

Guide to *Lectio Divina*

Choose a word or phrase of the Scriptures you wish to pray. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as you have no set goal of “covering” a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God’s hands, not yours.

Read. Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of a word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In *lectio divina*, God is teaching us to listen, to seek him in silence. God does not reach out and grab us but gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

Ponder. Take the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

Pray. Whether you use words, ideas, or images — or all three — is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. Give to God what you have discovered during your experience of meditation. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

It is not necessary to assess the quality of your *lectio divina*, as if you were “performing” or seeking some goal. *Lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Fr. Luke Dysinger

Lectio Divina: 5th Sunday of Easter (A)

Sunday, May 10, 2020

I am the way, the truth and the life

An answer to the constant questions of the human heart

John 14: 1-12

1. Opening prayer

Lord Jesus, send your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that you read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, you helped them to discover the presence of God in the disturbing events of your sentence and death. Thus, the cross that seemed to be the end of all hope became for them the source of life and of resurrection.

Create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples from Emmaus, may experience the force of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace. We ask this of you, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed to us the Father and sent us your Spirit. Amen.

2. Reading

a) A key to guide the reading:

As you read, try to listen as though you were present at the last meeting of Jesus with his disciples. Listen to his words as though they were addressed to you, today, at this moment.

b) A division of chapter 14 to help with the reading:

John 14: 1-4: Let nothing disturb you!

John 14: 5-7: Thomas' question and Jesus' reply

John 14: 8-21: Philip's question and Jesus' reply

John 14: 22-31: Judas Thaddaeus' question and Jesus' reply.

c) The text:

1-4: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house there are many places to live in; otherwise I would have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you to myself, so that you may be with me where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

5-7: Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said: I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.

8-12: Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?

'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works. In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father.



3. A moment of prayerful silence

so that the Word of God may enter into us and enlighten our life.

4. Some questions

to help us in our personal reflection.

a) Which word of Jesus most touched your heart? Why?

b) What traces of the face of God the Father, revealed by Jesus, appear in these twelve verses?

c) What do these verses reveal about the relationship of Jesus with the Father?

d) What do these verses tell us about our relationship with the Father?

e) What are the "greater works", which, according to Jesus, we shall be able to accomplish?

f) Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many places to live in". What do these words mean for us today?

g) Which problems and desires are implied in the questions of Thomas and Philip?

5. A key to the reading

for those who wish to go deeper into the text.

a) John's Gospel: a cloth woven from three threads:

* The word text means cloth. Hence, John's Gospel is like a beautiful cloth woven from three very different and yet very similar threads. These three threads harmonise so well that we sometimes get confused and are not aware that we are passing from one thread to another.

a) The first thread: is the facts of Jesus' life that happened in the year 30 as remembered by eyewitnesses, those who lived with Jesus and saw the things he did and heard the words he taught. This is the historical Jesus, preserved in the witness of the Beloved Disciple (1 Jn 1:1).

b) The second thread: is the facts and problems of the life of the community in the second half of the first century. Beginning with faith in Jesus and convinced of the presence of the Risen One among them, the communities enlightened these facts and problems by means of the words and signs of Jesus. Thus, for instance, the conflicts they had with the Pharisees, greatly influenced the story and the reporting of the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees.

c) The third thread: is the Evangelist's comments. In some passages, it is difficult for us to discern when Jesus stops talking and when the Evangelist begins his comments (Jn 2:22; 3:16-21; 7:39; 12:37-43; 20:30-31).

* In the five chapters, which describe Jesus' farewell (Jn 13 to 17), we can see these three threads: Jesus speaking, the communities speaking and the Evangelist speaking. In these chapters the three threads are interwoven in such a way that they present a whole of great beauty and inspiration, where it is difficult to distinguish which is which.

b) Chapters 13 to 17 of John's Gospel:

* The long conversation (Jn 13:1 to 17:26) between Jesus and his disciples at the last supper, on the eve of his apprehension and death, is the Testament he left us. In it Jesus expresses his last desire concerning life in community for his disciples. It was a friendly conversation, which the Disciple remembered well. The Evangelist wishes to convey that Jesus desired to prolong to the utmost that final meeting of friends, a moment of great intimacy. The same happens today. There are various kinds of conversations. There is the superficial conversation that leaves everything up in the air and reveals emptiness in the persons involved. Then there is the deep conversation that touches the heart. All of us, at some time, experience these moments of friendly sharing which expand our hearts and strengthen us in times of difficulty. This kind of conversation helps us to grow in trust and to overcome fear.

