

LECTIO DIVINA

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

LECTIO

First reading: Isaiah 55:1-3

Psalm 144(145):8-9, 15-18

Second reading: Romans 8:35, 37-39

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

MEDITATIO

"Come to the water all you who are thirsty." These words in the first reading are so familiar. We sing this hymn at Mass and recognise the rich symbolism of water in the scriptures. It is an invitation from God and a promise of his generosity initially made to the Israelites after their turbulent history of disruption and slavery and but it is also an invitation for us to seek a spirituality awakened and nourished by Jesus. He said to the woman at the well that the water He gives "will become ... a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Jesus also said "let anyone who is thirsty come to me ... he said this about the spirit" (John 7:37-39). The promise of eternal life rests in Jesus and the guidance we need to get there comes from the Holy Spirit. Another phrase in Isaiah that resonates with me is "Listen and your soul will live." This goes straight to the heart of Benedictine spirituality. "Listen with the ear of your heart" (RB prologue) that is with the deepest centre of our being not just emotion. Our calling is to energetically respond to the invitation of the Divine spirit by seeking the gifts and fruits of the spirit, the virtues and charisms and hope that we are listening when the voice of God speaks to us and not get too distracted by the cares of our lives.

In the Gospel reading, Jesus heard about the death of John the Baptist and he sought refuge and quiet maybe to mourn in sadness and avoid Herod's growing hostility. But it wasn't to be as the people 'went after him'. What follows is one of the most intriguing miracles of Jesus life, the miracle of the loaves and fishes. There is much debate about how this miracle occurred but I don't think 'the how' is very important but the lesson it teaches is.

Theologians point out that this miracle "looks forward to the gift of the Eucharist and, ultimately, to the final banquet in the Kingdom of God ... and makes clear that what God wants to do for humanity is simply be a most generous Host at the banquet of eternal life" (Byrne, B. 2026). What resonates with me is how Jesus put aside his own needs, 'took pity' on the people and gave generously and kindly to them healing the sick, bidding them to sit on the grass, feeding and teaching them. The disciples wanted to send the people away but Jesus said no and he cared for their needs, practical and spiritual.

We may feel reassured that God "is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love" (Psalm, 144). Furthermore, as the second reading in Romans promises, nothing can stop God from loving us, even during our most troubled times and worse failures. God wishes to satisfy everyone's hunger (Fallon, p.214) and to nourish our spirits. He nourishes us through his body and blood, his life, his teachings and the sacraments. And we have helpers on the way, people who teach us quietly how to live a Christian life by their example and by sharing their gifts.

ORATIO

Dear Lord immerse me in your living water.
Nourish my spirit with your grace and generosity.
Guide me along the path of eternal life and don't let me go astray.
Open my heart to your Word
Help me to follow your example by serving others in need before myself.
Thank you, Lord for all those who help me along the way.

CONTEMPLATIO

Abide, be still, silent, rest and wait ... God will work on us!

EVANGELIZATIO

What difference does this Lectio make in my life? In the coming week I will pray my prayer above. I will try and be alert to those in need and respond with generosity.

REFERENCES

Byrne, B.SJ (2026, 26 July). Australian Catholics Education Hub, Homily notes 18th Sunday (<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/homily-18-yr-a-2026>)

Fallon, M. (1997). The Gospel According to Saint Matthew. Chevalier Press: Sydney

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Anne 'Edith' Fry, Oblate of Jamberoo Abbey.

DIVINE INVITATION OF THE SPIRIT

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT Aquinas	GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT 1 Corinthians 12:4	FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT Galations 5:22-26	THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES	CARDINAL / MORAL VIRTUES	BENEDICTINE CHARISMS	BEATITUDES Mathew 5:1-11 Blessed are ...
wisdom	wisdom	Love	Faith	prudence	love of Christ & neighbour	the poor in spirit
understanding	knowledge	Joy	Hope	justice	Stability	those who mourn
counsel	faith	Peace	charity / love	fortitude / courage	hospitality	the meek
fortitude	healing	patience		temperance	Justice & peace	those who hunger & thirst for righteousness
knowledge	working miracles	kindness			obedience	the merciful
piety	prophecy	generosity			Prayer	the pure in heart
fear of the Lord	discernment of spirits	faithfulness			stewardship	the peacemakers
	speaking in tongues	gentleness			community	those persecuted for righteousness sake
	interpretation of tongues	self-control			conversation	You when people revile you & persecute you & utter evil against you falsely for my names sake
					discipline	
					Humility	
					good zeal	

Franciscan values: Reverence the unique dignity of each person, encourage a trustful, prayerful community of learners, serve one another, society and the church, foster peace and justice and respect creation.

Ignation values: authenticity, integrity, courage, love, hope, healing, forgiveness, service, justice