***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, January 3rd 2015
Solemnity of the Epiphany – the manifestation of the Lord to the whole world.
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week Two.
The "Hours" are those of Epiphanytide.

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, Feast or Solemnities this week.
January 9 takes Evening Prayer 1 of the Baptism of the Lord.

The Social Justice Calendar:
There are no events to remember this week.

In the Australian Church:
No anniversaries to record this week.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3 and 5-6.
Matthew 2:1-12.

***Lectio*: Read the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 60, verses 1-6.**
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.**
This text is the beginning of the long section on "The glorious new Zion", chapters 60:1-62:12. I find it enriching for prayer to read the whole section. The text we have been given is from Third Isaiah who sees a restoration of all Israel and whose songs and images are close to those of Second Isaiah (the Book of Comfort). There are some interesting notes on the background to this text: "Like Second Isaiah, the text opens with the double imperative, 'Arise, shine out…' God is radiating a dazzling presence from within the city (cf. Deut. 33:2 and Malachi 3;19). Like the sunrise in this area of the earth, darkness immediately surrenders to brilliant light; there is neither dawn nor dusk. Glory pervades the whole of chapter 60 and the word is used eight times.
Also note the number of times words of light are used in just these six verses we are given for prayer. The people from the Arabian Peninsula are meant to be associated with Abraham and therefore with Israel's Ancestry.
Note: alongside the Divine wealth which is promised, is the earthly wealth: the riches of the sea, the wealth of nations. Camels and dromedaries bearing gifts of gold

and incense, (a reference to the visit of the Magi to the new-born King). The Magi came bearing gifts. (cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 21:58).
This text also looks forward to the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem where all will gather for the heavenly festival.
It is a text which looks to the new age of a Messiah who will bring the gift of salvation to all peoples on earth.

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.

The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 71
The response is: LORD EVERY NATION ON EARTH WILL ADORE YOU.
Psalm 71 is a picture of a future ideal king who will rule a kingdom of peace. "The courtly compliments…are quite deliberately extravagant: the whole of the inhabited earth, the soil itself, pays him homage." (Commentary in the Jamberoo Abbey Psalters). We are given just a portion of the psalm. The whole psalm consists of 19 verses and is one of the psalms chanted at the Monastic Hour of Vigils on Sunday, the very early morning "hour", always before dawn.

Pray with the psalm throughout the week, marking the words, phrases or lines which speak to you and call forth prayer from your heart.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Mass Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3 and 5-6.**

***Meditatio*:** This text is about the revelation of Jesus Christ to the whole world and the central focus is in the words: "…pagans now share the same inheritance,…they are parts of the same body, and…the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel." This is what the Feast of the Epiphany is about after all.

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 adapted from Matthew 2:2.
WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST AND HAVE COME TO ADORE THE LORD.

***Lectio*: Now read the Gospel text from Matthew 2:1-12.**

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
While the story is straightforward - one we read every year and probably know by heart - it is good to revise a little:
The Magi were the first people (other than Jews) to believe in Jesus Christ.
There is no mention that there were three!. The number three as applying to persons was deduced because there were three gifts. Their names are first mentioned in the 6th century – that is, six hundred years after the account! They are called Casper, Balthasar and Melchior. In the Middle Ages they were venerated as Saints. The Milanese claimed to possess their relics, brought from Constantinople in the 5th century. The relics were later taken to Germany by Frederick Barbarossa in 1162, and

are today enshrined in Cologne Cathedral. The adoration of the Magi became one of the most popular subjects of representation in Sacred Art. The first extant painting was the 'Cappella greca" of the Priscilla Catacomb dating from the Second Century. (cf. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church).
Make your response in the days ahead. I share mine 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. I find this text a huge challenge. I am looking at myself as the Jerusalem of this text. I am looking at my life as a follower of Jesus and I am asking questions like: Do others come to my "light", my "brightness"? My "Christ-Light"? In that beautiful Hymn we often sing, "Will you let me be your servant?" there is a line which reads: "I will hold the Christ-Light for you in the night-time of your fear…" Recently I read a story which has enriched my life. It is about the founding of the "Footpath Library" in Sydney in 2003. It grew out of sorrow, a simple observation and a desire to make a difference. Sarah Garnett lost a close friend, unexpectedly. She responded to her grief by volunteering with a group serving meals to the homeless in Sydney's CBD. One evening Sarah noticed a man sitting under a streetlight reading a novel while waiting for the food van. She started bringing him a few books and it was from this humble beginning that the original library grew. It is now in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. "Enriching Lives by Giving Books" is the logo. What a brilliant light Sarah Garnett has lit in our country! A manifestation of the Light of Christ? Surely. May we each glow with the Christ-Light this Season.

2. My response is to return to the words of Maximus the Confessor: "Shut no one out from your love." The Light of Jesus Christ shines for all peoples on earth.

3. I am sharing something that Fr. Karl Rahner has written about this feast: "When we read of the Magi in the first twelve verses of the second chapter of Matthew, we are really reading our own history, the history of our own pilgrimage. Led by the star, three magi from far off Persia, struggled through deserts and successfully asked their way through indifference and politics until they found the child and could worship him as the saviour-king. It is our history that we read there. Do we not all have to admit that we are pilgrims on a journey, people who have no fixed abodes, even though we must never forget our native country? God is the goal of our pilgrimage. To God flows the huge stream of all creatures through all time, through every change and every succession. O Heart, despair not over the sight of the pilgrimage of humankind…do not despair, the star is there and it shines." The entire homily can be read in "The Great Church Year", pages 101-106, Epiphany: The Blessed Journey of the God-seeking Person. It is a magnificent homily and can only enrich our Lectio Divina on this beautiful feast.

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,
the one who brought forth the Word made Flesh,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ.