***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, November 22nd 2015 is the last Sunday of the Year and the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.
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 Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy:
November 23: St. Columban, abbot. An Optional Memorial. This day is mostly celebrated in Monastic communities.
November 24: St. Andrew Dung-Lac and his companions, martyrs. (Memorial)

In the Australian Church:
November 22: the Diocese of Ballarat remembers the death of Bishop James O'Collins in 1983.

The Social Justice Calendar:
November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
November 25: On this day in 1981 – Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.
November 27: First Sydney Peace Prize awarded to Muhammad Yunus.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are as follows:
Daniel 7:13-14
Apocalypse 1:5-8
John 18:33-37

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading from the Prophet Daniel, chapter 7, verses 13-14.**
Read it in a reverent way. The Word of God is sacred. Let us give ourselves to the Sacred Text and open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit calling us forth to respond. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you read. This is the true "oratio" (prayer) of *Lectio Divina*.

***Meditatio*: A little background to the text, so that we understand it and can make an informed response to it.**
In its original context, it is apocalyptic literature. Prior to these few verses, the prophet Daniel had seen (in a dream), a succession of earthly empires which would both dominate and characterize his own era in the history of Israel. Now the scene switches to a vision in which Daniel sees a Messiah figure. The Messiah is depicted in the presence of God and the heavenly court. God is depicted as the "elder", "one of great age", or a "wisdom figure". The Messiah is LED into the presence of God. Led by whom? We are not informed but probably by members of the heavenly court! We keep in mind that this is apocalyptic literature and so we need to enter into the scene created by the vision which the prophet is having. Like a prince of an earthly court who is about to be consecrated as King of an earthly empire, so this same imagery is used to depict the conferring of kingship upon the Messiah. The Messiah

is one like a son of man – the Word made flesh – the Messiah who took on our human body in order to bring us the gift of salvation. The last section of the text is our reassurance – the Kingdom of God will endure forever. Nothing can destroy the Kingdom which Jesus came to proclaim and to which he invited us to enter: Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

With this background, read the text again, and take a long time to ponder on the overall message. Build into each day some quiet time. Be still before the Lord. After pondering over many hours (days), you will want to make your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 92
The response is: THE LORD IS KING, HE IS ROBED IN MAJESTY.
Psalm 92 is a psalm which praises God as King of the world. In the Old Testament context it is the first of a series which bears the title "Royal Psalms". This series of psalms celebrates the kingship of God, a God who is the creator and ruler of the universe, and whose eternal tranquillity is contrasted with the restlessness of the sea. The Christological dimension of this psalm can be seen in Mark 4:39, where Jesus says to the wind and the sea, "Peace, be still." He gave the Apostles this witness of his power and reassured them that they could trust completely in him, for he came to bring only peace on earth. Another New Testament text of John's Gospel also links this psalm with Jesus. Pilate asks: "So you are a king then?" And Jesus declares that his Kingdom is not of this world. Certain lines of the psalm will speak to your spirit. Pray with them throughout this week.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Reading, from Apocalypse 1:5-8**
PAUSE. Read it again. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart like a harpist, in order to bring forth the most authentic melody of your response…

***Meditatio*:** While this text looks to the second coming of Christ, the main teaching is that Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the One is IS, who WAS and who IS TO COME. He is the supreme ruler of the earth (Christ the King of the Universe). He is the first-born from the dead – the one who has conquered death, and the one who has conquered sin by washing our sins away in his precious blood.
A note on, "He made us a kingdom and priests…" This means that the work of Jesus fulfils the promise of Exodus 19:6. Being a Kingdom means being under God's rule not Satan's Rule
Verses 7 and 8 contain two prophetic sayings: The first is an apocalyptic prediction which combines Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10. We need to read these two texts in order to enter the depths of the sayings.
The second saying is a Divine oracle. "I am" is typical of oracles in which the revealer identifies himself or herself. This is the first of only two passages in the Book of the Apocalypse in which God is explicitly identified as the speaker. Apocalypse 21:5-8 is the other one.
(for this background I have drawn on the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 63:18).

Take time over the text before making your response to it in the days ahead.
I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 2.

The Gospel Verse: Mark 11:9 and 10.
BLESSED IS HE WHO INHERITS THE KINGDOM OF DAVID OUR FATHER. BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Lectio: **Read the Gospel text from John 18:33-37.**
Pause and ponder. Read the text again.

Meditatio: This Gospel text is part of what we hear every Good Friday – from the Passion of Jesus Christ according to John.
The nature of the kingship of Jesus is portrayed here.
The Kingdom of Jesus is not like the Kingdoms of this world. The work of Jesus as King is to bear witness to the TRUTH.
And then the clarification which challenges all who dare to follow Jesus: "Those who are on the side of truth listen to my voice."
There is no need for complicated commentaries on a text like this.
The truth mostly hurts and yet, Jesus came to bear witness to the truth.
He taught us: To give and it shall be given to us, not to judge, to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, to be compassionate, to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us, to love as he loved, to be peace-makers, to be gentle, to be merciful, to suffer persecution for his sake. In other words, to follow the precepts of the Gospel. In doing this, we will remain on the side of truth and therefore we will be attuned to the voice of Jesus always.

Stand back from the Gospel and ponder. Visit a quiet corner of a church which is open for prayer. Hear the words: BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. Allow the Holy Spirit to play on the fibres of your heart like a harpist in order to bring forth the most beautiful melody of your response to God. I share my response in *Evangelizatio* 3.

Evangelizatio **is my LIVED RESPONSE to the sacred scriptures given to me each week by the Church for my formation as a Christian. If I don't respond, they are merely texts on a page. When I do respond, they are my life.**

1. My response is to the eternal reign of God. And I share something which I have in my prayer journal from my trusted friend, Fr. Thomas Keating: "Jesus lays out the principles, offers the invitation, gives encouragement and finally appeals to our freedom: 'If you wish, the reign of God is yours. But you have to take the responsibility of deciding. If you choose to enter it, you have nothing to worry about. The evil in you will not overcome the good that has been sown. At some point, the life you now experience with so much conflict will be transformed and all the evils that weigh you down will disappear'." So, the choice is mine, and not just today, but every new day of my life. And as Fr. Keating also says, "the reign [kingdom] of God is disruptive." It will disrupt my plans, and take me where I wouldn't normally go. It will challenge me to look beyond the narrow confines of my experience. And it is certainly not comfortable.

2. I have shared with you before that we hold in trust in our Heritage Centre, a piece of ecclesiastical embroidery worked in the middle of the 19th

Century by German Nuns living in exile in England. The Imperial Deputation of 1803 sent nuns and monks into exile and their lands were seized by the Government and returned to the ruling classes. The piece of embroidery in question (about the size of a large cope hood), depicts the Paschal Lamb and the Greek Letters "Alpha" and "Omega". This speaks to me of their faith amidst great hardship – exiled from their homeland, and yet filled with a strength of faith that proclaimed in their work: Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And I look at the ways I so easily go "under" when the big waves hit. Do I roll with the waves and go on believing that the Lord is here, or do I sit in the corner in a depressed state? This piece of embroidery is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. For me it is more beautiful than the Pugin pieces because of the circumstances of its production.

3. This week I will spend time with Matthew 2:2, Mark 15:18, Luke 23:2-3, John 6:15 and John 19:1-22, to deepen my understanding of the nature of the Kingdom which Jesus came to establish.

Lectio Divina is Holy Reading,
that is,
reading of the Sacred Scriptures
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.
It is about reading (and listening),
reflecting,
praying in tune with the Holy Spirit within me,
resting in God,
and responding in the way I live.