

# 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 the Holy Souls in Purgatory.*

*Pray daily for those who have died, just as you hope people will pray for you following your death.*

**“Think well. Speak well. Do well. These three things, through the mercy of God, will make a man go to Heaven.” ~SAINT CAMILLUS DE LELLIS**

### **Monday, November 1 ~ Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time Solemnity of All Saints**

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12a** When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

**Meditation:** The beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness that God has placed in every heart. They teach us the final end to which God calls us, namely the coming of God's kingdom (Matthew 4:17), the vision of God (Matthew 5:8; 1 John 2; 1), entering into the joy of the Lord (Matthew 25:21-23) and into his rest (Hebrews 4:7-11). Jesus' beatitudes also confront us with decisive choices concerning the life we pursue here on earth and the use we make of the goods he puts at our disposal. God alone satisfies. Theresa of Avila's prayer book contained a bookmark which she wrote: "Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you; all things pass: God never changes. Patience achieves all it strives for. Whoever has God lacks nothing, God alone suffices." Is God enough for you? God offers us the greatest good possible – abundant life in Jesus Christ (John 10:10) and the promise of unending joy and happiness with God. Do you seek the highest good, the total good, which is above all else?

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, by whose gift we venerate in one celebration the merits of all the Saints, bestow on us, we pray, through the prayers of so many intercessors, an abundance of the reconciliation with you for which we earnestly long. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** What is the good life which God intends for us? And how is it related with the ultimate end or purpose of life? Is it not our desire and longing for true happiness, which is none other than the complete good, the sum of all goods, leaving nothing more to be desired? Jesus addresses this question in his sermon on the mount. The heart of Jesus' message is that we can live a very happy life. The call to holiness, to be saints who joyfully pursue God's will for their lives, can be found in these ten beatitudes. Jesus' beatitudes sum up our calling or vocation – to live a life of the beatitudes. The word “beatitude” literally means “happiness” or “blessedness.” Living a life of Christ will bring us true joy, true happiness – everything else of this world is fleeting.

### **Tuesday, 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:** What kind of future are you preparing for? What about the life to come after our death? God puts in the heart of every living person the desire for unending life and happiness with him. While death claims each of us at the appointed time, God gives us something which death cannot touch -- his own divine life and sustaining power. In the Old Testament, one of the greatest testimonies of faith and hope in the midst of great suffering and pain is that of Job: For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another (Job 19:25-27).

**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, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Additional prayer for those who have died:** Almighty God, through the death of Your Son on the Cross, You destroyed our death; through His rest in the tomb You hallowed the graves of all who believe in You; and through His rising again You restored us to eternal life. God of the living and the dead, accept our prayers for those who have died in Christ and who are buried with Him in the hope of rising again. Since they were true to Your name on earth, let them praise You forever in the joy of heaven. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Daily Prayer of Saint Gertrude the Great for the Souls in Purgatory:** Eternal Father, I offer You the most precious blood of Your 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, for those in my own home and within my family. Amen. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

**Pray the All Souls Novena:** <https://www.praymorenovenas.com/souls-day-novena>

**Contemplation:** Yesterday we celebrated “All Saints” day; today we celebrate “All Souls” day as a day of remembrance and honor to those who have died. As we commemorate this day, it seems much like our Memorial Day civic holiday – without the veteran aspect of the holiday. What is the difference between our celebrations? On All Saints Day we pray to those saints in heaven to intercede for us. And on occasion this includes someone we know and who has been a strong part of our life. But on All Souls Day we pray for our loved ones who have died and ask the Lord to admit them to their eternal reward. Our readings encourage us to open up our minds and hearts to the mystery of God’s love for us. We very easily can focus our attention on what we are missing as we remember our family and friends who have died. And this very human emotion is strong and is good and is part of our human nature which God has created. But God also has called us to trust in His promises of salvation and an eternal reward. Jesus reveals himself in many countless ways to those who seek him with eyes of faith. When we read the word of God in the bible Jesus speaks to us and reveals to us the mind and heart of the Father. When we approach the altar of the Lord, Jesus offers himself in the Eucharist as spiritual food which produces the very life of God within us (I am the bread of life, John 6:35). He promises unbroken fellowship and freedom from the fear of being forsaken or cut off from everlasting life with God. And he offers us the hope of sharing in his resurrection. Is your hope and desire to see God face to face?

