

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

**Sunday 2 July 2023**

**13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**

**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week One**

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

**In the Liturgy:**

03: St. Thomas (feast)

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

03: Wilcannia - Forbes. Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Columba Macbeth-Green, 2014.

05: Broome - Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. John Jobst, 2014.

08: Cairns - Anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral, 1968.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

02: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday.

2-9: NAIDOC WEEK

02: International Cooperatives Day.

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

**The readings are:**

2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Matthew 10:37-42.

**Lectio:** Read the First Reading from the Second Book of Kings, chapter 4, verses 8-11 and 14-16.

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 Prophet Elisha says to a childless woman of rank: “This time next year you will hold a son in your arms.” But before that, he asks his servant Gehazi, what he can do for the woman. The woman and her husband have built a room for Elisha, to be used each time he passes that way. They were “of rank”, which may mean that they were financially well off.

It is the servant who makes the practical suggestions. He has noticed that she hasn’t a son and her husband is old. If her “old” husband dies, she will be left alone in a patriarchal society. Her rank won’t mean much then.

Read the text a few times. 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:** Psalm 88

**The response is:** FOREVER I WILL SING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.

Psalm 88 proclaims the magnificent praises of God. The messianic promise of 2 Samuel verse 7 was made by God, so were the heavens. Each has the same guarantee. There is no doubt about God's power and all kingship comes from him (vs. 6-19). "Of this I am sure, that your love lasts forever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens." (Cf. Grail Psalter, 1981 edition).

**Lectio:** Read the Second Text from the Letter to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 3-4 and 8-11.

**Meditatio:** There is a short but very apt summary above this text in the Glenstal Bible Missal: "Baptized into the death of Christ, the believer is dead to sin. One with the risen Lord the believer will live in future for the living God." *You must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.*

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 2*.

**The Gospel Verse is from 1 Peter 2:9.**

YOU ARE A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY PEOPLE.

PRAISE GOD WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS AND INTO HIS WONDERFUL LIGHT.

**Lectio:** Read the Gospel text from Matthew 10:37-42.

Pause and ponder.

**Meditatio:** Some helpful background in order to understand the text and make our response.

There is a Patristic commentary on this text by Hilary of Poitiers:

"We are not worthy of Christ if we refuse to take up his cross, that is to say, to share the Lord's passion, death, burial and resurrection and to follow him by living out the mystery of faith in the newly received grace of the Spirit. Thanks to the power of the word and the renunciation of past sins, temporal gains are death to the soul, and temporal losses, are salvation. Deuteronomy would say: "Choose life!"

Jesus commends those who do receive the apostles, assuring them of a greater recompense than they might have expected for their hospitality. (Hilary of Poitiers, commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel).

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 bring forth your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 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: I like Gehazi – a servant who is attentive to the needs of others. He is one who notices others. Some people wouldn't even notice if the sky fell in! They are too absorbed in themselves and their own importance. Surely Elisha knew of his servant's

attentiveness to others and their needs. He would have experienced Gehazi's attentiveness to his own (Elisha's) needs, and therefore he could ask his servant what he would recommend. Am I attentive to the needs of others? Do I notice when they are ill, tired, in need of comfort, in need of someone to talk to, needing someone to go with them on their daily walk? Is there someone who just needs me to sit with him or her, over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine? An all too common attitude is: I just haven't got that kind of time. If this is my excuse for not being attentive to the needs of others, I need to change. If I do not change and start being attentive to the needs of others, I may be contributing to the 1 in 3 Australians who suffer from depression.

2. The believer will live in future for the living God. In other words, the believer will set the world on fire – divine fire. Fr. Michael Casey quotes Parker Palmer from "Let your life speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation." 'Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood...' and this is living for the living God. St. Irenaeus would say: "The glory of God is humanity fully alive. (humanity which is heeding its deepest call - to grow into its own authentic selfhood). And the destiny of humanity is the vision of God. This is the destiny of those who heed their deepest call – to grow into their own authentic selfhood, to live for the living God. Teilhard de Chardin said: "We are pioneers who stand on the edge of great beginnings of unseen futures." And we remember what happens when we live for the living God, because the seed of God is in us and the seed of God grows into God. (Meister Eckhart).
3. With so much emphasis on the cross, I turn to a most profound prayer, written by Fr. Karl Rahner. "I embrace your cross, Lord of eternal love, heart of all hearts, heart that was pierced, heart that is patient and unspeakably kind. Have mercy on me. Receive me into your love. And when I come to the end of my pilgrimage, when the day begins to decline and the shadows of death surround me, speak your last word at the end of my life also: 'Father, into your hands I commend her/his spirit. O good Jesus. Amen.'" (From "Watch and pray with me", by Fr. Karl Rahner. Herder & Herder, New York, 1966). If we pray this prayer sincerely, we can't help taking up our own crosses and following the Lord Jesus. What are the crosses that challenge us?

*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.*



***Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday and NAIDOC WEEK***