

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)

“We never give more honor to Jesus than when we honor His Mother, and we honor her simply and solely to honor Him all the more perfectly. We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek – Jesus, her Son.” ~SAINT LOUIS MARIE DE MONTFORT

Monday, May 11 ~ Fifth Week in the Season of Easter

Holy Gospel: John 14:21-26 Jesus said to his disciples: “Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.” Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, “Master, then what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. “I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”

Meditation: God’s love for each of us is as real and tangible as the love of a mother for her child and the love of a lover who gives all for his beloved. God made us for love – to know him personally and to grow in the knowledge of his great love for us. How can we know and be assured of the love of God? The Holy Spirit helps us to grow in the knowledge of God and his great love. The Spirit enables us to experience the love of God and to be assured of the Lord’s abiding presence with us (see Romans 8:35-39). The Holy Spirit also opens our ears to hear and understand the word of God. Do you listen attentively to God’s word and believe it? Ask the Holy Spirit to inflame your heart with the love of God and his word.

Prayer: May your right hand, O Lord, we pray, encompass your family with perpetual help, so that, defended from all wickedness by the Resurrection of your Only Begotten Son, we may make our way by means of your heavenly gifts. 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 know the love that surpasses all, that is stronger than death itself (Song of Songs 8:6)? In Jesus’ last supper discourse he speaks of the love he has for his disciples and of his Father’s love. He prepares his disciples for his imminent departure to return to his Father by exhorting them to prove their love for him through their loyalty and obedience to his word. He promises them the abiding instruction and consolation of the Holy Spirit. Saint Augustine says “the Lord loves each of us as if there were only one of us to love.”

Tuesday, May 12 ~ Fifth Week in the Season of Easter

Holy Gospel: John 14:27-31a Jesus said to his disciples: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, ‘I am going away and I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe. I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me, but the world must know that I love the Father and that I do just as the Father has commanded me.”

Meditation: Nothing can take us from the peace and joy of Jesus Christ. No sorrow or grief, no danger, no suffering can make it less. Jesus also speaks of his destination and ultimate triumph over the powers of evil in the world. In the eyes of the world the cross stood for shame, humiliation, and defeat. Jesus went to the cross knowing that it would lead to victory over the powers of sin and of Satan. Jesus also knew that he would return to his Father in glory. The cross brought glory to Jesus and to the Father and it is our way to glory as well. In the Cross of Christ we find true peace and reconciliation with God. Do you live in the peace of Jesus Christ?

Prayer: O God, who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ, grant your people constancy in faith and hope, that we may never doubt the promises of which we have learned from 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: Do you know the peace which passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7)? In his farewell discourse Jesus grants peace as his gift to his disciples. What kind of peace does he offer? The peace of Christ is more than the absence of trouble. It includes everything which makes for our highest good. The world's approach to peace is avoidance of trouble and a refusal to face unpleasant things. Jesus offers the one true peace which conquers all of our fears and anxieties. Do you seek his peace before other sources of peace which are fleeting at best?

Wednesday, May 13 ~ Fifth Week in the Season of Easter Our Lady of Fatima

Catholic Culture web page – Special Section on Our Lady of Fatima

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/feasts/fatima/fatimahome.cfm>

An excellent web page of information: The Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, in Fatima

<https://www.fatima.pt/en>

Send your prayer requests to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, in Fatima

<https://www.fatima.pt/en/pages/prayer-requests>

Watch Live Masses and Liturgies from the Chapel of the Apparitions, in Fatima

<https://www.fatima.pt/en/pages/online-transmissions>

Holy Gospel: John 16:29-33 The disciples said to Jesus, "Now you are talking plainly, and not in any figure of speech. Now we realize that you know everything and that you do not need to have anyone question you. Because of this we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you believe now? Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world."

Meditation: Jesus knew the hearts of his disciples better than they knew themselves. He knew they would desert him in his hour of trial. Such knowledge could have easily led to bitterness and rejection. Jesus met the injury of betrayal and disloyalty with supreme love and trust in his disciples. He loved his disciples to the very end even when they left him alone to die on the cross. He knew that the cross would not bring defeat but victory over sin and death. Jesus speaks the same words to us today. "My love for you is unconditional and I will never abandon you." While we cannot avoid all pain and suffering in this life, Jesus, nonetheless assures us that he will guide us safely through any difficulty or trial we may have to undergo for his sake. The Holy Spirit gives us a living hope in the power of the resurrection and a confident trust in God's abiding presence. Nothing can overcome this faith and hope in Christ's victory – no trial, suffering, temptation, or testing. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength and courage we need to overcome adversity and to persevere in faith.

Prayer: O God, who chose the Mother of your Son to be our Mother also, grant us that, persevering in penance and prayer for the salvation of the world, we may further more effectively each day the reign of Christ. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Message of Fatima: The public message of Fatima recalls that of Lourdes. Through the children Mary urges prayer for sinners, recitation of the Rosary, and works of penance. On October 13 she said: "I have come to exhort the faithful to change their lives, to avoid grieving Our Lord by sin; to pray the Rosary. I desire in this place a chapel in my honor. If people mend their ways, the war will soon be over." But Mary also confided several "secrets" to the children, some of which Lucy subsequently transmitted. Presumably there was prediction of another war in the near future and a request for special veneration of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The final secret Lucy is thought to have entrusted to Pope John XXIII. As at Lourdes, the "apparitions" of Fatima have brought crowds of visitors. Pilgrimages, which began in the summer of 1917, have experienced growing success, not only among the Portuguese themselves but also among people from other countries, including the United States. The national pilgrimage following

ecclesiastical recognition of the apparitions (May 13, 1931) is said to have drawn more than a million participants. Popes have shown exceptional favor toward Fatima, Pius XII, Paul VI, and John Paul II in particular making a visit to the shrine. The papal interest and the basilica built at the site of the apparitions has helped to swell the summer pilgrimages to Fatima. Crowds comparable to, and sometimes larger than, those at Lourdes are not uncommon. In a rustic setting, pilgrims hear the message repeated that Mary spoke to the children: prayer, works of penance, recourse to her Immaculate Heart.

