

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)

The Month of October – a Marian Month – is dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary.

“Prayer is the sure way that leads to holiness. Alas! We easily enter on the road to perdition when we neglect prayer. The prayer which humbles the soul, which inflames her with love and excites her to the practice of virtue, is never subject to illusion. In prayer the soul is united to God through love, He who, on account of the duties of his state of life, cannot devote much time to prayer, need not be troubled; the exact fulfilment of his duties, with a pure intention, having only God in view, is an excellent prayer.” ~ SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS

Monday, October 19 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Saints John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, Priests, and Companions, Martyrs

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:13-21 Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.” He replied to him, “Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?” Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Then he told them a parable. “There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.”

Meditation: Why does Jesus call this wealthy landowner a fool? Jesus does not fault the rich man for his industriousness and skill in acquiring wealth, but rather for his egoism and selfishness - it's mine, all mine, and no one else's. This parable is similar to the parable of the rich man who refused to give any help to the beggar Lazarus (ref. Luke 16:19-31). The rich fool had lost the capacity to be concerned for others. His life was consumed with his possessions and his only interests were in himself. His death was the final loss of his soul! What is Jesus' lesson on using material possessions? It is in giving that we receive. Those who are rich towards God receive ample reward - not only in this life, but in eternity as well.

Prayer: O God, who chose to manifest the blessed hope of your eternal Kingdom by the toil of Saints John de Brebeuf, Isaac Jogues and their companions and by the shedding of their blood, graciously grant that through their intercession the faith of Christians may be strengthened day by day. 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: Where is your treasure? What is your treasure? Who is your treasure? Treasure has a special connection to the heart, the place of desire and longing, the place of our will, our drive and our focus. The thing we most set our heart on is our highest treasure. What do you treasure above all else? Most importantly, whom do you treasure above all others?

About Saint Isaac Jogues, Saint John de Brébeuf and Companions: French Jesuits were the first missionaries to go to Canada and North America after J. Cartier discovered Canada in 1534. Their mission region extended from Nova Scotia to Maryland. Isaac Jogues, John de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Noel Chabanel, Charles Garnier, Anthony Daniel, Rene Goupil and John de Lalande (the first six Jesuits, the last two laymen) preached the Gospel to the Iroquois and Huron Indians, and after being tortured, they were martyred in the area of what is now Auriesville, New York. The martyrdoms took place between 1642 and 1649. Ten years after the martyrdom of St. Isaac Jogues, Kateri Tekakwitha was born in the same village

in which he died. These martyrs are co-patrons of Canada. The missionaries arrived in Canada less than a century after its discovery by Cartier in 1534, in the hope of converting the Indians and setting up "New France." Their opponents were often the English and Dutch colonists. When Isaac Jogues returned to Paris after his first capture and torture, he said to his superior: "Yes, Father, I want whatever our Lord wants, even if it costs a thousand lives." He had written in his mission report: "These tortures are very great, but God is still greater, and immense."

Tuesday, October 20 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time **Saint Paul of the Cross, Priest**

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:35-38 Jesus said to his disciples: "Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants."

Meditation: This story illustrates the amazing generous spirit, servant-hearted love, and profound humility of God who is the exalted Lord and Master over all he has created. The Father sent his only begotten Son to become a man for our sake who shed his blood for us on the cross to ransom us from slavery to sin, Satan, and death. Saint Paul the Apostle tells us that Jesus who was equal with the Father, nonetheless, humbled himself and became a servant for our sake (Philippians 2:5-8). Saint Paul of the Cross, whose feast we celebrate today, said: "If you correspond to the designs of God, He will make a saint of you. Be generous, and remember that we ought to walk in the footsteps of Jesus crucified. The servant of God who is not crucified with Jesus Christ, what is he? He is unworthy of divine contemplation who has not fought and conquered some great temptation. God has suffered much for me; ought I not suffer something for Him?" Ah, yes – the reciprocity of love. Do you love Christ as much as he loves you? If not, why not?

Prayer: May the Priest Saint Paul, whose only love was the Cross, obtain for us your grace, O Lord, so that, urged on more strongly by his example, we may each embrace our own cross with courage. 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: Just as Jesus was faithful and ready to obey his Father in everything - even to the point of laying down his life for us on the cross - we, too are called to be faithful and ready to do whatever our heavenly Father's commands us. How can we serve as Jesus served and be faithful to the end of our days? Only the love "which God has poured into our hearts through the Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5) can transform us and fill us with joy and courage in offering our lives in humble service to God and to one another.

Wednesday, October 21 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:39-48 Jesus said to his disciples: "Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Then Peter said, "Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?" And the Lord replied, "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish the servant severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful. That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."

Meditation: Jesus calls us to be vigilant in watching for his return and to be ready to meet him when he calls us to himself. The Lord gives us his Holy Spirit so that we may have the wisdom, help, and strength we need to turn away from sin to embrace God's way of love, justice, and holiness. The Lord's warning of judgment causes dismay for those who are unprepared, but it brings joyful hope to those who eagerly

wait for his return in glory. God's judgment is good news for those who are ready to meet him. Their reward is God himself, the source of all truth, beauty, goodness, love and everlasting life.

