

# Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

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“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)

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*The Month of November is dedicated to praying for the souls in Purgatory.*

***Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the Universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.*** ~PRAYER OF SAINT GERTRUDE FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

**Monday, November 2 ~ Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time  
Feast of the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)**

**Holy Gospel: John 6:37-40** Jesus said to the crowds: “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day.”

**Meditation:** Jesus made a promise to his disciples then as he does so today, and a claim which only God can make and deliver: “...that everyone who sees the Son and *believes* in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day” (John 6:40). How can we see Jesus? The Lord makes his presence known to us in the reading of his words of teaching in sacred scripture (John 14:23), in the Eucharist, and in his church – the mystical body of Christ. The Lord Jesus reveals himself in many countless ways to those who seek him with *eyes of faith* (Hebrews 12:2, 11:27). When we read the word of God in the Bible Jesus speaks to us and he reveals to us the mind and heart of our heavenly Father. When we approach the table of the Lord, Jesus offers himself as spiritual food – his sacred body and blood – which produces the very life of Christ within us (*I am the bread of life*, John 6:35). Jesus promises that he will never break the bonds of fellowship with us and freedom from the fear of being forsaken or cut off from everlasting life with God – conversely, out of love for God, we should not break this bond from our end of the relationship, or cut ourselves off from God through sin. Jesus also offers us the hope of sharing in his resurrection – abundant life without end. Believing him means following him – doing as he has taught us, imitating him in thought, word and deed, living our lives in faithful witness to him. To say “I believe in Jesus” but not to live our lives according to his way shows a disconnect that exists of our own making, our own choosing, and therefore a wake-up call to conversion of mind and heart to align our minds to his, our hearts to his, so that we may live a life of love of God above all things, and love our neighbor as ourselves. If we do this we will turn away from sin simply because we love God above all things and we would not want to sin against him, and by loving our neighbor we would not sin against them. We all have the capacity to live our lives in witness to Christ. The saints did it – they are human beings just like you and I. So let’s raise the bar and strive for eternal life with Christ, instead of settling for the ways of the world which lead us nowhere. Walking with Christ will get us to heaven at the end of our earthly journey.

**Prayer:** Listen kindly to our prayers, O Lord, and, as our faith in your Son, raised from the dead, is deepened, so may our hope of resurrection for your departed servants also find new strength. 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:** All of us want to spend eternity with Christ in heaven. The question is: What are each of us doing to get there? Out of love God created us. And out of greater love God sent his son, Jesus Christ, into the world to shepherd and guide us as the one and only savior on the one and only path which leads to eternal life. Out of love for us Jesus suffered and died on the cross for our sake, then rose on the third day opening up the opportunity to spend eternity with him in heaven. Jesus invites all of humanity to

follow him – and does so 23 times in sacred scripture: **Matthew** 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38, 16:24, 19:21, 19:28; **Mark** 1:17, 2:14, 8:34, 10:21; **Luke** 5:27, 9:23, 9:59, 14:27, 18:22; and **John** 1:43, 8:12, 10:27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:19, 21:22. Take some time to read over these passages and contemplate Christ's invitation. Do not forsake him, but instead follow him! And when we stray from following him and, thus, sin, seek his love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation – not just once, but as many times as necessary. And not just during Advent or Lent, but any time you find yourself in a state of serious sin.

## **Tuesday, November 3 ~ Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time** **Saint Martin de Porres, Religious Lay Brother**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 14:15-24** One of those at table with Jesus said to him, "Blessed is the one who will dine in the Kingdom of God." He replied to him, "A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many. When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, 'Come, everything is now ready.' But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have purchased a field and must go to examine it; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have just married a woman, and therefore I cannot come.' The servant went and reported this to his master. Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.' The servant reported, 'Sir, your orders have been carried out and still there is room.' The master then ordered the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled. For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

**Meditation:** If a great lord or king invited his friends to a banquet, why would the guests turn down his invitation? A great banquet would take many days to prepare. And personal invitations would be sent out well in advance to the guests, so they would have plenty of time to prepare for the upcoming event. How insulting for the invited guests to then refuse when the time for celebrating came! They made light of the King's request because they put their own interests above his. Jesus probes the reasons why people make excuses to God's great invitation to "dine" with him at his banquet table. The first excuse allows the claims of one's personal business or work to take precedence over God's claim. Do you allow any task or endeavor to absorb you so much that it keeps you from the thought of God? The second excuse allows our possessions to come before God. Do you allow the media, including social media, and other diversions such as sports or work to crowd out time for God in daily prayer and worship? The third excuse puts home and family ahead of God. God never meant for our personal wealth and our relationships to be used selfishly. We serve God best when we invite him into our work, our homes, and our personal lives and when we share our possessions with others.

**Prayer:** O God, who led Saint Martin de Porres by the path of humility to heavenly glory, grant that we may so follow his radiant example in this life as to merit to be exalted with him 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:** Do you put other things before God? Before Christ? Do you make excuses not to embrace divine wisdom and to follow the teachings of scripture? God lavishes his grace upon each one of us to draw us closer to himself and he invites each of us to his banquet that we may share more deeply in his joy. Only a fool would turn away from this invitation to dine at the banquet table of God, or put other things as a priority over God and Jesus.

## **Wednesday, November 4 ~ Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time** **Saint Charles Borromeo, Bishop**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 14:25-33** Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for

peace terms. In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."

