

# Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

---

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

---

***“God inspired in the heart of the pure Virgin Mary His own intense love for humility...It was this humility which attracted to her the countless graces which rendered her worthy to be the Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth.”*** ~SAINT JOHN EUDES

**Monday, August 19 ~ Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Saint John Eudes, Priest**

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 19:16-22** A young man approached Jesus and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” He answered him, “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He asked him, “Which ones?” And Jesus replied, “You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

**Meditation:** Here we have a young man who had the best the world could offer — wealth and security — who came to Jesus because he lacked one thing — he wanted the kind of lasting peace and happiness which money could not buy him. The answer he got, however, was not what he was looking for. He protested that he kept all the commandments; but Jesus spoke to the trouble that was in his heart. One thing kept him from giving himself whole-heartedly to God. While he lacked nothing in material goods, he was possessive of what he had. He placed his hope and security in what he possessed. So when Jesus challenged him to make God his one true possession and treasure, he became dismayed.

**Prayer:** O God, who wonderfully chose the Priest Saint John Eudes to proclaim the unfathomable riches of Christ, grant us, by his example and teachings, that, growing in knowledge of you, we may live faithfully by the light of the Gospel. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Did you ever wonder why the young man went away from Jesus with sadness rather than with joy? Simple — the young man’s treasure and his hope for happiness were misplaced. Treasure has a special connection to the heart, the place of desire and longing, the place of our will and our focus. The thing we most set our heart on is our highest treasure. The Lord himself is the greatest treasure we can possibly have. Giving up everything else to have the Lord as our treasure is not something sorrowful — quite the opposite, it is the greatest joy! Jesus challenged the young man because his heart was possessive. He was afraid to give to others for fear that he would lose what he had gained. Those who are generous towards God and others find that they cannot outmatch God in generosity. God blesses us with spiritual goods that far outweigh the fleeting joys of material possessions.

**Tuesday, August 20 ~ Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbott and Doctor of the Church**

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 19:23-30** Jesus said to his disciples: “Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and said, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For men this is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” Then Peter said to him in reply, “We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you that you who have followed me, in the new age, when the Son of Man is seated on his throne of glory, will yourselves sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive

a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

**Meditation:** Some always wonder if Jesus was against wealth. Why does he issue such a strong warning to the rich (as well as to the rest of us who desire to be rich)? We know that Jesus was not opposed to wealth per se, nor was he opposed to the wealthy. He had many friends who were well-to-do, including some notorious tax collectors! One (Matthew) even became an apostle! Jesus' warning reiterated the wisdom of the Old Testament: "Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is perverse in his ways" (ref. Proverbs 28:6; Psalm 37:16). "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; be wise enough to desist" (ref. Proverbs 23:4). Jesus seems to say that it is nearly impossible for the rich to live as citizens of God's kingdom. The camel was regarded as the largest animal in Palestine. The "eye of the needle" could be interpreted quite literally or it could figuratively describe the narrow and low gate of the city walls which was used by travelers when the larger public gate was locked after dark. A normal sized man had to "lower" himself to enter that gate. A camel would literally have to kneel and crawl through it.

**Prayer:** O God, who made the Abbot Saint Bernard a man consumed with zeal for your house and a light shining and burning in your Church, grant, through his intercession, that we may be on fire with the same spirit and walk always as children of light. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Wealth can make us falsely independent. The church at Laodicea was warned about their attitude towards wealth and a false sense of security: "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing" (Revelations 3:17). Wealth can also lead us into hurtful desires and selfishness (see 1 Tim. 6:9-10). Look at the lesson Jesus gave about the rich man and his sons who refused to aid the poor man Lazarus (ref. Luke 16:19ff). They also neglected to serve God. The scriptures give us a paradox: we lose what we keep and we gain what we give away. Generosity will be amply repaid, both in this life and in eternity (ref. Proverbs 3:9-10, Luke 6:38). Jesus offers us an incomparable treasure which no money can buy and no thief can steal. The thing we most set our heart on is our highest treasure. Material wealth will shackle us to this earth unless we guard our hearts and set our treasure in God and his everlasting kingdom. Where is your treasure?

### **Wednesday, August 21 ~ Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time Saint Pius X, Pope**

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 20:1-6** Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.' So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.' When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.' He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

**Meditation:** What do work, wages, welfare, and the unemployed tell us about the kingdom of God? In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard we see the extraordinary generosity and compassion of God. There is great tragedy in unemployment. In Jesus' times hired laborers had to wait each day in the marketplace until someone hired them for a day's job. No work that day usually meant no food on the family table. The laborers who worked all day and received their payment complain that the master pays the late afternoon laborers the same wage. The master, undoubtedly, hired them in the late afternoon so they wouldn't go home payless and hungry. God is generous in opening the doors of his kingdom to all who will enter, both those who have labored a life-time for him and those who come at the last hour.

**Prayer:** O God, who to safeguard the Catholic faith and to restore all things in Christ, filled Pope Saint Pius the Tenth with heavenly wisdom and apostolic fortitude, graciously grant that, following his teaching

and example, we may gain an eternal prize. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** While the reward is the same, the motive for one's labor can make all the difference. Some work only for reward. They will only put as much effort in as they think they will get out. Others labor out of love and joy for the opportunity to work. The Lord calls his disciples to serve God and neighbor with generosity and joy. Do you perform your work and duties with cheerfulness for the Lord's sake? And do you give generously to others, especially to those in need?

