

# 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 June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

***“Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary conceived faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her: wherefore also the Holy One begotten of her is the Son of God.” ~SAINT JUSTIN THE MARTYR***

**Monday, May 29 ~ Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church**  
**~ Memorial Day ~**

**Holy Gospel: John 19:25-34** Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.” There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately Blood and water flowed out.

**Meditation:** To understand more fully the importance of this Memorial, especially in relation to today’s Gospel, it would be good to read the original Decree establishing this Memorial. *Indeed, the Mother standing beneath the cross (cf. Jn 19:25), accepted her Son’s testament of love and welcomed all people in the person of the beloved disciple as sons and daughters to be reborn unto life eternal. She thus became the tender Mother of the Church which Christ begot on the cross handing on the Spirit. Christ, in turn, in the beloved disciple, chose all disciples as ministers of his love towards his Mother, entrusting her to them so that they might welcome her with filial affection. As a caring guide to the emerging Church Mary had already begun her mission in the Upper Room, praying with the Apostles while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14). In this sense, in the course of the centuries, Christian piety has honored Mary with various titles, in many ways equivalent, such as Mother of Disciples, of the Faithful, of Believers, of all those who are reborn in Christ; and also as “Mother of the Church” as is used in the texts of spiritual authors as well as in the Magisterium of Popes Benedict XIV and Leo XIII. Thus the foundation is clearly established by which Blessed Paul VI, on 21 November 1964, at the conclusion of the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council, declared the Blessed Virgin Mary as “Mother of the Church, that is to say of all Christian people, the faithful as well as the pastors, who call her the most loving Mother” and established that “the Mother of God should be further honored and invoked by the entire Christian people by this tenderest of titles”.*

**Prayer:** O God, Father of mercies, whose Only Begotten Son, as he hung upon the Cross, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mother, to be our Mother also, grant, we pray, that with her loving help your Church may be more fruitful day by day and, exulting in the holiness of her children, may draw to her embrace all the families of the peoples. 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.

**Memorial Day Prayer:** God of power and mercy, you destroy war and put down earthly pride. Banish violence from our midst and wipe away our tears, that we may all deserve to be called your sons and

daughters. Keep in your mercy those men and women who have died in the cause of freedom and bring them safely into your kingdom of justice and peace. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Contemplation:** On this Memorial to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, there are many things to contemplate today in addition to today's Gospel. I believe it would be prudent for us to spend some time today thinking about our level of devotion to Our Lady, asking whether or not it truly is sufficient. Chances are, if we are honest, we see room for improvement. Mary was chosen by God for a special purpose in life. Her "yes" to the Angel Gabriel, sent to Mary by God, set in motion our salvation as she gave birth to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As mother of Jesus Christ, she became Mother of our Church, and thus she should hold a high and special place in our daily devotional practices. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls Mary our model of faith and charity, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. In addition to praying a daily rosary, I would encourage you to visit the web pages that follow to explore possible prayers and devotional practices to enrich your spiritual life:

[http://www.mycatholicsource.com/mcs/pc/the Blessed Virgin/popular marian devotions.htm](http://www.mycatholicsource.com/mcs/pc/the_Blessed_Virgin/popular_marian_devotions.htm)

[https://www.theworkofgod.org/Library/catholic/prayers\\_devotions Virgin Mary.htm](https://www.theworkofgod.org/Library/catholic/prayers_devotions_Virgin_Mary.htm)

<https://www.sistersofcarmel.com/devotion-to-the-blessed-virgin-mary.php>

<https://www.rosarycenter.org/>

## **Tuesday, May 30 ~ Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**

**Holy Gospel: John 17:1-11a** Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began. I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you."

**Meditation:** What is this "glory" of which Jesus speaks in this scripture passage? It is the cross which Jesus speaks of here. How does the cross reveal his glory? In the cross God reveals the breadth of his great love for sinners and the power of redemption which cancels the debt of sin and reverses the curse of our condemnation. Jesus gave his Father the supreme honor and glory through his obedience and willingness to go to the cross. In times of defense the greatest honor belongs not to those who fought and survived but to those who gave the supreme sacrifice of their own lives for their fellow citizens. Jesus speaks of the Father bringing glory to the Son through the great mystery of the Incarnation and Cross of Christ. God the Father gave us his only begotten Son for our redemption and deliverance from slavery to sin and death. There is no greater proof of God's love for each and every person on the face of the earth than the Cross of Jesus Christ.

**Prayer:** Grant, we pray, almighty and merciful God, that the Holy Spirit, coming near and dwelling graciously within us, may make of us a perfect temple of his glory. 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 tells his disciples that they can know the only true God. Knowledge of God is not simply limited to knowing something about God, but we can come to know God personally. The essence of Christianity, and what makes it distinct from Judaism and other religions, is the knowledge of God as our Father. Jesus makes it possible for each of us to personally know God as our Father. To see Jesus is to see what God is like. In Jesus we see the perfect love of God – a God who cares intensely and who yearns over men and women, loving them to the point of laying down his life for them upon the Cross. Jesus is the revelation of God – a God who loves us completely, unconditionally and perfectly.

