 37, 43, 45, 46, 47. It means one who gives service to the Christian community. We are advised to read Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 1:10. We must also note that the word "steward", occurs in the Gospels only in Luke and means one who gives service to the Christian community (1 Cor 4:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10).

Vs. 37: This role reversal is significant and underscores God's absolute gratuity. The servant who is faithful during the time of fulfilment before the Parousia will share in the eschatological banquet.

Vs. 41: Peter is the spokesperson for questions about church officials.

Verses 47-49: The punishments for unfaithful and negligent church officials are stark. (This summary has been taken from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary.

Stand back and ponder on the text – every aspect of it – over a few days. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you. This is the true *oratio* of *Lectio Divina*. Allow your spirit to rest and be still. Finally, make your response to the text and keep it in your prayer journal, and in your heart. I make 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 is to the words: "you make us glorious by calling us to you". It is surely not a coincidence that 9 August is both the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and at the same time, the destruction of Nagasaki by the atomic bomb. Both anniversaries tell of destruction. Human beings are specialists in the destruction of other human beings. August 9 is also the feast day of St. Edith Stein, who overcame the deaths of her people, not with anger, but with love. Her ministry to her own people in Auschwitz is well-documented. And Australia has its own history of destruction. Across our Continent corpses of Indigenous men, women and children are littered. To name only three: 1 May 1838: Massacre of between 60 and 300 Aboriginals at Slaughterhouse Creek. 10 June 1838 – Myall Creek Massacre. 6 July 1839 – Massacre of Aboriginal people at Chimney Pots, Grampians, Victoria.
2. I wish I had a faith like Abraham had, but I don't. St. John of the Cross, who is plunged into the night of faith, says: "Faith tells us of things we have never seen and cannot come to know by our natural senses. The light of faith is like the light

of the sun which blinds our eyes because its light is stronger than our own powers of sight. So, the light of faith transcends our comprehension.” (This text can be found in a number of sources. This particular source is in ‘The Joy of the Saints. Spiritual Readings Throughout the Year’ edited by Robert Llewelyn. And let us not forget the words of Rabindranath Tagore: “Faith is the bird that sings while the dawn is still dark.”

3. There is always one sentence in this text which frightens me: “When we have been given a great deal [by God], a great deal will be demanded of us.” A Carthusian Miscellany, Conferences by a Carthusian monk, suggests that we think of what makes up our life – our familial, psychological and social inheritance – as the materials given to us to create a work of art.” He says: “A masterpiece is not such because it is made of expensive material, but because of the beauty it expresses. A marvellous sketch can be made with a bit of charcoal.” So, what have I been given, with which to build my house? Family, yes; nation, yes; friends and enemies, yes; and “the web of passing events – encounters, contacts, this door open, that window shut, at the very moment I was passing. Intersecting footprints on the virgin snow of a history ever new for me.” God has given me a great deal and goes on giving. Therefore, a great deal will be demanded of me, a beautiful work of art.

***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,
the one who pondered the Word of God in her heart
and brought forth the Word made Flesh, our Saviour Jesus Christ.***

Where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.
Luke 12:34

