***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 10 July, 2016
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Three.

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:
July 11: St. Benedict (Memorial). Solemnity in Benedictine Communities.
July 15: St. Bonaventure

In the Australian Church:
July 10: Adelaide – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Philip Wilson, 1996.
July 10: Toowoomba – Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Robert McGuckin, 2012.
July 12: Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Peter Ingham, 1993.

In the Social Justice Calendar:
July 10: On this day in 1985 – sinking of Greenpeace ship "Rainbow Warrior" in Auckland.
July 11: World Population Day
July 12: 1971- Aboriginal Flag first flown in Adelaide.
July 14: 1995 – Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag proclaimed official flags in Australia.
July 16: 1945 – first atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Deuteronomy 30:10-14
Colossians 1:15-20
Luke 10:25-37

***Lectio*: Read the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy, Ch. 30, v's 10-14.**
Read it aloud. Read it slowly. Be aware of the Holy Spirit placing unction on the message of this text. When your heart responds to a word or a line, or a phrase, this is the Holy Spirit touching your heart and calling forth your response.

***Meditatio*: A little background to the text will help us understand it and make a response to it.**
This is a key text for all of us who live Lectio Divina. The Word of God is near to you. It is in your mouth, in your heart and in your hands to do it. (This is the Septuagint translation). The one we hear this Sunday will read: "…the Word is very near to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance." For the Hebrew people of the Old Testament, the word was literally the commandments (law) of God, given to the people by Moses. It was their way of "returning" to the Lord

with all their hearts and souls. For Christians of the New Testament, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. This is our Incarnate God, embodied in his Son, Jesus the Christ. And we are exhorted this year to remember that Jesus is "merciful like the Father." The message of the Gospels is love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, kindness, consideration, reverence, joy and much more. The New Testament texts are given to us each Sunday for our "formation" as Christians. These texts are not information, but "formation". In order to undergo this formation we need humility, because we will be called to admit that sometimes we are wrong, or we stray from the guidance of Jesus. Love is the Word of Jesus. Love is the Law of God. Love is his Way, as the hymn we sometimes sing reminds us. So this way of life, - Lectio Divina - is all about hearing, speaking, thinking and doing the Word as it comes to us in the Sacred Scriptures which we hear each Sunday.

After much pondering, take time to respond to the text. You may want to ponder for a day or more, as you work, walk, garden…sit and watch the ocean, the lake, the river. Just take time. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

The Responsorial Psalm: PSALM 18
The response is: THE PRECEPTS OF THE LORD GIVE JOY TO THE HEART.
"Precepts" and "joy" are the key words in this response. Psalm 18 is a psalm of praise for God as Creator and as Law-giver (giver of the Word that calls us to life).

Pray with the Psalm throughout the week, marking the words, phrases or lines which speak to you and call forth prayer from your heart.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Mass Reading: Colossians 1:15-20.**

***Meditatio*: A little background to help us understand the text and make our response to it.**
This text is simple in its two sections. It is about the centrality of Jesus Christ both in the universe, and in the human heart.
Christ was there with the Father at the beginning of creation. Christ is the end of all creation as all creation is drawn to him as Lord. Christ is the Redeemer of humankind, and his death on Calvary, which drew "all" to him, reconciled "all" to God: "God wanted all perfection (completeness or fullness) to be found in him, and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the Cross."

With this background, read the text again, and then ponder as you work or take time for leisure. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is from John 6:63 & 68.
YOUR WORDS LORD, ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE. YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF EVERLASTING LIFE.
(It is helpful with this text to read some or all of chapter 6, from which this short text is taken) This text is another foundational text for those of us who undertake Lectio Divina as a way of life.

***Lectio*: Now read the Gospel text from Luke 10:25-37.**

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
While this is the story of the Good Samaritan, it holds another "punch line", and one which Pope Francis is exhorting us to this year (2016). The Jews in this story already knew the Law: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." This was the answer given to Jesus by a man (a lawyer) who asked Jesus, as a means of provoking him, "Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus told him to obey that commandment and life would be his. But the man continued to provoke him, asking "And who is neighbour?" Then comes the story of the Good Samaritan. It would have been horrific for the ears of the lawyer and for other Jews present, because Samaritans were not liked or treated kindly by Jews. (There were historical reasons for this, and these can be found in any Biblical Commentary). However, the man enters into the story, and at the end, he answers the question Jesus puts to him: "The one who took pity on him." And then the lawyer and in turn, each one of us who hear this story, is told to "Go and do the same yourself." Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 3.

EVANGELIZATIO – this is one's lived response to the texts given us by the Church each Sunday. It is about the evangelization of the "self", and pins me down to be who I am: A Christian who prays with the Word of God, and responds to the call of the Word of God in my everday life.

1. My response is to the "nearness" of the Word of God. I am also responding to the nearness of the Word Incarnate, Jesus my Lord. St. Therese of Lisieux wrote an everlasting message on my heart, when she wrote: "To live by love is holding you within me, Incarnate Word." St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote, "I knew the Word was present by the movement of my heart." A Carthusian Monk shares: "In prayer I prostrate before the Truth of God, I welcome the Word with humility into my heart, I let my spirit be shaped by it and remade in its image." (The Wound of Love, A Carthusian Miscellany, page 95 – Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1994). And so, this week, I will prostrate myself before the Word Incarnate, opening my heart to my Lord, and seeking his guidance for each day's journey.

2. In response to this text of St. Paul's I will spend extra time this week, kneeling before the cross or sitting quietly in our monastic church, where the cross holds the figure of the Lord – crucified, risen and ascending to God. We also have the traditional crucifix from our church in West Pennant Hills, and it hangs in our cloister. We walk towards it every time we walk towards our church. We can never tire of spending time before the cross of Jesus, and proclaiming in faith that he is the beginning and the end of our lives.

3. The first time I ever heard this story opened out was in primary school, where a nun appealed to us for harmony not just in our class but in the playground. There was a lot of fighting, name-calling, and public humiliation: one child to another, and a group of children to a single child. (Today we call it bullying). Then I used it again when I was teaching in a Catholic Boarding School: again

the same problems existed. A former Headmaster of Downside School in England told me he had the same problems with boys from East Sussex and West Sussex. They were at war! He used the story of the Good Samaritan to try and exhort them to peace. Pope Francis says in "Misericordiae Vultus", that the Lord asks us "not to judge and not to condemn…" (page 22). Such judgment and condemnation destroys families, communities, schools, nations.

Lectio Divina is prayer with the Sacred Scriptures.
We read,
we seek to understand with the help of a commentary,
we ponder,
we take time for stillness
and we respond.
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.
Take the Mother of God as your model.