***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday 9 October 2016
28th 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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:
October 11: St. John XXIII (Optional Memorial)
October 15: St. Teresa of Avila

In the Australian Church:
October 13: Wagga Wagga – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral.

In the Social Justice Calendar:
October 10: World Mental Health Day
October 11: International Day of the Girl Child
October 11: 1962 – Opening Session of the Second Vatican Council.
October 12: Jewish Day of Atonement (Yom Kipper)
October 12: 2002 – First Bali Bombing. 202 people killed. 240 injured.
October 15: International Day of Rural Women.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The Readings are:
2 Kings 5:14-17;
2 Timothy 2:8-13
Luke 17:11-19

***Lectio*: Read the first text from the Second Book of Kings, chapter 5: verses 14-17.**
Be aware of the way you handle your bible. Take it up reverently and read the sacred text with deep reverence. This text is given to all of us on this particular Sunday in the Church's Liturgical Year, for our formation as Christians.

***Meditatio:* Some Background on the text, so that we can understand it more profoundly, and make our response to it.**
This is the story of Naaman the leper obeying the prophet Elisha – the result of his obedience and his faith in responding to the command was a miraculous cure. Naaman returns to Elisha to express his gratitude, and offers him a gift.
The model presented in this text is:
Petition (in this case, petition to be healed of illness), Command– faith response – cleansing – gratitude.

In the New Testament and in the Church founded on Jesus Christ, this will remain the model to follow: Prayer of petition, command or course to follow (the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick), faith response, cleansing, gratitude.

With this background in mind, read the text again. Ponder for a while. Maybe a day or more! Make your response.
I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

The Responsorial Psalm: Pslam 97
The response is: THE LORD HAS REVEALED TO THE NATIONS HIS SAVING POWER.

Psalm 97 is a psalm of praise to God, the king of the world.

Lectio: **Read the second text from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 8-13.**
Hold your bible with deep reverence. It is more precious than gold.

Meditatio: **A little background to the text, so that we can make an informed response.** First of all, Paul reminds Timothy that the Good News is that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David. The text is built on two theological foundations:

1. Isaiah 11:1-10 (Messianic Prophetic poem).
2. Christ's victory over sin and death.

The hymn at the end is one of the familiar liturgical hymns of the early Church. It has been incorporated into the Liturgy of the Hours, both in the Monastic Breviary and the "Prayer of the Church" used by countless millions of Christians daily.

Stand back from the reading and go about your work for a while. Maybe a day or two. Be alert to the grace of God. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist on the strings of the harp. The Holy Spirit will bring forth the most beautiful response to this reading. You will be surprised by the Spirit. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse is taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
FOR ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS TO GOD, BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT HE EXPECTS OF YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.

Lectio**: Read the Gospel text from Luke 17:11-19.**
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. Stand back from it and ponder.

Meditatio**: Some background to help us understand the text and respond to it.**
This is a text packed with Lucan Theology. Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem – Jesus will be crucified outside Jerusalem and will rise again. The Church will begin from Jerusalem. In the course of the journey (which goes through Luke's Gospel), Jesus is travelling (at this point in time) on the border between two cultures at enmity: Samaritans and Jews. (Verse 17:11) Luke places on the lips of the ten lepers a confession of faith – a proclamation of, and recognition that, Jesus was the promised Messiah. They were desperate sick people, who asked to be healed. In faith, they were obedient to him, and thus were cleansed. It was written into Jewish law that they must show themselves to the priests. Jesus is obeying the Law in this instance. Only the Jewish priests had the ultimate say – they were the ones authorized to pronounce the lepers clean and give them the freedom to take their places back in society, instead of living in a lepers' camp outside the city. The fact that the one who returned to thank Jesus was a Samaritan, is also deliberate on Luke's part. The foreigner returns to thank the Son of God – Luke's statement that salvation is for all – not just for Jews.

Read the Gospel text again slowly. Stand back from the text and the commentary and go about your work quietly ruminating. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

EVANGELIZATIO: My lived response to the texts with which the Church exhorts me to pray. 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 to this text is to think about the multitudinous times in my life when, in spite of sound spiritual advice, I've said to myself: "I know better". I've been independent, unwilling to obey the advice which would set me free. I both like and dislike the song "My Way", recorded by countless singers, and translated in many languages. It is sung all over the world and is a favourite at funerals. I see in retrospect that if I had followed the spiritual advice of "elders" and "prophets" in my life, I may not have made such a mess of things in the course of this journey home to God. And so, as I start afresh each morning, I am reminded of the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa: "From beginnings to beginnings, through beginnings that never end".

2. I am responding to one line of the hymn at the end: "If we hold firm then we shall reign with him." Holding firm is a life-long challenge. It requires effort and commitment on my part – daily *Lectio Divina*, especially with the Gospel. I am reminded again that I need to till (or turn) the soil of my heart daily, with the plough of the Gospel [teaching]. (St. John Cassian). The plough referred to is a primitive farming tool. A large farm animal, most probably a horse, pulls the plough. It is steadied by the farmer who walks behind it and guides it. It cuts into the earth, breaking through the dry and hard sections – preparing the soil for the sowing of the seed. As I understand it, this is what it means to hold firm to Jesus. The Word of God is alive and active. The plough is the Word of God turning the soil of my heart, and God is steadying the plough so that it doesn't by-pass the dry hard soil, but cuts into it. Is the Holy Spirit pulling the plough? Does the "furrow" symbolize the direct road to the Father? My heart is filled with thanksgiving.

3. One of the cards on sale in our Abbey Shop has a quotation which has always called me forth. It says simply: "A thankful heart remembers." It changed my life when I first read it a long time ago. A thankful heart remembers what has been given to it. My own grandmother, when she visited the town in which she was born, always spent time at the graves of her parents. Even though her parents were with God, this was her tangible way of remembering all they had given her and the way they had stood by her. She would sit there for a long time, sometimes in silence, and sometimes sharing with me all the love they gave her. An anonymous author contributes the following words which we can well add to our treasury of wisdom: "Learn to make the most of life, lose no happy day. Time can never bring thee back the chances that have been swept away. Leave no tender word unsaid [especially a word of thanks], love while life shall last. The mill will never turn again, with water that has past." (Cited in "The Journey" by Lynne Mathew). So, may we resolve again to say "thank you" while those we love are still alive. Why wait for a funeral and

sing hymns of thanks or write words of thanks on the booklet. We can do that too, - it will be especially meaningful if we have also thanked our loved ones while they were alive.

Lectio Divina is about reading the Sacred Scriptures and
reflecting on them 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.
Lectio Divina is a way of life
not a method of prayer.