

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)

Month of May ~ Dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary

“Turn all your thoughts and aspirations to heaven. Work hard to secure for yourself a place there forever.” ~SAINT DAMIEN OF MOLOKAI

Monday, May 10 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter
Optional Memorial of Saint Damien de Veuster (of Molokai), Priest;
Optional Memorial of Saint John of Avila

Holy Gospel: John 15:26-16:4a Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. “I have told you this so that you may not fall away. They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you.”

Meditation: Jesus tells us much about the Holy Spirit. First, the Holy Spirit is inseparably one with the Father and the Son. It is the Holy Spirit who gives life – the very life of God – and who kindles faith in hearts receptive to God's word. The Spirit makes it possible for us to know God personally. He gives us experiential knowledge of God as our Father. The Spirit witnesses to our spirit that the Father has indeed sent his Son into the world to redeem it and has raised his Son Jesus from the dead and has seated him at his right hand in glory and power. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the knowledge, wisdom and plan of God for the ages and the Spirit enables us to see with the “eyes of faith” what the Father and the Son are doing. Through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit we become witnesses to the great work of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus warned his disciples that they could expect persecution just as Jesus was opposed and treated with hostility. We have been given the Holy Spirit to help us live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Spirit gives us courage and perseverance when we meet adversities and challenges. Do you pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen you in faith, hope and love and to give you courage and perseverance with hope when you meet adversities and challenges?

Prayer: Grant, O merciful God, that we may experience at all times the fruit produced by the paschal observances. 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.

Prayer ~ Saint Damien: Father of mercy, who gave us in Saint Damien a shining witness of love for the poorest and most abandoned, grant that, by his intercession, as faithful witnesses of the heart of your Son Jesus, we too may be servants of the most needy and rejected. 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.

Prayer ~ Saint John of Avila: Almighty and eternal God, who gave your holy Church blessed John of Avila as Doctor, grant that what he taught when moved by the divine Spirit may always stay firm in our hearts; and, as by your gift we embrace him as our patron, may we also have him as our defender to entreat your mercy. 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.

Contemplation: Have you ever examined whom you turn to for help and support when you most need it? True friendship is strengthened in adversity. Jesus offers his disciples the best and truest of friends. Who is this promised friend? Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Counselor and Advocate (also translated “Paraclete” or “Helper” or “Guide”). Counselor is a legal term for the one who will defend someone against an adversary and who guides that person during the ordeal of trial. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate and Helper who brings us safely through the challenges and adversities we must face in this life. As Jesus

approaches the hour he was to be glorified – through his death on the cross and his resurrection – he revealed more fully to his disciples the person and role of the Holy Spirit.

Tuesday, May 11 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter

Holy Gospel: John 14:6-14 Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it."

Meditation: What's the greatest thing we can aim for in our brief earthly life? Fame? Riches? Power? The greatest thing we can aim for is to know, love and serve God. What is the best thing we can possess in this life, bringing more joy, contentment, life and happiness, than anything else? Knowledge of God! *Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glorifies glory in this, that he understands and knows me"* (Jeremiah 9:23-24). One of the greatest truths of the Christian faith is that we can know the *living* God. Our knowledge of God is not simply limited to knowing something about God, but we can know God personally. The essence of Christianity, and what makes it distinct from Judaism and other religions, is the personal knowledge of God as our Father – the one who created us out of love, and who out of love for us sent his only son into this world – Jesus Christ – to save and redeem us.

Prayer: Grant, almighty and merciful God, that we may in truth receive a share in the Resurrection of Christ your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: In Jesus we see the perfect love of God – a God who cares intensely and who yearns over men and women, loving them to the point of laying down his life for them upon the Cross. Jesus is the revelation of God – a God who loves us unconditionally – without reservation, unselfishly – for our sake and not his, and perfectly – without neglecting or forgetting us even for a brief moment. Jesus promises that God the Father will hear our prayers when we pray in his name. That is why Jesus taught his followers to pray with confidence, "*Our Father who art in heaven...give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses...*" (Matthew 6:9-11; Luke 11:2-3). Do you pray to your Father in heaven with joy and confidence in his genuine love and care for you?

Wednesday, May 12 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter ***Optional Memorial of Saints Nereus and Achilleus, Martyrs;*** ***Optional Memorial of Saint Pancras, Martyr***

Holy Gospel: John 16:12-15 Jesus said to his disciples: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you."

Meditation: Jesus told his disciples that he would send them the Spirit of truth who will guide you into all the truth, and declare to you the things that are to come (John 16:13). Through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit poured out on the new community of faith on the day of Pentecost, we too are able to profess the same creed which the apostles proclaimed – that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and will come again to judge, raise the dead, and give everlasting life (the Apostles Creed). We not only have the same faith given to the apostles and early believers, but we have the same Spirit in us who raised Jesus from the dead. The Lord Jesus gives each of us his Holy Spirit as our divine Teacher and Helper that we may grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God. Do you listen attentively to God's word and allow his Holy Spirit to give you understanding of God's truth and will for your life?

