

Guide to *Lectio Divina*

Choose a word or phrase of the Scriptures you wish to pray. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as you have no set goal of “covering” a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God’s hands, not yours.

Read. Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of a word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In *lectio divina*, God is teaching us to listen, to seek him in silence. God does not reach out and grab us but gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

Ponder. Take the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

Pray. Whether you use words, ideas, or images — or all three — is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. Give to God what you have discovered during your experience of meditation. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

It is not necessary to assess the quality of your *lectio divina*, as if you were “performing” or seeking some goal. *Lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Fr. Luke Dysinger

Lectio Divina

Sunday, October 30, 2022

Thirty-First Sunday of Ordinary Time

LECTIO

Opening Prayer:

O God, creator and Father of all the children of Abraham, grant us the light of your Spirit that we may serve you well and worthily, grant that we may follow in the footsteps of your Word and that our actions may reflect that we are disciples of the one Master who became man for love of us and for our salvation.

A Reading of the Gospel:

1 He entered Jericho and was going through the town 2 and suddenly a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. 3 He kept trying to see which Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; 4 so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today.' 6 And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. 7 They all complained when

they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house,' they said. 8 But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' 9 And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

A Moment of Silence:

so that the Word of God may penetrate us and enlighten our life

MEDITATIO

A Key to the Reading:

In the Gospel story, Luke likes to show the mercy of the Master towards sinners and Lk 19: 1-10 is one example. The story of the conversion of Zacchaeus tells us that no human condition is incompatible with salvation: Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham, (Lk 19: 9) says Jesus. The opening text of chapter 19 comes after the teachings and attitudes that Jesus presents to us in chapter

18. In that chapter we find the parable of the Pharisee who judges and the Publican who humbles himself before God and begs for pardon (Lk 18: 9-14). Then there is the scene where Jesus welcomes the children, warning the disciples that it is to anyone who is a child such as these that the kingdom of God belongs...anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it (Lk 18: 16-17). Immediately after this, Jesus tells the rich aristocrat who wishes to obtain eternal life (Lk 18: 18) of the need to sell everything and distribute the money to the poor in order to follow Jesus and obtain treasure in heaven (Lk 18: 22). Then comes the teaching of Jesus on riches that are an obstacle to salvation and the promise of a reward for those who renounce all for the sake of the Kingdom of God (Lk 18: 24-30). These parts of chapter 18 seem to lead us to the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus. Before the story of Zacchaeus we have two texts which contain important details:

- The third prophecy of the passion where Jesus reminds us that now we are going up to Jerusalem (Lk 18: 31). It would seem that Luke wishes to place everything within the context of the following of Christ; and
- The healing of the blind man of Jericho, who called Jesus, even though the crowd stopped him from going to the Master (Lk 18: 35-39). Once more, Jesus gives light to darkened eyes and says that faith has saved this blind man (Lk 18: 42). After regaining his sight, the blind man was able to follow Jesus praising God (Lk 18: 43).

These two texts together with the previous ones shed light on the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus. In this story we find surprising details that are already present in the abovementioned texts:

- Zacchaeus is a rich man and chief of the Publicans – Lk 19: 2
- He sought to see Jesus, but was not able because of the crowd – Lk 19: 3
- He was short – Lk 19: 3
- The crowd's judgment that stamps Zacchaeus: a sinner - Lk 19: 7
- The distribution of goods to the poor – Lk 19: 8
- Jesus' proclamation that salvation has come to the house of Zacchaeus – Lk 19: 9.

Zacchaeus, a short man, one who is rich and chief of the Publicans, welcomes the Kingdom of God like a child. He humbles himself and repents of his past and thus finds the salvation that comes from God in Jesus Christ the good Samaritan (Lk 10: 29-37) who comes to us to seek out and save what was lost (Lk 19: 10). This is a theme dear to Luke and we find it in other parts of his Gospel story (e.g.: Lk 15: 11-31).

A Time for Personal Reflection:

Place yourself silently before the word of God and reflect on the texts presented in this key to the reading. Ask yourself:

- What is the connection between these texts?
- What does salvation mean to you?
- Zacchaeus, a short man, shows his availability to welcome the Lord by climbing a sycamore tree. His curiosity was rewarded with Jesus' visit. What do you do to show your availability to welcome the salvation of God?
- Zacchaeus' action reminds us of the curiosity of Moses that urges him towards the burning bush. There too Moses found salvation. Do you approach the Lord? Do you feel attracted to Him?
- Jesus goes to Zacchaeus in his sinfulness and in the house he brings him salvation. How attached are you to sin? Do you allow the Master to come to you, in that dark house?

ORATIO

The Prayer of the Community:

O God, who in your Son have come to seek and save the lost, make us worthy of your call: bring to fulfilment our every wish for good, so that we may know how to welcome you joyfully into our house to share the goods of the earth and of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Moment of Silence:

for personal prayer.