Prayer: Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. 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: Safe it to say that all of us want to get to heaven and spend eternity there with Christ. But the question becomes "What am I doing to get to heaven?" Do I live my life according to the way of God and his son, Jesus Christ? Or do I live my life according to the way of the world? Do I follow the divine laws of God? Or do I follow the all-too-human legal rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court, most of which are contrary to the laws of God? Do I actively engage in the Corporal Works of Mercy (six of which are outlined in Matthew 25:31-40)? Or do I live my life focused entirely on myself, not caring about the needs of others? There is only one Savior, and his name is Jesus Christ, the son of God. He has given us everything we need to get to share in his eternal life – his teachings (the "Good News") and his sacraments, all of which nourish us in mind and in body. He also gave us his very life on the cross. What did any supreme court justice do to get you on the path to eternal life with Christ? Nothing. U.S. president, member of congress, library board member? Nothing. What about any advocacy group? Nothing as well, although adhering to the rhetoric and "cause" of some groups actually encourages people to stray from God. So we're back to that original question: "What am I doing to get to heaven?" Turn away, folks, from the way of the world which will lead to eternity, but not with Christ. Turn instead to Christ, our Lord, Savior, and Redeemer – the Good Shepherd who died for our sake, and whose entire life was spent teaching us the way, and the truth, and the life we are invited to live on this earth so that we might live with him for all eternity.

**Thursday, October 22 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time
Saint John Paul II, Pope**

***For a complete collection of Pope Saint John Paul II's
encyclicals, messages, homilies, and more,
visit the Vatican web page:***

<http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en.html>

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:45-53 Jesus said to his disciples: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Meditation: Jesus challenges his disciples in today's Gospel – and us as well – to examine who they love first and foremost. A true disciple loves God above all else and is willing to forsake all for Jesus Christ. Jesus insists that his disciples give him the loyalty which is only due to God, a loyalty which is higher than spouse or family member. It is possible that family and friends can become our enemies if the thought of them keeps us from doing what we know God wants us to do. If you think that is impossible, think about the times, perhaps, you were on a family vacation or gathering and Sunday rolled around – some chose to worship God during Mass on Sunday, others chose to worship themselves by going to saint mattress of the springs. Arriving back home from Mass the inevitable discussion comes around that "we usually can't make it to Mass." Someone asks "why?" The usual responses "Oh, we're so tired from working all week..." or "our son or daughter has sports practice that day or a game and we need to go to those..." or "we usually go to brunch on Sunday and don't have time to get to Mass..." or "Sunday is family-time day so we usually do something together..." And so it begins – our loyalty to God and our loyalty to following the commandment "Keep holy the Sabbath" goes out the window as we seek personal comfort, the god of sports, or whatever reason people may give for not going to Mass on Sunday. Upon deeper reflection, then, we find that we are not "on fire" for Christ, we do not love God above all things, our faith may be lukewarm at best, and even though the love of Jesus Christ compels us to put God first in all that we do (ref. 2 Corinthians 5:14) we sometimes fail. While this may be the case in one way or another, or on one level or another, this mindset, this way of life is fixable. It begins by recognizing that we are the source of division, sin and separation since we chose people or things over Christ. Now all we need to get back to living a life where we choose God above all things and live a life in Christ by following him instead of a ball

(football, soccer ball, basketball, baseball, golf ball, volley ball, tennis ball, rugby ball, meatball, or even the occasional musings that come from that semi-circular ball that rests on top of our neck).

Prayer: O God, who are rich in mercy and who willed that Saint John Paul II should preside as Pope over your universal Church, grant, we pray, that instructed by his teaching, we may open our hearts to the saving grace of Christ, the sole Redeemer of mankind. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: When Jesus spoke about division within families he likely had in mind the prophecy of Micah: "a man's enemies are the men of his own household" (Micah 7:6). The essence of Christianity is loyalty to Jesus Christ - the Son of God and Savior of the world - a loyalty that takes precedence over every other relationship. The love of God compels us to choose who will be first in our lives. To place any relationship (or anything else like sports) above God is a form of idolatry, and we have been told "You shall not have false gods before me." Let's keep all of this in mind the next time we are tempted to do something contrary to the way of God and his son Jesus Christ.

Friday, October 23 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time **Saint John of Capistrano, Priest**

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:1-7 Jesus said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain—and so it does; and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot—and so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time? "Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate, make an effort to settle the matter on the way; otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Meditation: We all stand in need of God's mercy, grace, and protection. The Lord Jesus is our physician and healer and he is ready to set us free from any sinful patterns of thinking, acting, and speaking. If we give our lives over to him he will fill us with his Holy Spirit and give us a new heart and a transformed mind that is filled with his truth, love, and goodness. If you want lasting peace and joy with God, then allow the Lord Jesus to transform every area of your life, your home, your work, your relationships, and possessions so that he may truly be the Lord and Giver of abundant life. Are you ready to surrender all to him, in order to receive all from him? If not, what is holding you back?

Prayer: O God, who raised up Saint John of Capistrano to comfort your faithful people in tribulation, place us, we pray, under your safe protection and keep your Church in everlasting peace. Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. 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: Our need for accurately discerning the spiritual condition and moral climate around us is vital if we want to avert spiritual crisis and moral disaster. The Lord to transform our lives by offering us his kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). But we can miss it if we allow a permissive attitude that takes sin lightly or puts off repairing wrongdoing before it is too late to get reconciled.

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.

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