Prayer: Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that the course of our world may be directed by your peaceful rule and that your Church may rejoice, untroubled in her devotion. 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.

Prayer ~ Saints Nereus and Achilleus: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who know the great courage of the glorious Martyrs Nereus and Achilleus in confessing you, may experience their loving intercession for us in your presence. 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.

Prayer ~ Saint Pancras: May your Church rejoice, O God, confident in the intercession of the Martyr Saint Pancras, and by his glorious prayers may she persevere in devotion to you and stand ever firm. 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.

Contemplation: What we would all give to know all truths! Truth, however, is not something we create nor is it our discovery. It is the gift of God who is the possessor and the giver of all truth. Jesus tells his disciples that it is the role of the Holy Spirit to reveal what is true. How can this be? Skeptics of truth don't want to believe in an absolute Truth. If truth is objective then it must be submitted to as authoritative. Some fear the truth because they think it will inhibit their freedom to act and think as they wish. Jesus told his disciples that the truth will set you free (John 8:32). The truth liberates us from doubts, illusions, and fears. Since God is the source of all truth, then the closer we draw to him and listen to his word, the more we grow in the knowledge of him and of his great love and wisdom for us.

Thursday, May 13 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter ***Our Lady of Fatima***

Holy Gospel: Luke 11:27-28 As Jesus said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But He said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Meditation: When an admirer wished to compliment Jesus by praising his mother, Jesus did not deny the truth of the blessing she pronounced. Her "beatitude" (which means "blessedness" or "happiness") recalls Mary's canticle: All generations will call me blessed (Luke 1:48). Jesus adds to her words by pointing to the source of all true blessedness or happiness - union with God in heart, mind, and will. Mary humbly submitted herself to the miraculous plan of God for the incarnation of his only begotten Son - the Word of God made flesh in her womb, by declaring: I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:38). Mary heard the word spoken to her by the angel and she believed it.

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.

Prayer to Our Lady of Fatima: O Most Holy Virgin Mary, Queen of the most holy Rosary, you were pleased to appear to the children of Fatima and reveal a glorious message. We implore you, inspire in our hearts a fervent love for the recitation of the Rosary. By meditating on the mysteries of the redemption that are recalled therein may we obtain the graces and virtues that we ask, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Prayers of Petition: Send your prayer requests via e-mail to the Shrine of our Lady of the Rosary in Fatima, Portugal; visit the Shrine web page: <https://www.fatima.pt/en/pages/prayer-requests>

Contemplation: Our ultimate goal in life, the very reason we were created in the first place, is not to attend a certain university, have a particular job, live at a certain address with a particular car parked in the driveway. No, our ultimate goal is to get to heaven where we may experience complete union with God. We were made for God and our hearts are restless until they rest in him. Saint Lucian of Antioch, an early Christian theologian and martyr, once said that "a Christian's only relatives are the saints." Those who follow Jesus Christ and who seek the will of God enter into a new family, a family of "saints" here on earth and in heaven. Jesus changes the order of relationships and shows that true kinship is not just a matter of flesh and blood. Our adoption as sons and daughters of God transforms all our relationships and requires a new order of loyalty to God and his kingdom. As in "those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28) and those who are "doers of the word, not hearers only" (James 1:22). Think about it!

Friday, May 14 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle

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 out give 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?

Saturday, May 15 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter Optional Memorial of Saint Isidore the Farmer

Today is a fitting day for all of us to pray for those who work the land, grow crops, raise farm animals, and all who provide for the food that is on our tables.

Holy Gospel: John 16:23b-28 Jesus said to his disciples: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. I have told you this in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures but I will tell you clearly about the Father. On that day you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

Prayer ~ Saint Isidore the Farmer: 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.

Prayer of Farmers to Saint Joseph: O glorious Saint Joseph, foster father of Jesus, you did provide for the Holy Family. We commit to your protection all of our crops and farm industries. Deign, we beseech you, to intercede in our behalf with Almighty God, Who rules the seasons, so that our fields being safe from pests and favored by the weather may yield abundant crops that will allow us to supply the wants of life. Thus freed from earthly worries may we after your example apply all our thoughts to eternal life. We beseech you to instill a love of the land into the hearts of our youth for their own salvation and that of Christian unity so that we may all share hereafter in the same blissful life you enjoy in heaven. Amen.

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011;
meditations and contemplations adapted from *Biblical Medications for Easter* by Rev. Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P.;
information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.