

# 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 September is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows*

***"Mary is that wondrous union of grace and freedom, which urges each of us to have trust, courage and participation in the life of God's people. 'He who is mighty has done great things for me' (Lk 1:49): may each of us know this joy and proclaim it with a new song. Let us not be afraid to choose life! It may seem risky and imprudent. Many voices whisper: 'Why bother? Let it go. Think of your own interests.' These are voices of death. But we are disciples of Christ. It is his love that drives us — soul and body — in our time. As individuals and as the Church, we no longer live for ourselves. This — and only this — spreads life and lets life prevail. Our victory over death begins here and now." +POPE LEO XIV, HOMILY EXCERPT, AUGUST 15, 2025***

### **Monday, September 8 ~ Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:1-16,18-23** The Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king. David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile. After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ. This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: *Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel*, which means "God is with us."

**Meditation:** Understandably many ask the question: "What is the significance of the genealogy in Matthew's gospel?" This genealogy is arranged in three sections portraying three great stages in the spiritual history of the people of the old covenant. The first stage begins with Abraham, the father of the chosen people, and ends with David, God's anointed King. The second stage takes us to the exile of God's people in Babylon. This is the period of Israel's shame and disaster due to her unfaithfulness. The third stage takes us to Jesus, God's anointed Messiah. Jesus the Messiah is the direct descent of Abraham and David, and the rightful heir to David's throne. God in his mercy fulfilled his promises to Abraham and to David that he would send a Savior and a King to rule over the house of Israel and to deliver them from their enemies. Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises. He is the hope not only for the people of the Old Covenant but for all nations as well. After all, Jesus is the Savior and Redeemer of the world.

**Prayer:** Impart to your servants, we pray, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace, that the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin may bring deeper peace to those for whom the birth of her Son was the dawning of salvation. 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:** Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham's lineage through the line of David, King of Israel. Matthew concludes his genealogy by stating that both Mary, Jesus' mother and Joseph, his foster father, came from the line of David. Mary was asked to assume in faith a burden of tremendous responsibility. That required faith and trust. Also, Mary was not yet married. Sexual relations outside of marriage (fornication) was a sinful act then, and remains so today. Mary was only espoused to Joseph, and such an engagement had to last for a whole year. She was asked to assume a great risk. She could have been rejected by Joseph, by her family, by all her own people. Mary knew that Joseph and her family would not understand without revelation from God. She nonetheless believed and trusted in God's promises. Joseph, a just and God-fearing man, believed the message given to him to take Mary as his wife and to accept the child in her womb as the promised Messiah. Like Mary, Joseph is a model of faith for us. He is a faithful witness and servant of God's unfolding plan of redemption.

## **Tuesday, September 9 ~ Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time**

### **Saint Peter Claver, Priest**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 6:12-19** Jesus departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. And he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and even those who were tormented by unclean spirits were cured. Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.

**Meditation:** Notice how the people came to Jesus wherever he was – they sought him out because they had heard all the wonderful things he taught and did. They were hungry for God and desired healing from their afflictions. In faith they pressed upon Jesus to touch him. As they did so power came from Jesus and they were healed. Even demons trembled in the presence of Jesus and left at his rebuke. Jesus offers freedom from the power of sin and oppression to all who seek him with expectant faith. When you hear God's word and consider all that Jesus did, how do you respond? With doubt, or with expectant faith? With skepticism, or with confident trust? Ask the Lord to increase your faith in his saving power and grace.

**Prayer:** O God, who made Saint Peter Claver a slave of slaves and strengthened him with wonder charity and patience as he came to their help, grant, through his intercession, that, seeking the things of Jesus Christ, we may love our neighbor in deeds and in truth. 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:** When Jesus embarked on his mission he chose twelve men to be his friends and apostles. In the choice of the twelve, we see a characteristic feature of God's work: Jesus chose very ordinary people. They were non-professionals, who had no wealth or position. They were chosen from the common people who did ordinary things, had no special education, and no social advantages. Jesus wanted ordinary people who could take an assignment and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these men, not for what they were, but for what they would be capable of becoming under his direction and power. When the Lord calls us to serve, we must not shrug back because we think that we have little or nothing to offer. The Lord takes what ordinary people, like us, can offer and uses it for greatness in his kingdom. How is God calling you? Is something holding you back from giving yourself unreservedly to God?

## **Wednesday, September 10 ~ Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 6:20-26** Raising his eyes toward his disciples Jesus said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way."

**Meditation:** How can one possibly find happiness in poverty, hunger, mourning, and persecution? If we want to be filled with the joy and happiness of heaven, then we must empty ourselves of all that would shut God out of our hearts. Poverty of spirit finds ample room and joy in possessing God alone as the greatest treasure possible. Hunger of the spirit seeks nourishment and strength in God's word and Spirit. Sorrow and mourning over wasted life and sin leads to joyful freedom from the burden of guilt and oppression. God reveals to the humble of heart the true source of abundant life and happiness. Jesus promises his disciples that the joys of heaven will more than compensate for the troubles and hardships they can expect in this world. Thomas Aquinas said: "No person can live without joy. That is why someone deprived of spiritual joy goes after carnal pleasures." Do you know the joy and happiness of hungering and thirsting for God alone?

