***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 22nd May 2016
Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:
May 24: Our Lady Help of Christians
May 26: St. Philip Neri

In The Social Justice Calendar:
May 22: International Day for Biological Diversity
May 23: International Day to end Obstetric Fistula
May 24: On this day in 2015, Pope Francis' Encyclical "Laudato Si" was launched.
May 25: Beginning of a Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.
May 26: National Sorry Day.
May 27: Beginning of a week of prayer for Reconciliation with Indigenous people.

In the Australian Church:
May 22: Rockhampton – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral. (1982)
May 24: Australia - National Patronal Feast. Broome, Bunbury, Canberra-Goulburn, Military Ordinariate of Australia, Sydney and Townsville – Patronal Feast.
May 25: Maronite Diocese – Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Antoine Tarabay, OLM, 2013.
Lismore – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Patrick Farrelly in 1974.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Proverbs 8:22-31
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

***Lectio*: Read the first reading from the Book of Proverbs, Ch. 8, verses 22-31.**
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.**

In the commentaries I have consulted on this text, chapter 8, verses 1-36 is the second speech of personified wisdom. The first speech is in chapter 1, verses 20-33. This second speech is divided easily into parts. The text we are given covers two parts: Wisdom's priority to all things and Wisdom's presence at the creation. Wisdom's superiority over all things is due to her origin before them. Wisdom witnessed the creation and came to know its secrets. (cf. New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 28: 33 & 34). To cut a long commentary short, Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God. Jesus was present at the beginning of all time. Jesus was with God. Jesus was God. And Jesus became human and lived among the children of God. And so, on Trinity Sunday, this is the first very significant text which draws us into the Mystery of the Godhead.

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: Pslam 8
The response is: O LORD, OUR GOD,
HOW WONDERFUL YOUR NAME IN ALL THE EARTH.
Psalm 8 is noted in our monastic Psalters as a lyrical reflection of the creation and endowment of humanity. It is also a hymn of praise to the creator of the earth, of the heavens, of the birds, beasts and sea creatures. And it takes us back to the Easter Vigil – to that first reading from the Book of Genesis, which was the account of Creation. It is a beautiful reflection and one we can dwell on through this week.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Mass Reading: Romans 5:1-5.**

***Meditatio*:** This text begins with the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who has shown us the Way to God, and brought us to God through his passion and death. And so, because of what Jesus has done for us, we can be confident in looking forward to the glory of God which awaits us. Then Paul brings into the the text "sufferings" as something we can boast about. In retrospect, Paul is surely comparing the sufferings of Christ with our own situation. He gives us the reason we can boast about sufferings: they bring patience. Patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope. So there is an element of hard work, and that is "patience". The final oucome is that hope is not something deceptive. Why? Because the love of God has been poured into our lives by the Holy Spirit of God which has been given to us on that day of Pentecost. Thus, we have a Trinitarian text.

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

The Gospel Verse is adapted from Apocalypse 1:8.
GLORY TO THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: TO GOD WHO IS, WHO WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME.
(A beautiful prayer to use at the beginning of Lectio Divina each day this week).

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from John 16:12-15.**

***Meditatio*: Some background to the text which will help us respond.**
This is another Trinitarian text, and one which unites the three Divine Persons of the Godhead. Whatever Jesus has told us, has as its source and foundation, God the Father. None of us can go to God the Father except through Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. And finally, it is the Holy Spirit who will explain (reveal) to us the true meaning of all Jesus has taught us in the Gospels. And, as we well know, it is the Holy Spirit at work within us who leads us to understand the sacred scriptures and allow them to challenge us to live more authentically. While we are reading, understanding, being still, or responding, the Holy Spirit is always prompting us from within.

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. My response is to Jesus Christ as our wisdom. St. Paul says that Jesus Christ is our wisdom, our holiness and our freedom. If I ponder on the real meaning of wisdom in the Sacred Scriptures, I can plunge headlong into the depths of God. "Wisdom" is both insight into the true nature of things and the ability to discern modes of action with a view to their results. Taking these meanings further, I see that Jesus is my insight into the true nature of things, of life, of love, of relationships, of the way I work. And Jesus is the one who teaches me to discern modes of action (my conduct) with a view to the results of my actions – my behaviour towards others. So, it is no wonder then, that Pope Francis says: "The first thing for a disciple is to be with the Master, to listen to him and to learn from him." (page 15, 'The Church of Mercy'). And so, I am called again to BE with the Master, not to always pour out my troubles, do all the talking, busily turn the pages of my bible or religious books. JUST TO BE. That is the challenge.

2. I am responding to the progression: sufferings, patience, perseverance, hope. And Hope will not deceive me. The best understanding of hope that I have read is that written by somene called Jean Kerr in a book called "Finishing Touches", published in 1973. Kerr wrote: "Hope is the feeling you have that the feeling you have isn't permanent." I would change the wording and say: Hope is the reality you have that the sufferings you are going through are not permanent, or will be conquered by persevering patience. Isn't this how physically damaged men and women see it? They are patient, going through rehabilitation, learning to walk again, taking part in competitive sport again, learning to speak again. I had a physiotherapist after my second bout of brain surgery. She had worked with returned soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan

and shared some of the stories with me. I learnt a lot about hope and these stories inspiried me, to say the very least.

3. Bl. Columba Marmion reminds us to pay great attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to allow the Holy Spirit to play on the strings of one's heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most beautiful of melodies – my response to the Word of Scripture. And so, I pray: "Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on 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.