* These five chapters (Jn 13 to 17) are also an example of the way the communities of the Beloved Disciple catechised. The questions of the three disciples, Thomas (Jn 14:5), Philip (Jn 14:8) and Judas Thaddaeus (Jn 14:22), were also the questions of the communities of the late first century. Jesus' replies to the three were like a mirror where the communities found an answer to their doubts and difficulties. Thus, chapter 14 was (and still is) a catechesis that teaches the communities how to live without the physical presence of Jesus.

c) Chapter 14: 1-12: An answer to the constant questions of the human heart:

John 14:1-4: The communities asked: "How can we live in community with so many different opinions?" Jesus replies with an exhortation, "Do not let your hearts be troubled! There are many rooms in my Father's house!" The insistence on encouraging words that would help to overcome the troubles and divergences, means that there must have been different tendencies among the communities, each claiming to be truer than the other. Jesus says, "There are many rooms in my Father's house!" It is not necessary for all to think alike. What matters is that all accept Jesus as the revelation of the Father and that, for love of him, all take on an attitude of service and love. Love and service are the concrete, which binds together the many bricks of the wall and makes the diverse communities into one Church of brothers and sisters.

John 14:5-7: Thomas asks, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus replies, "I am the way, the life and the truth!" Three important words. Without the way we cannot walk. Without the truth we cannot be certain. Without life, there is only death! Jesus explains that he is the way because "No one can come to the Father except through me!" He is the door through which the sheep enter and leave (Jn 10:9). Jesus is the truth because seeing him we see the image of the Father. "If you know me, you know my Father too!" Jesus is the life because if we walk in his footsteps we shall be united to the Father and shall have life in us.

John 14:8-11: Philip asks, "Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.'" Philip expressed the desire of many in John's communities and continues to be the desire of all of us: what must I do to see the Father of whom Jesus speaks so much? Jesus' answer is very beautiful, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." We must not think that God is far away, distant and unknown. Anyone who desires to know how and who God the Father is, has only to look at Jesus. He has revealed the Father in the words and signs of his life! "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." Through his manner of being, Jesus revealed a new face of God that drew people to him. Through his obedience, he was completely identified with the Father. At all times he did that which the Father told him to do (Jn 5:30; 8:28-29.38). That is why everything in Jesus is the revelation of the Father! The signs and works he did are the work of the Father! In the same way, we, by our manner of living and living together, must be a revelation of Jesus. To have seen us should be to have seen and recognised in us a part of Jesus.

What we need to meditate here is "How do I reflect Jesus?" Am I like Peter who would not accept a servant and suffering Jesus and wanted a Jesus according to his wishes? (Mk 8:32-33). Am I like those who can only say "Lord! Lord!" (Mt 7:21). Am I like those who only wish for a celestial and glorious Christ and forget that Jesus of Nazareth walked with the poor, welcomed the

marginalized, healed the sick, reinstated those excluded and who, because of his commitment to the people and the Father, was persecuted and crucified.

John 14: 12: Jesus' promise. Jesus says that an intimate relationship with the Father is not his privilege alone, but is possible for all of us who believe in him. Through him, we can do the same things he did for the people of his time. He will intercede for us. Whatsoever we ask of him, he will ask of the Father and will obtain for us, provided it is in order to serve (Jn 14:13)

6. Psalm 43 (42)

"Your light and your truth will guide me on my way"

As a heart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.(Picture)

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and behold the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:

how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God,
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

My soul is cast down within me,

therefore I remember thee from the land of Jordan
and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep at the thunder of thy cataracts;
all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love;
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock:

"Why hast thou forgotten me?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

As with a deadly wound in my body,
my adversaries taunt me,

while they say to me continually,

"Where is your God?"

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

Vindicate me, O God,

and defend my cause against an ungodly people;
from deceitful and unjust men deliver me!

