***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 5 June 2016
10th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Two.

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 11: St. Barnabas (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:
June 8: Broken Bay – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Peter Comensoli (2011).

The Social Justice Calendar:
June 5: World Environment Day
June 8: World Oceans Day
June 10: On this day in 1838, the Myall Creek Massacre of Aboriginal people took place.
On this day in 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in New York.
June 11: Neville Bonner became the first Aboriginal Australian to hold a seat in Federal Parliament.
On this day in 1975, Australia ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The Readings are:
1 Kings 17:17-24
Galatians 1:11-19
Luke 7:11-17

Lectio: **Read the first reading from the First Book of Kings, Ch. 17, verses 17-24.** 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 just ONE of the miracles of Elijah. The upper room is significant for an act of "ascending", and is associated with humankind's idea of God being above the earth. Placing the child in the child's own bed is significant: the child is secure in familiar surrounds. Elijah stretching himself over the boy three times? The number "three" in the Scriptures can be associated with fullness of testimony or fullness of manifestation, as in the three persons of the Godhead. (cf. Vine's Expository Dictionary). It could be interpreted this way in this text, as Elijah calls on God to manifest the fullness of Divine healing for the child. Paul Gardiner, in his "The

Complete Who's Who in the Bible", (along with other scholars), notes that behind the miracles of Elijah is the consistent use by God to teach faith. The miracles represent "signs" which call their witness to a decision for or against God. (page 149, Gardiner). In this case the witness is the widow (mother of the boy).

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 29
The response is: I WILL PRAISE YOU LORD, FOR YOU HAVE RESCUED ME.

Psalm 29 is a Psalm of thanksgiving for recovery from sickness and the most suitable response to the first text which narrates the miraculous healing of the widow's son.

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

Lectio: Read the second text from the Letter to the Galatians, Ch. 1, v's 11-19.

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

Paul speaks with authority. He could not do so, if he hadn't experienced the direct - and in his case, dramatic - call of God to cease persecuting Christians and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Fitzmyer, notes that 1:12-3:14 is about Paul's historic call to preach the Gospel: place names, time spans, people, travel, are all historical details. It is not a theological or doctrinal text. It is more a witness text. (NJBC 47:13-16).

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 from Luke 7:16.
A GREAT PROPHET HAS APPEARED AMONG US; GOD HAS VISITED HIS PEOPLE.

Lectio: **Read the Gospel text from Luke 7:11-17.**
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 story brings the story of Elijah to its fulfillment. Elijah, an Old Testament Prophet, healed the only son of a widow. Jesus the Son of God, raises to life the only son of a widow. In the social structure of a patriarchal society, if a widow were to

lose her only son, she was then without any male agency to speak on her behalf. The miracle which Jesus does for this widow, "bypasses the laws of ritual cleanliness in Jewish society – one should not touch a corpse." The compassion of Jesus is greater than the Jewish laws of ritual cleanliness. (cf the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 43:95). In verse 16, the reference to the great prophet is a reference to Elijah – the audience is recalling the miracle of Elijah, as narrated in the first text for the 10th Sunday.

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. I hear this story as a story about the mercy of God, a story of intercessory prayer and a story with a message for our own times. Sometimes only an "outsider" can effect healing in a particular person's life. There are oppressed peoples, people who live with domestic violence, people who are doing drugs or alcohol, children living in fear – and so we could go on. They all need miracles to set them free. Often that miracle is effected by someone "outside" their family or extended family. They can tell their story to a stranger. Some of our Australian Bishops have visited the Detention Centres where Asylum Seekers are held. They have listened to the stories of detainees who, like the widow's son "have no breath left in them" because they have nothing to live for. Australian Religious and those many caring Australians in Pastoral Ministry do the same work. So, for this week, I will listen to someone who is emotionally broken, someone who feels that there is nothing to live for, someone who does not have the energy to take another breath!

2. This text can be understood as historical or one of enlightenment. I am opting for "enlightenment". Sr. Joan Chittister says that "enlightenment requires complete abandonment of past certainties so that new possibilities can become possible." (Our Holy Yearnings). This is what Paul had to do: abandon past certainties. In doing so, he could embrace the Gospel. But, let us always remember that he was knocked off his horse, and almost brutally enlightened. Is this what it takes with some of us? We all love our certainties, being "set in our ways", or in some cases, being set in cement. We have to learn that nothing is set in cement. When we are enlightened about the Good News of the Gospel, a new certainty comes into our lives and this is a certainty which makes us into broad-minded people, with open arms and open hearts. We may take some time this week to remember those moments of enlightenment – the enlightenment which comes from the touch of the Lord Jesus on our hearts.

3. The compassion of Jesus is calling my heart to respond to this text. Jesus bypassed the Jewish law because he felt such deep compassion for this widow. To have compassion on someone is to have "mercy", and this is the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Pope Francis has exhorted us already with the words, "We will entrust the life of the Church, all humanity, and the entire cosmos to the Lordship of Christ, asking him to pour out his mercy upon us like the morning dew, so that everyone may work together to build a brighter future. How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!" So, is my "year", 2016, steeped in mercy? Each one of us has to answer that honestly.

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.