***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 26 November 2017
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.
This is also the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year.
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.

Sunday, November 26, 2017, is the The Scriptures for this Sunday are: For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes week 2.

Before beginning *Lectio Divina*, let us look at the week ahead in Liturgy, the Australian Church, and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:
November 30: St. Andrew (Feast)

The Social Justice Calendar:
November 26: 1883, death of Sojourner Truth in Michigan USA. Sojourner was an African American woman, born into slavery, escaped into freedom, and one of the first black women to win a court case against white men. She is remembered for her courageous advocacy of rights for her fellow Black Americans.
November 29: Death of Dorothy Day, Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. (1980)
November 29: Pope John Paul II met with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Alice Springs (1986)
November 30: Synod of Bishops' Statement "Justice in the World" 1971.

In the Australian Church:
November 29: Parramatta - Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (2003)

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Ezekiel 34:11-12 and 15-17
1 Corinthians 15:20-26
Matthew 25:31-46.

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading from the Prophet Ezekiel chapter 34, verses 11-12 and 15-17.**
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.**
The people of Israel are in exile, having been deported to Babylon. This prophecy is a prophecy of hope: don't despair, God will come and save you. God will bring you home. It is an Old Testament text of comfort, just as the New Testament text of John 10, will portray the Good Shepherd. The end of the text, with its message of judgment is linked with Matthew 25. In that beautiful book, "Day by Day", written by Sr. Stan of Dublin, she quotes George Isles: *Hope is faith holding out its hand in the dark.* Hope is the message of this text. Don't despair!

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, the mountains. Just take time. I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22
The response is: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; THERE IS NOTHING I SHALL WANT.

Psalm 22 is a prayer of confidence. "The trust of the psalmist is so complete that one might think the New Testament has nothing to add. But in the course of the years the Shepherd-Lord took flesh and died for his sheep – thus he led the way through a dark valley to pastures beyond." (Jamberoo Abbey Psalters).

***Lectio*:** Read the Second Mass Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 and verse 28.

***Meditatio*:** Understanding the text so that we can make an informed response to it. This text is about the kingly power of Our Lord Jesus Christ – the power which destroys evil, conquers death and brings all of us home to God. The use of the word "king" may conjure up images of Christ with a royal crown on his head, seated on a gold throne, with a royal sceptre in his hand. But, the only crown on his head was a crown of thorns, the only sceptre he held was a shepherd's crook. The only throne he had was one made up of all the attributes of divine love: compassion, forgiveness, kindness, humility and gentleness.

With this background, read the text again, and then ponder as you work or take time for leisure. Allow God to speak to you in the depths of your heart. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is from Mark 11:10.
BLESSINGS ON HIM WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.
BLESSINGS ON THE COMING KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER DAVID.

***Lectio*:** Now read the Gospel text from Matthew 25:31-46.

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
This parable of the last judgment presents every person (through the mystery of the Incarnation), as Christ clothed in human flesh. When a Christian does anything out of

love for another person, that "other" is Christ – whatever is done is done for Christ. Thus this text is really about the Mystery of the Incarnation. Until we accept in faith this Mystery, we cannot understand Matthew 25. Christ in the sick, the poor, the child who is a slave worker, and the child who is well-cared for; the parents, grand-parents who pour out their lives for family; those with whom we work, eat, party, celebrate, grieve and mourn. Because of the Incarnation, everyone in my life is to be reverenced and respected – from the least to the greatest.

Stand back and ponder on the text – every aspect of it – over a few days. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you. This is the true *oratio* of *Lectio Divina*. Allow your spirit to rest and be still. Finally, make your response to the text and keep it in your prayer journal, and in your heart. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

EVANGELIZATIO – this is one's lived response to the texts given us by the Church each Sunday. It is about the evangelization of the "self", and pins me down to be who I am: A Christian who prays with the Word of God, and responds to the call of the Word of God in my everday life.

1. My response to this text is to look back on my life and remember the times when I wandered in the mist and the darkness – Jesus came to me when he, through my family and my community, bandaged my wounds, showed me fresh pastures and led me to rest. Another text has come to me: *Behold I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.* And: *When you looked back and saw only one set of footprints, they were mine – it was then that I was carrying you.* Thank you, dear Lord, for being there.

2. I am responding to the truth that Jesus conquered death. This past month there has been a number of remembrance liturgies, beginning with All Souls' Day. Each liturgy has brought to the fore that death has been conquered by Jesus Christ, and those who have died in the Lord are the ones who are truly alive. Fr. Karl Rahner sys: 'Let us therefore be mindful of our dead, our living. Our love for them, our loyalty to them is the proof of our faith in Him, the God of everlasting life. Let us not ignore the silence of the dead, the silence that is the most ardent word of their love. This, their most ardent word, accompanies us today and every day, for they have gone away from us in order that their love, having gone into God, may be all the closer to us." (The Great Church Year, page 370).

3. My response is to re-visit in earnest the great Mystery of the Incarnation which changed the world forever. Bl. Columba Marmion taught that we must accept the Incarnation with all its consequences. The Rule of St. Benedict is a Christological Rule: Christ in the Abbot/Abbess, Christ in the sick, Christ in the Guest, Christ in each member of the community. And "to abandon the least of our brethren is to abandon Christ." (Bl. Columba Marmion). And from the revelation by God to St. Hildegard of Bingen: "The human is the very garment in which my Son clothed Himself." Those who threw dice at the foot of the cross, to see who would win the seamless garment belonging to Jesus, rather missed the point! The real garment was the flesh of the Lord, hanging on the cross. This is something we can't gamble for. It is pure gift from God – a Saviour who suffered, died, and rose again for each one of us, conquering sin and death, and opening the way home for us. We all know the story (by now) of the community of monks who were disgruntled, downhearted, apathetic, bored. The Abbot decided to consult with a holy hermit who lived in the woods not far from the monastery. The holy man said to the Abbot: Go back and say to your monks, *The Messiah is among you.* To shorten the story – the Abbot went back and gave the hermit's message to his community, and overnight they changed:

Who is the Messiah, which of us is the Messiah? They began to act with reverence and respect, as if each one of them was the Messiah, and because of the Incarnation, each one was – if we understand that Christ was alive in each one. This is what the Incarnation is about.

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.

The traditional Latin terms are: Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, Contemplatio, Evangelizatio.

