

# 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.*

***“If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself.” ~ SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO***

### **Monday, October 26 ~ Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 13:10-17** Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath. And a woman was there who for eighteen years had been crippled by a spirit; she was bent over, completely incapable of standing erect. When Jesus saw her, he called to her and said, “Woman, you are set free of your infirmity.” He laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, said to the crowd in reply, “There are six days when work should be done. Come on those days to be cured, not on the Sabbath day.” The Lord said to him in reply, “Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it out for watering? This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years now, ought she not to have been set free on the Sabbath day from this bondage?” When he said this, all his adversaries were humiliated; and the whole crowd rejoiced at all the splendid deeds done by him.

**Meditation:** Infirmities of all types – physical, emotional, spiritual – can come upon us for a variety of reasons. When these occur God can use these occasions for some purpose that we normally do not understand. When Jesus encountered an elderly woman who was spent of her strength and unable to stand upright, he gave her words of faith and freedom and he restored her to health. She must have suffered much, both physically and spiritually for eighteen years, since Jesus remarked that Satan had bound her. How can Satan do this? The Scriptures indicate that Satan can act in the world with malice and can cause injuries of a spiritual nature, and indirectly even of a physical nature. But we must remember that Satan's power is not infinite. He cannot prevent the building up of God's kingdom or reign in our lives.

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. 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:** Jesus demonstrates the power and authority of God's kingdom in releasing people who are oppressed by physical and emotional sickness, by personal weakness and sin, and by the harassment of the evil one in their lives. It took only one word from Jesus to release this woman instantly of her infirmity. The Jewish leaders, of course, were indignant that Jesus would perform such a miraculous work on the Sabbath – the holy day of rest. They were so caught up in their ritual observance of the Sabbath that they lost sight of God's mercy and goodness. Jesus healed on the Sabbath because God does not rest from showing his mercy and love, ever. God's word has power to change us, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. We might ask ourselves today: is there anything that keeps us bound up or that weighs us down? Identify through prayer what these might be, and pray that the Lord will speak his word to you and give you freedom.

### **Tuesday, October 27 ~ Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 13:18-21** Jesus said, “What is the Kingdom of God like? To what can I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and planted in the garden. When it was fully grown, it became a large bush and *the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches.*” Again he said, “To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened.”

**Meditation:** Unless you are a farmer, gardener or cook you might not fully understand how mustard seeds and leaven teach us about the kingdom of God. The tiny mustard seed – the smallest of seeds – literally grew to be a tree which attracted numerous birds because they loved the little black mustard seed it produced. God's kingdom works in a similar fashion. It starts from the smallest beginnings in the hearts of men and women who are receptive to God's word. And it works unseen and causes a transformation from within. Similarly a lump of dough left to itself remains just what it is, a lump of dough. But when the leaven is added to it a transformation takes place which produces rich and wholesome bread when heated – the staple of life for humans. Our faith can transform us from ordinary persons plodding through life into persons who have direction, purpose, hope and meaning in life.

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. 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:** We are often tempted to “throw in the towel” of our faith based on any number of life’s circumstances or challenges. And sometimes we are guilty of doing just that. But when the dust settles, and we come to our senses, we recognize the importance of our faith in continually nourishing us with the truth, and the need to turn to God and to Jesus – and the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints – for help, for direction, for guidance. Often when we are at our lowest points in life, that small mustard seed size of faith within us begins to take root and grow, or that leaven begins to transform us from despair to hope, getting us back on the path of once gain following Christ, recognizing that our faith and hope in Christ is all we really have to cling to help us in life’s situations, but also to help us achieve our ultimate desire – to spend eternity with Christ in heaven.

### **Wednesday, October 28 ~ Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 6:12-16** Jesus went up to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

**Meditation:** When Jesus embarked on his mission he chose twelve men to be his friends and apostles. In the choice of the twelve, we see a characteristic feature of God's work: Jesus chose very ordinary people, from everyday walks of life. They were non-professionals, who had no wealth or position. They were chosen from the common everyday people who did ordinary things, had no special education, and no social advantages. Jesus wanted ordinary people who could take an assignment and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these men, not for what they were, but for what they would be capable of becoming under his direction and power. When the Lord calls us to serve, we must not shrug back because we think that we have little or nothing to offer. The Lord takes what ordinary people, like us, can offer and uses it for greatness in his kingdom. Is there anything holding you back from giving yourself unreservedly to God, perhaps in a vocation as a priest or religious?

**Prayer:** O God, who by the blessed Apostles have brought us to acknowledge your name, graciously grant, through the intercession of Saints Simon and Jude, that the Church may constantly grow by increase of the peoples who believe in you. 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:** Wherever Jesus went the people came to him because they had heard all the things he did. They were hungry for God and desired healing from their afflictions. In faith they pressed upon Jesus to touch him. As they did so power came from Jesus and they were healed. Even demons trembled in the presence of Jesus and left at his rebuke. Jesus offers freedom from the power of sin and oppression to all who seek him with expectant faith. When you hear God's word and consider all that Jesus did, how do you respond? With doubt or with expectant faith? With skepticism or with confident trust? Ask the Lord in prayer to increase your faith in his saving power and grace.

