***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, 29 May 2016
Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)
For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalter takes Week One.

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 31: Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. (Feast)
June 1: St. Justin, Memorial
June 3: Sacred Heart of Jesus (Solemnity)

In the Australian Church:
May 29: Rockhampton – Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Michael McCarthy, 2014.
May 31: Broken Bay – Patronal Feast, "Mary, Star of the Sea" – a Solemnity in this Diocese.
June 1: Maitland/Newcastle – Anniversary of the death of Bishop Leo Clarke in 2006.
Townsville – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral in 2006.
June 4: Wollongong – Patronal Feast, "Immaculate Heart of Mary". In the Wollongong Diocese this Solemnity is usually transferred to the next day, Sunday and the Liturgy of the Word is of the Sunday.

In the Social Justice Calendar:
May 29: International Day of UN Peacekeepers.
June 1: Global Day of Parents
June 3: On this day in 1886, Catholic and Anglican Missionaries were martyred in Uganda. A complete story and list of those murdered can be found on www.buganda.com/martyrs.
Also on this day in 1992, the High Court of Australia handed down the decision in the Mabo Case.
June 4: International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression. Also on this day in 1989, the Tiananmen Square Massacre occurred.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

The readings are:
Genesis 14:18-20
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Luke 9:11-17.

***Lectio*: Read the first text from the Book of Genesis chapter 14, verses 18-20.**
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.**
Background to this text is of the utmost importance. Melchizedek can be found in an historical setting (here in Genesis 14), in a poetic setting (Psalm 109) and in a doctrinal setting (Hebrews 5-7). If we have the time, it would be beneficial to find these texts and read them prayerfully. The background to this text is as follows:

The king of Elam (modern Iran) and three allied Kings went to war against five kings who ruled the areas near the Dead Sea. Of the five, four of the kings were successful. They plundered Sodom and Gomorrah, and carried off Lot and his family (14:1-12). Abraham then enlisted 318 trained men and went forth and defeated the invaders under cover of darkness. When the battle was over the King of Sodom wanted to give Abraham some form of payment: Abraham refused, lest the king could hold it over him. Instead, he put his faith in God and distanced himself from the polytheistic worship of the kings in question. Then Melchizedek enters into the story. He gives Abraham bread and wine and a blessing from God Most High. This king was king of Salem (Jerusalem – cf. Psalm 76:2). He was a priest of God the Most High and therefore Abraham gave him a tenth of everything he had. (This summary is adapted from Paul Gardiner's extensive research on every character of the bible). This background is essential for an understanding of a text which seems to appear out of nowhere.

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: Psalm 110
The response is: YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER, IN THE LINE OF MELCHIZEDEK.
This Psalm is Christological in essence. We hear the Ascension of Christ in the first verse: Christ's place with the Father, or Christ's Priesthood (the high priest who intercedes on our behalf). Pray with the Psalm throughout the week and note the words, phrases or lines which speak to your heart.

Lectio: **Read the second text from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 23-26.**

Meditatio: This is Paul's teaching on the institution of the Eucharist. While the text is self-explanatory, the background to the text is that the Corinthian community had come to treat the Lord's supper in a selfish manner. There was greed, even drunkenness amongst them. Paul is calling them back to what it is about, reminding them of the right way to behave in the situation.

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 John 6:51-52.
I AM THE LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN, SAYS THE LORD; WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER.

***Lectio*: Read the Gospel text from Luke 9:11-17.**
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.**
The setting for this story is a "lonely place", a place away from the hustle and bustle of the town. In this "lonely place" there was no food for the vast crowds who came to hear the teaching of Jesus and to be cured of illness. It was late in the day.
So, it is our isolation that is addressed.
It is our hunger for the real food – the Eucharist
It is late in the day – that day being any stage or time of our lives when we need to hear the words of Jesus and receive healing for our woundedness.
There are five loaves and two fish. Five and two make seven, and seven in the scriptures is a symbol of "completion", or "fullness".
With this "fullness" in his hands, Jesus raises his eyes to heaven and prays and then blesses the fullness and breaks the fullness which is so full, so complete, that it all keeps on coming – the leftovers fill twelve baskets.
The number 12 in Scriptures designates Divine Administration. The whole wondrous miracle is a proclamation to the entire world that Jesus is there for everyone who seeks Him. He will never **not** be there.

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 is to Abraham's courage in the face of polytheistic worship. Gardiner's Commentary says that Abraham distanced himself from the worship of many gods. Way back in the early 1970s I used to pray with Carlo Carretto's "Letters From the Desert". I still have my notes about the false gods which can usurp the place of the one true God in my life: obsession with more and more possessions, more and more profit. Even the love of study and the passion for research can make people as mad and blind as termites in their dark tunnel. Blind devotion to false gods causes the human heart to lose peace, serenity, a balanced vision of things. On the other hand, whoever is immersed in the love of God, lives in deep peace, has an ordered view of things and knows the meaning of true freedom. Pope Francis, in his book "The Church of Mercy", has a chapter on demolishing the idols. He speaks of the cult and the god of money, and a culture of waste. He notes truthfully how this culture of waste extends beyond things and into the lives of human beings – persons become easy

to just discard – the unborn child or the elderly person. Then he mentions the leprosy of careerism. He sums it all up as the false gods of greed, pride, selfishness.

2. I am responding to this text in the light of some anniversaries which occur this week. On June 3rd, 1886, the Anglican and Catholic martyrs of Uganda gave up their lives for Christ, as Christ had done for humanity. (This is my Body. This is my Blood). On 4th June each year, we have the International Day for Innocent Children who are Victims of Aggression. On the same day, the Tiananmen Square Massacre occurred in 1989. So, on June 4th, may we remember in prayer, the lives of the innocent children who are violated by sexual and physical abuse, or by domestic violence where drugs or alcohol may be the cause. Let us call to mind the children kept in Detention Centres run by the Australian Government and children who are maimed, killed or emotionally damaged by war. Let us also remember the young who were shot in Tiananmen Square. All these innocent young people are made in the image and likeness of God Incarnate. Their lives are taken and broken, snuffed out quickly or slowly depending on their circumstances.

3. My response is to share something I read often in Br. John Venard's book, "Finally The Battler's God". He writes so truthfully: "Being addicted to a 'me me life' does not bring happiness." And: "The earth has enough for everybody's need but not enough for everybody's greed." St. Augustine prayed that we would become the Eucharist we receive: Body broken and life poured out for others. Henri Nouwen taught that one must be "taken" and "given" as was Jesus. And finally, in that song we all love to hear, "The Rose", we have the words: "It's the one who won't be taken, who cannot seem to give, and the soul afraid of dying that never learns to live."

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.