

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 14 April 2024
Third Sunday of Sunday, Year B
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Three

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:

No Memorias, feasts or solemnities this week.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

No anniversaries this week.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

No significant anniversaries this week.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Acts 3:13-15

1 John 2:1-5

Luke 24:35-48

Lectio: Read the First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 3, 13-15.

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. There is a significant insight into this history book. It comes from Gospel Light Publications: “The myths that were the basis of pagan religions were growing old at the time of the New Testament. At just the right time, the earliest Christians could say, ‘Listen to us – here is something that actually happened in the full light of history!’” Chapter 3 is still recounting what takes place in Jerusalem.

The Glenstal Bible Missal gives the perfect summary of this text: “Ignorance explains the cry of people yesterday and today for the death of the Holy One, the Just One. You nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing.”

And we hear the cry of Jesus on the Cross: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

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 4:2,5, 9.

The response is: LORD, LET YOUR FACE SHINE ON US.

Psalm 4 is listed as a psalm for night prayer. The Grail Psalter has the following explanation: “To forget to thank may be bad but to refuse to ask is a thousand times worse, indeed fatal, and this psalmist will not make that mistake: the psalmist has learnt from experience. The happiness and peace the Psalmist knows are lasting and satisfying. Few understand this: the celebrations of harvest-time seem to content them. There is no harm in these things – they are the gifts of God and we enjoy them gratefully. Our mistake is in thinking they can satisfy, to be at peace with God is to be at peace with oneself.

Sounds like the perfect way to get to sleep at night. Am I at peace with God?
If so, I should have no trouble getting to sleep (on an ordinary night).

Lectio: Read the Second Text from the First Letter of St. John, chapter 2, verses 1-5.

Meditatio:

1 John 2:1-5 is part of 1 John 2:3-11

Verse 5 is the key to the text: Love is the essence of the revelation of God. LOVE IS THE ESSENCE OF THE REVELATION OF GOD. How absolutely comforting!

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* No. 2.

The Gospel Verse is adapted from Luke 24:32.

LORD JESUS, MAKE YOUR WORD PLAIN TO US:
MAKE OUR HEARTS BURN WITH LOVE WHEN YOU SPEAK.

This is the prayer for us to pray at the beginning of *Lectio Divina* each day.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Luke 24:35-48

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

Let us listen to some of the sermon preached for this Sunday by St. Augustine: “Christ rose from the tomb with his wounds healed, though their scars remained. He knew it would be good for his disciples if he retained the scars, for those scars would heal the wound in their hearts. What wound do you mean? The wound of disbelief; for even when he appeared before their eyes and showed them his true body, they still took him for a [ghost], a disembodied spirit. Christ as head of his church, showed himself to his disciples. In showing himself to them, he was promising them the future. What, in fact, were his next words to them? ‘All these things I told you while I was still among you as a mortal among mortals. But now I no longer live among you as before; never again shall I have to die as mortals do. What I was telling you, then, was that everything that had been written about me had to be fulfilled.’”

Stand back from this text. Later, read it again. Go to your “quiet” place. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. 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. Peter is at his best again in this week's text. Peter is direct and clear in what he is saying. He describes Jesus as "the Holy One", "the Just One" and "the Prince of Life". We know Jesus as "the Prince of Peace", and we are aware that peace is the message of the Risen Lord, but "Prince of life"? We use inclusive language in our liturgy, so we say Ruler instead of Prince, and it speaks more clearly to me: Jesus is the Ruler of my life. Jesus is the Ruler of my life – that is, Jesus is Ruler of my life and as Rule, Jesus reigns supreme, if I am open to him. For me to be open to the Ruler of my life, I must be open to ongoing conversion. And in this way, Jesus reigns supreme in my life.
2. If we want to know a God of Love and understand that LOVE IS THE ESSENCE OF THE REVELATION OF GOD, we only have to read 1 Corinthians 13. There we will find all the meanings of love and how these meanings describe the nature of God. Being a presence of love for others is the big challenge. Recently, there was a missile attack by Israel on a group of aid workers. An Australian was among them. Our Foreign Minister, Penny Wong, very rightly expressed Australia's outrage over such an attack. But the danger is for us to take sides. Jesus does not say to us, "Love these people, but not those people." Even the Egyptians who were drowned in the Sea of Reeds, were God's children. When we take sides, we are no better than those who are doing the killing. I've heard it so often over the last three to four years: "Pray for the Ukraine." And we need to add: "Pray too for Putin and Russia." Not all Russians want war. Not all Israelis want war.
3. Augustine says that Christ rose from the tomb with his wounds healed, but the scars remained. Perhaps we could learn from this. Some of us have help for years to heal the wounds of the past, but the scars remain. This should make us more tolerant of others. We share our wounds with friends, very close friends, or with the psychologist or the counsellor, spiritual director or a doctor. We don't open up easily to confide our wounds to any of these people, and the scars always remain. On the other hand, Pope Francis says: "Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the Resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. In the midst of darkness something new always springs to life, and sooner or later produces fruit." It would be beneficial this week, if we asked ourselves: What are my most easily recognizable wounds? Have I sought the help of professional people? If so, am I aware of the scars which remain. Scars take a very long time to heal, even a lifetime. Therefore, I need to learn patience.

***Lectio divina is a way of life, not a method of prayer.
We read the text from the sacred scriptures.
We take time to understand the text by way of a commentary.***

*We respond to the text and listen to the prayer of the Holy Spirit within us.
Such a response is taking place from the beginning of our prayer.
The Spirit will place unction on the word/words we are meant to hear.
We ponder as we go...
Like the Mother of God, we treasure all this in our hearts.*



Image: The Road to Emmaus by Daniel Bonnell