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

**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, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."

**Meditation:** What does the parable of the tower builder and a ruler on a war campaign have in common? Both risk serious loss if they don't carefully plan ahead. In a shame and honor culture people want to avoid at all costs being mocked by their community for failing to complete a task they began in earnest. This double parable echoes the instruction of Proverbs: "By wisdom a house is built" and "by wise guidance you can wage a war" to ensure victory (Proverbs 24:3-6). Every landowner who could afford it walled in his orchard as a protection from intruders who might steal or harm his produce. A tower was usually built in a corner of the wall and a guard posted especially during harvest time when thieves would likely try to make off with the goods. Starting a building-project, and leaving it unfinished because of poor planning would invite the scorn of the whole village. Likewise a king who decided to wage a war against an opponent who was much stronger, would be considered foolish if he did not come up with a plan that had a decent chance of success. Jesus tells his would-be disciples that they, too, must count the cost if they want to succeed as his disciples. Jesus assures success for those willing to pay the price. All it cost is everything! What does Jesus have to offer that's worth giving up everything else? More than we can imagine! Jesus offers the gift of abundant life and everlasting peace and happiness with God.

**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, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Jesus used strong language to make clear that nothing should take precedence or first place in our lives over God. Jesus knew that the way of the cross was the Father's way to glory and victory over sin and death. He counted the cost and said 'yes' to his Father's will. We, too, must 'count the cost' and be ready to follow Jesus in the way of the cross if we want to share in his glory and victory. What is the 'way of the cross' for you and for me? 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 out give God. He always gives us more than we can expect or imagine. Do you allow the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with the love of God?

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

**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:** Shepherds normally counted their sheep at the end of the day to make sure all were accounted for. Since sheep by their very nature are very social, an isolated sheep can quickly become bewildered and even neurotic. The shepherd's grief and anxiety is turned to joy when he finds the lost sheep and restores it to the fold. The housewife who lost a coin faced something of an economic disaster, since the value of the coin would be equivalent to her husband's daily wage. What would she say to her husband when he returned home from work? They were poor and would suffer greatly because of the loss. Her grief and anxiety turn to joy when she finds the coin. Both the shepherd and the housewife "search until what they have lost is found". Their persistence pays off. They both instinctively share their joy with the whole community. The poor are particularly good at sharing in one another's sorrows and joys. 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. Do you pray and seek those you know who have lost their way to God?

**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, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** The scribes and Pharisees took great offense at Jesus because, among other things, he associated with sinners and treated them graciously. The Pharisees had strict regulations about how they were to keep away from sinners, lest they incur ritual defilement. They were not to entrust money to them 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. They were shocked with the way in which Jesus freely received sinners and ate with them. Sinners, nonetheless, were drawn to Jesus to hear him speak about the mercy of God.

### Friday, November 5 ~ 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:** Notice how 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. The original meaning of "shrewdness" is "foresight". A shrewd person grasps a critical situation with resolution, foresight, and the determination to avoid serious loss or disaster. Jesus is concerned here with something more critical than a financial or economic crisis. His concern is that we avert spiritual crisis and personal moral disaster through the exercise of faith and foresight. If Christians would only expend as much foresight and energy to spiritual matters which have eternal consequences as much as they do to earthly matters which have temporal consequences, then they would be truly better off, both in this life and in the age to come.

**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, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** True wealth consists not in what we amass and what we keep, but in what we give away. Possessions are a great responsibility. The Lord expects us to use them honestly and responsibly and to put them at his service and the service of others. We belong to God and all that we have is his as well. He expects us to make a good return on what he gives us. God loves generosity and he gives liberally to those who share his gifts with others. The Pharisees, however, had no room for God or others in their hearts. The gospel says they were lovers of money (Luke 16:14). Love of money and wealth crowd out love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus makes clear that our hearts must either be possessed by God's love or our hearts will be possessed by the love of something else. What do you most treasure in your heart?

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 Catholic Culture.

frlump:2021