***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**
**Sunday, October 11th 2015**
**28th 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 this week:**
October 11: St. John XXIII.
October 15: St. Teresa of Jesus, the great reformer of the Carmelite Order. (A Memorial in most Parishes. A Feast or Solemnity in Carmelite Houses).
October 17: St. Ignatius of Antioch. (Memorial)

**In the Australian Church:**
October 13: Wagga Wagga – Anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral (1928)
October 16: Ballarat – Episcopal Ordination of th Most Rev. Paul Bird, CssR, 2012.

**The Social Justice Calendar:**
October 11: International Day of the Girl Child
Anti-Poverty Week Begins.
Anniversary of the Opening session of the Seccnd Vatican Council.
October 12: First Bali Bombing – 2002
October 13: International Day for Disaster Reduction.
October 15: International Day of Rural Women.
October 16: World Food Day
October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

**LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS**

**The readings are:**
Wisdom 7:7-11
Hebrews 4:12-13
Mark 10:17-30

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 7, verses 7-11.**
Read it in a reverent way. The Word of God is sacred. Let us give ourselves to the Sacred Text, and open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit calling us forth to respond. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you read. This is the true "oratio" (prayer) of *Lectio Divina*.

***Meditatio*: Some informed background so that we can honour the text in its original meaning.**
The Jews of the Old Testament were well aware that what mattered in life were the gifts of the heart. "Wisdom" signified an important element of the Old Testament religious point of view. Vine's Expository Dictionary notes that "Religious experience was not a routine, a ritual, or faith experience. It was viewed as a mastery of the art of living in accordance with God's expectations." The text we are given is Solomon's prayer for wisdom. The miracle of this text is that Solomon preferred

wisdom to power, riches, health, comeliness and light. He prayed for her and Wisdom came to him with all these good things besides, much to Solomon's joy. (cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 33:23).

With this background, read the text again, and take a long time to ponder on the overall message. Build into each day some quiet time. Be still before the Lord. After pondering over many hours (days), you will want to make your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

**Responsorial Psalm**: Psalm 89
**The response is:** FILL US WITH YOUR LOVE O LORD, AND WE WILL SING FOR JOY.
Psalm 89 is a psalm which ponders on the shortness of life, a "wisdom" psalm. Perhaps we could equate God's Love with true wisdom. This surely is the gift for which we all long.

Certain lines of the Psalm will speak to your spirit. Pray with them throughout this week.

***Lectio*: Read the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 4, verses 12-13.**

**PAUSE.** Read it again. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most authentic melody of your response.

***Meditatio*:** This text is one of the foundation texts for those of us who go to Lectio Divina daily. It is a description of the Word of God and the power of the Word of God. Firstly the Word of God is "alive", and it is "active" (operative). It cuts like a double edged sword, - more finely than a double edged sword which indicates the power of the Word to challenge our "laziness" when it comes to responding to the Gospel. It will cut through to the heart where we will be confronted by it. The Word of God will be the judge of our secrets – our secret emotions and our secret thoughts. And may we remember that thinking is an act. It is something over which we have control. Then, the author of the text tells us that "no created thing can hide from him [the Word made flesh, Jesus the Christ]. Everything is uncovered and everything is open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give an account of ourselves." And so, we, as Christians are accountable. Everyone is accountable to someone, otherwise each person walks a treacherous path that usually leads to disaster. Every Christian is accountable to Jesus Christ and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Take time over the text before making your response to it in the days ahead.
I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 2.

**The Gospel Verse: Matthew 5:3.**
HAPPY THE POOR IN SPIRIT, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS.

***Lectio:* Read the Gospel text from Mark 10:17-30.** Pause and ponder.
Read the text again.

***Meditatio:*** This text from Mark is confrontational. Jesus confronts the man who questions Him, by quoting the Word, and the force of the Word, [recounting the

commandments of the Old Testament]. When the man says he has kept all the commandments from his youth, Jesus confronts him further. He adds: "There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Truly confrontational! And truly like a double edged sword! And the man became downcast, went away sad, because he had great wealth. Or, he was ATTACHED to his wealth. In the first reading from Wisdom, Solomon is not interested in wealth and power and all earthly things. He wants the real wealth – the gift of wisdom. This man in the Gospel wants eternal life, but is not prepared to do what it takes to gain eternal life. Jesus then elaborates on the destiny of those who prefer earthly riches over the Kingdom of God. He uses the "grotesque" image of the camel and the eye of the needle. (cf. NJBC 41:64). Overall, Jesus is teaching the path to freedom. The path to freedom is to let go of "things" which bind the heart. He assures Peter that those who are free, available for his sake and the sake of the Gospel will be repaid a hundred times over in this world and in the world to come – but with a warning – "not without persecutions". Anyone who embarks upon the path to Jesus in earnest will come up against opposition – maybe not full scale persecution, but certainly opposition.

Stand back from the Gospel and ponder. Visit a quiet corner of a church which is open for prayer. Hear the words: BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

***Evangelizatio* is my LIVED RESPONSE to the sacred scriptures given to me each week by the Church for my formation as a Christian. If I don't respond, they are merely texts on a page. When I do respond, they are my life.**

1. My response to to turn to one of the small gems I have in my prayer journal. It is about wisdom and knowledge and is from the writings of Wiliam Cowper who died in 1800. "Knowledge is proud that it has learned so much. Wisdom is humble that it knows no more." So, in an age in which knowledge comes to us relentlessly in the form of "information", I see "Wisdom" as that essential gift which ensures my "formation" as a Child of God, as a Christian, a follower of Jesus. Wisdom is "humble". Wisdom is the mark of one who has learned not to rush, but to take time, to be quiet, to listen, to ponder on the truths of life.

2. Over recent months, the Australian people have been appalled at the lack of accountability when it comes to politicians spending tax payers money on travel – both for themselves and for their families. The Australian public are asking for transparency. But what of Christians? This text from Hebrews is a text which reminds us that the Word of God will sort us out, will demand "transparency" in all our words, thoughts and actions. We can't hide from God. We are told by St. Paul that we are "children of the light". The "light" is where we are to be – in the light, in the Divine Light. We are to be "transparent" – no lies, no deeds done under cover of darkness. We are accountable to God.

3. I am responding by asking myself firstly: How free am I when it comes to possessions? Jesus once looked steadily at me, and I responded by following him. But it is easy for me to take a little back now and then. It happens so subtly and so quickly. There are some Scriptural passages which I will add to my Lectio Divina this week: Deuteronomy 8:3-4. Philippians 4:6-9, 1 Timothy 6:18-19, 1 Peter 5:5-11. These passages talk about the real treasure which we should be seeking, and the waste of time given to earthly cares and possessions. Lastly, I share a little story from my own monastic journey. I once nursed an elderly nun when she was in her last weeks. She had entered the community in the early 1920s and was a graduate of Sydney University. She had become a Catholic. Her family disowned her because of her choice for Monastic Life. She lived her whole monastic life without their support. Her love of Jesus sustained her. No one came to her funeral, only we her Sisters were present. Did she receive her hundredfold? Her deep joy seemed to indicate that she had.

***Lectio Divina is Holy Reading,***
***that is,***
***reading of the Sacred Scriptures***
***It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.***
***It is about reading (and listening),***
***reflecting,***
***praying in tune with the Holy Spirit within me,***
***resting in God,***
***and responding in the way I live.***