

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 2nd June, is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year A.
The Psalter takes Week One

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:

June 3: Sts Charles Lwanga and companions. (Memorial)

June 5: St. Boniface, Benedictine bishop and martyr. (Memorial)

June 7: The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (Solemnity)

June 8: The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Memorial)

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

June 7: Townsville: Anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral, (2006).

June 7: Ukrainian Eparchy: Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Mykola Bychok, 2020.

June 8: Melbourne – Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Peter Comensoli 2011.

June 8: Wollongong: Patronal Feast – Immaculate Heart of Mary. This day is usually held on Sunday. The Liturgy of Sunday takes precedence.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

June 5: World Environment Day

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Exodus 24:3-8

Hebrews 9:11-15

Gospel: Mark 14:12-16, 22-26.

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Book of Exodus, chapter 24, verses 3-8.

Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud. This is about our on-going conversion.

Meditatio: Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it and make our response.

The Book of Exodus is the second Law Book of the Old Testament. The purpose of this book is obvious – it records the release of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. There is a very confronting article in one edition of the Biblical Archaeology journal. It describes a mass grave of male bodies, complete with terrible descriptions of the way their spines were bent. It suggests that these were the Hebrews who built the Pyramids.

Chapter 24 which contains the text for this Sunday begins with chapter 20 and narrates the giving of the Law to God's people.

In chapter 24, Moses and the people are involved in liturgy, a liturgy which uses the blood of sacrifice, an altar on twelve standing stones, twelve being the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the number which suggests Divine administration.

The Book of the Covenant was read to the people, and their response was: "We will obey."

Read the text a few times over the week ahead and be aware of the Holy Spirit praying within you and bringing forth your response. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm is Psalm 115: 12-13, 15-18

The response is: I WILL TAKE THE CUP OF SALVATION AND CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.

In this Psalm the psalmist considers some outward expression of gratitude. The psalmist can find nothing more noble than sacrifice. The 'cup of salvation' is the wine-libation that celebrates temporal deliverance. How much more excellent is our salvation and how much worthier our cup! 'The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? (1 Cor. 10:16). (Page 103 – Grail Psalter, 1963 edition).

Lectio: Read the second text from the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 9:11-15.

Meditatio: This Letter has many profound parts, but mostly it was written to encourage Jewish Christians to stay with Christ instead of looking back to the Old Law. Chapters 4:14 – 10:18 state that Christ is greater than the priesthood and all older covenants. Therefore Christ is greater than the Covenant we read about in the first text from Exodus.

Now in Hebrews 9 we read that Christ "brings a new covenant, as the mediator, only so that the people who were called to an eternal inheritance may actually receive what was promised. His death took place to cancel the sins that infringed the earlier covenant."

Take time to ponder on this text from Hebrews. May we all allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of our hearts and bring forth the melody of our response to this text. When the Holy Spirit is moving within us we will be drawn to certain words, phrases, sentences which draw us forth and challenge us. We can note these in our prayer journals. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is John 6:51-52.

I AM THE LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN SAYS THE LORD;
WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text: Mark 14:12-16 and 22-26.

Meditatio: Some background to help us respond.

St. John Chrysostom has written a commentary on verses 12-16: "As they were eating he took bread and broke it. Christ instituted this sacrament at the time of the Passover in order to teach us by every possible means both that he himself had been the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and also that the whole of the Old Testament had been a foreshadowing of these mysteries. The fact that it was evening signified that the fullness of time had come and that all was about to be accomplished. He gave thanks to teach us how we ought to celebrate these mysteries to show that he was not going to his passion against his will, and to train us to accept with gratitude whatever we have to suffer and so to derive from it hope of future blessedness.

(Journey with the Fathers - Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels, Year B).

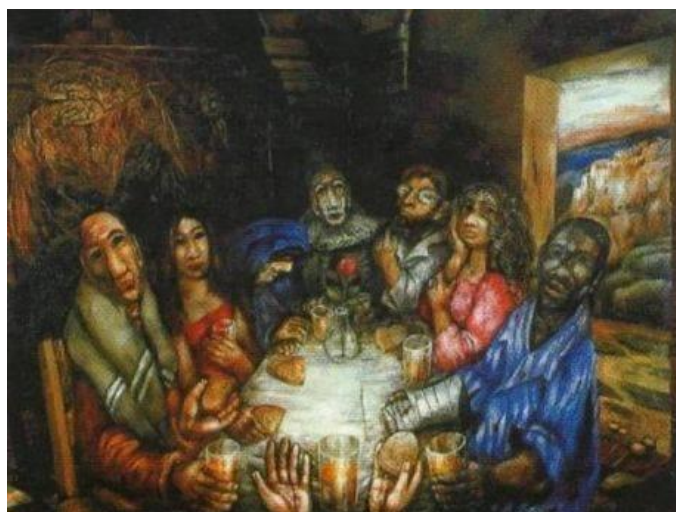
(John Chrysostom (347-407) was born at Antioch. After a period of great austerity as a hermit, he returned to Antioch where he was ordained deacon in 381 and priest in 386. From 386 to 397 it was his duty to preach in the principal church of the city, and his best homilies, which earned him the title 'Chrysostomos' or 'the golden-mouthed,' were preached at this time).

Read the Gospel again. Take quiet time and allow the Word to sink deep within until you come to your response. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 3*.

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian. 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. Hearing, believing and responding. This was the simple path the people took until they could say: “We will obey.” Faith is sometimes so complicated that great treatises and books of theology have to be written. But the Lord sees the heart. The heart, having heard the word of God responds with “I will obey.” Sr. Antonia’s book “I Give You My Word” has recently been published. It is a Book on how to teach Lectio Divina. I use it for prayer. I hope you can too. Sr. Antonia is a woman of the Word, and therefore her writing is authentic.
2. I am drawn to a little reflection on Paul, even though he did not write the Letter to the Hebrews: Paul said: “The love of Christ overwhelms us. Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ. I live now not with my own life, but with the life of Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in this body I live in faith: faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake.”
3. What calls forth a response to this Gospel is a prayer of St. Anselm: “Make me O Lord, so to perceive with lips and heart and know by faith and by love, that by virtue of this sacrament I may deserve to be planted in the likeness of your death and resurrection, by mortifying the old person, and by renewal of the life of righteousness. May I be worthy to be incorporated into your body which is the church, so that I may be your member and you may be my head, and that I remain in you and you in me. Then at the Resurrection you will refashion the body of my humiliation according to the body of your glory, as you promised by your apostle, and I shall rejoice in you forever, to your glory, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever Amen.” (Prayer before receiving Holy Communion. “The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm”, Penguin Classics, 1973)

*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**