

# 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 October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary*

***"Cling to the Rosary, for without Our Lady we cannot stand. The family that prays together, stays together, and if you want peace in your heart and your home, pray the Rosary every day. Our Lady has never refused me anything I have asked through the Rosary."*** +SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA (MOTHER TERESA)

**Monday, October 13 ~ Twenty-Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**  
***Anniversary of the 1917 Miracle of the Sun in Fatima, Portugal***

**Holy Gospel: Luke 11:29-32** While still more people gathered in the crowd, Jesus said to them, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. At the judgment the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is something greater than Solomon here. At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because at the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here."

**Meditation:** The Lord Jesus came to set us free from slavery to sin and hurtful desires. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit he pours his love into our hearts that we may understand his will for our lives and walk in his way of holiness. God searches our hearts, not to condemn us, but to show us where we need his saving grace and help. He calls us to seek him with true repentance, humility, and the honesty to see our sins for what they really are — a rejection of his love and will for our lives. God will transform us if we listen to his word and allow his Holy Spirit to work in our lives. Ask the Lord to renew your mind and to increase your thirst for his wisdom. James says that the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity (James 3:17). A double-minded person cannot receive this kind of wisdom. The single of heart desire one thing alone — God's pleasure. God wants us to delight in him and to know the freedom of his truth and love.

**Prayer:** May your grace, O Lord, we pray, at all times go before us and follow after and make us always determined to carry out good works. 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.

**For more information about the Miracle of the Sun, with 70,000 witnesses, please visit:**  
**<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/sixth-apparition-of-our-lady-23368>**

**Contemplation:** Many fatalities could be avoided if people took the warning signs seriously. When the religious leaders demanded a sign from Jesus, he gave them a warning to avert spiritual disaster. It was characteristic of the Jews that they demanded "signs" from God's messengers to authenticate their claims. When the religious leaders pressed Jesus to give proof for his claims he says in so many words that he is God's sign and that they need no further evidence from heaven than his own person. The Ninevites recognized God's warning when Jonah spoke to them, and they repented. Jonah was God's sign and his message was the message of God for the people of Nineveh. Unfortunately the religious leaders were not content to accept the signs right before their eyes. They had rejected the message of John the Baptist and now they reject Jesus as God's Anointed One (Messiah) and they fail to heed his message. Do you pay attention to warning signs?

**Tuesday, October 14 ~ Twenty-Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Saint Callistus, I: Pope and Martyr**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 11:37-41** After Jesus had spoken, a Pharisee invited him to dine at his home. He entered and reclined at table to eat. The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not observe the

prescribed washing before the meal. The Lord said to him, "Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. You fools! Did not the maker of the outside also make the inside? But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you."

**Meditation:** Is the Lord welcomed at your table and are you ready to feast at his table? A Pharisee, after hearing Jesus preach, invited him to dinner, no doubt, because he wanted to hear more from this extraordinary man who spoke the word of God as no one else had done before. It was not unusual for a rabbi to give a teaching over dinner. Jesus, however, did something which offended his host. He did not perform the ceremonial washing of hands before beginning the meal. Did Jesus forget or was he deliberately performing a sign to reveal something to his host? Jesus turned the table on his host by chiding him for uncleanness of heart.

**Prayer:** O God, who raised up Pope Saint Callistus the First to serve the Church and attend devoutly to Christ's faithful departed, strengthen us, we pray, by his witness to the faith, so that, rescued from the slavery of corruption, we may merit an incorruptible inheritance. 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:** Which is more important to God — clean hands, or a clean mind and a clean heart? Jesus chided the Pharisees for harboring evil thoughts that make us unclean spiritually — such as greed, pride, bitterness, envy, arrogance, and the like. Why does he urge them, and us, to give alms? When we give freely and generously to those in need we express love, compassion, kindness, and mercy. And if the heart is full of love and compassion, then there is no room for envy, greed, bitterness, and the like. Do you allow God's love to transform your heart and mind? If not, why not?

### **Wednesday, October 15 ~ Twenty-Eighth Week in Ordinary Time** **Saint Teresa of Avila, Virgin and Doctor of the Church**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 11:42-46** The Lord said: "Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb, but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others. Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces. Woe to you! You are like unseen graves over which people unknowingly walk." Then one of the scholars of the law said to him in reply, "Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too." And he said, "Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them."

