LECTIO DIVINA: Holy Reading

Sunday, April 19th, 2015, is the Third Sunday of Easter, Year B.

The readings are:
Acts of the Apostles 3:13-15 and 17-19
1 John 2:1-5
Luke 24:35-48.

For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week 3.

In the Liturgy:

April 25: ANZAC DAY. Centenary of Gallipoli. The Mass for Anzac day has its own prayers, and carries a Solemn Blessing.

The Social Justice Calendar:

April 22: International Mother Earth Day.
April 23: World Book and Copyright Day.

In the Australian Church:

April 21: Wollongong – Anniversary of the death of Bishop William Murray, 2013.
April 23: Port Pirie – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Peter de Campo, 1998.

***Lectio*: Read the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 3, verses 13-15 and 17-19. 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 text is part of Peter's Temple Sermon, which spans 3:12-26. We are informed by Richard Dillon, in his commentary, that "the Pentecost and Temple sermons are continuous and complementary, A clue to their relationship is the connection between the arguments from Scripture that frame their combined contents: the Joel prophecy beginning the first and the Deuteronomic promise of Deuteronomy 18:15-16 concluding the second. The combined statement of these two Scriptures forms a Christological framework around the two sermons, declaring that the Good News preached by the apostles…is the voice of the Risen Christ…heard" because Jesus Christ is the awaited successor of Moses. The goal of the discourse is the call to repentance. And the familiar comparison between God's actions and the people's actions towards

Christ is present. (cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary 44:30) The same background can be found in other commentaries.

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* No. 1.

The responsorial Psalm: LORD, LET YOUR FACE SHINE ON US.
Psalm 4:2, 4, 7, 9.
Psalm 4 is a Night Prayer. Verse 9 is the verse that speaks of a peaceful night. Verses 2 and 4 are about asking God for help, and receiving help. Verse 7 is a powerful question we must all ask, if it is true that "we are born with God pulsing through our veins." "What can bring us happiness?" Only the light of the face of God. This Psalm is used for Night Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours, and also on Holy Saturday, to depict the sleep of Christ in the tomb.

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: 1 John 2:1-5.

***Meditatio*:** the first couple of verses of this text, 1 & 2, are thought to have been part of an initiation ceremony into the Community. The ceremony included public confession of one's sins.
Verses 3-11, of which we only have 3-5, are focused on keeping God's commandments. We are informed that "this section emphasizes the biblical view that to know God is to keep God's commandments. In the Gospel, "knowing God" separated those who believed in Jesus, from the hostile world of darkness (John 1:10-13 and 14:7). Verse 4 rephrases John chapter 1, verses 6 and 8. (We need to go back to John's Gospel and read all these texts).
Finally the connection between love, keeping the commandments, and the indwelling of God appears in John 14:23-24.
There is a lot of "Lectio Divina" here.

With this background, from the New Jerome Bib. Comm., 62:17&18, read the text again, and then ponder as you work or take time for leisure. Make your response in the days ahead. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2

The Gospel Verse is from Luke 24:32. LORD JESUS, MAKE YOUR WORD PLAIN TO US: MAKE OUR HEARTS BURN WITH LOVE WHEN YOU SPEAK.

***Lectio*:** The Gospel is Luke 24:35-48.

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
This is an uncomplicated story. The disciples are telling their story of how they met the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus, how their hearts BURNED within them as they listened to Him speak, how they recognized Him in the Breaking of the Bread. And now, as they recount their story, He is there, standing among them. And his message is a simple one: PEACE.
Let us never forget this: THE MESSAGE OF THE RISEN LORD IS PEACE.

Stand back from the Gospel, having read it a number of times. Ponder over it, and be still. When you feel called to do so, make your response to the text. I share mine in Evangelizatio No. 3.

EVANGELIZTIO. Evangelizatio is about the evangelization of the "self". It is that part of Lectio Divina where we make our lived response to the text. First of all, we

pray with the text, take time to ponder and understand the text, be still with the text and listen to the response we are being called to make.

1. I am responding to the words: "Repent and turn to God." I was used to this call in Lent. Now it is Eastertide and here it is again: Repent and turn to God. I find the word "turn" particularly powerful. It involves turning from one direction and looking in another direction. I turn from God so easily and so subtly. And I am being called here to repent from that stance and turn around and face God. It is hard to look someone in the eye and tell a lie. It is hard to look at God and be other than truthful about the way one lives. I pray for the grace to look at God honestly and in so doing, to turn away from all that does not speak of God or the things of God. Sr. Joan Chittister writes in her book "Our Holy Yearnings" that "we are born with God pulsing through our veins. The rest of life is simply the process of coming to realize that nothing else we make God will ever be able to be God for us."
2. Unfortunately, there is no way to make this text an easy task. The message is brutal: "Anyone who

says, ‘I know God’, and does not keep the commandments of God, is a liar.” The greatest commandment of God is the commandment to love as God has loved us, giving His very life for us by sending His Son Jesus to die for us. I had a most moving experience recently, when I spoke with a guest who came to the Abbey for a Ceremonial scattering of Ashes, and Prayer. He told me that he had been recently converted to Christianity, and shared his journey. Then he began to cry as he shared what the death of Jesus meant to him. I’ve never had anyone cry before, when sharing about the death of Jesus and what it means. It was a grace for me to experience this, and to return once more to the “eternal newness” of Calvary.

3. I am responding to the message of the Risen Lord. If the message of the Risen Lord is “Peace”, then why am I stressed, easily upset, all in pieces. In her book, “Day by Day”, Sr. Stan of Dublin reminds us that “stillness gives you serenity and choice.” Serenity is peace. If we are peaceful, we are able to make wise choices, rather than reacting in a whirlwind of stress and destruction. Destruction and

aggression and brokenness is all around us. And yet, we who are followers of Christ, know that the message of the Risen Lord is PEACE. Then, it is up to me, and to each one of us to light the lamp of Peace and to keep it burning. In order to do so, we must remain close to the Divine Flame. Our Light will waver, as we are buffetted and knocked around. Staying close to the Divine Flame will keep our hearts in a place of Peace. PEACE IS THE MESSAGE OF THE RISEN LORD.

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.