

# 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 May is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

***“We are delighted and consoled by this pious custom associated with the month of May, which pays honor to the Blessed Virgin and brings such rich benefits to the Christian people. Since Mary is rightly to be regarded as the way by which we are led to Christ, the person who encounters Mary cannot help but encounter Christ likewise. For what other reason do we continually turn to Mary except to seek the Christ in her arms, to seek our Savior in her, through her, and with her? To Him men are to turn amid the anxieties and perils of this world, urged on by duty and driven by the compelling needs of their heart, to find a haven of salvation, a transcendent fountain of life.”*** +POPE SAINT PAUL VI, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL *MENSE MAIO*, APRIL 29, 1965

### **Monday, May 6 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 15:26-16:4a** Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. “I have told you this so that you may not fall away. They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you.”

**Meditation:** Jesus tells us much about the Holy Spirit. First, the Holy Spirit is inseparably one with the Father and the Son. It is the Holy Spirit who gives life – the very life of God – and who kindles faith in hearts receptive to God's word. The Spirit makes it possible for us to know God personally. He gives us experiential knowledge of God as our Father. The Spirit witnesses to our spirit that the Father has indeed sent his Son into the world to redeem it and has raised his Son Jesus from the dead and has seated him at his right hand in glory and power. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the knowledge, wisdom and plan of God for the ages and the Spirit enables us to see with the "eyes of faith" what the Father and the Son are doing. Through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit we become witnesses to the great work of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus warned his disciples that they could expect persecution just as Jesus was opposed and treated with hostility. We have been given the Holy Spirit to help us live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Spirit gives us courage and perseverance when we meet adversities and challenges. Do you pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen you in faith, hope and love and to give you courage and perseverance with hope when you meet adversities and challenges?

**Prayer:** Grant, O merciful God, that we may experience at all times the fruit produced by the paschal observances. 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:** Have you ever examined whom you turn to for help and support when you most need it? True friendship is strengthened in adversity. Jesus offers his disciples the best and truest of friends. Who is this promised friend? Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Counselor and Advocate (also translated “Paraclete” or “Helper” or “Guide”). Counselor is a legal term for the one who will defend someone against an adversary and who guides that person during the ordeal of trial. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate and Helper who brings us safely through the challenges and adversities we must face in this life. As Jesus approaches the hour he was to be glorified – through his death on the cross and his resurrection – he revealed more fully to his disciples the person and role of the Holy Spirit.

### **Tuesday, May 7 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 16:5-11** Jesus said to his disciples: “Now I am going to the one who sent me, and not one of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I told you this, grief has filled your hearts.

But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and condemnation: sin, because they do not believe in me; righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; condemnation, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.”

**Meditation:** Have you ever felt like God is far from you at times? Separation and loss of relationship often lead to grief and pain. The apostles were filled with sorrow when Jesus spoke about his imminent departure. Jesus explained that it was for their sake that he must leave them and return to his Father. He promised, however, that they would never be left alone. He will send in his place the best of friends, the Holy Spirit. Paul reminds us that "nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:39). By sending the Holy Spirit to his followers, the Lord Jesus makes his presence known to us in a new and on-going way. We are not left as orphans, but the Lord himself dwells within us through the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:9; 6:16b). Jesus tells his disciples three very important things about the work of the Holy Spirit – to convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. The original word for convince also means convict. The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier. He makes us holy as God is holy. He does this first by convicting us of our sin and by bringing us humbly to the foot of the Cross. The Spirit convinces us of God's love and forgiveness and of our utter dependence on God for his mercy and grace. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us from the error of our sinful ways and to show us the way of love and truth.

