***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, September 27th 2015
26th 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:
September 29: Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels. (Feast)
October 1: St. Therese of Lisieux (Memorial). It is most likely a Feast in Carmelite communities and is a Feast in our community. St. Therese of Lisieux is a Doctor of the Church.
October 2: The Holy Guardian Angels (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:
No anniversaries this week

The Social Justice Calendar:
September 27**:** Social Justice Sunday.
September 27: On this day in 1988, Burma's National League for Democracy was formed by Aung San Suu Kyi.
September 28: On this day in 1983, Australians were informed of the death of John Pat in Roebourne Prison, Western Australia. This death prompted the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in custody.
September 30: On this day in 1975 Australia's Racial Discrimination Act was proclaimed.
October 1: International Day for Older Persons.
October 1: On this day in 2005, the world witnessed the Second Bali bombing which killed 20 people and injured 100 people.
October 2: International Day of Non-Violence. On this day in 1869, Mahatma Ghandi was born.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Numbers 11:25-29
James 5:1-6
Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48.

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading from the Book of Numbers, ch. 11, verses 25-29.**
Read it in a reverent way. The Word of God is sacred. Let us give ourselves to the Sacred Text, and open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit calling us forth to respond. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you read. This is the true "oratio" (prayer) of *Lectio Divina*.

***Meditatio*: Some informed background so that we can honour the text in its original meaning.**

In this text, we have the divine compared with the human. The divine is manifested by the cloud which is usually the sign of God's Presence in the Scriptures. The cloud with its Divine Moisture enfolds Moses and later enfolds the 70 elders. Then Eldad and Medad who were in the camp (those who hadn't gone to the Tent of Meeting) are empowered by the cloud of Divine Moisture to prophesy, which simply means to speak on behalf of God or of the things of God or in praise of God. This divine encounter is then confronted by the ugliness of human jealousy. Moses puts a stop to it and not in a way that would have pleased them: "If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets, and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!"

Now take time apart with this reading. GO INTO YOUR TENT OF MEETING AND EXPERIENCE THE CLOUD OF DIVINE MOISTURE.
After pondering over many hours (days), you will want to make your response.
I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 18**
The response is: THE PRECEPTS OF THE LORD GIVE JOY TO THE HEART.
Psalm 18 is a psalm of praise of God as Creator and law-giver. We are given verses from the second part of the Psalm on the "law" of God. The "law" of God is best understood as the "Word" of God.

Certain lines of the Psalm will speak to your spirit. Pray with them throughout this week.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Reading from the Letter of James, ch. 5, verses 1-6.**
PAUSE
Read it again. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most authentic melody of your response…

***Meditatio*: Understanding the text in order to make an informed response to it.**
This text is straight-forward, as is the whole Letter of James. It is about the condemnation of wealth, injustice and greed.
Nothing could be more relevant to this reading (addressed to each one of us), than the Encyclical Letter "Laudate Si", "Praise be to you, my Lord", by Pope Francis. In paragraph 2, the Pope nails the problem: "This sister [the earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as the lords and masters entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor…" I believe that this is the wealth James is addressing: wealth gained by destruction of the earth, injustice towards the poor, no thought for the future of humanity, greed and waste.

Take time over the text before making your response to it in the days ahead.
I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is adapted from John 17:17.
YOUR WORD O LORD IS TRUTH: MAKE US HOLY IN THE TRUTH

Lectio: **Read the Gospel text from Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48.**
Pause and ponder. Read the text again.

Meditatio: **Some informed background to the text.**
The real message of this text is about those who are authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. Authentic disciples are those who rid their lives of all forms of sin. The cutting off of limbs is not to be interpreted literally. Cut off the sin, not the hand that commits the sin. The beginning of the text has a familiar tone: the "jealousy", or at least the "indignant response" of John when he witnesses another man casting out devils in the name of Jesus. Jesus, like Moses, responds to John and the disciples, reassuring them that "no one who works a miracle in my name is likely to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us." The real issue is sin. And perhaps implied in this text is the sin of scandal, scandal which brings down the little ones who have faith. Our Church is trying to confront such scandal at present, as are all Religious Institutions.

Stand back from the Gospel and ponder. Visit a quiet corner of a church which is open for prayer. Hear the words: BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. 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. My response is to address "jealousy" as the reality which can destroy my life, the life of my community, the life of a parish or the life of the Church. Jealousy is envy, resentment, suspicion, and distrust. Jealousy in my heart will keep me like a slave chained to a post, resenting the gifts of others instead of understanding that there is room for all. Jealousy in a religious community sometimes means that the older members will keep the young at a safe distance, not allowing them to use their gifts in case they might be better than the older members. Jealousy in a parish may be manifest towards gifted lectors, gifted musicians, gifted altar servers. Jealousy in the wider Church will go as far as making sure a gifted priest is not made a bishop and worse. Jealousy knows no bounds. We are well aware of what it does between siblings, especially where one child is praised more than another. If there is a smidgen of jealousy in my heart I want rid of it. At the moment, another sister and I are sharing the service of accompanying the Liturgy of the Hours on the Church Organ. The other sister is a gifted organist, and I am encouraging her to play more. She is much younger than I am. I believe this is the life-giving way. I remember a terrible episode once in a parish where I worked. A woman who was gifted in intercessory prayer was deviously kept away from the Prayer Meeting. She was given the wrong address as to where the meeting was being held because the person who was jealous of her didn't want here there. How far will jealousy take us? Will we be the creators of suspicious gossip or scandal mongering just to get rid of someone who is more gifted than we are? Will a child cause another child to have an accident so that the other

child cannot compete in the swimming carnival, or surfing carnival? Yes, jealousy is everywhere. May it not be in my heart.

2. Like me, we are all probably frustrated with waste. Recently I went to purchase some rechargeable batteries for my solar-powered garden lights. The shop assistant was difficult, said they didn't have those batteries and they weren't likely to be getting them in (they were two years out of date) then added that I could buy a new set of lights for $20.00. I said I didn't want new lights because the ones I had were made of metal and would last another few years. Still, she wouldn't help me with batteries so I left without batteries or lights, resolving not to throw out a dozen lights, adding to the destruction of the earth through landfill. My brother, who works in hardware, was able to put me on to the right place for the batteries. So I went elsewhere and purchased the batteries. I try to make life-giving decisions for the sake of our sister, the earth.

3. My response to this text is to ask myself how do I sin with my hands or feet, or eyes, ears, tongue? James has a lot to say about sins of the tongue, noting that we praise God with the tongue and we curse others with the same tongue. I sin with my eyes when I not only notice the failings of others but dwell on them in my heart. I sin with my ears when I listen to gossip, especially malicious gossip. And now, my hands. Do I sin with my hands when I go into shops, pick up things I don't need, and put them in my basket? More stuff! Satisfying my greed. Do I sin with my hands when I throw away things just because I can't deal with them? Waste! More landfill. And where do my feet take me? Do I seek out someone whom I know will listen to my negativity about others? Do I walk away from someone in need? I have a choice in all of this. I can choose life or I can choose death.

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,
praying in tune with the Holy Spirit within me,
resting in God,
and responding in the way I live.