***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, October 25th 2015
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:
October 28: Sts. Simon and Jude. (Feast)

In the Australian Church:
October 27: Melbourne – the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1897)

In The Social Justice Calendar:
October 26: On this day in 1985, "Uluru" was returned to the traditional owners, the Anangu People.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Jeremiah 31:7-9
Hebrews 5:1-6
Mark 10:46-52

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading: Jeremiah 31: 7-9.**
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.**
Deuteronomy 4:31 assures the people that God would not forget the promises made to their ancestors and would once again show mercy to his people. This is the reason that the Prophet Jeremiah proclaims a message of hope for the future of Israel. Jeremiah 30:1-33:26 is a long text of assurance, assurance that the God of their ancestors will one day bring about a new era. And so, in the middle of this long passage, we have the text given to us for our formation on this particular Sunday in the Church's Liturgical year. Three verses out of 13, are presented for our reflection and response. The text is a hymn, a hymn which opens with a solemn call to joy, for the Lord has bestowed salvation on his people. It is suggested in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary that we also reflect on Isaiah 12:6, Isaiah 40:9-10, Isaiah 55:11, and Isaiah 68:33-36. All these texts will support the message of the "new era". The recipients of the Lord's salvation are called the "remnant", being the small number of those who have escaped the calamity of 721 B.C. and who have been purified through the exile to constitute the new Israel, faithful to her God.
A note on "the ends of the world". We are informed that this expression is synonymous with the North, namely Assyria, where the people have been held

captive. (cf. Isaiah 43:5-6). The "caravan" (those returning) is composed of weak people, a sign of the miraculous nature of the event.
A note on "departed in tears". This same opposition between sorrow and joy is the theme of Psalm 125, which we could take for prayer. (It is the Responsorial Psalm).
The reference to "streams of water" could be an allusion to the water from the rock in Exodus. But here, it is more than one flowing stream (as in the Shepherd Psalm. We could pray with Psalm 22: "The Lord is my Shepherd").
The reference to a "smooth path" is once again a reference to a God who makes the path smooth and facilitates the return of the exiles.
Finally, God as a Father to Israel, defines the nature of the Covenant.
(For this background, I have summarized from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 31:84).

After much pondering, take time to respond to the text. You may want to ponder for a day or more, as you rest, work, walk, garden…sit and watch the ocean, the lake, the river. Just take time.

I share my response to this reading in *Evangelizatio* 1.

The responsorial Psalm: Psalm 125
The resooinse is: THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US. WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY.
The Psalm chosen is Psalm 125, already mentioned in the commentary on the first reading. It is, in its original setting, the "Song of the Returned Exiles". For us it is also a Song of Returning. We often sow in tears, experience the suffering of our purification here on earth, and see the hand of the Lord beckoning us onwards and upwards to rest in his arms and be restored on the journey home.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Reading: Hebrews 5:1-6.**

***Meditatio*:** In this text, the author of Hebrews is comparing the high priest of the Old Testament with the eternal High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. The text carries on the theme of the 29th Sunday, while stating that the high priest of the Old Testament understood sinners because he was also a sinner. High priests of the Old Testament were descendants of the priestly family of Aaron. In the case of Jesus, he took on our humanity and became like us in all things except sin. Jesus understands us better than any of the high priests of the Old Testament or of his own lifetime, because he is the Son of God, and God is Love. We must always remember this. God is Love. God is not religion. It is Divine Love which understands our earthly pilgrimage, as we continue to return from exile and take the "highways of the heart that lead us home." (Sr. Joan Chittister – already quoted in Evangelizatio 1).

Make your response in the days ahead. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2

The Gospel Verse is adapted from 2 Timothy 1:10
OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST JESUS HAS DONE AWAY WITH DEATH
AND BROUGHT US LIFE THROUGH HIS GOSPEL.

***Lectio*: Now read the Gospel text from Mark 10:46-52.**

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
This is a beautiful text, both in its original historical setting and in its original spiritual context. And it is a powerful text for each one of us as we come to the altar of God this weekend and listen to this Gospel story of the blind beggar crying out: "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me." These were times when there was no surgery for blindness, and such an affliction was associated with sin, either his sin or the sin of his parents. He is obviously a "pest". People may have been used to him sitting by the side of the road begging – maybe for many years! They tell him to stop causing a fuss. But Jesus insists on speaking to him. Jesus asks him the question: "What do you want me to do for you?" And the answer: "Master, let me see again."
Stand back from the Gospel, having read it a number of times. Ponder over it, and be still. When you feel called to do so, make your response to the text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 3.

EVANGELIZTIO. Evangelizatio is about the evangelization of the "self". It is that part of Lectio Divina where we make our lived response to the text. First of all, we pray with the text, take time to ponder and understand the text, be still with the text and listen to the response we are being called to make.

1. Recently, I was giving a retreat conference (really, a passionate and personal sharing) to guests in our Retreat Cottages. We were sharing about the perilous journey each of us has to make to self-realization and the necessity for making this journey so that we will reach inner freedom. One quotation I used came from Sr. Joan Chittister's Book, "Aspects of the Heart". It is the Chapter on "A self-realized heart". She writes: "It can take a lifetime of side roads to find the highways of the heart that take us home, whole and entire, satisfied and content." I am asking myself this week: What are the side roads I have taken, and continue to take while I avoid the highways of the heart that take me home? I am in exile, just as the people in this text were in exile. God is calling me to find "home", here and now, in this life. I may feel weak, unable to muster courage for the return journey. I will remember that God is my comforter as I return, is leading me to streams of fresh water, is making the ground level, and is often reaching out to take my hand.

2. I am responding to the truth that it is Divine Love which understands me. Religion, and particularly institutional religion doesn't always understand the human journey. Our present Pope has chosen a pastoral and compassionate model of papacy, and thus is witnessing to the presence of a God of Love, who understands the human journey. I am encouraged by his words and actions, especially by his actions as he reaches out to the human family. St. Augustine once exhorted his followers to: "Enlarge your love to the size of the world, if you want to love Christ [who is the Son of a God of Love, and who understands the human journey]. May we take the example of Jesus, and the example of Pope Francis, reaching out to our brothers and sisters world-wide.

3. In response to this Gospel text, I will listen to Jesus asking me: "What do you want me to do for you?" What will be my answer? "Lord that I may see, hear, speak and act according to the truth of the Gospel." I will pray for clear

vision to see the good in others, to listen to the voice of God in the Scriptures and in those around me, to speak and to act in Love towards others. May the Grace of God be with me.

Lectio Divina is prayer with the Sacred Scriptures.
We read,
we seek to understand with the help of a commentary,
we ponder,
we take time for stillness
and we respond.
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.
Take the Mother of God as your model.