

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

Sunday 25 September 2022

26th 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:

27: St. Vincent de Paul

29: Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

30: St. Jerome

01 October: St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

25: World Refugee and Migration Day

26: Diocese of Darwin, Australia – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Charles Gauci, 2018.

29: Port Pirie, Australia – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Karol Kulczycki, 2020.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

26: International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

28: Australia – Death of John Pat in Roeburne Prison, Western Australia, promoting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

30: International Podcast Day

On this day in 1975 Australia ratified its position at the International Convention against all forms of Racial Discrimination.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Amos 6:1, and 4-7

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-31.

Lectio: Read the First Reading from the Prophet Amos 6:1,4-7.

Read it in a reverent way. The Word of God is sacred. Let us give ourselves to the Sacred Text and open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit calling us forth to respond. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you read. This is the true “oratio” (prayer) of *Lectio Divina*.

Meditatio: A little background to the text, so that we understand it and can make an informed response to it.

We couldn't find a text more direct than this one. For me, it conjures up the big screen movie, the portrayal of Nero, the Roman Emperor, resting on his divan, eating grapes and drinking wine. Other movies have also portrayed this scene. We must remember that there was no dining room table, set for everyone. Divans or couches were the fashion. Even the Last Supper was had on couches.

The sprawlers revelry is over!

But there is a further understanding: "The evil of the life of pleasure described here is not the self-indulgence itself so much as the refusal to notice or care about what has happened to Israel. As the idle rich have been first in the receiving line of Israel's bounty, it is fitting that they be the first to experience deportation." (New Jer. Bib. Comm. 13:18D).

Take time over the text before making your response to it in the days ahead.
I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145

The response is: PRAISE THE LORD MY SOUL.

Psalm 145 is a prayer of praise for God's fidelity. The Grail Psalter notes: "The Almighty God is at our service: the All-Mighty, the only mighty; we cannot take out a second insurance – we must rely on him only, cast all our care on the Lord for he has care of us.

Lectio: Read the second text from 1 Timothy 6:11-16.

Meditatio: The background to this text: "St. Paul, on the way to Macedonia, has left Timothy at Ephesus to oppose false teachers. But Timothy is still young for so responsible a task; his health is far from strong (5:23), and he has the timidity which the language of 1 Cor.16;10 may suggest. Thus St. Paul, though hoping shortly to re-join him (3:14), feels that there is cause for anxiety in case he is delayed. He writes to repeat his warning against false teaching and give directions about public worship and the character of the Church officers and draws an attractive picture of the true teacher and of true teaching." (Burn & Goudge, the Pastoral Epistles). Paul hopes that Timothy may live to welcome the Second Coming, which will happen in God's own time. The Lord's return (second coming) has, it seems, been delayed. Time is moving on. It is fifty or sixty years since Jesus was on earth.

Stand back from this text. Later, read it again. Allow the Holy Spirit to pour light on this text and make your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is from 2 Corinthians 8:9

JESUS CHRIST WAS RICH BUT HE BECAME POOR,
TO MAKE YOU RICH OUT OF HIS POVERTY.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 16:19-31.

Meditatio: A little background to the text, so that we may gain an understanding, and make an informed response. It is the story of Dives and Lazarus. We are to notice that this parable says nothing about moral considerations. It simply presents a picture of a rich man in his luxury and a pauper in his misery asking for crumbs. When we are taken into the next world, the scene shifts. The rich person lands in torment and anguish – into hell. No more throwing scraps to Lazarus, as one would to a dog. Lazarus is embraced by Abraham. The rich man is shocked. He has five brothers. Can't Lazarus go and warn them? But no – they have had Moses and the prophets. And they missed the message.

Take time every day for *Lectio Divina*: a line or word, or more. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

***Evangelizatio* is my LIVED RESPONSE to the sacred scriptures given to me each week by the Church for my formation as a Christian. If I don't respond, they are merely texts on a page. When I do respond, they are my life.**

1. So, it is not about having wealth: a villa on the Gold Coast or in the Caribbean, a glass front so one can sit all day and watch the ocean, while sipping the occasional martini. Rather, it is about having these pleasures and at the same time forgetting, or not even noticing what is happening to the rest of humanity. Sr. Stan of Dublin has some very sound insights which may help us: "You read, hear and experience stories of war and bloodshed, violence and oppression, poverty and injustice, murder and suicide; of human rights being violated. It is difficult to tune into sorrow and grief if you have been deaf to its place in your own life." Something to think about.
2. My response is to the "time" theme. Where is Jesus? We are waiting. Our expectations are the things that destroy our prayer, our peace, our hope. One writer said: "Hope, but don't expect." Expectations can be destructive. We put on a tantrum because God hasn't done what was promised. Or worse than that: God hasn't done what I asked! One must be a patient person in order to pray sincerely. Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695) had the following gem: "Patience and time do more than force and rage." Waiting with patience – this is the stance of parenthood. Waiting in prayer for the needs of our children, grandchildren, friends. The prayer of waiting and watching in vigilance is a prayer of commitment and one which takes us out of ourselves and into the hearts of others. "When I pray for the other, I become the other." (Henri Nouwen, "The Genesee Diary")
3. Fr. Kevin Ryan wrote a column some years ago in the Catholic Leader in which he said: "The wealthy countries of the world seem inclined to give a lead in looking after ourselves and forgetting the rest." And: "At the World Food Summit held in Rome recently, the US delegation, in the face of 800 million

hungry people stated that the right to food is not guaranteed by international law. At the Rome meeting the Pope was the only major spokesman to challenge the \$900 billion spent each year on military armament. In the time you take to read this column (I have only taken a short excerpt), 35,000 children will die of hunger.

*Lectio Divina is Holy Reading,
that is, reading of the Sacred Scriptures.
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.
It is about reading (and listening), reflecting and praying
in tune with the Holy Spirit within me,
resting in God and responding in the way I live.
May we imitate the Mother of God who pondered all things in her heart.*



Celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.