

# 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 JUNE IS DEDICATED TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS ~

***“Behold this Heart, which has so loved men that It has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love. In return, I receive from the greater part [of humanity] only ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of Love” [Holy Communion]. It is for this reason I ask thee that the first Friday after the octave of the Blessed Sacrament, be appropriated to a special feast to honor My Heart by receiving Communion on that day, and making reparation for the indignity that It [My Heart] has received. And I promise that My Heart shall dilate to pour out abundantly the influences of My Love on all who will render It this honor or will obtain My Heart being given this honor.”*** ~APPARITION: JESUS SPEAKING TO SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

**Monday, June 1 ~ Ninth Week in Ordinary Time  
Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church**

**Holy Gospel: John 19:25-34** Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.” There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately Blood and water flowed out.

**Meditation:** To understand more fully the importance of this Memorial, especially in relation to today’s Gospel, it would be good to read the Decree establishing this Memorial. *Indeed, the Mother standing beneath the cross (cf. Jn 19:25), accepted her Son’s testament of love and welcomed all people in the person of the beloved disciple as sons and daughters to be reborn unto life eternal. She thus became the tender Mother of the Church which Christ begot on the cross handing on the Spirit. Christ, in turn, in the beloved disciple, chose all disciples as ministers of his love towards his Mother, entrusting her to them so that they might welcome her with filial affection. As a caring guide to the emerging Church Mary had already begun her mission in the Upper Room, praying with the Apostles while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14). In this sense, in the course of the centuries, Christian piety has honored Mary with various titles, in many ways equivalent, such as Mother of Disciples, of the Faithful, of Believers, of all those who are reborn in Christ; and also as “Mother of the Church” as is used in the texts of spiritual authors as well as in the Magisterium of Popes Benedict XIV and Leo XIII. Thus the foundation is clearly established by which Blessed Paul VI, on 21 November 1964, at the conclusion of the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council, declared the Blessed Virgin Mary as “Mother of the Church, that is to say of all Christian people, the faithful as well as the pastors, who call her the most loving Mother” and established that “the Mother of God should be further honored and invoked by the entire Christian people by this tenderest of titles”.*

**Prayer:** O God, Father of mercies, whose Only Begotten Son, as he hung upon the Cross, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mother, to be our Mother also, grant, we pray, that with her loving help your Church may be more fruitful day by day and, exulting in the holiness of her children, may draw to her embrace all the families of the peoples. 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:** On this Memorial to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, there are many things to contemplate today in addition to today's Gospel. I believe it would be prudent for us to spend some time today thinking about our level of devotion to Our Lady, asking whether or not it truly is sufficient. Chances are, if we are honest, we see room for improvement. Mary was chosen by God for a special purpose in life. Her "yes" to the Angel Gabriel, sent to Mary by God, set in motion our salvation as she gave birth to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As mother of Jesus Christ, she became Mother of our Church, and thus she should hold a high and special place in our daily devotional practices. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls Mary our model of faith and charity, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. In addition to praying a daily rosary, I would encourage you to visit the web pages that follow to explore possible prayers and devotional practices to enrich your spiritual life:

[http://www.mycatholicsource.com/mcs/pc/the\\_Blessed\\_Virgin/popular\\_marian\\_devotions.htm](http://www.mycatholicsource.com/mcs/pc/the_Blessed_Virgin/popular_marian_devotions.htm)

[https://www.theworkofgod.org/Library/catholic/prayers\\_devotions\\_Virgin\\_Mary.htm](https://www.theworkofgod.org/Library/catholic/prayers_devotions_Virgin_Mary.htm)

<https://www.sistersofcarmel.com/devotion-to-the-blessed-virgin-mary.php>

<https://www.rosarycenter.org/>

## **Tuesday, June 2 ~ Ninth Week in Ordinary Time Saints Marcellinus and Peter, Martyrs**

**Holy Gospel: Mark 12:13-17** Some Pharisees and Herodians were sent to Jesus to ensnare him in his speech. They came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you are not concerned with anyone's opinion. You do not regard a person's status but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or should we not pay?" Knowing their hypocrisy he said to them, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at." They brought one to him and he said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They replied to him, "Caesar's." So Jesus said to them, "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." They were utterly amazed at him.

**Meditation:** What do we owe God and what's our obligation towards others? Paul the Apostle tells us that we must give each what is their due (ref. Romans 13:6-8). The Jewish authorities sought to trap Jesus in a religious-state dispute over the issue of taxes. The Jews resented their foreign rulers and despised paying taxes to Cesar. They posed a dilemma to test Jesus to see if he would make a statement they could use against him. If Jesus answered that it was lawful to pay taxes to a pagan ruler, then he would lose credibility with the Jewish populace who would regard him as a coward and a friend of Cesar. If he said it was not lawful, then the Pharisees would have grounds to report him to the Roman authorities as a political trouble-maker and have him arrested. Jesus avoided their trap by confronting them with the image of a coin. Coinage in the ancient world had significant political power. Rulers issued coins with their own image and inscription on them. In a certain sense the coin was regarded as the personal property of the ruler. Where the coin was valid the ruler held political sway over the people. Since the Jews used the Roman currency, Jesus explained that what belonged to Caesar must be given to Caesar.

**Prayer:** O God, who surround us with protection through the glorious confession of the Martyrs Saints Marcellinus and Peter, grant that we may profit by imitating them and be upheld by their prayer. 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:** This passage has another deeper meaning as well. We, too, have been stamped with God's image since we are created in his own likeness (ref. Genesis 1:26-27). We rightfully belong, not to ourselves, but to God who created us and redeemed us in the precious blood of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (ref. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Paul the Apostle says that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (ref. Romans 12:1). Do you acknowledge that your life belongs to God and not to yourself? And do you give to God what rightfully belongs to Him?

