***LECTIO DIVINA*: (Holy Reading)**
PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES
Sunday, July 5th 2015
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
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 the Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

In the Liturgy this week:
July 11: St. Benedict (Memorial). Feast or Solemnity in Benedictine Communities.

In the Australian Church:
July 8: Cairns – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1968).
July 10: Adelaide – Episcopal Ordination of Most Rev. Philip Wilson (1996)
July 11: Adelaide – Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (1996)
July 11: Toowoomba – Episcopal Ordination of Most Rev. Robert McGuckin (2012).

The Social Justice Calendar:
July 5: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday.
NAIDOC WEEK BEGINS.
July 5: On this day in 1935 the Dalai Lama was born in Tibet. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989
July 7: On this day in 1945 Blessed Peter To Rot was killed in Papua New Guinea – martyred for the faith.
July 10: On this day in 1985 – sinking of the Greenpeace Ship "Rainbow Warrior" in Auckland.
July 11: World Population Day.

LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS

Readings:
Ezekiel 2:2-5
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Mark 6:1-6

***Lectio*: Read the First Reading from the Prophet Ezekiel 2: 2-5**
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*:** The Prophet Ezekiel, as we saw on the 11th Sunday three weeks ago, was one of the Israelites taken into exile and he spoke on God's behalf, to the Jews in exile. The text itself is clear in its message. The New Jerome Biblical Commentary 20:21, has the following summary: "God charges Ezekiel with the mission to speak the divine word to a people so hardened in disobedience that they will not listen; rather, they will oppose him as a deadly enemy. But, as charged in both the call of Moses and Jeremiah, the prophet is to speak despite all opposition. Verse 5 is a

typical ending for an Ezekiel oracle: "They shall know…" It is a "recognition statement" – the formula which declares that "the Lord has done something."

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: OUR EYES ARE FIXED ON THE LORD, PLEADING FOR HIS MERCY.
We are informed that Psalm 122 is both a cry for help and a pilgrimages. The exiles returned from Babylon to a ruined city and a neglected land. Hostile colonists mocked their efforts to rebuild (Nehemiah 2:19). This short hymn expresses the trust that upheld this "remnant of Israel". (cf. Jamberoo Abbey Monastic Psalters). Certain lines of the Psalm will speak to your spirit. Pray with them throughout this week.

***Lectio*: Read the Second Reading from 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**
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.

Paul is given a thorn in the flesh. This is an internal personal source of affliction which is confirmed by the use of "thorns" in the Old Testament to mean "enemies". We are referred to Numbers 33:55. It seems most likely that the hostility is coming from within his own communities. The bottom line in the message of this text is that Paul's strength comes from Jesus Christ, because there is not much of Paul. Like John the Baptist: "He must increase. I must decrease." This seems the best way to summarize the message of this text. Paul is experiencing opposition, just as Ezekiel experienced opposition. Both Paul and Ezekiel will be strengthened by the Lord. They won't be able to carry out their vocations to preach and evangelize without the power of God.

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: Luke 4:18
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME. HE SENT ME TO BRING GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR.

***Lectio:* Read the Gospel text from Mark 6:1-6**
Pause and ponder. Read the text again.

Meditatio: The message is straight-forward. A prophet is only despised in his own town, among his own people. Those familiar with Jesus, those of his home town were blocked by the familiarity. Faith was not forthcoming. There is no need to

complicate the story. There is only need to read it and look at one's own life of faith in the light of this story.

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. My response takes me to the Social Justice Calendar for this week. This Calendar is printed by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, and is therefore the voice of the Catholic Church calling me to an awareness of Justice Issues. I hear the call of God to become involved again in NAIDOC Week, by taking on this project within my own community. Naidoc Week, we are informed, "is a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and an opportunity to recognize the contribution of Indigenous Australians". And then, there is the mention of the sinking of the Greepeace Ship "Rainbow Warrior" in 1985. The voice of God, through the Church is also calling me to remain aware of environmental issues. I pray to give myself to these annual anniversaries and to be obedient to the call of God through the events of this week. The Social Justice Calendar is the voice of the Church (the voice of God), just as Ezekiel was the voice of God in the Old Testament, challenging the Jews. Last of all, there are the personal "words" or "calls" of God, to turn to Him in obedience. These will come my way also. I pray to listen with the ear of my heart.

2. My response comes by way of an observation. Some of the Sisters in my community, those whom one sees as elderly and frail, are the strongest among us, because they have had to let go of so much personal strength and give their lives over more and more to Jesus. St. Mary Mackillop said: "The love of Jesus is too strong and too beautiful, for me not to cling to Him." These Sisters to whom I refer have remained close to the love of Jesus all their lives and now show so much of Jesus and so little of themselves. Perhaps they have also taken to heart other words of St. Mary Mackillop: "WE ARE BUT TRAVELLERS HERE".

3. My response is to look at those whom I ignore as being "nobodys', just because I know them too well. And certainly they have nothing to say that is worth sharing (at least in my opinion)! The Rule of St. Benedict teaches that everyone is to be listened to – and that the most profound insights can come from the youngest member of the community. I need to "drop" the old familiar words that run through my head: "What would so & so know?" "She's only such and such." That's what was said of Jesus: "What would He know about things? He is only the son of a carpenter." I have attended many community meetings since I entered Religious Life in 1967. I remember one meeting where an elderly Sister spoke great

wisdom, and was then humiliated by another younger sister who had all manner of Degrees! What she was lacking was faith in the wisdom of someone who was 20 years her Senior and had much more lived experience. All kinds of difficulties arise at meetings, no matter where those meetings are held. May we hesitate before "writing off" another person just because that person is not as qualified as I am, or not an intellectual, - just an old person, a cleaner, a council worker, a bus driver and so on. The lift driver in David Jones (when I was a child) was more courteous than a lot of intellectuals I know. He always had a kind word, and a caring manner. In the evening of life, we will be judged on how much we have loved, not how many degrees we have accumulated. (cf. Matthew 25).

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.