**LECTIO DIVINA**
**HOLY READING – PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.**

**Sunday, April 5th, 2015, is Easter Sunday, or the Sunday of the Resurrection.**

**The readings are:**
**Acts of the Apostles chapter 10, verses 34, and 37-43.**
**Colossians 3:1-4, or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8**
**John 20:1-9, or Matthew 28:1-10, or Luke 24:13-35.**

**For the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, every day of the Easter Octave is a Solemnity, and takes the Hours of each day.**

**In the Liturgy this week:**
**Nothing takes the place of the Octave of Easter.**

**In the Australian Church:**
**April 7:** Melbourne – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. Francis Little, 2008.

**The Social Justice Calendar:**
**April 6:** International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.
**April 7:** Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Rwandan Genocide

***Lectio:*** Read the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles chapter 10, verses 34, and 37-43. Read slowly and prayerfully, really listening to the text as you read aloud. This is about my on-going conversion.

***Meditatio*: Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it, and make our response to it.** In the Acts of the Apostles, from chapters 8 to 12, the Gospel is preached in Judea and Samaria. The Acts of the Apostles, which most scholars agree was written by Luke, highlights the Missionary activity of Peter and Paul. Here in this text, Peter, a first-hand witness of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, is proclaiming the Paschal Mystery to Cornelius and his household. A household such as that of Cornelius comprised everyone down to the last servant or stable boy. Cornelius was a Centurion in the Italian Regiment of the Roman Army and the first Gentile convert. He is remembered as the most famous Centurion in Biblical History. Peter narrates his conversion a second time in Acts 11:1-18. The event, Paul Gardiner notes, "played a large role in the transformation of early Christianity from an exclusively Jewish sect to a multi-ethnic religion." The key line of the text is: "…all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name."

This is the message for all of us down through the ages of time.

Take time to ponder on this text in the days ahead as you go about your work, rest, recreation. 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* No. 1.

**Read the Responsorial Psalm. The response is: THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD.**
Psalm 117 is a Processional Song of Praise. The most relevant Easter "statement" is in block 3: The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone." Hence the choice of this Psalm for Easter Sunday.

Pray with the Psalm in the week ahead and note lines and phrases which touch your inner spirit.

**Lectio: Read the second text from 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.**

**Meditatio:** Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.

This text speaks through its own simplicity. The new self is to replace the old self. Or, the Feast of Easter is to be celebrated with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The old yeast of evil and wickedness is to be replaced by the new Bread of sincerity and truth. May we be aware of this as we receive the Eucharist this Easter.

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. What words, what phrases, what sentences are to change your life? I share my response in Evangelizatio 2.

**Lectio: The Gospel Verse:** The text is taken from 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. CHRIST HAS BECOME OUR PASCHAL SACRIFICE; LET US FEAST WITH JOY IN THE LORD.

**Lectio: Read the Gospel text from John 20:1-9.** Read it slowly and reflectively, and maybe a second time. Try to read aloud rather than with the mind. Listen to the text as you read.

**Meditatio: What is it about?**
This is the first account of the Resurrection. Mary of Magdala is the first to see that the tomb is empty. Her distress is tangible: “They have taken away the Lord and we do not know where they have put him.” She

cannot bear this. She runs to tell the Apostles, and Peter and John set out for the tomb and see for themselves that Mary has told them the truth.
The entire unit is John 20:1-29: Jesus is raised. It is worth reading the entire unit.
John 20:1-10 is about the empty tomb.
Mary of Magdala had stood at the foot of the Cross.
She is first named in a list of women who come to the tomb (Mark 16:1, Luke 24:10 and Matthew 28:1).
Peter is the spokesman for the apostles.
John is the beloved disciple.
An important verse is the fact that John delays going into the tomb, but believes. This affirmation of FAITH is a climax of the visit. On the contrary, Peter, gets there and rushes in.
And then John goes in, sees the situation and believes. This is only an addition for the readers. His deep faith and intuition did not need this proof. (Cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary 61:229).

**Read this Gospel text a number of times, and as you read, listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth melody of your response.**
I share my response in Evangelizatio No. 3

**EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church exhorts me to pray. 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. The Word of God is life-changing for me, when I respond to it in a practical way.**

1. My response is to share something that Fr. Thomas Keating says of Easter. In itself it is a proclamation: "Easter is the awakening of the Divine Life in us. "Christ is risen" is not merely the cry of historical witnesses [the first being the Apostles]. It is the cry of all the people of God throughout the centuries who have realized Christ rising in them, not only in the form of emotional enthusiasm, but in the form of unshakable conviction. The light of Christ reveals the fact of our abiding union with him and its potential to transform every aspect of our lives." This for me, sums up how Cornelius and his household must have felt when Peter proclaimed the Paschal Mystery and their hearts were changed forever.
2. I am challenged by the call to "sincerity and truth". Sr. Joan Chittister speaks strongly of "what we

are at the core of us…truth, goodness, beauty are the most valuable things in life." And she refers to the words we all know so well, words penned by St. John of the Cross: "In the evening of our lives, we will be judged on love." Love is truth and love is sincerity. I will read Matthew 25 once again, and ponder on the call to love, which is surely the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

3. I am responding to the mystery of "faith", John's faith, Mary Magdalen's faith, Peter's faith. Sr. Joan Chittister, in her book, "Illuminated Life" has a chapter on "faith". She comments that "faith is confidence in a God we cannot see but know without doubt exists – if for no other reason than that we feel the power of life within us…" Somehow, the Sunday of the Resurrection always leads me to feel the power of life within me, the Divine Life and its effect on every aspect of my being. I thank God for this. Pope Francis calls it "returning to our first love, in order to receive the fire which Jesus has kindled in the world and to bring that fire to all people, to the very ends of the earth." Finally he adds: "Let us be on our way!" On our way

to our first love, to the Divine Fire which Jesus kindled in our world. It was the same fire that burned in the heart of Mary Magdalen, Peter and John on Easter Sunday morning. Some things don't change!

**LECTIO DIVINA IS ABOUT READING THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, REFLECTING ON THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, FROM AN INFORMED BACKGROUND. IT IS ALLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PLAY ON THE FIBRES OF MY HEART, LIKE A HARPIST, AND BRING FORTH THE BEAUTY OF MY RESPONSE. IN RESPONDING TO THE TEXT, MY LIFE IS CHANGED MORE AND MORE INTO CHRIST.**