## Wednesday, June 3 ~ Ninth Week in Ordinary Time Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

**Holy Gospel: Mark 12:18-27** Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus and put this question to him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us, If someone's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first married a woman and died, leaving no descendants. So the second brother married her and died, leaving no descendants, and the third likewise. And the seven left no descendants. Last of all the woman also died. At the resurrection when they arise whose wife will she be? For all seven had been married to her." Jesus said to them, "Are you not misled because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven. As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly misled."

**Meditation:** Among the many problems of the Sadducees, they could not conceive of heaven beyond what they could see with their own eyes. Are we not often like them? We often don't recognize spiritual realities because we try to make heaven into an earthly image. The Sadducees came to Jesus with a test question to make the resurrection look ridiculous. The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in immortality, nor in angels or evil spirits. Their religion was literally grounded in an earthly image of heaven. Jesus retorts by dealing with the fact of the resurrection. The scriptures give proof of it. In Exodus 3:6, God calls himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He defeats their arguments by showing that God is a living God of a living people. God was the friend of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when they lived. That friendship could not cease with death.

**Prayer:** O God, who have made the blood of Martyrs the seed of Christians, mercifully grant that the field which is your Church, watered by the blood shed by Saint Charles Lwanga and his companions, may be fertile and always yield you an abundant harvest. 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:** As Psalm 73:23-24 states: "I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory." The Holy Spirit reveals to us the eternal truths of God's unending love and the life he desires to share with us for all eternity. Paul the Apostle, quoting from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 64:4; 65:17) states: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him," God has revealed to us through the Spirit (ref. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10). The promise of paradise – heavenly bliss and unending life with an all-loving God – is beyond human reckoning. We have only begun to taste the first-fruits! Do you believe the scriptures? If so, do you know the power of the Holy Spirit?

## Thursday, June 4 ~ Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

**Holy Gospel: Mark 12:28-34** One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: *Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* The second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, *He is One and there is no other than he. And to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.*" And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

**Meditation:** What is the purpose of God's law or commandments? The Pharisees prided themselves in the knowledge of the law and their ritual requirements. They made it a life-time practice to study the 613 precepts of the Old Testament along with the numerous rabbinic commentaries. They tested Jesus to see if he correctly understood the law as they did. Jesus startled them with his profound simplicity and mastery of the law of God and its purpose. What 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, whose providence never fails in its design, keep from us, we humbly beseech you, all that might harm us and grant all that works for our good. 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 makes our love for God and his commands grow in us? Faith in God and hope in his promises strengthens us in the love of God. They are essential for a good relationship with God, for being united 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, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, gives us a new freedom to love as he loves. So ask yourself: Do you allow anything to keep you from the love of God and the joy of serving others with a generous heart? Paul the Apostle says: hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (ref. Romans 5:5). Do you know the love which conquers all?

## **Friday, June 5 ~ Ninth Week in Ordinary Time Saint Boniface, Martyr ~ the "Apostle of Germany"**

**Holy Gospel: Mark 12:35-37** As Jesus was teaching in the temple area he said, "How do the scribes claim that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said: *The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies under your feet.'* David himself calls him 'lord'; so how is he his son?" The great crowd heard this with delight.

**Meditation:** Do you acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord over all? It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make Christ known to us. That is why Jesus stated that King David could proclaim that his future heir would be both Messiah (the Hebrew word for Christ or the Anointed One) and his Lord. Among the Jews the most common title for the Messiah was the Son of David. The Jews looked forward to the long-expected Savior who would come from the line of David. Jesus was often addressed with that title, especially by the crowds (Mark 10:47ff, Matthew 9:27; 12:23). Jesus not only asserts that the Messiah is David's son, and that he is, indeed, David's son, but, that he is not only David's son, but also his Lord. Paul the Apostle states that no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).

**Prayer:** May the Martyr Saint Boniface be our advocate, O Lord, that we may firmly hold the faith he taught with his lips and sealed in his blood and confidently profess it by our deeds. 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:** Have you ever given any real thought to what it means when you acknowledge that Jesus is Lord? The word *Lord* means "ruler" or "king" – the one who is owed "fealty" and "submission." The Lord or Master of our lives is the person or thing we give our lives over to or submit to in a full way. We can be ruled by many things – our unruly passions, the love of money, alcohol, drugs, etc. Only one Lord can truly set us free to love and to be loved as God intended from the beginning. When we acknowledge that Jesus is Lord we invite him to be the king of our heart and the ruler of our thoughts, relationships, and all that we do. Is the Lord Jesus the true king of your heart and mind? Do you give him free reign in every area of your life?

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 the Catholic Culture web site.

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## *The Month of June ~ Dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Prayer to the Sacred Heart*

Oh Lord Jesus Christ, to Your most Sacred Heart I confide this intention {*name petition*}. Only look upon me, then do what Your love inspires. Let Your Sacred Heart decide. I count on You. I trust in You. I throw myself on Your mercy. Lord Jesus, You will not fail me.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in You. Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in Your love for me. Sacred Heart of Jesus, Your kingdom come. Sacred Heart of Jesus, I have asked You for many favors, but I earnestly implore this one. Take it, place it in Your open Heart.

When the Eternal Father looks upon it, He will see it covered with Your Precious Blood. It will be no longer my prayer, but Yours, Jesus. Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in You. Let me not be disappointed. Amen.