

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 30 June 2024
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Two

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:

03 July: St. Thomas, Feast.

In the Australian 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.

06: Adelaide - Anniversary of the death of Archbishop Leonard Faulkner (2018).

In the Social Justice Calendar:

01: Commencement of the Fair Work Amendment (TCF Industry) Act, ensuring fair pay and conditions for outworkers in the garment industry.

02: Death of women's rights' activist, feminist, Jessie Street (1970).

Election of Linda Burney as the first Aboriginal woman member of the Australian Parliament (2016).

06: 1839 - Massacre of Aboriginal people at Chimney Pots, Grampians, Vic.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Wisdom 1:13-15, and 2:23-24

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

Mark 5:21-43.

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 1, verses 13-15 & 2:23-24.**

Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud.

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

E.J. Bicknell's introduction to the Wisdom Literature will be a help to teachers, catechists, and those who pray with the Word of God: "All over the world there emerges a philosophy of life that expresses itself in proverbs and riddles and fables. These embody popular reflection upon the meaning and problems of the world. They are devices for handing on the accumulated experience of the past in a form that can be easily remembered and understood."

The text we are given for *Lectio Divina*, is part of the longer text, 1:16-2:24, and announces that the wicked are the ones who invite death. In their view of life and death: "the wicked espouse a practical atheism and attribute human origins to chance. They resolve to persecute the just because their words are heard as a reproach – which they are meant to be. (New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 33:13).

Chapter 2, Verses 23 and 24: Wisdom never says that we are by nature immortal, but rather that we receive immortality as a divine gift. "Death" in this verse means spiritual death.

Take time to ponder on this text from Ezekiel in the days ahead. May we all allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of your heart and bring forth the melody of your response to this text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 29

The response is: I WILL PRAISE YOU LORD FOR YOU HAVE RESCUED ME.

Psalm 29 is a thanksgiving prayer for recovery from sickness. **“I will praise you Lord, for you have rescued me.”**

Lectio: Read the second text, 2 Corinthians 8:7-9 and 13-15.

Second Corinthians records Paul’s response to the result of his earlier writings. He defends his authority to correct them, affirms his love for them, and continues to teach on various subjects. The overall theme of chapters 8-9 is “the importance of sharing our means with others. Verses 13-14 may surprise us: “The Corinthians are not expected to beggar themselves but to share their surplus wealth, however little it may be. Now Jerusalem is in need, one day it could be themselves.” (NJBC 50:35). This is a different interpretation from what we are used to.

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you and prompting you to respond to words, phrases, sentences which call you forth and challenge you. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse: cf. 2 Timothy 1:10

OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST HAS DONE AWAY WITH DEATH
AND BROUGHT US LIFE THROUGH HIS GOSPEL.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text: Mark 5:21-43.

Meditatio: Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response. It is a beautiful story of the way Jesus healed the sick. The sick in Jesus’ time did not have access to the most effective medications, chemotherapy, a pharmacy where one could buy over the counter medication for colds and flu. The woman may have had endometriosis, but it would not have been recognized as such, and the mind boggles as to what may have been tried in order to help her. And now, it was her faith that healed her. All she did was touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. How great was her faith. And then the twelve-year-old girl, loved and raised by her parents for all those years, and now ill and dying. We can imagine the agony they were going through. Jairus begged Jesus to come and lay his hands on the little girl. Having raised the little girl to life, he then brings the story to a very human and beautiful conclusion: “...he told them to give her something to eat.”

Read the Gospel again take quiet time. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth the melody of your response. I share my response 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. My response is to sit quietly with my prayer journal and to recall the wisdom taught to me by my parents, grand-parents and great-grandparents. It is wisdom for life. And in a way it has made me who I am. My grandfather had learnt a line of scripture from his mother: Never let the sun go down on your anger. It was one of the pillars on which his marriage rested. If you were to teach just one tenet of wisdom to a child or grandchild, what would you say? Write it down. Think about the number of times you have said to someone: “Is that wise?” It seems that “some people are wise, and some are otherwise.” (Tobias Smollet, 1748). From Chinese wisdom: “I dreamed a thousand paths. I woke and walked my own.”

From the wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience.”

2. I found it hard to respond to this text. However, I feel called to look both at myself and at those in authority over me, in regard to giving until one drops. This is what causes people to drop and not get up again. There must be a middle course that one steers. There are many reasons that we work until we drop: We must save the day, prove that we are invincible, that we are incapable of illness, that we have more energy than the rest of humankind, that we are better than most people, that we can wear a hundred hats and not get tired. We know these people. They are not giving from their surplus, but rather from the energy they don't have. We watch them crash, and the crash is terrible: a complete break-down, or bodily illness brought on by lack of sleep, lack of healthy food, eating on the run, or too much alcohol to drown anxiety. My father would say: “If the cap fits, wear it.” Am I the person described here? In the past I was just like the person described here. Then I learnt that it is not shameful to take a rest, to let go of some things, to relax on my annual holiday, or to at least make Sunday free of work.
3. Most of us would agree that here in Australia, we are in a privileged position when it comes to healing and wholeness. If we get sick, we can go to our doctor, and be referred on for tests, and then be treated by a specialist or surgeon. Not so in other countries. And we have surely saw our world's share of illness and death during the Covid years. There are followers of Jesus (Christians), and humanitarian heroes such as Doctors Without Borders, working with the ill and the dying, working until they drop. God is love, and these doctors and nurses are surely manifesting love to the victims of war and famine. Let us focus our prayer on those who are serving in this capacity. As people of faith, may we continue to pray for the faith of Jairus and the faith of the woman with the hemorrhage. Perhaps the following prayer by Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr is suitable: “Jesus, press deeply into my soul a seed of trust that, like the birds of the air, I may fly unfettered, a free child in love with life. Write on my heart the truth of your care for me and let me discover that truth written there. Be my partner in the dance of trust so that all my priorities may turn round right. Astonish me with your loving presence.” I would add: Give me the faith and trust of the woman with the hemorrhage, or Jairus, the father who loved his daughter, and went against the crowd, to bring Jesus to her bedside.

*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.*



*“... go in peace and be healed.”
Image ~ Mary Southard csj*