

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)

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.

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy 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, those in my own home and within my family. Amen. ~PRAYER OF SAINT GERTRUDE FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

Monday, November 8 ~ Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Luke 17:1-6 Jesus said to his disciples, “Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the one through whom they occur. It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, ‘I am sorry,’ you should forgive him.” And the Apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” The Lord replied, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Meditation: While Jesus warns against the sin of bad example and scandal, he also demonstrates the power of faith for overcoming temptation and obstacles. We often encounter challenges and difficulties in life which seem beyond our power or capacity to handle. What appears impossible to human power is possible to those who believe in God's power. Faith is a gift freely given by God to help us know God personally, to understand his truth, and to live in the power of his love. God expects more from us than we can do by ourselves. Faith in God is the key for removing obstacles and difficulties which keep us from doing his will. We are his servants, and he is ever ready to work through us and in us for his glory. For faith to be effective it must be linked with trust and obedience — an active submission to God and a willingness to do whatever he commands.

Prayer: Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours. 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: So today we might ask: what is the driving force in my life? Jesus speaks of two forces at work in our lives — the power of temptation to sin and cause harm and the power of faith to overcome obstacles and difficulties that stand in the way of loving God and our neighbor. The Greek word for temptation (*scandalon*) is exactly the same as the English word “scandal.” The original meaning of scandal is a trap or a stumbling block which causes one to trip and fall. The scriptures warn us about the snare or enticement to go astray and to do what is evil. Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me, and from the snares of evildoers (Psalm 141:9)! Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling (1 John 2:10). The Jews held that it was an unforgivable sin to teach another to sin. If we teach another to sin, he or she in turn may teach still another, until a train of sin is set in motion with no foreseeable end. Jesus warns his disciples of the terrible responsibility that they must set no stumbling block in the way of another, that is, not give offense or bad example that might lead another to sin. The young in faith are especially vulnerable to the bad example of those who should be passing on the faith.

Tuesday, November 9 ~ Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time **Feast of the Dedication of Saint John Lateran Basilica**

Holy Gospel: John 2:13-22 Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers seated

there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *Zeal for your house will consume me*. At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his Body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

Meditation: The cleansing of the temple by Jesus was seen by his disciples as a prophetic sign of God's action. The temple was understood as the dwelling place of God among his people. When God delivered his people from slavery in Egypt, he brought them through the sea, and finally to Mount Sinai where he made a covenant with them and gave them a new way of life embodied in the Ten Commandments (ref. Exodus 20:1-17). God gave Moses instruction for worship and for making the Tabernacle, or tent of meeting, which was later replaced by the temple. The New Testament tells us that these "serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary" – God's Temple in heaven (ref. Hebrews 8:5). Jesus' cleansing of the temple is also a prophetic sign of what he wants to do with each of us – cleanse us.

Prayer: O God, who from living and chosen stones prepare an eternal dwelling for your majesty, increase in your Church the spirit of grace you have bestowed, so that by new growth your faithful people may build up the heavenly Jerusalem. 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.

About this Feast: Many Catholics wonder what the significance is of celebrating the anniversary of the dedication of St. John Lateran Basilica. This particular Basilica is the Cathedral Church of Rome – just as St. Joseph Cathedral is the "mother church" of the Diocese of Columbus, and is the "Bishop's Church." The Holy Father – Pope Francis – is also the Bishop of Rome, thus the Lateran Basilica is his Church as Bishop. St. John Lateran is Christendom's earliest basilica. Ordered by Rome's first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great, it became the Popes' own cathedral and official residence for the first millennium of Christian history. Today, standing before the basilica's ponderous 18th century facade, surrounded by the heavy street traffic of Rome which snarls on every side, we can hardly imagine this as the cradle of our religious heritage. It was to Jesus the Savior that Constantine dedicated the original church, confirming Christ's superiority over the Capital's pagan gods and assuring the worldwide expansion of the Christian religion. The dedication of a church is a feast for all its parishioners. St. John Lateran is, in a sense, the parish church of all Catholics, for it is the Pope's parish, the Cathedral Church of the Bishop of Rome. This church is the spiritual home of the people who are the Church.

Wednesday, November 10 ~ Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time Saint Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church

Holy Gospel: Luke 17:11-19 As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

Meditation: The word "mercy" literally means "sorrowful at heart." But mercy is something more than compassion, or heartfelt sorrow at another's misfortune. Compassion empathizes with the sufferer. But mercy goes further; it removes suffering. A merciful person shares in another's misfortune and suffering as if it were his own. And he or she will do everything in their power to dispel that misery. Mercy is also connected with justice. Saint Thomas Aquinas once said that mercy "does not destroy justice, but is a certain kind of fulfillment of justice...Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution; (and) justice without mercy is cruelty." Pardon without repentance negates justice. So what is the significance of these ten lepers asking for mercy? They know they are in need of healing, not just physical, but spiritual healing as well. They approach Jesus with contrition and faith because they believe that he can release the burden of guilt and suffering and make restoration of body and soul possible. Their request for mercy is both a plea for pardon and release from suffering. Jesus gives mercy to all who ask with faith and contrition.

Prayer: O God, who never allow the gates of hell to prevail against your Church, firmly founded on the apostolic rock, grant her, we pray, that through the intercession of Pope Saint Leo, she may stand firm in your truth and know the protection of lasting peace. 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: Why did only one leper out of ten – a Samaritan – return to show thanks and gratitude? Gratefulness is related to grace – gratitude is the homage of the heart which responds with graciousness in expressing an act of thanksgiving. The Samaritan approached Jesus reverently and gave praise to God. If we do not recognize and appreciate the mercy shown to us we become ungrateful. Ingratitude is forgetfulness or a poor return for kindness received. Ingratitude easily leads to lack of charity and intolerance towards others, as well as to other sins, such as discontent, dissatisfaction, complaining, grumbling, pride and presumption. How often have we been ungrateful to our parents, pastors, teachers, and neighbors? Do you express gratitude to God for his mercy towards you and do you show mercy to your neighbor? When is the last time you thanked God for all that he has given you?

