LECTIO DIVINA
HOLY READING – PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

Sunday, June 21st, 2015, is the 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.

The readings for Year B are:
Job 38:1, 1-11
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Mark 4:35-41

For those praying the Liturgy of the Hours, THE PSALTER TAKES WEEK 4

Before beginning to pray with the Sacred Texts, take a look at the week ahead:

In the Liturgy:
June 22: Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, Martyrs of the English Reformation.
June 24: Nativity of St. John the Baptist

In the Australian Church:
June 26: Bathurst – Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Michael McKenna, 2009.
June 27: Maitland-Newcastle, and Wilcannia-Forbes celebrate their Patronal Feast, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The Social Justice Calendar:
June 23: Public Service Day.
June 26: International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

This is also the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Lectio: Read the first reading from the Book of Job, chapter 38, verse 1 and verses 8-11. 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.** The Book of Job is part of the Old Testament Wisdom Literature which asks questions about life and death, joy and suffering. This book literally grapples with the question: Why do good people suffer? At some point in our lives or many times in our lives we ask the same question. Chapters 38-42, from which this text has been taken, narrate Job's Conversation with God as to why he has been afflicted with so much suffering.
The "sea" in Biblical Literature symbolizes unnbridled chaos. The Spirit of God hovered over the watery chaos at the beginning of creation and brought order out of chaos. In the New Testament Jesus will calm the sea and save the Apostles from drowning. Here in this text we are reminded that just as God contains the watery chaos, so God can prevent further suffering.

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* No. 1.

Read the Responsorial Psalm. The response is: GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, HIS LOVE IS EVERLASTING. Psalm 106 is a Psalm consisting of 43 verses. We are given just a small portion. It is a Psalm about God's inexhaustible love. We, a pilgrim people, still have a stormy passage to make, but God's protection is with us. The images in this Psalm are profound: the wonders he does in the deep (the wonders God works within us through suffering?) Distress, Intercessory Prayer, the intervention of God, the stilling of the storm and the waves, the safe haven, Prayer of thanksgiving.

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

Lectio: Read the second text from 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Meditatio: Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.

The last sentence of the text is the focus. The focus is the Lord, not self. The effect of Christ's saving act, His death, is NEW LIFE. To be "in Christ" is to belong to the believing community. There must also be a radical shift in the way believers assess other human beings. Christ died for all. Paul condemns an assessment of

others based on the conventional criteria of a fallen world. (cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary 50:25). I have summarized the commentary briefly.

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.

Lectio: The Gospel Verse is taken from the Gospel of Luke 7:16. A GREAT PROPHET HAS APPEARED AMONG US; GOD HAS VISITED HIS PEOPLE.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from Mark 4:15-41.

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?
This magnificent text goes straight to the heart. Once again, the power of the Sea versus the power of God. The call of the text is to believe. Faith is the teaching here.
When all seems lost – faith.
When there is nothing but despair – faith.
When it seems we are drowning – faith.

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 No. 3

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with 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. I reflect that sometimes in life it doesn't seem that God is preventing further suffering. I have friends with cancer, with chronic illness, with children who have been sexually abused by adults in positions of responsibility. Then I see the Asylum Seekers drowning in the Mediterranean Sea and the Millions of people whose home is a tent in a Refugee Camp. Why doesn't God stop the suffering? Is that the right question? Should it be rather, 'Why don't I stop the suffering?' Surely it begins with me and the way I live. It begins with the way I treat another person – in traffic, on public transport, in the Shopping Mall, in the Supermarket. One person can shift the balance from despair to hope, from despair to faith, from despair to love. "Love one another as I have loved you." (Jesus). So, why don't I stop the suffering by the choices I make for life. I have the power to be

the heart, the mind, the voice, the hands and the feet of Jesus, bringing only “new life” to our world. There is no use my pointing the finger at those who kill other human beings, if I am doing the same by my thoughts, words and actions. When we were children in a Catholic School, we learned about the sins of slander, calumny and detraction. We don’t hear them mentioned much now, but they are still alive and well, and still as destructive as ever.

2. I am greatly challenged by this reading to be the new person who has been transformed because of Christ’s death and to manifest this truth by refraining from assessing other persons by the conventional criteria of a fallen world. Jesus redeemed humankind and brought Reconciliation and a new Creation. Sometimes I assess others as if I haven’t been recreated and as if they haven’t been recreated. And I notice that I always do this kind of thing when negative people have been bashing me with negative talk. Recently, someone gave me a Poster with the following words: ‘Let go of the people who dull your shine, poison your spirit, and bring you drama. Cancel your subscription to their issues.’ (Steve Maraboli). As always, there is work to do, if I am to

be that “new creation” –that gift for which Jesus laid down His very life.

3. I had a letter recently from someone who is a person of deep faith and who is having financial difficulties. She is also a Carer, looking after an elderly friend who has no one else in this world. She had taken this lady into her own home. She sent us a donation of $50.00 and when I suggested she couldn’t afford it, she said: ‘After I sent you $50.00, I received $174.00 from Centrelink for compensation for Medical Equipment for my elderly friend. Then Coles had $50.00 percent off all the groceries because of the floods in our part of New South Wales. Then I found the adjustable bed I needed for my friend at the Salvation Army Store for $250.00 and only $15.00 delivery, as compared with $8,000 somewhere else. Then the electric blanket I needed for my friend was down to $39.00 dollars.’ Her comment: “It rained money. Thank you Lord.” She and her friend do Lectio Divina together every day. They also pray part of the Liturgy of the Hours every day, and turn to the Word of God when they have difficulties in this life. I thank God for her and for so many people of faith who have touched my life and reminded me of the teaching of Jesus.

LECTIO DIVINA IS ABOUT READING THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, 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.