**Prayer:** O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting 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:** When you encounter misfortune, grief, or tragic loss, how do you respond? With fear or faith? With passive resignation or with patient hope and trust in God? We know from experience that no one can escape all of the inevitable trials of life — pain, suffering, sickness, and death. When Jesus began to teach his disciples he gave them a "way of happiness" that transcends every difficulty and trouble that can weigh us down with grief and despair. Jesus began his sermon on the mount by addressing the issue of where true happiness can be found. The word beatitude literally means happiness or blessedness. Jesus' way of happiness, however, demands a transformation from within — a conversion of heart and mind which can only come about through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit.

### **Thursday September 11 ~ Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time Anniversary of 9/11 + Remember, Honor, Pray**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 6:27-38** Jesus said to his disciples: "To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful. "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

**Meditation:** What makes Christians different and what makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is grace — treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated, with loving-kindness and mercy. God is good to the unjust as well as the just. His love embraces saint and sinner alike. God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good of others, even those who hate and abuse us. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown to us. It is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return.

**Prayer:** O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting 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.

**Prayer of Pope Saint John Paul II ~ Anniversary of 9/11:** Since the inhumane terrorist attacks that occurred in different parts of the United States of America, we again recommend to the eternal mercy of the God of our Fathers the numerous innocent victims. We ask for consolation and comfort for their family and relatives, burdened by pain; we invoke strength and courage for the many who continue their work in the places struck by this terrible disaster; we implore for tenacity and perseverance by all men of goodwill continuing on the paths of justice and peace. May the Lord remove from the heart of man every trace of

resentment, of hostility and of hate, and open him to reconciliation, to solidarity, and to peace. Let us pray, so that the "culture of love" may be established all over the world . . . O God, Almighty and Merciful Father, he who sows discord cannot understand You; he who loves violence cannot welcome You: watch over us in our painful human condition tried by the brutal acts of terrorism and death. Comfort your children and open our hearts to hope, that our time may again know days of serenity and peace, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Visit:** [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_20010912.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010912.html)

**Contemplation:** Why should we pray for those who harm us in one way or another? Our prayer for those who do us ill both breaks the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do good in the face of evil. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm and ill-will? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who believe and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. His love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and grief. Only the cross of Jesus Christ can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment and gives us the courage to return evil with good. Such love and grace has power to heal and to save from destruction. Do you know the power of Christ's redeeming love and mercy?

## **Friday, September 12 ~ Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time** **Most Holy Name of Mary**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 6:39-42** Jesus told his disciples a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye."

**Meditation:** Have you wondered why is judgmentalism and a critical mind and spirit so rampant today, even among persons of faith? Part of it is due to the number of "talking heads" on cable television programs who "spin" their views into their "reporting" on issues and news events – journalists have made note of this disturbing trend, which influences how we, then, conduct ourselves. Of course blogs and people who feel compelled to post their negative comments and viewpoints on their Facebook pages don't help. As difficult as it may be at times, we must strive to "think the best of other people" if we, ourselves, wish to grow in love. The Lord knows our faults and he sees all – even the imperfections and sins of the heart which we cannot recognize in ourselves. Like a gentle father and a skillful doctor he patiently draws us to his seat of mercy and removes the cancer of sin which inhabits our hearts. As challenging as it may appear at times, pray to the Lord to flood your heart with his loving-kindness and mercy that you may only have room for charity and forbearance towards your neighbor.

**Prayer:** Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, for all who celebrate the glorious Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary, she may obtain your merciful favor. 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:** On this day dedicated to the Holy Name of Mary let us repeat that wonderful prayer of Saint Bernard: "Look to the star of the sea, call upon Mary ... in danger, in distress, in doubt, think of Mary, call upon Mary. May her name never be far from your lips, or far from your heart ... If you follow her, you will not stray; if you pray to her, you will not despair; if you turn your thoughts to her, you will not err. If she holds you, you will not fall; if she protects you, you need not fear; if she is your guide, you will not tire; if she is gracious to you, you will surely reach your destination." Amen.

**Contemplation:** A true disciple of Christ is one who listens to the voice of their Master and who submits to the skillful help of the Divine Physician for treating and removing the cancer of sin in our lives. If we are to be guides and teachers for others, then we need clear vision, both spiritual and moral vision, and a map that shows us the right destination for our life's journey. If our ultimate destination is heaven, then there is only one way to get there and that way is through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the cross of Christ sin is pardoned and the sinner is made whole, darkness and corruption give way to light and truth, death is defeated and new life restored. The cross of Christ frees us from condemnation and guilt and shows us the way of perfect love.

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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