***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 3 July, 2016
14th 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:
There are no Memorias, Feasts or Solemnities this week.

In the Australian Church:
July 3: Wilcannia Forbes – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Columba Macbeth-Green (2014)
July 5: Broome – Anniversary of the death of the Most Rev. John Jobst (2014)
July 8: Cairns – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1968)

In the Social Justice Calendar:
July 3: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday. NAIDOC week begins.
July 5: Birth of the Dalai Lama in Tibet – awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.
July 7: On this day in 1945, Bl. Peter To Rot was killed in Papua New Guinea, defending his faith in God. He has been beatified as a martyr.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Isaiah 66:10-14
Galatians 6:14-18
Luke 10:1-12 and 17-20.

***Lectio*: Read the first text from the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 66, verses 10-14.** Be aware of the way you handle your bible. Take it up reverently and read the sacred text with deep reverence. This text is given to all of us on this particular day in the Church's Liturgical Year for our spiritual formation.

***Meditatio:* Some background on the text, so that we can understand it more profoundly, and make our response to it.**
This text is taken from Trito-Isaiah (Third Isaiah). It is situated within 66:1-16. Verses 10-14, "sing with the ecstatic joy of Second Isaiah; the poet is continually crying out "Rejoice!" to the new Jerusalem." In fact joy "permeates many poems of Third Isaiah (cf. 56:7; 60:18; 61:3,7,10; 65:13-19)." God's children nursing at the breast of Jerusalem is deliberate in its intent to portray peace and contentment. We are referred to: Isaiah 42:14, 45:10 and 49:15, for images of the motherhood of God. (This summary has been adapted from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 21:69)

Read the text again a couple of times. Ponder on the text for a day or more. However, if you are aware of the Holy Spirit calling forth your response to the text, note it down. When the Holy Spirit prays within you or pours unction on a text and calls you forth, this is the true "prayer" (oratio) of Lectio Divina.

I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 65
The Response is: LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY. Psalm 65, in its literal context, is a prayer of thanksgiving. We could throughout this week, note the number of times "joy" or words related to "joy" appear in this psalm. Thus, it is an appropriate response to the first reading from Trito-Isaiah.
Listen, as you pray with the psalm throughout the week, to the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to a line, a word, a phrase. This is the Holy Spirit praying within you.

Lectio: **Read the second text from the Letter to the Galatians, ch. 6, verses 14-18.**

***Meditatio*: Some background to help us with our understanding and response.**
The text is situated within 6:11-18. It is there as a postscript, containing Paul's signature, resume, and his farewell blessing. Verse 14 is an answer to the Judaizers of 6:12. Thus Paul boasts not on self-reliance but on the grace and favour of God.
The word "world" of verse 14 stands for all that is at enmity with God: pleasures, and ambitions related to the flesh. Because of the historic event of Calvary, Paul has died to all of this.
Verse 15, with its mention of circumcision is important. The old law is replaced by the "new ontological reshaping of human existence…through an energizing principle that re-creates life."
Vs. 11: The "Israel of God" means the Christian people of God as the new "offspring of Abraham", in contrast to "Israel according to the flesh." (1 Cor. 10:18).
Vs. 17: Paul "had suffered from illness, floggings, beasts, and affliction for Christ's sake. He speaks of the evidence of such suffering as "brands", marking him forever as "the slave of Jesus. (Gal 1:10 and Rom 1:1)."
At this time in history, "stigmata" (marking) often referred to the branding used to mark a slave or an animal as someone's possession. Of such marks in his flesh, Paul gladly boasted to those who tried to glory in a different mark (that of Circumcision). (cf. NJBC 47:32).

Stand back from the reading and go about your work for a while. Maybe a day or two. Be alert to the grace of God. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist on the strings of the harp. The Holy Spirit will bring forth the most beautiful response to this reading. You will be surprised by the Spirit.

I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is from Colossians 3:15, 16.
MAY THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, AND THE FULLNESS OF HIS MESSAGE LIVE WITHIN YOU.

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from Luke 10:1-12 and 17-20.**
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. Stand back from it and ponder.

***Meditatio*: Some background to help us understand the text and respond to it.**
There are two defined parts of this Gospel, which has been extracted from 10:1-24, the teaching of Jesus about "Mission". Luke concentrates his reflections on the nature of mission and the causes of its joys and sorrows. Luke anchors the universal mission of the Church in the ministry of Jesus.
Two by two: mutual support, bearing witness to the truth of their testimony. The most famous missionary pair was Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13).
Lambs among wolves: The missionaries may be defenceless against hostile people. Or, the Christian mission inaugurates a new era of peace and reconciliation in which the lamb will lie down with the wolf. (Is. 1:6 and 65:25)
Verse 4: Silence? Greet no one. Yes, it is socially shocking, but it would certainly gain attention and cause the other person to speak – engage the disciples in conversation.
Vs. 6: Missionaries must be dedicated to the pursuit of peace.
In the Christian mission of preaching and healing of the sick, the reign of God is manifest.
Vs. 10-16 give voice to the negative side: just as Jesus met with hostility and rejection, so too, will his missionaries.
In verses 17-20, the effects of mission in Jesus' name are in focus.

Read the Gospel text again slowly. Stand back from the text and the commentary and go about your work quietly ruminating. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church exhorts me to pray. 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. My response to this text is to the "Jerusalem" which is the Church on earth – not buildings, but people. During our annual holidays in May we went out to the local parish for Sunday Mass. At the door of the church, handing out the Mass leaflets was an adult who was very obviously intellectually and physically disabled – a man with a beautiful smile. In the front seat was a disabled teenage boy who became excited when the music started, turning around at intervals to look at everyone, and smiling at us, as he conducted the music! Then there were the married couples, single men and women, the elderly on walkers. The parish priest gathered all of us together with a warm welcome. After the homily, he asked all "mothers" to remain standing and he prayed a very moving blessing over them (it being Mothers' Day). I experienced joy, peace, contentment and something of which Pope Francis is trying to achieve and help us to achieve: embracing everyone in our hearts. **We** form the Church. The buildings, though often very beautiful are only buildings, places where we gather. The real work is done in our hearts.

2. My response is to the reality of "branding". When I was very young I spent time on a cattle property in North West Queensland and watched the branding of cattle. Each beast "roared" when the hot iron touched its body. In my life, with its various traumas and trials, I have often cried out to God: "No, I can't do this!" "No – not again." "Why me?" And in each trauma or trial, with the marks that have made me who I am today, some loving, caring person has been there to help me heal. They are angels sent by God: my mother, grandmother, siblings, loyal friends. And I give thanks for these beautiful people.

3. I take two aspects of this Gospel very seriously: the harvest is great, but the labourers are few", and "peace to this house." For this reason I make It my business (when out of the monastery shopping or at a medical appointment), to talk with those I meet. I do the work of Jesus at Michel's, in Woolworths, at the X-Ray and Pathology Clinic, in the Reject Shop. I don't talk about religious things. On the contrary, I talk about warm, human things, like family and I listen to the stories of those I meet. I admire babies and pat dogs. It's so easy to bring love and peace to others. The previous parish priest of Albion Park did a lot of his ministry at Michel's Coffee Shop in the local shopping centre. Any of us can do it. We don't need degrees in ministry or qualifications in dogmatic or moral theology. We just need to open our hearts and embrace other people.

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.