CONTEMPLATIO

You will reveal the path of life to me,
and at your right hand everlasting pleasures. (Psalm 15/16: 11)



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

30 OCT₂₀₂₂ - Small is beautiful

"I am only one person," we hear people say. "I'm nobody special. I don't have any power over what happens." We can all summon up plenty of reasons why our contribution to creating a more just global society is withheld. Mother Teresa of Calcutta had a different perspective. "There are no great things, only small things with great love," she said. "Happy are those." A little man named Zacchaeus once climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus. Take the small step of lifting your vision just a little higher today and you may encounter love.

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Today's readings:

Wisdom 11:22—12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:11—2:2; Luke 19:1-10 ([153](#)).

"Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house."

31 OCT₂₀₂₂ - Hallowed be the Eve

Given its association with witches, goblins, and the like, it might seem strange that Halloween is actually a Catholic holiday. Halloween, or Hallowe'en, is an abbreviation for "All Hallows Eve," a celebration the night before All Saints' and All Souls' Days (November 1 and 2). Just like on the night before Christmas or before Ash Wednesday, people make merry on October 31—with costumes and parties for kids and adults alike—before the more solemn days to come. Take a cue this week from Mexican culture's festive *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) to pay respects with a joyful heart to those who have gone before us.

Today's readings:

Philippians 2:1-4; Luke 14:12-14 ([485](#)).

"When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you."

01 NOV₂₀₂₂ - It's the company you keep

"It is the example of the righteous that we must make our own," instructed Pope Clement of Rome. "Seek the company of the saints, for those who seek their company shall be sanctified." Catholics believe in the communion of saints: all who have attained a place at the heavenly banquet—and from whom we seek inspiration, example, and intercession. They include Saint Francis as well as someone's Uncle Frank, Saint Gertrude the Great along with a great many grandmas. Images of both famous and ordinary saints informed the work of artist John Nava for the stunning [Communion of Saints tapestries](#) at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles; let them grace your prayer today.

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

Today's readings:

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12a ([667](#)).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

02 NOV₂₀₂₂ - Dressing for the dearly departed

All Souls' Day is celebrated in many different ways, depending on one's culture. Some celebrate the season by dressing up. Others honor *Día de los Muertos* by having feasts at cemeteries, where stories are told and gifts are offered to the ancestors. Some spend the day with doors and windows wide open as a symbol of welcoming the

dearly departed. In all different ways, life is celebrated, the life we shared with loved ones who have died, and the life we continue to share with them and one another in new ways. What will be your All Souls' Day custom today?

COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED (ALL SOULS' DAY)

Today's readings:

Wisdom 3:1-9; Romans 5:5-11 *or* Romans 6:3-9; John 6:37-40 (668).

"The souls of the just are in the hand of God."

03NOV₂₀₂₂ - The struggle for racial justice continues

In 1947, the Catholic Interracial Council of Los Angeles sued the state of California to challenge the law that prohibited interracial marriages. At the time laws in 30 states made interracial marriages illegal. The challenge cited Catholic teaching to argue that racism is inherently evil and irrational. The lawsuit succeeded, a step along the long road to racial justice. Peruvian Saint Martin de Porres, born out of wedlock in 1579 to a Spanish nobleman and a formerly enslaved African woman, is patron of mixed-race people and all those seeking racial harmony. Ask Saint Martin to help us keep up the fight for racial justice.

MEMORIAL OF MARTIN DE PORRES, DOMINICAN BROTHER

Today's readings:

Philippians 3:3-8a; Luke 15:1-10 (488).

"He, the LORD, is our God; throughout the earth his judgments prevail."

04NOV₂₀₂₂ - An inspiration in trying times

Many lessons can be drawn from our experience these difficult years of the epidemic. Foremost among them is that we have to be there for each other. During the 1576-78 Plague of Milan, when many city officials fled the scene, Archbishop Borromeo stayed the course, not only organizing a wide-ranging clerical response to the temporal and spiritual needs of the people, but even selling his own possessions and borrowing funds to care for the many hungry, homeless, and dying souls. Dismissing concerns over infection, he made visitations across the diocese and personally ministered to the sick. What can we do today to honor his memory and serve those in need?

MEMORIAL OF CHARLES BORROMEO, BISHOP

Today's readings:

Philippians 3:17—4:1; Luke 16:1-8 (489).

"Prepare a full account of your stewardship."

05NOV₂₀₂₂ - Loosen that grip

Imagine going through an entire day having left your wallet or purse at home, carrying no money of any kind (cash, credit card, or otherwise). Now imagine going through your entire life that way! More than likely, that's how Jesus lived. He had a lot to say about money, especially our relationship to it, but we never read of Jesus carrying any himself. When he's challenged about paying taxes, he asks to be shown a coin in order to respond, so he likely wasn't carrying any of his own. While Jesus did not command us to live without money, he cautioned us to use it ethically and to be careful how tightly we hold it in our hands—and our hearts.

Today's readings:

Philippians 4:10-19; Luke 16:9-15 (490).

"If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth?"