***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, August 16th 2015
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Four.

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:
August 20: St. Bernard (Memorial)
August 21: St. Pius X. (Memorial)
August 22: The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:
August 16: Lismore celebrates the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral – 1919.
August 20: Darwin celebrates the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral - 1972
August 21: Cairns celebrates the Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. James Foley - 1992
August 22: The Military Ordinariate of Australia celebrates the Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Max Davis – 2003.

In The Social Justice Calendar:
August 16: On this day in 1975, the Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory, was returned to the Gurindji People.
August 18: Vietnam Veterans' Day
August 19: World Humanitarian Day.
August 19: On this day in 2007, protests in Burma began. These protests were led by Buddhist monks.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Proverbs 9:1-6
Ephesians 5:15-20
John 6:51-58

***Lectio*: Read the first reading from the Book of Proverbs, chapter 9, verses 1-6.**
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 from the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament is a fore-text of the Eucharistic Texts of the New Testament, and the eschatalogical banquet of the Book of Revelation. Wisdom is personified as a builder of the house with seven pillars. The number "7" as we know, signifies fullness or abundance – whenever it is used in

the Scriptures. We note the symbols of meat and wine. At the Last Supper it will be the Paschal Lamb and on Calvary, the Lamb of God. John the Baptist, forerunner of the Lord, calls Jesus the Lamb of God early in the Gospel. The table is prepared (a familiar text in the Gospel – everything is ready – come to the marriage feast). As in the Gospel, so here in the Old Testament, messengers are despatched to proclaim from the city heights: "Who is ignorant? Let him step this way." Or, who is ignorant of God, eternal life, Jesus Christ? May they step up to the Eucharistic banquet. Fools are called forth to partake of bread and wine and to walk in the ways of perception. The meaning is truth – to walk in the ways of truth. And so, this banquet is a fore-text of the Eucharistic banquet and of the eternal banquet of the Book of Revelation. It would help to stop and read Revelation 21:1-22:5, to become immersed in the glory of the eternal banquet.

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: Psalm 33
The Response is: TASTE AND SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.
Perhaps the most powerful line in this Psalm (for the 20th Sunday) is: "Those who seek the Lord lack no blessing". As a response to the text from Proverbs, seeking the Lord is related to "stepping up" and partaking of the banquet which God has prepared, the banquet which will give us the knowledge we need to progress in the path of God's truth: "Your word, O Lord, is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path."(Ps. 118:105). God's Word, God's Truth, God's Banquet. Surely this is what we truly seek. 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 Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20.**

***Meditatio*:** In this text, the author is contrasting the children of darkness with the children of light. In addition to this we have the reference to singing words and melodies of psalms and hymns when the assembly gathers to pray. (This implies prayer meetings and Liturgy). And furthermore, one is to go on doing this after the prayer meeting or the Liturgy is finished, so that "always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (The carrying over of prayer into everyday life). This is a powerful teaching. With this background, 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 John 6:56.
ALL WHO EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOOD LIVE IN ME
AND I IN THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

***Lectio*: Now read the Gospel text from John 6:51-58. .**

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
We continue with John's account of the Eucharist. The terms "flesh" and "blood" are Johannine. The other evangelists and Paul use Body and Blood. Somehow, the

Johannine author's use of "flesh" packs the power of the message. The other powerful message is that just as Jesus draws life from the Father, so we who eat his flesh and drink his Blood, draw life from him. More than that, we become one with him, we LIVE in him. The profundity of this message is too much to take in. 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: "…walk in the ways of perception." Perception is knowledge, knowledge of God in this case. I am aware that this "knowledge" can only be found by partaking of the banquet which God provides. It can't be gained by reading or studying or through information technology. It is about my personal relationship with a God who invites me to the banquet of life. The more I partake of the Eucharistic banquet, the deeper is my knowledge of the Divine Presence. The more I partake of the Eucharist, the deeper I plunge into the Mystery of Divine Love. I also hear the challenge of being a Messenger, calling to someone to "come to the Lord's banquet". Is there someone who is alienated from the Assembly? Why not be God's Messenger?

2. I am challenged by the call of this text, to make "praise of God" a way of life. In Monastic life, I am encouraged to do this by the Rule of St. Benedict. But even before I entered Monastic Life, I had felt the call powerfully – from childhood – to make praise of God a way of life. In a Catholic School, this was encouraged through frequent attendance at Mass, and morning prayer before the school day began. When I was in Secondary School, the Midday Angelus would ring and the whole school would stop to pray. Thus we were taught to make "praise of God" a way of life. Since Lectio Divina is about my formation, not merely information, this text which calls me to make "praise of God" a way of life is inviting me to be shaped and formed by the Scriptures: the Psalms, the Hymns, the texts which the Church gives us. May we step up to the challenge. In our Monastic Community, we work with the Psalter open before us, so that now and then, we can look at a line and pray it. We are also encouraged to recall parts of the readings we hear through the day at the Liturgy of the Hours.

3. I am responding to this teaching on the Eucharist by returning to a precious entry in my prayer journal: "The gift of the Eucharistic Christ accustoms us progressively to an interiorizing of the Presence of Christ. It is no longer outside that we must look for him, it is within. Christ dwells by faith in our hearts. In a marvellous way, the Divine Instruction of the Sacrament of the Eucharist invites us to turn our eye within and teaches us to find Jesus in the deepest intimacy of the heart." (Louis Lochet, "Child of the Church"). And St. Peter Julian Eymard taught: "A love of God which no longer finds or

centres its life in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, can render no account of the basis of its vitality. It is soon extinguished like a fire that lacks fuel."

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.