

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 October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary

“The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer. In the sobriety of its elements, it has all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety, of which it can be said to be a compendium. With the Rosary, the Christian people sit at the school of Mary and are led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.”

+Pope Saint John Paul II

Monday, October 20 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Paul of the Cross, Priest

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:13-21 Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.” He replied to him, “Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?” Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Then he told them a parable. “There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.”

Meditation: Inheritance disputes are rarely ever easy to resolve, especially when the relatives or close associates of the dead benefactor can't agree on who should get what and who should get the most. Why did Jesus refuse to settle an inheritance dispute between two brothers? He saw that the heart of the issue was not justice or fairness but rather greed and possessiveness. The Ten Commandments were summarized into two prohibitions – do not worship false idols and do not covet what belongs to another. It's the flip side of the two great commandments – love God and love your neighbor. Jesus warned the man who wanted half of his brother's inheritance to "beware of all covetousness." To covet is to wish to get wrongfully what another possesses or to begrudge what God has given to another. Jesus restates the commandment "do not covet", but he also states that a person's life does not consist in the abundance of his or her possessions.

Prayer: May the Priest Saint Paul, whose only love was the Cross, obtain for us your grace, O Lord, so that, urged on more strongly by his example, we may each embrace our own cross with courage. 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 does Jesus call this wealthy landowner a fool? Jesus does not fault the rich man for his industriousness and skill in acquiring wealth, but rather for his egoism and selfishness – *it's mine, all mine, and no one else's*. The rich fool had lost the capacity to be concerned for others. His life was consumed with his possessions and his only interests were in himself. His death was the final loss of his soul! Saint Augustine comments on Jesus' words to the brother who wanted more: *Greed wants to divide, just as love desires to gather. What is the significance of "guard against all greed," unless it is "fill yourselves with love"?* We, possessing love for our portion, inconvenience the Lord because of our brother just as that man did against his brother, but we do not use the same plea. He said, "Master, tell my

brother to divide the inheritance with me." We say, "Master, tell my brother that he may have my inheritance." [Excerpted from Sermon 265.9]

Tuesday, October 21 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:35-38 Jesus said to his disciples: "Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants."

Meditation: This parable contains a lesson in faithfulness and a warning against sloth. Why is faithfulness so important to God? For one, it's the foundation for any lasting and meaningful relationship. Faithfulness or fidelity allows us to persevere in living out an unswerving commitment. The Lord is committed to us in a bond of unbreakable love and fidelity. That is what covenant means – keeping one's word, promise, and commitment no matter how tough or difficult it gets. Faithfulness is a key character trait of God and one that he expects of us. Fortunately God gives the grace and strength to be faithful. He also rewards faithfulness. Why is fidelity, commitment, and faithfulness so difficult today? Many today in western society extol freedom over fidelity and don't want to be bound to an unknown or uncertain future. It's regarded as inconvenient and a burden to the pursuit of the individual's interests. We badly need to recover this virtue, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of future generations as well. If we want to pass on the faith then we need to first be faithful models for our young people. Faithfulness demands consistency and determination to stay the course and see the task to its completion.

Prayer: Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. 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: God loves faithfulness. That is why we can always expect God to give us what he promises. In turn, God expects us to be faithful to him and to one another. How can we grow in faithfulness? God's grace shows us the way. When we are faithful in the little tasks and promises we make, we learn to be faithful in the bigger and more important responsibilities and tasks entrusted to us. Our reward is the Lord Jesus himself who shares with us his joy and friendship – "well done good and faithful servant ..enter into the joy of your Master" (Matthew 25:21).

Wednesday, October 22 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time **Pope Saint John Paul II**

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:39-48 Jesus said to his disciples: "Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Then Peter said, "Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?" And the Lord replied, "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish the servant severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful. That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."

Meditation: The Lord loves faithfulness and richly rewards those who are faithful to him. What is faithfulness? It's keeping one's word, promise, and commitments no matter how tough or difficult life's challenges may be. Faithfulness is a key character trait of God and one that he expects of us. Fortunately God gives the grace and strength to remain faithful. He also rewards faithfulness. The joy and privilege of being a son or daughter of God carries with it an awesome responsibility. The Lord expects us to make good use of the gifts and graces he gives to us. The more he gives, the more he requires. The temptation while the Master is away is to put off for tomorrow what we know the Master expects us to do today. How can we grow in faithfulness? God's grace shows us the way. When we are faithful in the little tasks and

promises we make, we learn to be faithful in the bigger and more important responsibilities and tasks entrusted to us.

Prayer: O God, who are rich in mercy and who willed that Saint John Paul II should preside as Pope over your universal Church, grant, we pray, that instructed by his teaching, we may open our hearts to the saving grace of Christ, the sole Redeemer of mankind. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The treasure house of everything ever written or spoken by Pope John Paul II – is available at:
<https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en.html>

During this month of the Rosary, read Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter on the Rosary:
https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae.html

Contemplation: The Lord Jesus calls us to be vigilant in watching for his return and to be ready to meet him when he calls us to himself. The Lord gives us his Holy Spirit so that we may have the wisdom, help, and strength we need to turn away from sin to embrace God's way of love, justice, 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.

