***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 26 June, 2016
13th Sunday in ordinary Time, Year C.
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 Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:
June 29: Sts. Peter and Paul (Solemnity)

In the Australian Church:
June 26: Bathurst – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Michael McKenna (2009)
June 27: Maitland/Newcastle and Wilcannia/Forbes – Patronal Feast. (Our Lady of Perpetual Help).
June 29: Bathurst – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1865).

In the Social Justice Calendar:
June 26: International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.
International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
July 1: On this day in 2012 – Commencement of the Fair Work Amendment Act (2011), ensuring Fair Pay and conditions for outworkers in the garment Industry.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
1 Kings 19:16 and 19-21
Galatians 5:1, and 13-18
Luke 9:51-62.

Lectio: **Read the first reading from 1 Kings 19:16 and 19-21.**
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.**
The whole of chapter 19:1-21 portrays an Elijah (the prophet) running away from danger. To Elijah's desire to resign his mission because of Israel's infidelity, the Lord responds by naming his successor – Elisha. The investiture of Elisha recalls the "call/investiture' of Elijah. The words "passes by" are used again. As Elijah returns to society, Elisha will abandon his family and work, in order to follow Elijah. And so, "Elijah himself begins to function as a goal of pilgrimage, a locus of holy power to which Elisha is drawn…" (New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 10:33)

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* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 15
The response is: YOU ARE MY INHERITANCE O LORD.
Psalm 15 is a Psalm of Confidence – true happiness occurs when we look to God rather than to the gods we make for ourselves.

Pray long with this Psalm and listen to the Holy Spirit pouring unction on certain words and phrases.

Lectio: **Read the second text from Galatians 5:1 and 13-18.**

Meditatio: **Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.**
It is Jesus Christ who has set us free. It is Jesus Christ who wants us to remain that way and refrain from submission to the yoke of slavery. Paul opens out the meaning of Christian liberty – it is about serving "one another…in works of love." He then uses the **One** New Testament commandment to support his teaching: Love. "Love your neighbor as yourself." He addresses the kind of attitude which destroys love.
Finally he explains life lived under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: what this means for us, and what opposes it.
The last line of the text, verse 18, means that "under the indwelling Spirit, the Christian has an "interior principle" to counteract the "flesh" and is no longer merely confronted with the extrinsic norm of the law. It is about the heart. If the heart is not in union with the Holy Spirit, if the interior life is not given to God then the Christian will remain a kind of robot dictated to by do's and don't's.
For Paul (and for us), it is about "relationship with God". (cf. NJBC 47:30).

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.

The Gospel Verse is taken from 1 Samuel 3:9 and John 6:68.
SPEAK O LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING, YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

Lectio: **Read the Gospel text from Luke 9:51-62.**
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?**
The text begins with Luke's Gospel "purpose" – all roads lead to Jerusalem. Here, Jesus "resolutely took the road for Jerusalem…"
Then there is a reference to the age-old Samaritan/Jewish conflict.
The resolution of the incident is the important thing. The disciples James and John wanted to destroy those Samaritans who wouldn't offer hospitality. Jesus "rebuked" them. Was Jesus also frustrated that they still didn't understand the love which he embodied?

They moved on to another village and it is here that a man exclaims that he wants to follow the Lord.
Jesus replies with a mighty challenge – does the man know what this implies?
Then another wants to follow him.
Then another.
The answers Jesus gives are instructions about the cost of discipleship.
What we must not do is interpret them literally.
Jesus uses "hyperbole" or "exaggeration" to jolt listeners out of their staid way of ordering their universe and to view existence from an entirely new angle – that of discipleship in response to the kingdom of God preached by Jesus. To literalize these proverbs is to strip them of their power.
The first one highligths the lowliness of Jesus.
The last challenges expectations of who would be fit to receive the reign of God into their lives. The "plough" referred to, is light – it needs dexterity and concentrated attention. If the ploughman looks back the new furrow becomes crooked. There does not seem to be agreement among scholars as to what Jesus meant by "leave the dead to bury their dead…", except that it is another very radical challenge about what it means to follow Jesus – even the things most dear to us may have to be sacrificed. (cf. NJBC 43:121).

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 the melody of your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 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 to this text is by way of comparison. There are wisdom figures, role models, "goals of pilgrimage" in my own monastic community and in society at large. These are sisters, grand-parents, great grand-parents – those who have travelled a journey of fidelity in good times and in bad, and who are now looking at those who will continue the work they began. As they share with us their wisdom, experience, fidelity, we can only be enriched by their presence – provided that we are humble enough to sit at their feet and listen like disciples.

2. My response to this text is to the two words in the commentary: interior principle. I understand this as governing all of life. If I am driving the car and the speed limit in the local village is 50, I drive at 50, not just because it is the law, but out of reverence for other drivers and pedestrians. When the "interior principle" is strong and firmly established, my life is then governed by loving service, care, reverence, awareness of others and so on.

3. There are many ways of responding to this text. One friend, a practicing Christian, whose vocation is marriage, shared with me that on the day of her son's wedding, her father was also at the point of death. She had to choose in accordance with her vocation as wife and mother, and be there for her son.

My own father, when a Lay Missionary with the Pallottine Priests in Western Australia, had to choose between visiting his mother (in Brisbane) in her last weeks, or attending her funeral. He could only afford one airfare. He chose to visit his mother while she was still alive in "Mt. Olivet" (now St. Vincent's in Brisbane). His brother and my own siblings took care of the funeral. A Bishop friend of mine shared that he couldn't be at his brother's death bed because of his commitments in his diocese. So, whatever vocation we embrace within Christianity: married, single, priest or religious, there will always be choices that must be made for Christ, and these choices will cost!

Lectio Divina is about reading the Sacred Scriptures
and
reflecting on them 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.