

LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday 25 August 2024
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, 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:

27: St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine.

28: St. Augustine

29: Beheading of St. John the Baptist.

In the Australian and New Zealand Church:

25: Broken Bay: Anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral, 1991.

30: Geraldton, Anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral, 1988

30: Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Patrick Dougherty, 2010

31: Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. William Brennan, 2013

In the Social Justice Calendar:

25: Social Justice Sunday (Australia).

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:

Joshua 24, 1-2 and 15-18.

Ephesians 5:31-32

John 6:60-69

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Book of Joshua, chapter 24, verses 1-2 and 15-18.

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 Joshua is a history book of the Old Testament. Gospel Light Publications has the perfect introduction to the history books: God brought his nation to a new homeland. And we know that Moses who had led them out of Egypt, didn't lead God's people into their new homeland. Joshua did!

God helped his people to defeat their enemies and chose kings to rule over them. The problem was that sometimes the people remembered God and his laws and sometimes they did not. More often it seems, they did not! The nation divided itself in half. Both halves ended up being carried away by their enemies.

The Glenstal Bible Missal says, "with this conclusion of the Book of Joshua, we are at a turning point in the history of the covenant. The Lord of Sinai presents himself clearly as the God of all the tribes of Israel, who demands of them absolute and exclusive allegiance. The tribes can still return to their

old gods. Those who opt for the God of Israel must serve him by worship, by faithfulness to the law and complete submission.”

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: Psalm 33.

The response is: TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD.

THEY ARE HAPPY WHO SEEK REFUGE IN HIM.

St. John Fisher prayed this verse when he saw the sun behind the scaffold before he went to his death. He and Thomas More were martyrs of the English Reformation.

Lectio: Read the second text from the Letter to the Ephesians chapter 5, 21-32.

Meditatio:

In the Glenstal Bible Missal, we read: “...in Christian Marriage, husband and wife must forget themselves in order to think of each other and this love introduces them into the heart of the mystery of God.” This reading is found in the section deemed “the responsibility of those united in Christ.”

Take time to respond to the text over this week. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Acclamation is from John 6:63, 68

YOUR WORDS, LORD, ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE.

YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE. ALLELUIA.

Lectio: Read the Gospel from John 6:60-69.

The commentary is by Cyril of Alexandria:

“‘To whom shall we go?’ Peter asks. In other words, who else will instruct us the way you do or to whom shall we go to find anything better? You have the words of eternal life; not hard words, as those other disciples say, but words that will bring us to the loftiest goal, unceasing, endless life removed. These words surely make quite obvious to us the necessity of sitting at the feet of Christ, taking him as our one and only teacher, and giving him our constant and undivided attention. He must be our guide who knows well how to lead us to everlasting life removed from all corruption.”

Take time every day for *Lectio Divina*: a line or word, or more. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

***Evangelizatio* is my LIVED RESPONSE to the sacred scriptures given to me each week by the Church for my formation as a Christian. If I don't respond, they are merely texts on a page. When I do respond, they are my life.**

1. I can hear God saying: Make up your minds. Are you in or out? Are you with me or against me? Before Sr. Elizabeth entered our community, she was taken as a university student, with others, to Subiaco, the Benedictine Monastery at Rydalmere, near Parramatta. Their guide was Fr. McCrystal. He said something one day that she has never forgotten: “Those

nuns in there. All they have is their faith.” She quoted it and quoted it. And she put it in her memoirs for all to read. Fr. Michael Casey says, in his book “Grace on the Journey to God” that faith is richly layered. He says there are five moments to be distinguished in the act of faith: (i) an experience with a more or less strong affective component; (ii) an illumination of the mind of more or less clarity - this was the topic of Pope Francis’s encyclical *Lumen fidei*; (iii) an assent of the will of more or less potency; (iv) a translation of this assent into daily practice of more or less consistency and (v) a life-long perseverance in belief, trust and practice. It is this last moment that we need to take on board. Faith is a life-long perseverance in belief, trust and practice.

2. My response to this text is to accept that it is mystery that is being presented to us. None of us feel comfortable with mystery and yet, the author of Ephesians says that the mystery being presented “has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.” Fr. Keating says: “the liturgy expresses the whole of the mystery of Christ in a single Eucharist. The present moment as an encounter with Christ is celebrated in a special way in each Eucharist.”
3. I am responding to this text as one who has complained from time to time about anything and everything. God has given me everything and yet I am a complainer. I have been given all, and yet I complain. It comes easily to me. I must stop. I am placing this expectation on myself – the expectation to stop. Stop complaining and thank God for his gifts, for life the glory of creation, the bread of the Eucharist the laughter of children, my beautiful goldfish, my dog, the wildlife on our property.

*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.*