**Prayer:** Grant, almighty and merciful God, that we may in truth receive a share in the Resurrection of Christ your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** The Jews who condemned Jesus as a heretic and blasphemer thought they were serving God rather than sinning when they crucified Jesus. When the gospel was later preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37), many were pricked in their heart and convicted of their sin. What made them change their mind about Jesus? It is the work of the Holy Spirit to both convict us of wrongdoing and to convince us of God's truth. The Spirit convinces us of the righteousness of Christ, backed by the fact that Jesus rose again and went to his Father. The Holy Spirit also convicts us of judgment. The Spirit gives us the inner and unshakable conviction that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. God's judgments are just and good. When we heed his judgments we find true peace, joy and reconciliation with God. Do you allow the Holy Spirit free reign in your life that he may set you free from the grip of sin and set you ablaze with the fire of God's love?

### **Wednesday, May 8 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 16:12-15** Jesus said to his disciples: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”

**Meditation:** Jesus told his disciples that he would send them the Spirit of truth who will guide you into all the truth, and declare to you the things that are to come (John 16:13). Through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit poured out on the new community of faith on the day of Pentecost, we too are able to profess the same creed which the apostles proclaimed – that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and will come again to judge, raise the dead, and give everlasting life (the Apostles Creed). We not only have the same faith given to the apostles and early believers, but we have the same Spirit in us who raised Jesus from the dead. The Lord Jesus gives each of us his Holy Spirit as our divine Teacher and Helper that we may grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God. Do you listen attentively to God's word and allow his Holy Spirit to give you understanding of God's truth and will for your life?

**Prayer:** Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, as we celebrate in mystery the solemnities of your Son's Resurrection, so, too, we may be worthy to rejoice at his coming with all the Saints. 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 we would all give to know all truths! Truth, however, is not something we create nor is it our discovery. It is the gift of God who is the possessor and the giver of all truth. Jesus tells his disciples that it is the role of the Holy Spirit to reveal what is true. How can this be? Skeptics of truth don't want to believe in an absolute Truth. If truth is objective then it must be submitted to as authoritative.

Some fear the truth because they think it will inhibit their freedom to act and think as they wish. Jesus told his disciples that the truth will set you free (John 8:32). The truth liberates us from doubts, illusions, and fears. Since God is the source of all truth, then the closer we draw to him and listen to his word, the more we grow in the knowledge of him and of his great love and wisdom for us.

### **Thursday, May 9 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 16:16-20** Jesus said to his disciples: "A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while later and you will see me." So some of his disciples said to one another, "What does this mean that he is saying to us, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father?'" So they said, "What is this 'little while' of which he speaks? We do not know what he means." Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing with one another what I said, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'? Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy."

**Meditation:** The world says take your joy now in whatever pleasures you can get from this present life – "eat, drink and be merry" as the saying goes. Jesus points to an "other-worldly" joy which transcends anything this world can offer. Jesus contrasts present sorrows with future joy. A woman in labor suffers the birth-pangs first, but then forgets her sorrow as soon as her new-born child comes to birth. We cannot avoid pain and sorrow if we wish to follow Jesus to the cross. But in the cross of Christ we find freedom, victory, and joy. It was Saint Thomas Aquinas who said: "No one can live without joy. That is why a man or woman deprived of spiritual joy will turn to carnal pleasures." Do you know the joy of the Lord?

**Prayer:** O God, who made your people partakers in your redemption, grant, we pray, that we may perpetually render thanks for the Resurrection of the Lord. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** How do "weeping" and "rejoicing" go together? Jesus contrasts present sorrows with the future glory to be revealed to those who put their hope in God. For the people of Israel time was divided into two ages – the present age and the age to come. The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah as the dawn of a new age. Jesus tells his disciples two important truths. First, he must leave them to return to his Father and second, he will surely come again at the end of time to usher in the new age of God's kingdom. Jesus' orientation for the time between his first coming and his return in glory at the end of the world is a reversal of the world's fortunes. Do you weep and rejoice in the Lord?

### **Friday, May 10 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter Saint Damien of Molokai, Priest**

**Holy Gospel: John 16:20-23** Jesus said to his disciples: "Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy. When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. On that day you will not question me about anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you."

