

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

**Sunday, 11 June, is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year A.
The Psalter takes Week Two**

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:

13: St. Anthony of Padua (Memorial)

16: The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. (Solemnity)

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

15: Australia - Perth, Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Timothy Costelloe, SBD. 2007

16: Australia - Townsville, Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral, 2006.

17: Wollongong, Patronal Feast.

20: New Zealand - Auckland. Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. John Mackey (2014).

In the Social Justice Calendar:

No anniversaries to mark this week.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Deut. 8:2-3 and 14-16

1 Corinthians 10:16-17.

Gospel: John 6:51-58.

Lectio: Read the first text from the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 8, 2-3 and 14-16.

Meditatio: Some background so that we understand the text and can make a response to it.

The most important word in this text is “remember”, - because, whether it is the people in the wilderness or each one of us in the wilderness of our lives, if we forget God and what God has done for us, we begin spiralling downwards. The purpose of the wilderness is for us to learn humility and come into touch with our inmost heart (honesty and integrity – transparency). It is to learn that we do not live on bread alone but on everything that comes from the mouth of God. And it is very hard work. We can’t do it without the grace of God.

Read the text again, or even a third time, and listen to the Holy Spirit prompting you to respond. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 147:12-15 and 19-20

The response is: PRAISE THE LORD JERUSALEM.

Psalm 147 is a psalm of praise – praise of God’s personal care for Israel.

Lectio: Read the 2nd text from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Ch. 10, v’s 16-17.

Meditatio: Some background to help us understand the text and respond to it.

“One loaf” is the centre of this dynamic text.

We all share in this one loaf.

Two verses of the Sequence which follows addresses this text in a most powerful way:

Those who eat it do not divide it.

The sacred food, which whole abides

Unbroken still, nor knows decay;

Be one, or be a thousand fed,

They eat alike that living bread,

Which still received ne'er wastes away.

In Medieval times, a large number of sequences were in regular use. Only five have survived to be used in the Roman Liturgy: *Victimae Paschali* at Easter, *Veni Sancte Spiritus* at Pentecost, *Lauda Sion* at Corpus Christi, *Dies Irae* at All Souls, and the *Stabat Mater* on the feast of Our Lady's Seven Sorrows. (Cf. Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church).

Make your response to this text in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from John 6:51-52.

I AM THE LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN, SAYS THE LORD.

WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER.

Lectio: Read now, the Gospel from John 6:51-58.

This seems a good opportunity to revise the Eucharist in the Scriptures.

We have the tradition of Matthew and Mark: Matthew 26:26-29. Mark 14:22-25.

We have the tradition of Luke and Paul: Luke 22:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

AND WE HAVE JOHN CHAPTER SIX.

Meditatio: John chapter six contains two homilies: 26-51a and 51b-59.

The text we are given for this solemnity fits into the second homily.

Verse 57 is one we need to take to ourselves: Jesus says, ‘I live because of the Father. Jesus is held by the Father. ‘Those who eat me will live because of me.’ And so, we are held by Jesus! To be held by Jesus – how precious that is! Our response is surely that of gratitude for such a precious mystery.

Read the Gospel again and mark words, phrases or sentences to which the Holy Spirit prompts you to respond. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 3*.

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church exhorts me to pray. 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. I am called to respond to the wilderness that teaches humility and how to come into touch with my inmost heart. My inmost heart is always a mysterious spiritual place. I don't know where it, and I experience it, by the positive fruits it bears, the

changes in my words and behaviour – for the better. It's no use losing ourselves in images of my inmost being and the Presence of God in my inmost being, if it just stays in warm feelings and a wonderful newness. It is about the fruits of God's Presence in my life. May I never forget that.

2. One loaf is the message. One loaf, even if shared, cannot be taken away. It will still be there for the next one and the next one and so on. Or, the next group, and next group and so on. In other words, the Eucharist will never run out. Do we remember that in John's Gospel, there were 12 baskets full of bread and fish left over. The Eucharist will never run out.
3. I am responding to the truth of verse 57, that I AM HELD BY JESUS. When a child falls and cries, we run to pick up the child and hold it in a gesture of reassurance. We use comforting words and caress him or her. And then there is another "being held". It is being held in place by a fortification, against wind, torrential rain, cyclonic gusts, another cyclone with its potential for damage. The depths of foundations in a building can save a lot of unnecessary damage, but not all the damage. I look back on times in my life when I have been held by Jesus through hurt, intense emotional pain, and fear. I have a friend who works for the RSPCA. She loves it and she hates it. She has to struggle all the time to not pass judgment on people who have treated animals with the most appalling cruelty. She is a woman of prayer and relies on the help of God to see her through each day. I believe she is held in place by Jesus, who went after the lost sheep and carried it back on his shoulders, or, who carried lambs in his arms, or who wasn't so high and mighty that he couldn't be born in a stable, close to the animals. May we pray this week for victims of domestic violence, and most especially for the children. May we ask Jesus to hold them close to his breast, caressing them and comforting them.

A further reflection for this Solemnity, and especially if you are joining a Corpus Christi Procession.

What is the first thing the Corpus Christi Procession tells us? It reminds us that we are pilgrims on the earth. We have here no lasting dwelling place. We are a people who change, who are restlessly driven on through time and space, who are 'in via', (on the way) and still seeking our real homeland and our everlasting rest. We are those who must allow themselves to be changed, because to be a member of the human race means to let oneself change, and perfection means to have changed often. The movement of the procession makes perfectly clear our dependence on time and the stratification of the sphere of our existence. A procession is a holy movement of those truly united. It is a gentle stream of peaceful majesty, not a procession of fists clenched in bitterness, but of hands folded in gentleness. It is a procession which threatens no one, excludes no one, and whose blessing even falls on those who stand astonished at its edge and who look on, comprehending nothing. It is a movement which the Holy One, the eternal One supports with his presence... (From: "The Eternal Year" by Fr. Karl Rahner).

*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,
the one who pondered the Word of God in her heart.*



"The One Loaf"
Image by Sieger Köder