

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

Sunday 6 November 2022

32nd 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:

09: Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (Feast)

10: St. Leo the Great. (Memorial).

11: St. Martin of Tours. (Memorial)

12: St. Josaphat (Memorial).

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

08: Australia – Diocese of Rockhampton – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Bernard Wallace, 1990.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

09: Opening of the Berlin Wall, 1989.

10: World Science Day for Peace and Development.

09, 1995: Execution of Nine Nigerian environmentalists and human rights Activists.

11: Armistice (Remembrance) Day, commemorating the end of WWI in 1918.

12: 1991 – Dili Massacre, Timor-Leste – more than 271 people killed.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, and 9-14

2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Luke 20:27-38.

Lectio: Read the text from the Second Book of Maccabees, Ch. 7, v's 1-2, & 9-14.

As always, it is best to read the Word of God 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.

We can hear, on a first reading, that it is a story of incredible bravery. But there is something else being proclaimed – and that is belief in the resurrection of the dead. And yet Christ hasn't come on earth.

1 and 2 Maccabees are Inter-Testamental books and this story is about young martyrs: seven young men who gave up their lives to torture rather than break the law of the Jewish religion, and the faith they treasured.

The number '7' when used in the Scriptures means 'complete'. Their bravery astounded the torturers.

So – a story of martyrdom which throws a huge challenge at us and at all who read this text.

Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 1*.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16

The response is: LORD, WHEN YOUR GLORY APPEARS, MY JOY WILL BE FULL.

The following notes may help us: "It is a constant source of surprise to those who think of Judaism as a religion of works, to find how often the responsibility is thrown on to God. From the earliest days, this responsibility has been perceived on a national scale. Only God could restore the fortunes of his people. (Part of the Commentary in the Grail Psalter).

Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading, from the Second Letter to the Thessalonians, chapter 2:16-3:5.

Meditatio: A brief explanation to help us understand this text. The reading begins with a prayer/blessing. "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who has given us his love, and, through his grace, such inexhaustible comfort and such sure hope, comfort you and strengthen you in everything good that you do or say."

Read this prayer two or three times.

Read it a fourth time and hear it being prayed for you.

The last part of the text is a request: "Pray for us...that the Lord's message may spread quickly and be received with honour, as it was with you."

Bigoted faithful are most likely hostile Jews.

Faith = the Gospel of Jesus.

Verses 3-5 present Paul's confidence in their spiritual progress.

The love of God and the fortitude of Christ: These are both attributes of the deity and are ruling principles in the hearts of the saints (M. Jones). The saints were the early Christians – believers in Jesus.

Make your response to the text during the coming week. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

Gospel Verse: Apocalypse 1:5&6.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE FIRST BORN OF THE DEAD;

GLORY AND KINGSHIP BE HIS FOREVER AND EVER.

Gospel: Luke 20:27-38.

Meditatio: The number seven means 'complete' in the Sacred Scriptures. As with the first text from Maccabees, there are seven brothers. This Gospel centers on the question of the resurrection as did the first text with the seven martyrs of Maccabees. Verses 27-40 present the question of the resurrection. Verse 35 is

important. It is the resurrection from the dead, not the resurrection of the dead. Verses 37-38 (cf Phil. 3:11).

The argument is, in effect, that the relation of the patriarchs to God is so personal and close that it cannot but partake of God's own everlastingness. 'All live unto him' – only to us do they die. (Gore, Rahner).

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: My response is to 'martyrdom'. Recently when I was writing the Oblate Booklet and sharing St. Benedict's teaching on death, I suggested that one way of looking at it was to address the daily martyrdoms we all experience (dying to self). This is the story for most of us. One Oblate responded by saying: "Yes, it's the daily martyrdoms that trip us up." The incredible stamina of the seven brothers suggests that they may have been challenged in this way before. One just can't turn on that kind of courage without practice or practical experience. I suggest we take this coming week to concentrate on daily martyrdoms and how courageous we are at submitting to them and letting things go. One example: I've just cooked a beautiful meal for dinner and my son and his girlfriend are late again. I'm angry so I'm not keeping it warm for them. I've had enough. The mother of one of our nuns had a rule: one was never to be late for dinner. If they were, they received a dressing down. Most daily martyrdoms are annoyances that can be overcome.
2. I am responding to the fortitude of Christ which comes to us through the grace of God. Thomas Merton says that "the Incarnation is adequately appreciated only by those to whom Christ's humanity is the marvel of marvels, a superb creation in which they have their being, in which they live, work, die and in which they hope to rise again, and in which they find the fullness of the Godhead as Moses found the fire in the bush." He is quoting Dom Vonier, 'the Christian Mind' Volume 1, page 12. Only through the grace of God do we understand Christ's humanity as the marvel of marvels and the fortitude that equips us for the journey. The journey is unique for each of us. One thing is certain – we don't breeze through life without the cross and when confronted with the Cross, we need the fortitude of Christ.
3. I am responding to: "All live unto Him. Only to us do they die." St. Irenaeus taught: "The glory of God is humanity fully alive and the destiny of humanity is the vision of God." Those who live unto God are fully alive. Karl Rahner, in his magnificent reflections for All Souls Day and All Saints Day offers a profound reflection: "Hidden in the peace of the eternal God, filled with his own bliss, redeemed for eternity, permeated with love for us that can never cease, they (our loved ones), on their feast, utter the prayer of their love for us: 'Lord grant eternal rest to them whom we love...Grant it to them who still walk the hard road of pilgrimage, which is none the less the road that leads

to us and to your eternal light. We, although silent, are now closer to them than ever before.'

*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.*

