

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.**  
**Sunday 8 September 2024**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Three**

**Note from Sr Hildegard:**

For a while now, I've been thinking of changing the format for the weekly Lectio Divina. Many have said there is too much to take in, and my disabilities are more manifest at this stage of life, especially my sight. So, I will give you the whole of the Liturgy of the Word, the Social Justice events of each week, and the Gospel.

Before beginning prayer with the Sacred Texts, let us take a look at the week ahead in the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

**In the Australian and New Zealand Church:**

08: Australia: Safeguarding Sunday

New Zealand: Social Justice Week.

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

05: International Day of Charity

08: International Literacy Day

**LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS**

**The readings are:**

Isaiah 35:4-7

Psalms 145: 7-10. The response is: Praise the Lord my soul.

James 2:1-5.

Gospel Verse: Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick.

Mark 7:31-37.

**The Gospel of the Day**

**Lectio:** Read the Gospel text from Mark 7: 31-37.

Pause and ponder.

**Meditatio:** Some helpful background in order to understand the text and make our response.

Let us listen to some of the sermon preached for this Sunday by Lawrence of Brindisi:

“Just as the Divine Law says that God created the world. Then, he saw all that he had made and found it very good, so the Gospel, speaking of our redemption and re-creation, affirms: *He has done all things well. A good tree bears good fruit; no good tree can bear bad fruit.* As fire can give out nothing but heat and is incapable of giving out cold; and as the sun gives out nothing but light and is capable of giving out darkness, so God is incapable of doing anything but good for he is infinite goodness and light. He is a sun giving out endless light, a fire producing endless warmth. He has done all things well.

Stand back from this text. Later, read it again. Go to your “quiet” place. 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 No. 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. My response to this Gospel is firstly to sit outside in the sun with its healing benefits. I want to take in its warmth. I will later read John chapter 1, and ponder on Christ, the Light of the world. And thirdly I will remember that beautiful verse we sing in *The Servant Song*: "I will hold the Christ-light for you, in the night-time of your fear".

Many of my friends are gripped with fear. I will hold the Christ-light for them and help them on their journey. Sr. Mechtild, on her recent sabbatical, told me of a Jamberoo Oblate in Seattle who has a large family. Two of her children, a boy and a girl are different from the others. I didn't ask why, but I was rather bowled over by the fact that this beautiful mother cooks a meal for them every night and leaves it in the kitchen for them. They come whenever they can and have that meal. This is what it means to hold the Christ-Light for others. I remember that I said it to Sr. Elizabeth in 2006, when Mother Benedicta died. I tried to hold that Light as much as I could.

**For those who want to know a little more about Lawrence of Brindisi:**

He was born in Brindisi and educated in Venice. In 1575 he entered the Capuchins and was sent Padua to study philosophy and theology. He had a prodigious memory and was said to know the Scriptures by heart. This enabled him to convert many Jews. Raised to a high degree of contemplation himself, he evangelized much of Europe, speaking to the hearts of those who heard him. As chaplain to the imperial troops, he led them into battle and to victory against the Turks on two occasions armed only with a crucifix.

I love the story of Lawrence Brindisi going into battle armed only with a crucifix. My dear grandmother sprinkled every room in her house with Holy Water, every night, to keep away evil. It is still done in monasteries, where every person is sprinkled every night for protection against evil. Evil is alive and well more than ever. We only have to turn on the news to see it!

*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.*

