

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 28 May, is the Solemnity of Pentecost, Year A.
The Psalter takes Week Four

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

In the Liturgy:

29: The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

31: The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

01: St. Justin, martyr

03: Sts Charles Lwanga and Companions.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

29: Rockhampton: Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Michael McCarthy, 2014.

31: Broken Bay: Patronal Feast, Mary, Star of the Sea.

Wellington: Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. John Dew, 1995.

01: Dunedin – Anniversary of the Most Rev. Leonard Boyle, 2016.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

27 May - 3 June: National Reconciliation Week

28: 2000 - 250,000 people walk in Sydney for Reconciliation.

29: International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

29: 1992 - Launch of the Torres Strait Islander Flag

01: World Youth Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings for the Day Mass are:

Acts 2:1-11

1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

John 20:19-23.

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, verses 1-11.

Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud. This is about our on-going conversion.

Meditatio: Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it and make our response.

The name "Pentecost" was first given to the Jewish Feast of Weeks, which fell on the 50th day after the Passover, when the first fruits of the corn harvest were presented (Deut. 16:9), and in later times, the giving of the Law of Moses was commemorated. As the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles on this 50th day after the Resurrection, the name was applied by the church to the feast celebrating this event. The Church called it Whitsunday. In the Nicene Canons, (Canon 20) the word 'Pentecost' was used for the whole period between Easter and Pentecost. It became Paschal time or Paschaltide during which no fast was allowed, prayer was only made standing, and the

Alleluia was sung more frequently. (Summarized from the Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1961 Edition).

This text from the Acts of the Apostles is an account of Pentecost. We notice that:

The Apostles were gathered in one room (unity).

They heard a sound like a powerful wind (listening).

Tongues of fire rested on each one of them (divine visitation).

They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign languages as the Spirit gifted them. They were gifted to go forth and PROCLAIM.

People from all Nations were gathered in Jerusalem. This would have meant Jews of the Diaspora – present for the Feast of Weeks.

Read the text a few times over the week ahead and be aware of the Holy Spirit praying within you and bringing forth your response. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 1*.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103

The response is: LORD SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT, AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

Psalm 66 is a psalm about God's boundless care for his creation. We are encouraged to pray for the earth that cries out in anguish at the way we have treated it and to make conscious decisions to change our lives to care for it and sustain it. How are we going with recycling, composting, buying less plastic, planting, nurturing, taking time for delighting in creation?

Lectio: Read the second text from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Ch. 12:3-7 and 12-13.

Meditatio: The main theme of this text is that there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit. The next teaching or exhortation is also to ONE-NESS. All the different gifts given to all of us are given by the same Spirit, and the same Lord – working differently on each of us. In Christ we are one. A variety of gifts and all sorts of service. Paul uses the metaphor of the human body. He marries Jews and Greeks, slaves and non-slaves (citizens), ONE SPIRIT WAS GIVEN TO US ALL TO DRINK. Have we noticed the word "drink" in this context? We know that 55-60 percent of our bodies is made up of water and we know the importance of drinking water, for our brain and other organs to remain healthy. If we have been given the Spirit of God to drink, we should be transformed by what we imbibe and remain spiritually healthy. "Holy Spirit, breath of all holiness, fire of love..." Can we add: "Water of life..."? Breath of holiness, fire of love, water of life.

Take time to ponder on this text from the First Letter to the Corinthians. May we all allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of our hearts and bring forth the melody of our response to this text. When the Holy Spirit is working on the fibres of our hearts, we will be drawn to certain words, phrases, sentences which draw us forth and challenge us. Note these in your prayer journal. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is a Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, FILL THE HEARTS OF YOUR FAITHFUL
AND KINDLE IN THEM THE FIRE OF YOUR LOVE.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text: John 20:19-23

Meditatio: Some background to help us respond.

The Patristic Commentary on this Gospel is from St. Augustine: “The happy day has dawned for us on which Holy Church makes her first radiant appearance to the eyes of faith and sets the hearts of believers on fire. It is the day on which we celebrate the sending of the Holy Spirit by our Lord Jesus Christ, after he had risen from the dead and ascended into glory. In the gospel it is written: *Those who are thirsty, let them come to me and drink. Those who believe in me, rivers of living water shall flow from their hearts.* The Evangelist explains these words by adding: *Jesus said this about the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive. For the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified.* Now the glorification of Jesus took place when he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, but all was not yet accomplished. The Holy Spirit still had to be given; the one who made the promise had to send him. This is precisely what occurred at Pentecost.” (St. Augustine, Sermon 271).

(My source says that Augustine’s writings are voluminous and his influence on subsequent theology immense. He moulded the thought of the Middle Ages down to the 13th century. Yet he was above all a pastor and a great spiritual writer).

Read the Gospel again. Take quiet time. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth the melody of your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 3*.

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian. St. James says, “Be doers of the Word.” And the Book of Deuteronomy tells us that the Word of God is in our hands to do it.

1. My response is mixed: People from all nations gathered in Jerusalem and witnessed the miracle born of “fire” – the miracle of tongues. The listeners are amazed and astonished at the miracle. I have witnessed the miracle of the Holy Spirit at work in many people. I have seen them on fire for the Gospel of Jesus and the proclamation of the Gospel. And so, I am drawn this year to the miracle of “fire”. St. Hildegard of Bingen calls the Holy Spirit a fiery Comforter. Her prayer is: Holy Spirit, breath of all holiness, fire of love, awaken us. Fire of Love! And love is the language we all understand. All peoples of all Nations understand the language of love. St. John tells us that God is love. About ‘fire’, we also know that fire purifies, and refines. It hurts. Most of us don’t want to be refined or made into a better shape! Fire makes metal soft and therefore able to be bent and shaped. A blacksmith’s fire comes to mind. Many of my friends tell me that giving up and letting go are the two most brutal purifications – losing your job to someone younger or accepting the fact that you can’t work in the garden as you did when you were young. I think we all know about these purifications. Ageing and illness tend to purify us quite brutally.
2. Instead of responding in the usual way, I am going to find a quiet place and spend time in prayer with the Sequence for Pentecost:

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,
From the clear celestial height.
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor,
Come, with treasures which endure;
Come, thou Light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best,
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
Dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, Light divine,
Visit thou these hearts of thine,
And our inmost being fill.

If thou take thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay;
All his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour thy dew,
Wash the stains of guilt away.

Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore
Thee confess and thee adore,
With thy sevenfold gifts descend.

Give us comfort when we die;
Give us life with thee on high;
Give us joys that never end.
Amen. Alleluia!



3. I hear the Lord saying to me: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." That is the essence of Pentecost. I am being sent to live the Gospel in the world. My thoughts and my words need to be born from the Gospel of Jesus.

*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.*