**Meditation:** Why does Jesus single out the teachers and lawyers for some rather strong words of rebuke? The word woe can also be translated as alas. It is as much an expression of sorrowful pity as it is of anger. Why did Jesus lament and issue such a stern rebuke? Jesus was angry with the religious leaders because they failed to listen to God's word and they misled the people they were supposed to guide in the ways of God. The scribes devoted their lives to the study of the Law of God and regarded themselves as legal experts in it. They divided the Ten Commandments and precepts into thousands of tiny rules and regulations. They were so exacting in their interpretations and in trying to live them out, that they had little time for anything else. By the time they finished compiling their interpretations it took no less than fifty volumes to contain them! In their misguided zeal, they required unnecessary and burdensome rules which obscured the more important matters of religion, such as love of God and love of neighbor. They were leading people to Pharisaism rather than to God.

**Prayer:** O God, who through your Spirit raised up Saint Teresa of Jesus to show the Church the way to seek perfection, grant that we may always be nourished by the food of her heavenly teaching and fired with longing for true holiness. 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 was the point of Jesus' lesson in today's Gospel? Simple. The essence of God's commandments is love — love of the supreme good — God himself and love of our neighbor who is made in the image and likeness of God. God is love and everything he does flows from his love for us. God's love is unconditional and is wholly directed towards the good of others. True love both embraces and lifts the burdens of others. Paul the Apostle reminds us that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given us" (1 Cor. 5:5). Do you help your neighbors carry their burdens? God gives each of us sufficient grace for each day to love as he loves and to lift the burdens of others that they, too, may experience the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

**About Saint Teresa of Avila:** St. Teresa of Jesus, honored by the Church as the "seraphic virgin," and reformer of the Carmelite Order, ranks first among women for wisdom and learning. She is called "doctor of mystical theology;" in a report to Pope Paul V the Roman Rota declared: "Teresa has been given to the

Church by God as a teacher of the spiritual life. The mysteries of the inner mystical life which the holy Fathers propounded unsystematically and without orderly sequence, she has presented with unparalleled clarity." Her writings are still the classic works on mysticism, and from her all later teachers have drawn, e.g., Francis de Sales, Alphonsus Liguori. Teresa was born at Avila, Spain, in the year 1515. In 1533 she entered the Carmelite Order; for eighteen years she suffered physical pain and spiritual dryness. Under divine inspiration and with the approval of Pope Pius IV, she began the work of reforming the Carmelite Order. In spite of heavy opposition and constant difficulties, she founded 32 reformed convents. Truly wonderful were the exterior and interior manifestations of her mystical union with God, especially during the last decade of her life. When dying she often repeated the words: "Lord, I am a daughter of the Church!" Her holy body rests upon the high altar of the Carmelite church in Alba, Spain; her heart with its mysterious wound is reserved in a precious reliquary on the Epistle side of the altar. St. Teresa composed the following well-known lines: *"Let nothing affright thee, nothing dismay thee. All is passing, God ever remains. Patience obtains all. Whoever possesses God cannot lack anything God alone suffices."*

**Thursday, October 16 ~ Twenty-Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, Virgin; Saint Gerard Majella, Priest**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 11:47-54** The Lord said: "Woe to you who build the memorials of the prophets whom your fathers killed. Consequently, you bear witness and give consent to the deeds of your ancestors, for they killed them and you do the building. Therefore, the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and Apostles; some of them they will kill and persecute' in order that this generation might be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who died between the altar and the temple building. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be charged with their blood! Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter." When Jesus left, the scribes and Pharisees began to act with hostility toward him and to interrogate him about many things, for they were plotting to catch him at something he might say.

**Meditation:** What does Jesus mean when he says they have taken away the key of knowledge? The religious lawyers and scribes held the "office of the keys" since they were the official interpreters of the scriptures. Unfortunately their interpretation of the scriptures became so distorted and difficult to understand that others were "shut off" to the scriptures. They not only shut themselves to heaven; they also hindered others from understanding God's word. Through pride and envy, they rejected not only the prophets of old, but God's final prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the "key of David" (see Isaiah 22:22; Revelations 3:7) who opens heaven to those who accept him as Lord and Savior. He is the "Wisdom of God" and source of everlasting life. Only the humble of heart – those who thirst for God and acknowledge his word as true – can truly understand this wisdom.

