

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 23 June 2024
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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:

24: The Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

23: Parramatta: Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Vincent Long Van Nguyen, 2011

23: New Zealand - Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants.

24: Christchurch - Patronal Feast.

26: Bathurst - Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Michael McKenna, 2009.

27: Maitland-Newcastle, Wilcannia-Forbes - Patronal Feast, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

In the Social Justice Calendar:

No more anniversaries for this month. We start again with July.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Job 38: 1, 8-11.

2 Corinthians 5:14-16

Mark 4:35-41

Lectio: Read the first text from the Book of Job, chapter 38, verses 1 and 8-11.

As always, it is best to read the Word of God slowly. Be aware of the Holy Spirit placing unction on the message of this text. When your heart responds to a word or a line, or a phrase, this is the Holy Spirit touching your heart and calling forth your response.

Meditatio: A little background to the text will help us understand it and make a response.

If you think you have problems, read the book of Job!

The Book of Job is the most “famous attempt in Western literature to grapple with the question of why good people sometimes suffer...Job tries to preserve both the power and the justice of God.” (Gospel Light Publications, 1989). The book concludes that ultimately the reason behind much suffering is known only to God.” (Not much help!)

Job, chapter 1 deals with Job’s disasters, disasters beyond imagining. With the state of our world at present, it would be helpful if God said to suffering: “Come thus far and no farther.” And, if only God would bolt the gate and keep suffering locked up.

Read the text again. Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Remember also: Lectio Divina is a way of life – allow God’s word to travel with you.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 106:23-26, 28-31

The response is: GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, HIS LOVE IS EVERLASTING.

Psalm 106 is about God's inexhaustible love. (quite a change from what poor Job is going through). It is a long psalm of 43 verses.

"What we call redemption comes to us in two stages – one already achieved, but the other not yet, not till the end of our lives. We are a pilgrim church, and we will have to pass through the desert (vs. 4); we are still in some degree bound by chains of sin (vs. 10); and we still have a stormy passage to make (vs. 23). But the first stage of salvation is the guarantee of the second, and we pass through all this confident of God's protection (vv. 33 and following)."

(Grail Psalter, 1973 Edition, pages 189 – 190).

Lectio: Read the Second Mass Reading, from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 5, verses 14-16.

Meditatio: An explanation to help us understand this text.

This short text is loaded with meaning.

Chapter 5:14: the love shown by Christ is the model of authentic existence.

Verse 15: Paul feels that he has no choice but to imitate the selflessness of Christ.

One has died for all. This is a modification of a liturgical formula. It would have been known to the readers.

We judge no one in a fleshly way. Here Paul condemns an assessment of others based on the conventional criteria of a fallen world. The humanity of Christ is the true touchstone (standard, criterion, yardstick).

We once knew Christ in a fleshly way. As a Pharisee Paul had judged Christ falsely because of his uncritical acceptance of current Jewish opinion.

We know Him so no longer. There must be a similar radical shift in the way believers assess other human beings. (Cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary 50:25).

Alternatively, you may opt for the simpler commentary, like the one in the Glenstal Bible Missal: "The apostles first knew Jesus in human fashion, but they had to approach the mystery of Christ just as we have to. He let himself die that we might be saved. To grasp Christ in this sense is to live as new people, no longer centred on self but on the Lord, the Fountain of life."

Make your response to this text during the coming week.

I share mine in *Evangelizatio 2*.

Gospel Verse: Luke 7:16.

A GREAT PROPHET HAS APPEARED AMONG US; GOD HAS VISITED HIS PEOPLE.

Gospel: Mark 4:35-41

From a Commentary on John's Gospel by St. Augustine:

"With the Lord's help I want to speak to you about today's reading from the holy gospel, and to urge you in his name not to let your faith lie dormant in your hearts when you are buffeted by the winds and waves of this world. The Lord Christ's power is by no means dead. Nor is it asleep. Do you think the Almighty was overcome by sleep in the boat against his will? If you

do, then Christ is asleep in your hearts. If he were indeed keeping watch within you, then your faith too would be vigilant. The sleep of Christ has a symbolic meaning. The boat's crew are human souls sailing across the sea of this world in a wooden vessel. When you have to listen to abuse, that means you are being buffeted by the wind; when your anger is roused, you are being tossed by the waves. So, I will curb my anger and restore peace to my heart. Now, all is calm again."

Read this Gospel text again. Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio 3*.

EVANGELIZATIO – this is one's lived response to the texts given us by the Church each Sunday. It is about the evangelization of the "self" and pins me down to be who I am: A Christian who prays with the Word of God and responds to the call of the Word of God in my everyday life.

1. Someone who'd had enough of suffering once said to me: "Don't think that God doesn't test you beyond what you can take, because God does! God tests you beyond what you can cope with." That person had lost her husband, her son and her best friend – all in one year! Then she got cancer. It was then that friends gathered round her and told God: "Enough!" It never ceases to amaze me how our Oblates cope with suffering and turn it into the positive. One man, on learning that he was going to die, wrote a book of his life, for his children. Another wrote a book to help others who might have the same illness as he had. A lady told me today that it is 30 years since her oblation. She has remained faithful to Benedictine life all that time. Elizabeth Barrett Browning expresses suffering and its effects by saying that "frequent tears have run the colours from my life." We all shed tears. It's part of suffering.
2. There must be a radical shift in the way we judge (assess) other human beings. And this takes place because Christ has shown us the way forward, the authentic way of being 'Christian'. We need to be shown the way because Jesus said, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the Kingdom of God before you." Pope Francis has called for church policy to be more inclusive, and his comments often receive backlash. Of course the way forward for everyone who is Christian is a way of inclusion, not exclusion.
3. Do you know someone who is always in a tizz! That person is saying: "Master, do you not care? I am going down!" The Master is asleep with his head on a cushion, in the stern of the boat. Terribly frustrating for the person who is in a tizz. We could be saying the same now. "Master, don't you care? More and more children are without sanitation in Gaza. More missiles are coming their way, and more of the dead are lying on the streets. The hungry and thirsty are climbing over one another to get water and food from the supply trucks which are coming less frequently. "Master, save us! This humanitarian crisis is exhausting. Increase our faith! Thomas Kettle wrote in "Poems and Parodied: "If I live, I mean to spend the rest of my life working for perpetual peace. I have seen war and faced artillery and know what an outrage it is against simple people."

*Lectio Divina is a way of life -
carrying the Word of God within you as you work or take leisure.
It begins with reading the word,
then seeking to understand what you have read,
listening to the Holy Spirit praying within you,
allowing God to lead you into Divine rest,
and responding in action to what you have read and prayed over.*



***"Peace! Be Still!"
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