***LECTIO DIVINA*: Holy Reading**

Sunday, May 10th, 2015, is the Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year B.
It is also Mothers' Day.

The readings are as follows:

Acts of the Apostles 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48.
1 John 4:7-10
(or 1 John 4:11-16)
John 15:9-17, or John 17:11-19.

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 this week:
May 14: St. Matthias. Feast.

In the Australian Church:
May 15: Diocese of Sandhurst celebrates the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral.
The Diocese of Wagga Wagga celebrates the Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Gerard Hanna in 2002.

The Social Justice Calendar:

May 10: On this day in 1994, Nelson Mandela gave his Inaugural Address as President of South Africa.
May 10: World Fair Trade Day
May 11: World Day of Prayer for Vocations.
May 12: International Nurses' Day
May 15: International Day of Families.
May 16: World Debt Day.

***Lectio*:** Read the First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10, verses 25-26, 34-35 and 44-48. 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*:** Some informed background so that we can honour the text in its original meaning. This is the second time in the season of Eastertide that we are presented with the conversion to Christianity of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, and his entire household. The first time was the Day Mass on Easter Sunday. The key verse of this reading and the one which astonishes all who are present is: "…anybody of any nationality who fears (reveres) God and does what is right (true) is acceptable to God." "While Peter was still speaking…" emphasizes the power of the preaching of God's Word, and

the faith of the listeners which brought down the Holy Spirit upon them.
This is a dynamic text for all of us who engage in Lectio Divina as a way of life.

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* No. 1.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 18. The response: THE LORD HAS REVEALED TO THE NATIONS HIS SAVING POWER.
There are no words more fitting than these to respond to the conversion of Cornelius and his household, and to the key verse of the first reading: "…anybody of any nationality who reveres God and does what is right is pleasing to God."
Psalm 97, is an "orchestra of praise to God, the King of the world." (Jamberoo Abbey Psalters). And so, the perfect response to the fact that God, King of the whole world has revealed to all who live in the world SALVATION.

Certain lines of the Psalm will speak to your spirit. Pray with them throughout this week.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Reading, from 1 John 4:7-10.**

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*:** Some brief background so that we can make an informed response to the text, the response which will be prompted by the presence of the Holy Spirit praying within us.
The KEY three words of the text are: GOD IS LOVE.
And in the light of these three words, we are taken back to the Last Supper where Jesus gave us the greatest commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.
GOD IS LOVE.
And whoever this author is, probably a disciple of John, reminds the community that the love of God is manifest in the Son of God who is sent to us to be our **way** home, our **truth** for living, and our **life** for the journey.

Take time over the text before making your response to it in the days ahead.
I share mine in Evangelizatio No. 2.

The Gospel Verse: John 14:23
ALL WHO LOVE ME WILL KEEP MY WORDS, AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE THEM AND WE WILL COME TO THEM.

Lectio: Read the Gospel text from John 15:9-17.

Pause and ponder.
Read the text again.

Meditatio: This text is about Jesus' love "for his own". This love is shown in his death – the laying down of His Life for humankind, and is the example which all are to follow.
The commandment to "love one another" is said TWICE in this text.
There is no escaping it.
Then there is the reminder that Jesus chose his disciples, and commissioned them to go out and bear fruit, and to bear fruit that will last.
Then the promise that the Father will give anything that we ask for in the Name of Jesus.
Hence the ending of nearly all the Prayers in the Liturgy: "We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

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 No. 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. I am responding by reminding myself that when I hear the Word of God or read the Word of God, the Spirit of God, already dwelling within me, prompts me to respond. Blessed Columba Marmion says the Holy Spirit plays on the fibres of my heart to bring forth the most beautiful melody – the most beautiful, authentic song of my "response" to the touch of God's Word, and in that response (every time I respond), my life is changed and I am more and more transformed into the likeness of Christ. I become a more authentic follower of Jesus.
2. My response is to note that May 15th, in the Social Justice Calendar, is the International Day of Families. It is in the stability of family that love is first learned. And unfortunately, that is not the case for all people. However, in our times, there are different models of family, such as Fr. Chris Riley's "Kids off the Street" which gathers the scattered children into the safety of a stable situation.

There are shelters for the homeless, and in those shelters, often an atmosphere of family is created. There are those heroic people who are foster parents and who take a baby for two to three years, giving the child a stable beginning in life, a beginning grounded in love. And there are Neighbours who take the kids next door when they get home from school, because their family situation isn't good. And – there are heroic grandparents who raise their grandchildren because their own children have gone astray somehow and can't take on the responsibility. Let us pray for all these persons who provide a seedbed of love for those in their care. GOD IS LOVE.

3. I am responding to two "truths" of this text: Firstly, the command to love as Jesus has loved me. And secondly, to "go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last." What legacy do I want to leave in this world when it comes time to die? Surely, the legacy of love. I want to bear love that will last. And I can only do this by making choices

for life over death, every hour of every day. In our Social Justice Calendar this week, we also have the anniversary of Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Speech as President of South Africa. Before that, he spent 27 years in prison, where he gave birth to the fruits of love and light, the love and light which would eventually shine for his people, and indeed for the whole world. He bore fruit that has lasted and which will never be forgotten. No matter what our circumstances, may we choose to bear the fruits of love which will change our world for the better.

Lectio Divina **is <u>Holy Reading</u>, 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.**