***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, November 8th 2015
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Four.

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:
November 9: The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, the official Church of the Pope. (Feast)
November 10: St. Leo the Great (Memorial)
November 11: St. Martin of Tours (Memorial)
November 12: St. Josaphat (Memorial).

In the Australian Church:
November 8: The Rockhampton Diocese remembers the death of Bishop Bernard Wallace in 1990. Our community was privileged to have Bishop Wallace present for the opening of the Abbey at Jamberoo, on Trinity Sunday, 1989.

The Social Justice Calendar:
November 9: On this day in 1989, the Berlin Wall opened.
November 10: On this day in 1995, Nine Nigerian environmentalists and human rights activists were hanged.
November 11: Remembrance Day, commemorating the end of World War I. A minute's silence is observed at 11.00 a.m. on this day each year.
November 12: On this day in 1991, the Dili Massacre took place in Timor-Leste. More than 271 people were killed.
November 14: World Diabetes Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
1 Kings 17:10-16
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 12:38-44

Lectio: **Read the First text from the First Book of Kings, chapter 17, verses 10-16.**
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 episode is situated in Zarephath, a Sidonian town, which is well known as a town in territory acknowledged by all as Baal's not the Lord's Yet the power of the God of Israel causes drought even there and protects those the Lord favours with miraculous food similar to manna. (cf. verses 8-10) The theme of our text is the "faith in the Word of God". The prophet speaks (as God's mouthpiece), a Divine

word of power. Obedience to the Prophet and the word he speaks, wins the Lord's favour. Elijah supports the widow's plight, and what she has shared and adds: "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you have said, but first make a little scone…and bring it to me." And of course, in her obedience to Elijah, (and thus, her obedience to the Word of God), she does this and finds that she still has enough for herself and her son. God's assurance and providential care was assured by her response in faith. (cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary 10:29).

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 145
The response is: PRAISE THE LORD MY SOUL.

Psalm 145 is a Psalm in praise of God's faithfulness. We are called in this Psalm, to cast our cares on the Lord and have faith in his providential care for us. Our first Australian Saint, St. Mary of the Cross wrote that "God's goodness and beauty and gentle care pursue me everywhere." May we also be able, in faith, to proclaim this truth.

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 Hebrews, chapter 9, verses 24-28.**

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

For the last few Sundays, we have been with the theme of Christ, the true High Priest. Some of the texts have been challenging. This Sunday's is a little easier:
Christ gave His life for the world **once.**
Christ has ascended into heaven and is our eternal High Priest. He has done this **once**. He has conquered death and sin **once**.
No need to do it over and over again, like the High Priests who made sin offerings to atone for the sins of the nation.
There are a lot of rather complicated commentaries on this short text. We don't need them for prayer. We need to be with the "once" theme. Jesus offered his life in atonement for the sins of the world, and in doing so, he conquered sin. By rising from the dead, he conquered death. By his ascension into heaven, he is present to all humankind and is the eternal High Priest who appears before God on our behalf. This is the reality for us – the only reality.

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 taken from Matthew 5:3.
HAPPY THE POOR IN SPIRIT; THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS.

Lectio: **Read the Gospel text from Mark 12:38-44.**

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?**
We can be grateful that this is a simple story which goes straight to the heart. The widow in the first reading was a woman of faith. She was obedient to Elijah's request. The widow in this Gospel text is also poor and yet she is putting coins into the Temple Treasury – because of her faith in God. Jesus remarks that it is "all she has to live on". The message is clear. A small child can explain it to us. We hear of the very wealthy people of our society contributing millions to various causes. And yet, we don't often hear of the poorer people contributing money or time to causes such as visitation of the elderly in Nursing Homes, or of children with cancer.

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. My response is to the faith of the widow. And I am looking at my own faith – the times when I am asked by God to go on believing, even when all seems hopeless. I am not as faith-filled as this widow was. In that wonderful old book, "We Dare To Say Our Father", Louis Evely, comments that "when we have little we give all. As soon as we have more, we give less. All the teaching of Jesus is aimed at making us learn to prefer God. And therefore to be happy. Those who trust are happy. Do we trust God? If we do not trust God we should no longer call him Father! Our real wealth is to know that if we were to lose everything, our bread, our hands, our legs, we would still have a Father." Lord, increase my faith that I may trust more fully in your care and provision for me.

2. I am inspired by the "once" of this text, and I return to a Poem by the Australian Religious Poet, Andrew Lansdown. It bears the title "Golgotha". *Finally one arrives at the place of the skull because there is nowhere else to go. And there before the face of bone, one pauses in despair. The culmination of all evil is displayed before one's eyes: man's heart conspired with the devil and cared little for disguise. Yet if, at the sight of the Cross, a light is struck on the rough of the brain and the mind conceives [that] all except this is vain, [then] there comes a voice [which] reassures: Thus is the seed of tenderness sown in the cleft of the heart of stone.* (Anthology of Australian Religious Poetry, selected by Les A. Murray, page 124). May we all arrive at the place of the Skull (Golgotha),

because there is nowhere else to go. This is the great Mystery of the "once" which our Saviour gave to us.

3. My response to this Gospel is to share a story about my father. When he died not long after the 21st century dawned, he died from cancer. What broke his heart was not his own cancer, but the number of children in the hospital – children who also had cancer. He didn't have an abundance of energy but he gave of the little he had, by sitting and talking with these sick children outside of visiting hours, when their parents couldn't be present. He would read to them, or tell them stories, and just give of himself in this capacity. He gave all he had to give (of the very little energy he possessed).

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.