**Meditation:** Today's Gospel is often misunderstood because of the use of the word "hate." The expression "to hate" often meant to "prefer less." And so Jesus uses strong language to make clear that nothing should take precedence or first place over God. God our heavenly Father created us in his image and likeness to be his sons and daughters. He has put us first in his love and concern for our welfare. Our love for him is a response to his exceeding love for us. True love is costly because it is willing to sacrifice all for the sake of the beloved. God sacrificed his Son for our sake and for our salvation. God proved his love for us by sending his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who offered up his life for us as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

**Prayer:** Preserve in the midst of your people, we ask, O Lord, the spirit with which you filled the Bishop Saint Charles Borromeo, that your Church may be constantly renewed and, by conforming herself to the likeness of Christ, may show his face to the world. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Jesus willingly embraced the cross, not only out of obedience to his Father's will, but out of a merciful love for each one of us in order to set us free from sin, Satan, and death. Jesus knew that the cross was the Father's way for him to achieve victory and glory for our sake. He counted the cost and said "yes" to his Father's will. We, too, must 'count the cost' and be ready to follow the Lord Jesus in the way of the cross if we want to share in his glory and victory. And so we might ask: What is the "way of the cross" for you and me? It means that when my will crosses with God's will, then his will must be done. The way of the cross involves sacrifice, the sacrifice of laying down my life each and every day for Jesus' sake. What makes such sacrifice possible and "sweet" for us is the love of God poured out for us in the blood of Jesus Christ. Paul the Apostle reminds us that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). We can never give more than God. He always gives us more than we can expect or imagine.

### **Thursday, November 5 ~ Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 15:1-10** The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus addressed this parable to them. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. "Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

**Meditation:** The scribes and Pharisees took great offense at Jesus because he went out of his way to meet with sinners and he treated them like they were his friends. The Pharisees had strict regulations about how they were to keep away from sinners, as they would incur ritual defilement. They were not to entrust money to sinners or have any business dealings with them, nor trust them with a secret, nor entrust orphans to their care, nor accompany them on a journey, nor give their daughter in marriage to any of their sons, nor invite them as guests or be their guests. The Pharisees were shocked when they saw Jesus freely meeting with sinners and even going to their homes to eat with them. Many sinners and outcasts of society were drawn to Jesus to hear him speak about the mercy of God and the offer of new life and friendship in the kingdom of God. When the Pharisees began to question Jesus' motive and practice of associating with sinners and outcasts, Jesus responded by giving them two parables about a lost sheep and a lost coin to challenge their way of judging sinners and shunning contact with them.

**Prayer:** Almighty and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised. 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:** Both the shepherd and the housewife search until what they have lost is found. And their persistence pays off. They both instinctively share their joy with the whole community. What was new in

Jesus' teaching was the insistence that sinners must be sought out and not merely mourned for. God does not rejoice in the loss of anyone, but desires that all be saved and restored to fellowship with him. That is why the whole community of heaven rejoices when one sinner is found and restored to fellowship with God. Seekers of the lost are much needed today, especially in this time when people increasingly withdraw from community and society and bury themselves in front of computers and iPads spending endless hours on social media rather than interacting personally with one another, or texting with one another rather than actually having a conversation with one another. The effects of this form of isolation is twofold, in that people withdraw more and more from the world, and others don't really care about their well-being because they do not see them or hear from them other than what is posted on their Facebook pages or blogs, and what is posted is only what people want others to see – not the whole picture, and more than likely not the whole truth. Also, if people are not connected electronically they do reach out to others. Prior to social media people interacted more with one another personally, face-to-face, interpersonal communication, at the kitchen table over coffee, or talking with one another at dinner as a family. And so we must remember that we are to help one another get to heaven. But the only way we can really do that is to be in touch with one another personally, one-one-one, face-to-face, devoid of electronic means, reaching out to each other in order to care for another, and help on another.

### **Friday, November 6 ~ Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 16:1-8** Jesus said to his disciples, "A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' Then to another he said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.' And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than the children of light."

**Meditation:** Jesus seemed to praise a steward (a manager entrusted with his master's goods) who misused his employer's money. What did the steward do that made Jesus praise him? The steward was responsible for managing his wealthy landowner's property. The steward very likely overcharged his master's tenants for their use of the land and kept more than his fair share of the profit. When the landowner discovered the steward's dishonest practice he immediately removed him from his job, leaving him penniless and ashamed to beg or do manual work. Before news of his dismissal became public knowledge, the shrewd steward struck a deal with his master's debtors. In discounting their debts he probably was giving up his generous commission. Such a deal won him great favor with the debtors. Since the steward acted as the landowner's agent, such a deal made his master look very generous and forgiving towards those who owed him money. Surely everyone would praise such a generous landowner as the town hero! Since the master could not undo the steward's cancellation of the debts without losing face and making his debtors resent him, he praised the steward for outwitting him and making him appear as a generous and merciful landowner.

**Prayer:** Almighty and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised. 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 obviously thought that the example of a very clever steward would be a perfect illustration for a spiritual lesson about God and how God treats those who belong to his kingdom. What's the point of Jesus' parable? The dishonest steward is commended not for mishandling his master's wealth, but for his shrewd provision in averting personal disaster and in securing his future livelihood. Look up the original meaning of "shrewdness" and you will see "foresight." A shrewd person grasps a critical situation with resolution, foresight, and the determination to avoid serious loss or disaster.

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