### **Thursday, October 29 ~ Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 13:31-35** Some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you.” He replied, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and I perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I accomplish my purpose. Yet I must continue on my way today, tomorrow, and the following day, for it is impossible that a prophet should die outside

of Jerusalem.' "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be abandoned. But I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*"

**Meditation:** When King Herod, the jealous, narcissistic ruler of Galilee, heard that thousands of people were coming to Jesus, he decided it was time to eliminate this threat to his influence and power. That is why some of the Pharisees warned Jesus to flee from the wrath of Herod. Jesus, in turn, warned them that they were in greater spiritual danger of losing both soul and body if they refused to listen to God and to his messengers the prophets. Like John the Baptist and all the prophets who preceded him, Jesus posed a threat to the ruling authorities of his day. Note that Jesus went so far as to call Herod a "fox." What did he mean by such an expression? The fox was regarded as the slyest of all animals and one of the most destructive as well. Any farmer will tell you how difficult it is to get rid of foxes who under the cover of night steal and destroy. The fox became a symbol of what was worthless, insignificant, and destructive. It takes great courage to stand up and openly oppose a tyrant. Jesus knew that he would suffer the same fate as the prophets who came before him. He not only willingly exposed himself to such danger, but he prayed for his persecutors and for those who rejected the prophets who spoke in God's name. In praying for them, Jesus prays for their conversion of mind and heart, turning away from sin, lies and deception and turning to the truth.

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. 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:** There are many fox-like persons in our world who in their own way, step-by-step, imitate King Herod in trying to eliminate the teachings of Jesus in the public square – some by discrediting the teachings of the Catholic Church. These people are sly and crafty just like a fox, and have an agenda that is contrary to Christ. Be attentive, be aware – do not fall prey to these people who are often glib and articulate in their speech, and many of them are in very powerful positions who know how to use social media and other methods to distribute their message.

### **Friday, October 30 ~ Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 14:1-6** On a Sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully. In front of him there was a man suffering from dropsy. Jesus spoke to the scholars of the law and Pharisees in reply, asking, "Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath or not?" But they kept silent; so he took the man and, after he had healed him, dismissed him. Then he said to them "Who among you, if your son or ox falls into a cistern, would not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" But they were unable to answer his question.

**Meditation:** In our increasingly busy world where we regularly try to pack ten pounds of activities into a five-pound bag, today we should give an honest assessment of how each of us approaches the commandment to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest to honor the Lord. Obviously there is a balance to be struck here. The Pharisees were convinced that Jesus was a reckless Sabbath-breaker. The Gospels record seven incidents in which Jesus healed people on the Sabbath - the seventh day of the week set apart for rest and the worship of God. You would think Jesus' miracles on the Sabbath day of rest would draw admiration and gratitude from all. Unfortunately, each incident seemed to incite increasing hostility from the religious leaders who held an interpretation that went beyond God's intention for the Sabbath day of rest. They were certain that Jesus was a dangerous and irreligious man, a Sabbath-breaker, who must be stopped at all costs. But what about ourselves? How do we treat Sunday (the Sabbath for Christians)? Do we make going to Mass a priority because we want to give fitting praise, worship and thanksgiving to God, and to be nourished by the words of sacred scripture and the Body and Blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ? Do we have a desire to "want" to go to Mass, versus a drag-your-feet attitude of "do I have to go to Mass?" Do I place sports, practices, rehearsals, sleep, shopping, travel, time in the office to catch up, yard work, et cetera above Mass? Or do I make Mass a priority recognizing that I can do these other things later? After Mass, am I cheating myself out of a much-needed day of rest by choosing instead to pack ten pounds of activities into a five-pound bag?

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. 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:** Why did God give the commandment to keep holy the Sabbath and enjoined his people to refrain from work on that day? The "Sabbath rest" was (and is still) meant to be a time to remember and celebrate God's goodness and the goodness of his works, both in creation and redemption. It was (and still is) a day set apart for the praise of God, his work of creation, and his saving actions on our behalf. It was (and still is) intended to bring everyday work to a halt and to provide needed rest and refreshment. It was not, however, intended to put a stop to love of God and love of neighbor. The law of love supersedes the law of rest! Jesus shows the fallacy of the Pharisees' legalism by pointing to God's intention for the Sabbath: to do good and to heal. Are hospitals closed on Sundays? Of course not. The need for physical healing is a constancy in our lives. So is spiritual healing, which is just as important. That is why the Sabbath remains an important day in our lives to get the spiritual nourishment we need to keep ourselves spiritually fit in order to live our lives as disciples of Christ.

## **Saturday, October 31 ~ Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 14:1,7-11** On a sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully. He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

**Meditation:** We would be well served to meditate on what true humility is and why should we make it a characteristic mark of our life and action. True humility is not feeling bad about yourself, or having a low opinion of yourself, or thinking of yourself as inferior to others. True humility frees us from preoccupation with ourselves, whereas a low self-opinion tends to focus our attention on ourselves. Humility is truth in self-understanding and truth in action. Viewing ourselves truthfully, with sober judgment, means seeing ourselves the way God sees us (Psalm 139:1-4). A humble person makes a realistic assessment of himself or herself without illusion or pretense to be something he or she is not. The humble regard themselves neither smaller nor larger than they truly are. True humility frees us to be our true selves and to avoid despair and pride.

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. 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:** A humble person does not have to wear a mask or put on a facade in order to look good to others, especially to those who are not really familiar with that person. The humble are not swayed by how many "likes" they have on Facebook, or by fame, reputation, success, or failure. Humility is the queen or foundation of all the other virtues because it enables us to view and judge ourselves correctly, the way God sees us. Humility leads to true self-knowledge, honesty, realism, strength, and dedication to give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. Humility frees us to love and serve others selflessly, for their sake, rather than our own. Paul the Apostles, gives us the greatest example and model of humility in the person of Jesus Christ, who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, ...who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:7-8).

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:2020