Thursday, October 23 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time **Saint John of Capistrano, Priest**

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:49-53 Jesus said to his disciples: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Meditation: Do you want to be on fire for God? Jesus shocked his disciples when he declared that he would cast fire and cause division rather than peace upon the earth. What kind of fire did Jesus have in mind here? Fire in biblical times was associated with God and with his action in the world and in the lives of his people. God sometimes manifested his presence by use of fire, such as the burning bush which was not consumed when God spoke to Moses (Exodus 3:2). The image of fire was also used to symbolize God's glory (Ezekiel 1:4, 13), his protective presence (2 Kings 6:17), his holiness (Deut. 4:24), righteous judgment (Zechariah 13:9), and his wrath against sin (Isaiah 66:15-16). It is also used of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11 and Acts 2:3). God's fire both purifies and cleanses, and it inspires a reverent fear of God and of his word in us. Jesus' sharp statement that he would cause division rather than peace within families must have shocked his disciples. Was he exaggerating? Jesus used a typical Hebrew (Semetic) hyperbole to drive home an important lesson. We often do the same when we want to emphasize something very strongly. Jesus' hyperbole, however, did contain a real warning that the gospel message does have consequences for our lives. It has the power to heal, restore, and unite those who believe its message. But the consequence of ignoring or rejecting the gospel can lead to many hurtful desires and seduction by the world – especially the latest societal trends, what is popular, teachings of false prophets, and giving adherence to man-made civil laws prominence over following God's laws (e.g. supporting legalized abortion under the antiseptic spin language of "choice" and "freedom" versus God's simple and straightforward commandment of "Thou shalt not kill"). Do we really think we have the ability to trump God's laws by simply enacting civil laws or rendering judicial verdicts? Our human Supreme Court cannot invalidate or supersede God the Supreme being. Folks, let get back to loving God as his children, and loving Christ as our Savior and Redeemer, humbling ourselves to follow their way. Let's admit our all too human mistakes in life, reconcile ourselves with God, and come back to the fold of Christ as his sheep whom he loves and shepherds on the one path that leads to eternal life.

Prayer: O God, who raised up Saint John of Capistrano to comfort your faithful people in tribulation, place us, we pray, under your safe protection and keep your Church in everlasting peace. Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. 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 spoke about division he likely had in mind the prophecy of Micah: "a man's enemies are the men of his own household" (Micah 7:6). The essence of Christianity is loyalty to Jesus Christ – a loyalty and faithfulness that takes precedence over every other relationship. The love of God compels us to choose who will be first in our lives. To place any relationship (or anything else) above God is a form of idolatry. Jesus challenges his disciples to examine who they love first and foremost. A true disciple loves God above all else and is willing to forsake all for Jesus Christ. Jesus insists that his disciples give him the loyalty which is only due to God, a loyalty which is higher than spouse or kin. It is possible that family and friends can become our enemies, if the thought of them keeps us from doing what we know God wants us to do. Does the love of Jesus Christ compel you to put God first in all you do (2 Corinthians 5:14)? Remember, Jesus invites us to follow him – let's take him up on this profound invitation, and in doing so live lives of discipleship of love of God, and love of neighbor.

Friday, October 24 ~ Twenty-Ninth Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Anthony Claret, Bishop, and
Founder of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Holy Gospel: Luke 12:54-59 Jesus said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain—and so it does; and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot—and so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time? "Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate, make an effort to settle the matter on the way; otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Meditation: A lot of effort is made today, with the help of science and technology, to discern potential natural dangers, such as tropical storms, hurricanes, floods, tornados, earth quakes, and erupting volcanoes, so that people can be warned to take shelter before disaster hits. Our need for accurately discerning spiritual danger is even more necessary if we want to avoid a spiritual crisis or a moral disaster. Jesus used a vivid illustration to point out the urgency of getting right with God before it is too late. If you got into serious trouble with your neighbor and did something that could get you severely penalized (like being thrown into jail and losing everything you owned), would you not try to settle the case out-of-court to avoid the worst consequences?

Prayer: O God, who for the evangelization of peoples strengthened the Bishop Saint Anthony Mary Claret with admirable charity and long-suffering, grant, through his intercession, that, seeking the things that are yours, we may earnestly devote ourselves to winning our brothers and sisters for Christ. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Contemplation: None of us has the power and strength of will for overcoming sin and evil on our own. We stand in constant need of God's grace, help, strength, and protection. That is why scripture uses vivid language to describe God as our rock, refuge, fortress, and mighty defense. We are also vulnerable to Satan's lies and deceptions as well as our own spiritual blind spots for recognizing sin and moral weakness in our own lives. That is why we need God's help and discernment for distinguishing between truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil. Fortunately the Lord Jesus, who is a just judge, is also a merciful advocate who pleads for us at the right hand of the Father in heaven. The light of Jesus Christ reveals what is in our hearts and his grace frees us from the tyranny of sinful habits, hurtful desires, and harmful addictions. God's call is urgent and his grace is available for total freedom and transformation in Christ. If we want to turn away from sin the Lord is ready to give us the grace and help we need to choose for his way of love and holiness. Are you ready for his saving grace and healing action in your life?

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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