**Meditation:** Why does Jesus tell his disciples to weep and mourn? Jesus was neither a pessimist nor a masochist, and he was certainly more than a realist! The way to happiness and joy in the kingdom of God is through the cross. Sin must be brought to the cross of Jesus Christ and evil can only be completely mastered by the power of God's redeeming love. Jesus told his disciples that it was more blessed to mourn for sin because it would yield the fruit of peace, joy, and righteousness. Jesus knew that the cross would be a stumbling block for those who refused to believe in him. The cross for Jesus was not defeat but victory – victory over sin, over the forces of evil in the world, and over the devil – the arch-enemy of God and humankind.

**Prayer:** Father of mercy, who gave us in Saint Damien a shining witness of love for the poorest and most abandoned, grant that, by his intercession, as faithful witnesses of the heart of your Son Jesus, we too may be servants of the most needy and rejected. 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 Saint Damien:** Saint Damien of Molokai was a missionary of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who is revered primarily by Hawaii residents and Christians for having dedicated

his life in service to the lepers of Molokai in the Kingdom of Hawaii. He brought hope to this hell of despair. He became a source of consolation and encouragement for the lepers, their pastor, the doctor of their souls and of their bodies, without any distinction of race or religion. He gave a voice to the voiceless, he built a community where the joy of being together and openness to the love of God gave people new reasons for living. After Father Damien contracted the disease in 1885, he was able to identify completely with them: "We lepers." Father Damien was, above all, a witness of the love of God for His people. He got his strength from the Eucharist: "It is at the foot of the altar that we find the strength we need in our isolation..." It is there that he found for himself and for others the support and the encouragement, the consolation and the hope, he could, with a deep faith, communicate to the lepers. All that made him "the happiest missionary in the world," a servant of God, and a servant of humanity. Fr. Damien died on April 15th, 1889, having served sixteen years among the lepers. In Father Damien, the Church proposes an example to all those who find sense for their life in the Gospel and who wish to bring the Good News to the poor of our time.

**Contemplation:** We must remember that through his death on the cross, Jesus won for us new life and freedom over the power of sin, despair, and death. The Easter victory of Jesus teaches us courage in the face of suffering and death. In the resurrection of Christ our fears are laid to rest. His resurrection is total, final triumph, and for us peace and joy at the end. We will have troubles in the present reality. Through the eyes of faith, we know the final outcome – complete victory over sin, suffering, and death in Jesus Christ. That is why we can pray confidently now, knowing that the Father will give us everything we need to live as his children and as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know the Easter joy of Christ's victory over sin and death?

### **Saturday, May 11 ~ Sixth Week in the Season of Easter**

**Holy Gospel: John 16:23b-28** Jesus said to his disciples: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. "I have told you this in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures but I will tell you clearly about the Father. On that day you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

**Meditation:** Jesus often taught his disciples (and, thus, each of us) by way of illustration or parable. Here he speaks not in "figures" (the same word used for parables), but in plain speech. Jesus revealed to them the hidden treasure of the heavenly kingdom and he taught them how to pray to the Father in his name. Now Jesus opens his heart and speaks in the plainest of language: "The Father himself loves you!" How can the disciples be certain of this? Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus makes it possible for his disciples to have a new relationship with God as their Father.

**Prayer:** O God, whose Son, at his Ascension to the heavens, was pleased to promise the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, grant, we pray, that, just as they received manifold gifts of heavenly teaching, so on us, too, you may bestow spiritual gifts. 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:** Because of what Jesus has done for us in offering his life for our redemption we now have a new relationship as the adopted children of God. St. Paul the Apostle reminds us that "when we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:15-16). We can boldly approach God as our Father and ask him for the things we need. In love he bids us to draw near to his throne of grace and mercy. Do you approach the Father with confidence in his love and with expectant faith in his promise to hear your prayers?

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.

frlumpe:2024

