

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 19 May 2024
Pentecost Sunday, Year B

For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, 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:

20: Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church.

24: Our Lady Help of Christians

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

19: Palmerston North – Patronal feast.

Canberra-Goulburn – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Christopher Prowse, 2003.

22: Rockhampton – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral, 1982.

24: Australia – National Patronal Feast: Broome, Bunbury, Canberra-Goulburn, Military Ordinariate of Australia, Sydney, Townsville

25: Maronite Diocese – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Antoine Taraboy, OLM, 2013.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

16-24: Laudato Si' Week.

22: International Day of Biological Diversity

26: National Sorry Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings taken from the Day Mass are:

Acts 2:1-11

Galatians 5:16-25

John 15:26-27 and 16:12-15

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

Be aware of the way you handle your bible. Take it up reverently and read the sacred text with deep awareness. This text is given to all of us on this particular Sunday for our formation as Christians. Think of the Sacred Scriptures as a school from which we never graduate. We are learners until the close of our lives on earth.

Meditatio: Some notes on the background of this text may help us to understand it and respond. This is Luke's account of Pentecost. Instead of analyzing the text, I have chosen some reflective material: Pope Francis, at a general audience on 15 May 2013 exhorted those present, to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and reflected on the Holy Spirit's action in guiding the Church and each one of us, to the truth. Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit 'will guide you unto all truth, (John 16:13) since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth' (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13). The Pope goes on to say that we are living in an age in which people are rather skeptical of truth. Pope Benedict

XVI frequently spoke of relativism, that is, of the tendency to consider nothing definite and to think that truth comes from consensus or from something we like.

Truth is not a possession. It is an encounter with a person. (“The Church of Mercy, by Pope Francis. A Vision for the Church. 2014, Darton Longman and Todd).

The second reflection on the Holy Spirit is from “Prayers of Hope, Words of Courage: by Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan.

He shares a reflection which he calls “By the working of the Holy Spirit.” He begins with the Mother of God, saying, “The Holy Spirit took total possession of you, Virgin Mary. The Spirit dwells in you, lives in you and in you realizes the greatest work of human history – the Word made flesh.” Let us join in the prayer of Cardinal Francis Xavier: “Teach me to listen to the Holy Spirit. Teach me to entrust myself to the Holy Spirit. Teach me to allow the Holy Spirit the freedom to act within me. (Prayers of Hope Works of Courage, Pauline Books and Media, Boston, 2012. Page 94).

Read the text again a couple of times. Stay with the text. Ponder on it for a day or more. However, if you are aware of the Holy Spirit calling forth your response to the text, note it down. When the Holy Spirit prays within you or pours unction on a text and calls you forth, this is the true “prayer” (*oratio*) of *Lectio Divina*. (*Lectio, oratio, meditatio, contemplatio, ruminatio, evangelizatio* – these Latin terms describe the prayer rooms of *lectio divina*. We move from one room to the other, spending as much time as we are called to spend in each room).

I share my response to the first text in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103: 1, 24, 29-31

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

Psalm 103 is a Psalm of Worship. The notes on this Psalm, from the Grail Psalter are as follows: Religion is not a strictly private affair between God [and me] I am part of a world which God made and loves. The creation was described in the first chapter of Genesis in brief phrases; here, the same account is painted in loving detail. The Psalmist speaks of the world as seen and known at that time. We can think of the world as we know it: a world besieged by conflict and in a vast number of places, by hatred. In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis speaks of Mother Earth crying out in torment. At this time, surely the torment is the destruction of her beauty by missiles.

Lectio: Read the second text, from the Letter to the Galatians 5:16-25.

This text is about self-indulgence vs. the fruits of the Spirit.

Make two lists:

1. Led by the Spirit.
2. Given to self-indulgence

Meditatio: Which of the fruits of the Spirit is speaking loudly to you?

In her recently published book, “I Give You My Word”, Sr. Antonia quote’s Michael Casey’s 7 principles of *Lectio Divina*: “From time to time in our reading, we come across something that particularly appeals to us, or which seems to apply to our situation at any given moment. We need to stop and spend as much time with the text in question as we can. If it helps, we can write it out and keep it before us for a few days, allowing ourselves to ruminate upon it and really let it

become part of us.” (Sr. Antonia Curtis osb, quoting Michael Casey ocso, *The Seven Principles of Lectio Divina*)

Take time to ponder, (ruminate) on this text. This is done as we go on with each day’s work, or rest. *Lectio Divina* is a way of life. Once it becomes so, then we can ponder anywhere. Write your response to the text. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

Gospel Acclamation:

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

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from **John 15:26-27; 16:12-15**.

Meditatio: About this text, St. Aelred of Rievaulx says: “Today’s holy solemnity puts new heart into us. On this feast it is love that we specially honour, and among human beings there is no word more pleasant to the ear, no thought more tenderly dwelt on, than love. The love we celebrate is nothing other than the goodness, kindness and charity of God; the goodness of God is identical with his Spirit, with God himself. In the work of disposing all things the Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world from the beginning, reaching from end to end of the earth in strength, and [ever so] delicately.

Now indeed the Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole earth, and all creation recognizes his voice. Everywhere the Spirit is at work, everywhere the Spirit speaks. From this day onwards, however, the voice of the Lord has resounded over the waters; the God of majesty has thundered, and the Lord makes his voice echo over the flood. From now on the voice of the Lord speaks with strength...in majesty; it strikes flaring fire, shakes the desert, strips the forest bare, and all will cry out ‘Glory!’”

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. My response is to take one of the three prayers of the Cardinal: “Teach me to allow the Holy Spirit the freedom to act within me.” I know that in praying this way, I am stepping away from my likes and dislikes, my preferences, my prejudices and am allowing the Spirit of God to lead me in the paths of love, peace, acceptance and freedom. I may even be challenged to accept my ill-health and the constant demands of ageing.
2. My response: Which of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, expressed in this text has pierced my heart? Peace. I pray for peace in our world, sometimes all day long: Lord light up the darkness in our world. By way of a reminder: we are in the midst of “Laudato Si’ Week”. Michael Casey says that *Laudato Si’* is one of the signature documents issued by Pope Francis, marking, as it does, his extension of the second commandment to include the whole of creation. Pope Francis understands that the fate of the human race is intimately bonded with the fate of the physical universe. That is why he asserts [that] *Laudato Si’* is a social encyclical. The values he holds dear are inclusion of the marginalized, universal solidarity and respect for differences. These will come under threat if the environment deteriorates to the point where only the rich and powerful will have access to the basic

necessities of life.” (A Vision for renewal, the Social Teaching of Pope Francis, by Michael Casey osco. St Pauls’ Publications 2022).

3. Fr. Thomas Keating’s insights are still part of my on-going formation. Of Pentecost, he writes: “the Spirit, the Power of God, is in us. Let us resolve not to extinguish the Spirit. Let us listen to the Spirit by interior silence, humble prayer, that the Spirit will guide and enlighten us.” He continues, saying that we are to mistrust our human strength, and have the humility and receptivity to the Spirit’s delicate touches. The delicate touches of the Spirit are like mist in the air, or the gentle breeze revealing the presence of God to Elijah. The miracle of tongues on the day of Pentecost is a gift given by the Holy Spirit who is the overflow of divine life into each one of us, so that we will be able to speak of divine love to people of all cultures and languages. We don’t have to form words to give the gift of divine love to others.”

***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.***