Thursday, November 11 ~ Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Martin of Tours, Bishop
~ Veterans Day ~

Holy Gospel: Luke 17:20-25 Asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus said in reply, "The coming of the Kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, 'Look, here it is,' or, 'There it is.' For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you." Then he said to his disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. There will be those who will say to you, 'Look, there he is,' or 'Look, here he is.' Do not go off, do not run in pursuit. For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation."

Meditation: Jesus identified himself with the "Day of the Lord." "Son of man" was understood as a Messianic title for the one who would come not only to establish God's kingdom but who would come as Judge of the living as well as the dead. Jesus points to his second coming when he will return to complete the work of restoration and final judgment. While we do not know the time of his return, we will not mistake it when it happens. It will be apparent to all, both believers and non-believers as well. When the Pharisees asked Jesus what sign would indicate the "Day of the Lord," Jesus replied that only one sign would point to that day and that sign was Jesus himself. Jesus surprised the Jews of his time by announcing that God's kingdom was already present among them in his very person – the Son of God sent from the Father to redeem the world from sin and destruction. In Jesus we see the power and the glory of God's kingdom. His power overthrew the powers of darkness and sin. Jesus knew that the only way to victory was through the cross. On that cross he defeated death and canceled the debt of sin for us. The victory of his cross opens the way for us to become citizens of God's kingdom. Do you seek the coming of God's kingdom with joyful hope?

Prayer: O God, who are glorified in the Bishop Saint Martin both by his life and death, make new, we pray, the wonders of your grace in our hearts, that neither death nor life may separate us from your love. 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.

A Prayer for Veterans: Help us, dear God, to see your face in every Veteran we encounter. Guide us as we imagine new ways to support Veterans and their families. Bring healing and peace to all who have been wounded physically, mentally and spiritually during wartime. Help us bring your saving grace to heal the invisible wounds of war. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Contemplation: Why did Jesus associate lightning with the "Day of the Lord?" In the arid climate of Palestine, storms were infrequent and seasonal. They appeared suddenly and unexpectedly, seemingly out of nowhere, covering everything in thick darkness. With little or no warning lightning filled the sky with its piercing flashes of flaming light. Its power struck terror and awe in those who tried to flee from its presence. Jesus warned the Pharisees that the "Son of man" would come in like manner, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, on the clouds of heaven to bring God's judgment on the "Day of the Lord". No special sign will be needed to announce his appearance, no will his presence and power be veiled or hidden; all will recognize him as clearly as the lightning in the sky.

Friday, November 12 ~ Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr

Holy Gospel: Luke 17:26-37 Jesus said to his disciples: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man; they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Similarly, as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; on the day when Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained from the sky to destroy them all. So it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, someone who is on the housetop and whose belongings are in the house must not go down to get them, and likewise one in the field must not return to what was left behind. Remember the wife of Lot. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it. I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. And there will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken, the other left." They said to him in reply, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will gather."

Meditation: What does Jesus mean when he says that one person will be taken and another left? God judges each person individually on how they have responded to his grace and invitation to live as citizens of his kingdom. We cannot pass off personal responsibility to someone else, such as family, spouse, or friends. No one can discharge his or her duty by proxy or association. The good news is that God gives grace and help to all who seek him with faith. The Lord Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit so that we may have the wisdom, help, and strength we need to turn from sin to his way of love and holiness. The Lord's warning of judgment causes dismay for those who are unprepared, but it brings joyful hope to those who eagerly wait for his return in glory. God's judgment is good news for those who are ready to meet him. Their reward is God himself, the source of all truth, beauty, goodness, love and everlasting life. The people in Noah's time ignored the Lord's warning of judgment. They missed the boat, literally! Whose boat are you taking — the world's boat to success and happiness or God's boat to heaven and bliss with him? Those whose hope is firmly anchored in heaven will not be disappointed when God's judgment comes.

Prayer: Stir up in your Church, we pray, O Lord, the Spirit that filled Saint Josaphat as he laid down his life for the sheep, so that through his intercession we, too, may be strengthened by the same Spirit and not be afraid to lay down our life for others. 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 quotes a familiar proverb to his audience: "Where the body is, there the eagles (or vultures) will be gathered together." Eagles, like vultures, are attracted to carrion. The Book of Job describes the eagle spying out its prey from afar (Job 39:29). What's the point of this analogy? It's inevitable that a thing will happen when the necessary conditions are fulfilled. The return of the Lord is certain, but the time is unknown. The Lord's judgment comes swiftly and often unexpectedly. Jesus warns his listeners to not be caught off guard when that day arrives. It will surely come in God's good time! The question is, are you ready – ready right now, this very minute – for the second coming of Jesus Christ? If not, there is no time like the present to prepare yourself. Step #1 begins in the confessional.

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.

frlumpe:2021

DURING THIS MONTH OF NOVEMBER
A Prayer For Our Loved Ones Who Have Died

*God our Father, Your power brings us to birth, Your providence guides our lives,
and by Your command, we return to dust. Dear Lord, those who die still live in Your presence,
their lives change but do not end. I pray in hope for my family, relatives and friends,
and for all the dead known to You alone. In company with Christ, Who died and now lives,
may they rejoice in Your kingdom, where all our tears are wiped away.
Unite us together again in one family, to sing Your praise forever and ever.
Amen.*