***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 3 April 2016
Octave Day of Easter or the 2nd Sunday of Easter.
It is also Divine Mercy Sunday.

For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Two. The antiphons and hymns are for Eastertide. Alleluia is added to every antiphon during Eastertide.

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:
April 4: The Anunciation of the Lord. (Solemnity) – transferred from Holy Week.

In the Australian Church:
April 7: Melbourne – anniversary of the death of Archbishop Francis Little (2008).

The Social Justice Calendar:
April 4: International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.
April 6: International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.
April 7: International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda.
Also World Health Day.
April 8: National Youth Week begins.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings for Year C are:
Acts 5:12-16
Revelation 1:9-13 and 17-19
John 20:19-31

Lectio: **Read the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Ch 5, verses 12-16.** 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, while it presents an ideal image of Christian living, states clearly what the essentials are if one is to live in a Christian community (specifically a community of the early Church). Even though we don't live in this period, but in 2016, the essentials are just as relevant now as they were then. We are to meet up with other believers and by the strength we gain from these meetings, others will come to believe in the Lord. Yes, the apostles worked signs and wonders. We are the apostles of today. We will work signs and wonders by our faith and commitment to prayer and ministry.

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 117
The response is: GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD; HIS LOVE IS EVERLASTING.

Psalm 117, with a few verses is repeated. It was also prayed on Easter Sunday. The important verse is included: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone."

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 Book of Revelation, chapter 1, verses 9-13 and 17-19.**

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

John writes the Book of Revelation for Christians undergoing persecution. He is in exile on the Island of Patmos. In this text he has a vision (apocalyptic literature is full of visions and dreams). John's vision occurs on the Lord's Day, a Sunday.
The apocalyptic phenomena are:
The Spirit possessing John
A voice shouting like a trumpet
The order to write
The vision of the Risen Lord
The seven golden lamp-stands, representing the seven Churches known to John.
Since the number "seven" in the Scriptures means fullness or completion, the wider meaning is the universal Church.
John is touched with the Lord's right hand (always the symbol of God's strength, used more frequently in the Old Testament), and the words Jesus spoke to his disciples in the Gospel are spoken to John: "Do not be afraid…"
Here Jesus proclaims that he is the First and the Last, the Living One – not dead, but alive forever and ever. He holds the keys of death and the underworld because he has conquered death and freed the dead.

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.

Lectio: The Gospel Verse is from John 20:29.
YOU BELIEVE ME, THOMAS, BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN ME; HAPPY THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN ME, BUT STILL BELIEVE.

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from John 20:19-31.**

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?**

There are two episodes narrated in this text: two appearances of Jesus. The first appearance is on Sunday, the day of the Resurrection and the message of the Risen Lord is: "Peace be with you…" Then Jesus repeats the message: "Peace be with you." Then he declares that he is missioning them. John uses the word "sending". After that he breathes on them the Holy Spirit and gives them power to forgive sins.

And so we have "Peace and Presence" which brings joy, then Mission and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Perkins, commenting in the Jerome Biblical Commentary, notes that the "sending" means that the apostles now represent Jesus to the world. (61:234)

He also notes that the "power" of forgiveness is probably expressed in the bestowing of the Spirit on those who believe as a result of the disciples' mission and who join the community rather than in a process of dealing with Christians who have committed sin (as in Matthew 18:19). (cf. 61:235).

The second appearance is eight days later. The story is a creation by John.

The elements of the scene are all characteristic of John.

(a) The summons to become a believer (vs. 27)

(b) Thomas's confession, "My Lord and My God" (vs 28. This Confession is the culmination of the Gospel's Christology since it acknowledges the crucified/exalted Jesus as "My Lord and my God."

(c) The blessing on future believers (vs. 29).

For other Christological Acclamations in John's Gospel, we are referred to: 1:49, 4:42, 6:69, 9:37-38, 11:27, 16:30. (For most of this background I have consulted the NJBC).

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 am responding to the working of signs and miracles. On February 2nd, our annual Foundation Day in Australia, our Diocesan Bishop, Peter Ingham, came for Mass and this year, for the Solemn Profession of one of our nuns. In his homily on the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, he spoke of all the characters in the story. He especially mentioned what parents hope for their children when they bring them to the church for Baptism. Then he spoke of the sword which Simeon said would pierce the heart of Mary and he compared this to the sword which pierces the heart of many a parent when a child breaks a parent's heart by turning to drugs or alcohol-fuelled violence or whatever negative things parents hope their

children will steer away from. The miracle the Bishop worked was that so many parents present in our Church could relate to this, were deeply touched by it, and could let out their emotions. A lot of deep sharing took place after the ceremony between guests and other guests, or guests and members of our monastic community. There were tears of grief and sorrow and much inner healing took place through the sharing. So in this way, Bishop Peter healed the hearts of many parents who were present.

2. My response is to reflect on the nature of "Sunday". It was the day Christians believed that Jesus rose from the dead. In this sense, every Sunday is a Day of Resurrection. So, how do I celebrate Sunday? In Monastic life we talk of "holy leisure" or leisure for God, making more space for God. This we try to do on a Sunday. It doesn't mean no work, but it means for me, work with the hands, uncomplicated work which rests my mind and allows me to ponder on the sacred readings which have nourished me at Mass. I find gentle gardening a help, or quiet cleaning. Sometimes I just sit and immerse myself in the natural beauty of my surroundings. Sundays are holy days.

3. My response is to take Thomas's prayer of faith and to make it my "mantra" throughout this week.

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.