

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 30 April 2023**  
**4th Sunday of Easter, Year A**  
**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Four**

Before beginning prayer with the Sacred Texts, let us take a look at the week ahead in Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

**In the Liturgy**

May 2: St. Athanasius

**In the Australian Church**

May 3: Townsville – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Timothy Harris. (2017)

May 6: Adelaide - Death of the Most Rev. Leonard Faulkner (2018).

**In the Social Justice Calendar**

May 1: International Workers' Day (St. Joseph the Worker).

May 1: 1838 – massacre of 60-300 Aboriginal people at Slaughterhouse Creek, NSW.

May 3: World Press Freedom Day.

On this day in 1990, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was established.

May 5: 2016 – Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM was appointed Bishop of Parramatta. He is the first Vietnamese born Australian Bishop.

May 6: 1992 – Introduction of Mandatory Detention of Asylum Seekers in Australia.

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

**The readings are:**

Acts 2:14, and 36-41

1 Peter 2:20-25

John 10: 1-10

**Lectio:** Let us now move into prayer with the first text from Acts 2:14; 36-41

**Meditatio:** A little background to the text to help us understand it clearly and respond to it more honestly.

Commenting on part of this text, Fr. Karl Rahner breaks open its essence: "...If our baptism is recorded on the first page of the book of our life, we are not released from the second demand made by Peter at Pentecost – repent! We can quench the Spirit. We can hinder the Spirit from bringing the special fruit of eternal life into us. And that is why we must open ourselves again each day, be converted to him again each day." (The Great Church Year, the best of Karl Rahner's Homilies, Sermons & Meditations, Edited by Albert Raffalt), Page 213.

In this text from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter is on fire for the Lord, so secure, so free, unstoppable, that he accuses his listeners of killing Jesus – the one whom God has made both Lord and Christ. Those with receptive hearts repent and are baptised – about 3000 people.

Have we ever wondered how Peter could make himself heard to 3000 people without a microphone? We don't have to be concerned because what is meant is a "round" number, which "dramatizes the extraordinary success of the Spirit-filled Pentecost Mission." (NJBC, 44:27).

Read the text again and spend time with it as you go about your work and leisure. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 1*.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 22

**The response is:** THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, THERE IS NOTHING I SHALL WANT.

The "Grail Psalter", used by the nuns at Jamberoo Abbey, has a very beautiful commentary, situating this Psalm in its place in the Psalter: "The trust of the Psalmist is so complete that one might think the New Testament has nothing to add, but the Shepherd-Lord took flesh and died for his sheep – thus he led the way through a dark valley to the pastures beyond." (Grail Psalter, 1962). This is a good opportunity for us to reflect on the dark valleys of our lives and how the Lord has brought us forth into the light.

**Lectio:** Read the Second Text from 1 Peter 2: 20-25.

**Meditatio:** By his wounds you have been healed.

This text is part of a Canticle which is used in the Liturgy of the Hours, and the Monastic Liturgy on the weekends of Lent. The Monastic Liturgy uses it for Saturday and Sunday during Lent and again for Holy Saturday. This may be excessive, but the truth is that the more repetition we have in the Liturgy, the more the text is written on to our hearts. Those of us who prayed First and Second Vespers (Evening Prayer 1 and 2), would have prayed this canticle with its refrain: By his wounds you have been healed. This truth we must never forget. It is helpful to remember that repetition in the Liturgy is to remind us. The same text read and prayed with, regularly forms us as people of the Word. Changing things in the Liturgy every week leads to "novelty" – something to entertain us rather than form us.

With this background, read the text again, and then ponder as you work or take time for leisure. Allow God to speak to you in the depths of your heart. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

**The Gospel Verse is from John 10:14**

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD, SAYS THE LORD;  
I KNOW MY SHEEP AND MINE KNOW ME. ALLELUIA!

**Lectio:** Take time now to read the Gospel text for this Sunday.

St. John Cassian reminds us that we must till the soil of our hearts every day with the plough of the Gospel.

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

There is no entry to eternal life except through Jesus.

The Good Shepherd is known by the sound of his voice. He leads his sheep, going ahead of them. They only have to keep their eyes on him. They are not afraid because he is guiding them to green pastures. Recognizing the voice of the shepherd is the beginning.

Sound is the principal factor. Recognizing the voice of the Good Shepherd is not easy. The Good Shepherd calls to us in the Gospel. That's enough for a lifetime. We can take any section from any Gospel, and we will hear the voice of the Lord. This text is a well-known story, and one we can read and teach to the smallest of children. It defies complication. It is about any shepherd in the Old Testament. This is the way shepherding was done. We will remember that the boy David was out in the field minding the sheep and was called to be anointed as the future king. The shepherd kept watch over his sheep by day, and put them away by night, sleeping across the gate of the sheepfold to keep out the wolf.

Isn't this what Jesus does for us, what all the "good shepherds" we have known have done for us?

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 share my response 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. The culmination of Lectio Divina, is how it changes our lives for the better.**

1. My response to this text from the Acts of the Apostles is to Rahner's explanation: open ourselves again each day, be converted to the Spirit again each day. This is a way of life, a call to live [in the now] and be converted to the Spirit of God in the "now". Wayne Teasdale speaks of "openness" as a "receptivity" to everything and everybody. "When we are open, we become naturally willing to serve those who need us. It can be said that the Divine itself is openness. We must also be open and receptive to God, to boundless awareness, to reality, others, nature, the earth and the cosmos." (The Mystic Heart, by Wayne Teasdale, with a Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama p. 165.)
2. My response to the reading from 1 Peter is to the fact that this is one of the early hymns (or Canticles) used in the Liturgy of that time in history. That time is the time following the death and Resurrection of the Lord. It is the beginning of Christianity, so to speak, the spread of Christianity, and the founding of Christian communities. *By his wounds you have been healed* – over and over these words would have been said or sung or proclaimed in prayer.
3. My response to the Gospel text is to the "sound" factor. Every person on the face of the earth has a voice, and each voice is different. I probably recognize the voices of my siblings, husband, wife, parents and friends. Recognizing the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd is more of a challenge. The Lord speaks to me under different guises, through different persons, and in different circumstances. Do I recognize the voice of

the Lord? Sometimes I don't because I have my own agenda. Some days I'm not open. The challenge for me is that one of those voices is not always pleasing or gentle. It may be a corrective tone, words I don't want to hear, but that I need to hear. I'm being guided by the Good Shepherd, ever present and concerned for me on life's journey.

*Lectio Divina is a way of life, not a method of prayer.  
We read, we reflect on the text from an informed background.  
We are aware of the Holy Spirit praying within us,  
prompting us to respond to certain words or sentences.  
We may be led to a time of stillness.  
Last of all, we respond as true disciples of Jesus,  
seeking to follow Him with pure hearts.  
But even then, it is not over.  
We are called to imitate the Mother of God,  
who kept all sacred words and experiences in her heart.  
Ruminatio is pondering like the Mother of God.*



Image ~ The Good Shepherd, by Sieger Köder