***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, August 30th 2015
22nd 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:
September 3: Pope St. Gregory the Great (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:
August 30: Bathurst -Anniversary of the death of Bishop Patrick Dougherty – 2010
August 31: Wagga Wagga – Anniversary of the death of Bishop William Brennan – 2013.
September 2: Toowoomba - Anniversary of the death of Bishop Edward Kelly – 1994
September 3: Armidale – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Henry Kennedy – 2003.
September 3 is the anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Anthony Fisher, O.P, (2003),and the Most Rev. Julian Porteous (2013),
September 4 is The Spring Ember Day, a day of special prayer and penance.
September 5: Bunbury – the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Gerard Holohan - 2001

The Social Justice Calendar:
August 30: Refugee and Migrant Sunday
August 30: International Day of the Victims of Forced Disappearance.
September 1: National Wattle Day
On this day in 1815, the Sisters of Charity were founded by Mary Aikenhead.
September 2: On this day in 1991, the Aboriginal Reconciliation Act was passed by Parliament.
September 5, 1997: – the death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.
September 5, 2013: The Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers came into force.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Deuteronomy 4:1-2 and 6-8
James 1:17-18, 21-22 and 27.
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15 and 21-23.

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 4, verses 1-2 and 6-8. 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.**
Deuteronomy 4:1-14 gives the full story and is a prologue to the Promulgation of and instruction in the Law of the Old Testament. The words, "now…take notice of …" are standard formula for the opening of a liturgical address. In the Book of

Deuteronomy, Moses is preeminently a teacher. Observance of the Law is an essential condition for secure possession of the land. The Law is of canonical status and must not be altered. In verses 6-8, the observance of this Law is to be Israel's wisdom and discernment – the equivalent of the wisdom tradition of other nations. This, we are informed, is an important step on the way to identifying the Law (Torah) as WISDOM. (cf. The New Jerome Biblical Commentary 6:14).

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.

The Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 14
The Response is: THE JUST WILL LIVE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. Psalm 14 is a challenge for those of us who would enter the Presence of the God. The passport is a blameless life, righteousness, sincerity. All these are interpreted and further defined in relationships with other human beings because the Israelite has a strong sense of community. In the final scrutiny, before we enter the Presence of God, the emphasis is of the same kind (Matthew 25:31), but given an even stronger motive: the love of Christ. "As you did it for the least of my people, you did it for me." (Jamberoo Abbey Choir Psalters).

Pray with the Psalm throughout the week and stay with the lines that call you forth to respond.

Lectio: Read the Second Reading from the Letter of James, chapter 1, verses 17-18, 21-22 and 27.

Meditatio: Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.
This is one of the foundation texts for the practice of Lectio Divina. We must be doers of the Word. If we are not doers of the Word, we hear the Word, but then go our own way, perhaps saying to ourselves: "What a beautiful reading!" And there it remains – a beautiful reading. We've enjoyed hearing it, but we are not open to allowing the text to change our lives for the better.

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 from James 1:18.
THE FATHER GAVE US BIRTH BY HIS MESSAGE OF TRUTH, THAT WE MIGHT BE AS THE FIRST FRUITS OF HIS CREATION. (May we note – the message is one of TRUTH).

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23.
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?
It was Moses who said, in the first reading (Deuteronomy), "You must add nothing to what I command you." And yet, through the ages, the Pharisees and Scribes had added innumerable observances, so much so that these observances were the little gods they worshipped. And it was all these observances which were crippling the real spirit of the Law of Moses. Jesus, well-versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, uses the prophet Isaiah to condemn them and adds: "You put aside the commandments of God to cling to human traditions." Then he gives the homily on the evils which reside within the heart and which cause a person to be unclean.

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 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 comes from a New Testament perspective. Jesus said that he came not to abolish the Old Testament Law but to fulfil it. Every time he was challenged on the Law, he taught a new law: the law of love. He associated with those who were "unclean" according to the Law. He saved the woman taken in adultery by challenging the accusers with their own sinfulness. He said: "I give you a new commandment." This is what I need to hear. This is where the challenge is for me. Love is my Law, my Way. It was the way for Mother Teresa, whose anniversary occurs this week. Unfortunately, it would be easier for me, and probably for a lot of us, if we were presented with a law book, with points 1 – 12. "Love one another as I have loved you" takes us beyond any Law book, into areas that aren't black and white.

2. Someone who shares Lectio Divna with me by mail every week, wrote to me early in July sharing how she had been given the chance to "do" the Word – practise the Gospel. She had given a small sum of money to a poor man in the street. She hadn't been in that part of the city before, but was seeking out a shop which had been recommended to her. He had been turned away from a fast-food outlet because he didn't have enough money for a cup of coffee. This person is a "good" person, having given decades of her life to supporting her family in good times and in bad. She is a person of deep prayer and is faithful to Lectio Divina. With the grace of God, I pray to "do" the Word every day this coming week (in my monastic community), by spreading encouragement, giving praise and lifting up those who might be down. And I thank God for all those who share prayer with me by mail, and whose lives are a living example of Gospel love.

3. Monastic literature is never short of texts which support the homily of Jesus. The ancient Monastic teachers speak of posting a sentinel at the

door of the heart to guard evil from entering within – evil being judgmental thoughts, or all thoughts not of God. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks", says Jesus. If the mouth speaks only complaints, that is what is in the heart. As described by Sr. Joan Chittister, "complaining is the acid that shrivels my own soul and the soul of the community around me." The same can be said for negative talk, negative judgments, dark words, "nothing is right" attitudes. All of these shrivel the soul. It is up to me. Do I want to follow Jesus or not? I find it worthwhile - and I recommend it - to take just one morning or one afternoon and listen to what I say aloud to people. What kind of conversation do I engage in? Whatever kind it is, then that is what is in my heart.

Lectio Divina is about reading the Sacred Scriptures
and reflecting on the Sacred Scriptures 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.