Contemplation: How did Jesus convince his disciples that he was the Son of God? Jesus could read their hearts like an open book. He answered their questions before they could even speak them out. And he showed them the glory of God. For a Christian, believing in God cannot be separated from believing in the One he sent, his "beloved Son," in whom the Father is "well pleased." We can believe in Jesus and in the words he speaks because he is himself God, the Word made flesh. Since he "has seen the Father," and is "one with the Father," Jesus is the only one who knows the Father as he truly is and can reveal him to us. Our faith is "certain" because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie. Faith is already the beginning of eternal life. Saint Basil the Great says: "When we contemplate the blessings of faith even now, as if gazing at a reflection in a mirror, it is as if we already possessed the wonderful things which our faith assures us we shall enjoy one day."

Thursday, May 14 ~ Fifth Week in the Season of Easter Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle

Visit Saint Matthias Abbey Church in Trier, Germany; relics of Saint Matthias are housed here

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/germany/trier-st-matthias>

Holy Gospel: John 15:9-17 Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another."

Meditation: Do you know the love that produces immeasurable joy? Jesus speaks of the love which the Father and he have for those who belong to him. We can never outgive God in love, because he has loved us without measure. Our love for him is a response to his exceeding mercy and kindness towards us. Paul the Apostle tells us that we can abound in joy and hope because "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:5). In God's love we find the fullness of grace, life, peace, and joy. Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment – a new way of love. We are to love others as Jesus has loved us.

Prayer: O God, who assigned Saint Matthias a place in the college of Apostles, grant us, through his intercession, that, rejoicing at how your love has been allotted to us, we may merit to be numbered among the elect. 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: What is the essence of this new commandment? True love is sacrificial. It gives all to the beloved. And there is no greater proof in love than the sacrifice of one's life for the sake of another. Jesus proved his love for his disciples by giving his life for them, even to death on the cross. We prove our love for God and for one another when we embrace the way of the cross. What is the cross in my life? When my will crosses with God's will, then God's will must be done. Do you know the joy and contentment of a life fully surrendered to God and consumed with his love?

Friday, May 15 ~ Fifth Week in the Season of Easter Saint Isidore the Farmer

Learn more about Saint Isidore:

<https://www.stisidorestow.org/About/stisidore.html>

Holy Gospel: John 15:12-17 Jesus said to his disciples: "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if

you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.”

Meditation: Jesus defines friendship, the mutual bond of trust and affection between two or more people, as the willingness to give totally of oneself even to the point of dying for one's friends. How is such love possible or even desirable? God made us in love for love. That is our reason for being, our purpose for living, and our goal in dying. God is love and everything he does flows from his love for us. He loved us so much, some might even mistakenly say too much, by giving us the best of all gifts, the offering of his beloved Son who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. God gave up his Son so that we might become his sons and daughters, his adopted children (Romans 8:14-17).

Prayer: Lord God, to whom belongs all creation, and who call us to serve you by caring for the gifts that surround us, inspire us by the example of Saint Isidore to share our food with the hungry and to work for the salvation of all people. 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 called his disciples his “friends.” Jesus not only showed his disciples that he cared for them. He enjoyed their company. He ate with them, shared everything he had with them – even his most intimate thoughts. And he spent himself doing good for them. To know Jesus is to know God and to understand the love and friendship God offers each one of us. One of the special marks of favor shown in the scriptures is to be called the friend of God. Abraham is called the “friend of God” (Isaiah 41:8). God speaks with Moses “as a man speaks with his friend” (Exodus 33:11). Jesus, the Lord and Master, in turn, calls the disciples his “friends” rather than his servants. Friendship with God certainly entails a loving relationship which goes beyond mere duty and obedience. Friendship is based on love, and love must be reciprocal. Do you love Christ as much as he loves you? If not, why not?

Saturday, May 16 ~ Fifth Week in the Season of Easter

Holy Gospel: John 15:18-21 Jesus said to his disciples: “If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you, ‘No slave is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me.”

Meditation: What does Jesus mean when he says “you are not of this world”? The “world” in scripture refers to that society of people who are hostile towards God and opposed to his will. The world rejected Jesus, and his disciples can expect the same treatment. Jesus leaves no middle ground for his followers. We are either for him or against him, for his kingdom of light or for the kingdom of darkness. The prophet Isaiah warned that people who separate themselves from God because of their rebellion and spiritual blindness would end up calling evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20).

Prayer: Almighty and eternal God, who through the regenerating power of Baptism have been pleased to confer on us heavenly life, grant, we pray, that those you render capable of immortality by justifying them may by your guidance attain the fullness of glory. 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: If we want to live in the light of God's truth, how can we rightly distinguish good from evil? True love of God and his ways draw us to all that is lovely, truthful and good. If we truly love God then we will submit to his truth and will for our lives. A friend of God cannot expect to be a friend of the world because the world opposes God. Jesus' demand is unequivocal and without compromise. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15). We must make a choice either for or against God. Do you seek to please God in all your thoughts, actions, and relationships? Let the Holy Spirit fill your heart with the love of God (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; Daily meditations and contemplations adapted from the Irish Jesuits' *Sacred Space* web page and *Biblical Medications for Easter* by Rev. Carroll Stuhlmuehler, C.P.; information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.