***LECTIO DIVINA* (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.
Sunday, 19 June, 2016
12th Sunday in ordinary Time, Year C.
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:
June 21: St. Aloysius Gonzaga (Memorial).
June 22: Sts. John Fisher and Thomas More (Memorial).
June 24: Nativity of St. John the Baptist (Solemnity).

In the Australian Church:
June 19: Brisbane – Episcopal Ordinationn of the Most Rev. Mark Coleridge, 2002.

The Social Justice Calendar:
June 19: National Refugee Week begins today.
On this day in 1945, Aung San Suu Kyi was born.
On this day in 1969, The Arbitration Commission affirmed the principle of equal pay for women who did equal work.
June 20: World Refugee Day.
June 23: Public Service Day, and International Widows' Day.
June 25: Day of the Seafarer.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Zechariah 12:10-11 13:1;
Galatians 3:26-29;
Luke 9:18-24.

***Lectio*: Read the first reading from the Prophet Zechariah, chapter 12, verses 10-11 and chapter 13, verse 1.**
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.** T
he text is a Messianic prophecy fulfilled on Calvary. The spirit of kindness and prayer will be embodied in Jesus, the One who not only teaches his apostles to pray, but who spends whole nights in prayer to his Father, pours out compassion, mercy and kindness upon the sick, the troubled, the sinner, the lost sheep: "Merciful like the Father", which is the theme of this Jubilee Year of Mercy. The fountain symbolizes the cleansing of the house of David and the Jerusalemites from their sin. (NJBC

22:46). Water is used as a symbol of moral cleansing in both the Old and New Testaments. Our thoughts may well go to Calvary where John's account tells us that when Jesus was pierced with the lance, both blood and water flowed from his side.

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.

Responsorial Psalm: Pslam 62
The response is: MY SOUL IS THIRSTING FOR YOU, MY GOD.
Psalm 62 is a prayer of longing for God. It is perhaps the warmest and most intimate of the expressions of love for God in the entire Psalter. The image of the "dry and weary land" may suggest the desolation of a life without God. To love God is to live fully, to feast, to rest content, to be under a protecting wing, to embrace and to be embraced. (Adapted from the Commentary in the Jamberoo Abbey Monastic Psalters).

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: Galatians 3:26-29.**

***Meditatio*:** The message of these four verses of Scripture is direct – all of us who have been baptized in Christ are equal in Christ: one people in Christ, clothed in Christ. Paul is addressing issues which arose in the first Christian Communities. The questions concerned all those "others", or "foreigners" – are we all equal? Before now it was "them and us", now it is only "us". This was hard to swallow. There are no more distinctions: Jews, Greeks, slaves, free people, men, women – all are equal once baptized in Christ. And this shattered the comfort zones of those who saw themselves as a privileged class.

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 from John 10:27.
MY SHEEP LISTEN TO MY VOICE, SAYS THE LORD; I KNOW THEM AND THEY FOLLOW ME.

***Lectio*:** Now read the Gospel text from Luke 9:18-24.

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
This text is loaded. Jesus firstly asks the question regarding his identity in an objective way: Who do the crowds [the general public] say I am? Luke, in recording the answer to the question, incorporated two of the greatest prophets, Elijah and John the Baptist, whose Nativity it is this week - John, the forerunner of Christ.
Secondly, Jesus asks the question directly of his apostles – Who do you say I am?

Peter is the spokesman. The confession of faith is simple: four life-changing words - THE CHRIST OF GOD.
Then there is the reference to his passion, death and resurrection – the great Easter Mystery celebrated liturgically each year of our lives.
Finally, there is the call to renounce self, take up the cross every day and follow Jesus.
Recently, I was reading a diary kept by one of our two foundresses, on the Ship "St Vincent", travelling from Liverpool to Sydney (October 1847-February 1848). During the voyage, Archbishop Polding, leader of the group, gave spiritual meditations. One such meditation was on the words of this section of the Gospel: "If you will…renounce self, take up the cross every day and follow Jesus." He put the emphasis on the word "if", reminding his listeners that it is a choice each of us has to make: If I want to, or, if this is the life I want, this is how I go about it. He interpreted the renunciation of self, as that of renouncing, not one's personality, but the things that lead one away from Jesus and away from the Gospel of Jesus: judgmental thoughts of others, looking upon the faults of others and indulging in a kind of gloating, reading matter that is not conducive to Gospel living and so on.
The last part of this Gospel is the crucial part – for having established the identity of Jesus and having foretold his passion and exhorted all his followers to daily take up the cross, he gives it to them strongly (no frills or padding): "Anyone who loses his/her life for my sake, will save it."

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. My response is to the face of Christ in almost two million refugees world-wide. We are looking upon those who have been "pierced". The Social Justice Statement of our Australian Bishops "challenges us to face the reality of the terror and danger that people face around the world and to work to change Australia's response to people seeking asylum. 'When we Australians support policies of cruelty and rejection, we close our ears to Christ's call and turn him away from our doors.'" (Social Justice Statement, 2015-16)

2. I am responding to the "distinctions" issue. I am asking, 'Why do we still use labels to describe persons?' Some labels which we hear too often are : divorcee, solo parent, gay, lesbian, disabled, intellectually disabled, bi-polar, autistic, depressed, refugee…if we don't say them aloud, at least we use them in our thoughts. The Parish Community today is surely a miniature of contemporary society. All kinds of persons worship in a Parish. It is a challenge to see them as persons, without attaching the labels. My little dog teaches me a lot about acceptance. She often plays with another little dog who has only three legs, a rescue dog belonging to a friend. She doesn't sit and stare because he's different. They play and play until they drop from exhaustion. So, as baptized Christians, we need to look at the 'labels' we are using in our thoughts and in our conversation. Pope Francis is exhorting us this year to reach out and embrace every person in our Parish Community, and to embrace (in our hearts) every person in our Global Community. Maybe we can cancel our membership of the "label" club!

3. My response is to share something that happened to me and another sister just a few days ago. We were in Woolworths and there were the usual long lines of customers waiting to be served. One lady who was going off her "shift" and heading for home, asked us to come to her register. She left the closed sign up and yet served us – she chose kindness. She also arranged for the potting mix we had bought ($8.95 a bag), to be exchanged for the cheaper potting mix which was not on the shelf of the

supermarket but out the back. We saved $15.00 because of her kindness. We don't know whether she was a Christian or not, but her kindness will not be forgotten. She made a choice to be kind and to serve. I am inspired by her to make a choice again for Jesus and the Gospel of Jesus.

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.