***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 21 August 2016
21st 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:
August 22: The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Memorial)
August 24: St Bartholomew. (Feast)
August 27: St. Monica.

In the Australian Church:
August 21: CAIRNS – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop James Foley (1992).
August 22: MILITARY ORDINARIATE OF AUSTRALIA – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Max Davis (2003).
August 23: BUNBURY – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Peter Quinn.
August 25: BROKEN BAY – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1991).

The Social Justice Calendar:
August 23: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.
August 26: On this day in 2001, the MV Tampa rescued 433 Asylum Seekers from a sinking vessel. The Australian Govt. sent troops to prevent disembarkation.
August 27: 1999- Death of Dom Helder Camara

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Isaiah 66:18-21
Hebrews 12:5-6 and 11-13
Luke 13:22-30

Lectio: **Read the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 66, verses 18-21.** 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.** This text is taken from the last verses of Trito-Isaiah. Trito-Isaiah, we remember spans chapter 57:17 – 66:24. Our text is a few verses towards the end of the book. The central message of this last section is that "foreigners are at home in the house of God". (Gentiles). Tarshish is in Southern Spain. Put and Lud are in Africa. Tubal is near the Black Sea and Javan – the Ionian Islands where there were Greek Settlers. It is not clear whether the author of Third Isaiah is talking about Gentiles or Diaspora Jews. The triumphal procession home comes from all directions. The favoured interpretation among scholars is that these

people are Gentiles. The Book of Third Isaiah, ends with a radical announcement: Gentiles take their place in the Priesthood. ("And some of them I will make priests and Levites, says the Lord"). (This background has been summarized from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 21:70).

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 116
The Response is: GO OUT TO ALL THE WORLD AND TELL THE GOOD NEWS.
Psalm 116 is a world-wide call to praise God. And the shortest psalm in the Psalter.

"Praise the Lord all you nations
Acclaim Him all you Peoples.

Strong is His love for us.
He is faithful forever."

Pray with the Psalm throughout the week and stay with the words that call you forth to respond.

***Lectio*: Read the second text from the Letter to the Hebrews 12:5-7 and 11-13.**

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

Hebrews 12:1-13 is about God's treatment of his children. For the beginning of this text, we are referred to Proverbs 3:11-12.
The text focuses on "correction", "training", "discipline", receiving a "no", the "pain of punishment", and then the fruits of such actions on the part of God: peace and goodness. Then finally, an exhortation to "hold up your limp arms and steady your trembling knees and smooth out the path you tread; then the injured limb will not be wrenched, it will grow strong again."
God corrects us and disciplines us in ways we find difficult. God uses those who have our "good" at heart, to lead us away from our errors and on to a path which leads us to peace and goodness.
Our pride is usually hurt when we are corrected, so that is the first place to start. We are called to humility in all of this.
And then we will grow strong again – discipline leads to strength.
Correction leads us to think twice before we plunge in and ruin our own lives and the lives of others.
Training is constant – a daily event, as it is for those training for the Olympic Games or the weekend Sporting event. It hurts and is exhausting at times. But it is necessary.
We are in training for the Kingdom of God.
The call is to submit to the discipline of the Gospel and bear the fruits of peace and goodness.

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you and prompting you to respond to words, phrases, sentences which call you forth and challenge you. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

The Gospel Verse is from John 14:6.
I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE, SAYS THE LORD; NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME.

Lectio: **Read the Gospel text from Luke 13:22-30.**
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 a harsh text, but it leaves no doubt as to what it is about. It is part of 13:22-17:10, and is "Instruction on the meaning of the Christian way. 22-30 deals with "repentance". Luke "stresses that the Christian way demands total allegiance to Jesus and provides travel companions from all over the world as well as places at the eschatological banquet." The image of the narrow gate is most probably a reference to the singularity of focus which one needs in order to enter by the Way, who is Jesus. He is also the Truth and the Life. The locking of the door is harsh, but direct. Jesus will not tolerate those who boast of knowing him and his message, and leave it at that! One must "share in his life, as symbolized by his table fellowship with the lowly." (I have summarized this background from the NJBC 43:141).

Read the Gospel text a number of times during the week. Sit with the text for many "quiet" times. 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 gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian. 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.**

1. This first text calls to me to open my heart to all people and embrace all in prayer. Pope Francis asks us to "experience the opening of our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates. How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich!" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 15, page 23). As one who prays the Liturgy of the Hours in a monastic community, I also understand that those who have no voice are those persecuted for their race, their religious beliefs, their colour, their culture. In the Psalms I give all these people a voice. St. Augustine taught: "The Psalmist is Christ himself. It

is his voice I hear in the cry of the poor and in the praise of the faithful. The voice of Christ is not strange to me. He embraces the voices of all the members of his own body…his suffering members, crying out for justice, prolonging his passion, and his members glorified by his Resurrection. In the total voice of Christ, there is the voice of all humanity who await deliverance". And when I give a voice to the voiceless, I bring them all "home" to God's Holy Mountain, to his dwelling place – from all the corners of the earth, I bring them "home".

2. What calls forth my response to this reading is the exhortation to hold up one's limp arms and steady one's trembling knees, for there is much trembling and unsteadiness during times of purification: in sickness, in emotional anguish, in the renunciation of self-will, as we journey from one day to the next and go on saying our "yes" to God. As Christians we live under the discipline of the Gospel of Jesus. This is the most serious and most challenging of all "disciplines".

3. What speaks to me is that part of the Commentary which says "total allegiance to Jesus". What the Christian way demands is total allegiance to Jesus. Dom Helder Camara, whose anniversary occurs this week, taught that "it is useless to dream of reforming society without a corresponding deep change in our inner lives." For Dom Helder Camara, it was a preferential option for the poor. For Jesus, it was "table fellowship with the lowly". For each of us, it is total allegiance to Jesus. This week we also remember the abolition of the Slave Trade. That heroic woman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, condemned the Slave Trade in her writings over and over. In "Uncle Tom's Cabin" she wrote: "Does not every American Christian owe to the African Race some effort at reparation for the wrongs that the American Nation has brought upon them? Both Dom Helder Camara and Harriet Beecher Stowe underwent the purification that results in a "deep change to one's inner life", and as a result of this they were able to witness their total allegiance to Jesus and the Gospel of Christian Love.

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.