For thou art the God in whom I take refuge;
why hast thou cast me off?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

Oh send out thy light and thy truth;

let them lead me,

let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling!

Then I will go to the altar of God,

to God my exceeding joy;

and I will praise thee with the lyre, O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,

and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

7. Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice that which your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, your mother, not only listen to but also practise the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

10May2020 – FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Equal actions of the spiritually mature

There's some disagreement between those who consider prayer the number-one obligation for believers and those convinced that actions speak louder than words. Monastic leader Benedict of Clairvaux wrote his *Rule* to ensure his monks understood that *ora et labora*—prayer and labor—are partner activities in reaching spiritual maturity. Some people are clearly called to devote themselves primarily to spiritual matters in full-time religious vocations. Others can better serve elbow-deep in more worldly arenas. Try to balance the mix between spiritual rejuvenation and gritty action in your life.

Today's readings:

Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12 ([52](#)).

“It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table.”

[Sunday Spanish Translation](#)

11May2020 - EASTER WEEKDAY

Be an advocate

Jesus promised to send his followers an advocate—the Holy Spirit—to come to our aid, to strengthen and plead our Christian cause and defend us from evil. (We can use all the help we can get in these trying times!) As part of our church's social teaching, Catholics are to be advocates for the poor. Add your voice to those urging policymakers to take action on critical issues from malnutrition to forced migration. Confrontglobalpoverty.org is a good place to start.

Today's readings:

Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26 ([285](#)).

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name.”

12May2020 - MEMORIAL OF PANCRAS, MARTYR

A child shall lead us

Not much is known about Saint Pancras—other than he was martyred, like many Christians, by the Roman Emperor Diocletian around the year 303. Historic churches and a famous train station in London bear his name because Augustine of Canterbury brought devotion to Pancras with him to northern Europe. A truly defining characteristic of Pancras, though, is that he was only 14 when he was tortured and beheaded, putting him in the same “child saint” category as martyrs Maria Goretti, Agnes of Rome, and José Luis Sánchez del Río. How can your own faith benefit from a childlike trust?

Today's readings:

Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a ([286](#)).

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

13May2020 - MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Pray as if your (eternal) life depends on it

Beginning May 13, 1917 and continuing through that fall, three children (Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta) of Fatima, Portugal reported several Marian apparitions. Much has been written about the message of Our Lady of Fatima, whose feast was added to the church calendar in 2002. The [defining document](#) on Fatima comes from the Vatican's

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In sum: The apparitions did *not* predict the future or announce the end of the world. They *did* “exhort” us to pray, because “prayer is the salvation for souls.” Good advice in any guise!

Today's readings:

Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8 ([287](#)).

“No more than a branch can bear fruit of itself apart from the vine, can you bear fruit apart from me.”

14May2020 - FEAST OF MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

Ready and willing

Not much is known about Matthias except that he replaced Judas as one of the 12 apostles. Tradition has it that he preached in the areas around Judea and possibly farther afield and was persecuted and martyred, but details are few and unreliable. Today’s first reading tells us he stepped in when needed and agreed to join the apostles following Jesus’ death and Resurrection. Like most Christians, he lived a life of quiet faithfulness without much glory. Be ready to step in to serve others. Never mind the glory.

Today's readings:

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; John 15:9-17 ([564](#)).

“Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles.”

15May2020 - EASTER WEEKDAY

That they might be one

The call to unity is woven throughout our Catholic faith. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis writes that we share with our ancestors in faith the conviction “that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice, and faithfulness to others.” Recent events bring this truth home in forceful ways. Today let’s commemorate International Day of Families and Endangered Species Day, both of which are ways to help nurture our essential connectedness with each other and the world.

Today's readings:

Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17 ([289](#)).

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.”

16May2020 - EASTER WEEKDAY

Being Christian has a cost

Religious persecution was commonplace in the story of the Early Church. Two thousand years later, persecution of Christians continues. In a 2019 trip to the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome, Pope Francis remarked, “Still today Christians are persecuted—even more than in the first centuries.” Play your part in stopping all religious persecution by expressing zero tolerance for it in your own backyard.

Today's readings:

Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21 ([290](#)).

“If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”