**Prayer (Saint Margaret Mary):** Pour out on us, we pray, O Lord, the spirit with which you so remarkably endowed Saint Margaret Mary, so that we may come to know that love of Christ which surpasses all understanding and be utterly filled with your fullness. 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.

**Prayer (Saint Gerard Majella):** O good Saint Gerard, powerful intercessor before God and wonder worker of our day, confidently I call upon you and seek your aid. On Earth you always fulfilled God's designs, help me now to do the holy will of God. Implore the Master of Life, from whom all paternity proceeds, to render me fruitful in offspring, that I may raise up children to God in this life, and in the world to come heirs to the Kingdom of His Glory. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Do you revere God's word and submit to it as true and authoritative for your life? Or does God's word make for a good phrase on a t-shirt or coffee mug, and that's about as far as it goes? God sent his prophets to open the ears of his people to hear and understand God's word and intention for their lives. God's wisdom is personified in the voice of the prophets, a voice that usually brought rejection and martyrdom because they spoke for God rather than for human approval and favor. Jesus chastised many of the religious leaders of his day for being double-minded and for demanding from others standards which they refused to satisfy. They professed admiration for the prophets by building their tombs while at the same time they opposed their message and closed their ears to the word of God. Are your ears open to God's word – enough to transform your mind and heart?

**Friday, October 17 ~ Twenty-Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop Martyr**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 12:1-7** At that time: So many people were crowding together that they were trampling one another underfoot. Jesus began to speak, first to his disciples, "Beware of the leaven—that

is, the hypocrisy—of the Pharisees. “There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops. I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one. Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.”

**Meditation:** You might be wondering why Jesus warned his disciples to avoid the ways of the Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted everyone to recognize that they were pious and good Jews because they meticulously and scrupulously performed their religious duties. Jesus turned the table on them by declaring that outward appearance doesn't always match the inward intentions of the heart. Anyone can display outward signs of goodness while inwardly harboring evil thoughts and intentions. The word “hypocrite” means actor – someone who pretends to be what he or she is not. But who can truly be good, but God alone? Hypocrisy thrives on making a good appearance and masking what they don't want others to see. The good news is that God's light exposes the darkness of evil and sin in our hearts, even the sin which is unknown to us. And God's light transforms our hearts and minds and enables us to overcome hatred with love, pride with humility, and pretense with integrity and truthfulness. God gives grace to the humble and contrite of heart to enable us to overcome the leaven of insincerity and hypocrisy in our lives.

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, who adorn the sacred body of your Church with the confessions of holy Martyrs, grant, we pray, that, just as the glorious passion of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, which we celebrate today, brought him eternal splendor, so it may be for us unending protection. 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 does fear have to do with the kingdom of God? Fear is a powerful force. It can lead us to panic and flight or it can spur us to faith and action. The fear of God is the antidote to the fear of losing one's life. “I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears...O fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no want! ...Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” (Psalm 34:4,9,11) What is fear of God? It is reverence for the One who made us in love and who sustains us in mercy and kindness. The greatest injury or loss which we can experience is not physical but spiritual – the loss of one's soul to the power of hell. A healthy fear of God leads to spiritual maturity, wisdom and right judgment and it frees us from the tyranny of sinful pride, deceit and cowardice – especially in the face of evil and spiritual deception. Do you trust in God's grace and mercy and do you submit to his word?

**About Saint Ignatius of Antioch:** In the *Martyrology* we read: “At Rome, the holy bishop and martyr Ignatius. He was the second successor to the apostle Peter in the see of Antioch. In the persecution of Trajan he was condemned to the wild beasts and sent in chains to Rome. There, by the emperor's order, he was subjected to most cruel tortures in the presence of the Senate and then thrown to the lions. Torn to pieces by their teeth, he became a victim for Christ.” The bishop and martyr Ignatius of Antioch occupies a foremost place among the heroes of Christian antiquity. His final journey from Antioch to Rome was like a nuptial procession and a Way of the Cross. For the letters he wrote along the way resemble seven stations of the Cross; they may also be called seven nuptial hymns overflowing with the saint's intense love for Christ Jesus and his longing to be united with Him. These letters are seven most precious jewels in the heirloom bequeathed to us by the Church. The exact year of St. Ignatius' death is unknown.

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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