## **Thursday, August 22 ~ Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

**Meditation:** There is a great lesson for us in Mary's response to the word of God delivered by the angel Gabriel. She knows she is hearing something beyond human capability. It will surely take a miracle which surpasses all that God has done previously. Her question, "how shall this be, since I have no husband" is not prompted by doubt or skepticism, but by wonderment! She is a true hearer of the Word and she immediately responds with faith and trust. Mary's prompt response of "yes" to the divine message is a model of faith for all believers. Mary believed God's promises even when they seemed impossible. She was full of grace because she trusted that what God said was true and would be fulfilled. She was willing and eager to do God's will, even if it seemed difficult or costly. Mary is the "mother of God" because God becomes incarnate when he takes on flesh in her womb. When we pray the Nicene Creed we state our confession of faith in this great mystery: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man". God gives us grace and he expects us to respond with the same willingness, obedience, and heart-felt trust as Mary did. When God commands he also gives the help, strength, and means to respond. We can either yield to God's grace, or resist and go our own way. But if we choose the latter, where are we going? Nowhere!

**Prayer:** O God, who made the Mother of your Son to be our Mother and our Queen, graciously grant that, sustained by her intercession, we may attain in the heavenly Kingdom the glory promised to your children. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Folks, we need to remind ourselves that God lavishes his grace upon all who believe in him. He shows his favor to the lowly, to those who are humble and receptive to his word. We see the unfolding of God's plan of redemption in the events leading up to the Incarnation, the birth of the Messiah. The new era of salvation begins with the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary. This child to be born is conceived by the gracious action of the Holy Spirit upon Mary, who finds favor with God. As Eve was the mother of all humanity doomed to sin, now Mary becomes the mother of the new Adam who will father a new humanity by his grace (Romans 5:12-21). This child to be conceived in her womb is the fulfillment of all God's promises. He will be "great" and "Son of the Most High" and "King" (Luke 1:32-33), and his name shall be called "Jesus", which means "the Lord saves". "He will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The promise of an everlasting kingdom to the house of David (Isaiah 9:6-7) is fulfilled in the King to be born in Mary's womb.

**About the Queenship of Mary:** With the certainty of faith we know that Jesus Christ is king in the full, literal, and absolute sense of the word; for He is true God and man. This does not, however, prevent Mary from sharing His royal prerogatives, though in a limited and analogous manner; for she was the Mother of

Christ, and Christ is God; and she shared in the work of the divine Redeemer, in His struggles against enemies and in the triumph He won over them all. From this union with Christ the King she assuredly obtains so eminent a status that she stands high above all created things; and upon this same union with Christ is based that royal privilege enabling her to distribute the treasures of the kingdom of the divine Redeemer. And lastly, this same union with Christ is the fountain of the inexhaustible efficacy of her motherly intercession in the presence of the Son and of the Father. Without doubt, then, does our holy Virgin possess a dignity that far transcends all other creatures. In the eyes of her Son she takes precedence over everyone else. In order to help us understand the preeminence that the Mother of God enjoys over all creation, it would help to remember that from the first moment of her conception the holy Virgin was filled with such a plenitude of grace as to surpass the graces enhancing all the saints. Spurred on by piety and faith, may we glory in being subject to the rule of the Virgin Mother of God; she bears the royal sceptre in her hand, while her heart is ever aflame with motherlove. ~Excerpted from *Ad Caeli Reginam (On Proclaiming the Queenship of Mary)*, Pius XII

## Friday, August 23 ~ Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time Saint Rose of Lima, Virgin

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40** When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

**Meditation:** Let's get back to something quite basic and foundational: What is the purpose of God's laws and commands? The Pharisees prided themselves in the knowledge of the law of Moses and the ritual requirements of the law. They made it a life-time practice to study the 613 precepts of the Torah – the books of the Old Testament containing the Law of Moses. Jesus startled them with his profound simplicity and mastery of the law of God and its true purpose. Jesus summarized the whole of the law in two great commandments found in Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might," and Leviticus 19:18: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." So what, then, does God require of us? Simply that we love as he loves! God is love and everything he does flows from his love for us. God loved us first and our love for him is a response to his exceeding grace and kindness towards us. The love of God comes first and the love of neighbor is firmly grounded in the love of God. The more we know of God's love and truth the more we love what he loves and reject what is hateful and contrary to his will.

**Prayer:** O God, you set Saint Rose of Lima on fire with your love, so that, secluded from the world in the austerity of a life of penance, she might give herself to you alone; grant, we pray, that through her intercession, we may tread the paths of life on earth and drink at the stream of your delights in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Faith in God and hope in God's promises strengthens us in the love of God. They are essential for a good relationship with God, and uniting ourselves with him. The more we know of God the more we love him and the more we love him the greater we believe and hope in his promises. The Lord Jesus, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, gives us a new freedom to love as he loves. So has anything entered your life that keeps you from the love of God and the joy of serving others with a generous heart? Saint Paul the Apostle wrote: "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5).

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;  
prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011;  
information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of Catholic Culture.

frlumpe:2019

