

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.**  
**Sunday 11 September 2022**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C**  
**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Four**

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:**

- 13: St. John Chrysostom (Memorial)
- 14: Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15: Our Lady of Sorrows.
- 16: Sts Cornelius and Cyprian (Memorial)
- 17: St. Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor of the Church.

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

- 11: Australia – Child Protection Sunday.
- 12: Maitland Newcastle: Anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral (1941)
- 14: Military Ordinariate of Australia – Anniversary of death of the Most Rev. Geoffrey Mayne, 2003.
- 16: Melkite Eparchy: Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Robert Rabbat, 2011.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

- 13: Adoption by the UN of Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (2007)
- 15: International Day of Democracy
- 16: International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer.
- 16: 1993 – Death of Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker), Aboriginal poet, activist and artist.

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

**The readings are:**

- Exodus 32:7-11 and 13-14
- 1 Timothy 1:12-17
- Luke 15:1-32.

**Lectio:** Read the First Reading from the Book of Exodus, chapter 32:7-11 and 13-14.

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:** Some informed background so that we can honour the text in its original meaning.

The people of God are fools. They make an image of metal. This they will worship, instead of the God who brought them up from the land of Egypt. It is first of all, a violation of the first commandment: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol,

whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God..." (Deut. 5:6-9).

After pondering over many hours or longer, you will want to make your response. Of course, the Holy Spirit may draw forth a response immediately. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

**Responsorial Psalm Response: Psalm 50**

**The response is: I WILL RISE AND GO TO MY FATHER.**

Palm 50 is a prayer of contrition. From the Grail Psalter, page 96, the following words may help: "A deep sense of sin is already a step towards the sanctity of God – it opens the door for his eager mercy." This we will see in the Gospel. "...Our Lord takes us even further than the psalmist. He teaches us to cry not 'God!' but 'Father!' He bids us think of that father who ran to meet the son who had left him, and the father took the son in his arms and kissed him: 'My son was lost and is found' (Luke 15:24).

**Lectio:** Read the Second text from the first Letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter 1, verses 12-17.

**Meditatio:** This text is about Paul as the true teacher, for nowhere else does Paul depict his conversion in terms that are quite as stark as this. Paul was what heretics are now. Unlike the heretics however, Paul could claim ignorance as an excuse. Cf. Acts 3:17 and Acts 17:30. (New Jerome Bib. Comm., 56:29).

Paul says: "Here is a saying you can rely on, and nobody should doubt: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I myself am the greatest of them. And if mercy has been shown to me it is because Jesus Christ meant to make me the greatest evidence of his greatest patience for all the other people who would have to trust in him to come to eternal life." (Part of the text of this second reading. (Cf. John 3:17; Luke 19:10; Matthew 9:13; Paul's conversion is to be a model for all those who will come to believe in Jesus the Christ. (NJBC, 56:29). The text is Paul at his passionate best.

Pause. Read. Spend time with this text from 1 Timothy.

Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most authentic melody of your response. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* No. 2.

**The Gospel Verse is From John 10:27**

**GOD WAS IN CHRIST TO RECONCILE THE WORLD TO HIMSELF,  
AND THE GOOD NEWS OF RECONCILIATION HE HAS ENTRUSTED TO US.**

**Lectio:** Read the Gospel text from Luke 15:1-32.

**Meditatio:** Some helpful background in order to understand the text and make our response. The parable of the Prodigal Son is a challenging story which calls us to enter into its depths.

We are to understand that “God’s mercy breaks through all human restrictions of how God should act towards sinners. God’s mercy is as foolish as a shepherd who abandons 99 sheep to save one, or as a Jewish father who joyfully welcomes home his wasteful son who has become a Gentile. Because disciples have such a merciful God, they can embark trustingly and joyfully on the way of Jesus.

Lost and found is a “refrain” in this parable.  
Joy and good food also pervade the story.

Stand back from this text. Later, read it again. Go to your “quiet” place. Allow the Holy Spirit to pour light on this text and make your response. I share my response in Evangelizatio No. 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. My response: How many golden calves are in my life? To how many false gods do I cling? Do you do the flowers in your parish? Do you resent anyone else interfering? Be careful! We can make golden calves of anything, even prayer. I remember hearing a friend saying: “If my mother rings at 5.00 p.m., I’m not picking up the phone – that’s the time I pray the rosary.” What about, “I can’t deliver food parcels to the poor on a Tuesday night. I’m at the parish Novena on that night.” The parish novena is more important. My golden calf is Thursday, our day off. I dread the thought of something interfering with my day off. I am possessive of the time and freedom. Two years ago, we changed our whole week, which meant moving our free day to Friday. The reason for this was that monastic visitors were coming from England to meet us. They stayed for under an hour! We weren’t very happy having our whole week altered for under one hour. My second golden calf is my garden. It is becoming harder and harder for me to do anything in the garden. But that doesn’t alter the golden calf. I know every flower, and whatever stage it’s at. Spring is here and I sit inside in my easy chair and admire the beauty of my garden. What would happen if I was asked to sacrifice over half my garden? I take after my grandfather in this – the garden. Nothing or no one could get him out of the garden – it was harder when he retired. He wouldn’t even stop to greet you if you called in. Then, there is driving a car. Since 2010, following brain surgery, I had to give up driving, and that means my independence. I am taken to appointments by the sister who is my Carer. Yes, that was a difficult one. I miss driving and having my music playing. It also blew the cobwebs out of my head – the freedom of the highway. Fr. Paul used to say that there is nothing as free and wonderful as riding his motor bike. Someone might say: “I will never miss Midnight Mass.” Can Midnight Mass be a golden calf? It can if we are neglecting our care of husband, wife, children in order to be there at midnight.
2. This text from 1 Timothy, where Paul is passionately witnessing to his own conversion, takes me to a woman whose anniversary of death is listed in the Social Justice Calendar for this week: Kath Walker, 16 September 1993.

Kath wrote the Aboriginal Manifesto which resulted in changes to the Australian Constitutions 179 years after white settlement. In this manifesto she is asking for the real Christ, and the real Gospel: “Give us Christ, not crucifixion. Though baptized and blessed and bibles, we are still tabooed and libelled. You devout salvation-sellers, make us neighbours, not fringe-dwellers.” Paul is passionate about his own conversion. Kath Walker is passionate about helping her people who at this time, ranked as aliens in their own land, were restricted, were serfs on stations, were deprived of human rights, were shunned for the colour of their skin, prevented from owning land, the land which had been stolen from them by white settlers. Any response to this text calls for great honesty. What are the false gods in my life?

3. My response is to ask the question: Who am I in this story? Which character am I? I always ask myself this question when this Gospel comes up on any given Sunday. And it may not be the same answer I got when this Gospel came up three years ago. In my family, only one sister reached out to our brother when he had a stroke on Christmas eve, 2016. The rest of us were all “elder brothers” because we were cheated off by our father only having time for this brother and not for the rest of us, and especially not for our baby brother who looked after our father when our mother died. Lately our older brother has returned home – not yet to God – but there is still time. We all ring him and send emails. And he is interested in all of us. So, in one sense, he has come home to God, for God is love. We couldn’t wish for anymore. And we keep an eye on baby brother who is the real elder brother in this story.

*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.*



*Image – Susan Daily ibvm*