## **Wednesday, May 31 ~ Eighth Week in Ordinary Time** **Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 1:39-56** Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,

the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever." Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

**Meditation:** The word "blessed" (*makarios* in Greek) means "happiness" or "beatitude." It describes a joy which is serene and untouchable, self-contained, and independent from chance and changing circumstances of life. Mary was given the "blessedness" of being the mother of the Son of God. That blessedness also would become a sword which pierced her heart as her Son died upon the cross. Saint Anselm once wrote: "Without God's Son nothing could exist; without Mary's son, nothing could be redeemed." To be chosen by God is an awesome privilege and responsibility. Mary received both a crown of joy and a cross of sorrow. Her joy was not diminished by her sorrow because it was fueled by her faith, hope, and trust in God.

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, who, while the Blessed Virgin Mary was carrying your Son in her womb, inspired her to visit Elizabeth, grant us, we pray, that, faithful to the promptings of the Spirit, we may magnify your greatness with the Virgin Mary at all times. 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 promised his disciples that "no one will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). The Lord gives us a supernatural joy which enables us to bear any sorrow or pain and which neither life nor death can take away. Do you know the joy of a life given over to God in faith and trust? Do you live in the joy and knowledge of God's indwelling presence with you through his Holy Spirit?

**About this Marian Feast:** The Mass of today salutes her who in her womb bore the King of heaven and earth, the Creator of the world, the Son of the Eternal Father, the Sun of Justice. It narrates the cleansing of John from original sin in his mother's womb. Hearing herself addressed by the most lofty title of "Mother of the Lord" and realizing what grace her visit had conferred on John, Mary broke out in that sublime canticle of praise proclaiming prophetically that henceforth she would be venerated down through the centuries: "My soul magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Because he who is mighty, has done great things to me, and holy is His name" (Luke 1:46).

### **Thursday, June 1 ~ Eighth Week in Ordinary Time** **Optional Memorial: Saint Justin, Martyr**

**Holy Gospel: John 17:20-26** Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying: "I pray not only for these, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

**Meditation:** The unity of Jesus and his Father is a unity of love and obedience, and a unity of personal relationship. Because Jesus loves us and united us through the Sacrament of Baptism we are called to live in a unity of love. Through the Eucharist, we are united to Christ in the greatest gift to us – Christ's Body and Blood. Through his teachings, we follow him wherever he leads us as his disciples. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we demonstrate our heartfelt desire to reunite ourselves with him, recognizing our sinfulness, our sorrow for having sinned, and our pledge not to sin again. Jesus' prayer on the eve of his sacrifice shows the great love and trust he has in his beloved disciples. He knows they would abandon him in his hour of trial, yet he entrusted to them the great task of spreading his name

throughout the world and to the end of the ages. The Lord entrust us with the same mission...to make him known and loved by all. Jesus died and rose again that all might be one as he and the Father are one.

**Prayer:** O God, who through the folly of the Cross wondrously taught Saint Justin the Martyr the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, grant us, through his intercession, that, having rejected deception and error, we may become steadfast in the faith. 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:** Look around at the people in the pews who are with you in Church. Look around at the people in your office, your school, your home, your neighborhood. The distinctive mark of Jesus' disciples is their love for God and their desire to do his will, and their love for one another. Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper concludes with the prayer for all men and women who will come after him and follow him as his disciples. In a special way Jesus prays here for us that as members of his body we would be one as he and his Father – God the father – are one.

## **Friday, June 2 ~ Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**

### **Optional Memorial: Saints Marcellinus and Peter, Martyrs**

**Holy Gospel: John 21:15-19** After Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples and eaten breakfast with them, he said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

**Meditation:** Jesus calls us, even in our weakness and sin, to love him above all else. Saint Augustine in his book *Confessions* wrote: "Late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient and so new. Late have I loved you! ...You shone your Self upon me to drive away my blindness. You breathed your fragrance upon me... and in astonishment I drew my breath...now I pant for you! I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me! - and I burn to live within your peace." Nothing but our stubborn human pride, our sinfulness, and our willfulness can keep us from the love of God. God's love is a free gift, unmerited and beyond payment. We can never outmatch God in love. He loved us first; we must reciprocate with total love for Him by following His commands, and the teachings of His Son and His Catholic Church.

**Prayer:** O God, who surround us with protection through the glorious confession of the Martyrs Saints Marcellinus and Peter, grant that we may profit by imitating them and be upheld by their prayer. 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:** Do you want the fire of God's love to burn in your heart? John the Evangelist tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:16). His love is unconditional, without limit, and everlasting. It's the beginning and the end; and it's the essence of Christianity. It draws us to the heart of God and it compels us to give to him our full allegiance and our very lives. Saint Paul the Apostle tells us that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given us (ref. Romans 5:5). As so we must ask ourselves: Do I love God with all my mind, all my heart, and all my soul? If not, then ask yourself: what is holding me back?

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 are courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

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### *Memorare to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Remember, O most kind Jesus, that none who have had recourse to Your Sacred Heart, implored its assistance, or called for mercy, have ever been abandoned. Filled, and animated by this same confidence, O divine Heart, Ruler of all hearts, I fly to You, and oppressed beneath the weight of my sins, I prostrate myself before You. Despise not Your unworthy child, but grant me, I pray, an entrance into Your Sacred Heart. Sustain me in all my combats and be with me now, and at all times, but especially in the hour of my death. O gracious Jesus! O amiable Jesus! O loving Jesus!