

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, November 6, 2022

Jesus answers to the Sadducees who ridicule faith in the Resurrection

Luke 20, 27-40

Initial Prayer

Oh infinite Mystery of Life, We are nothing,
And still we can praise you
With the voice itself of your Word
Who became the voice of our whole humanity.
Oh, my Trinity, I am nothing in You,
But You are all in me
And then my nothingness is Life... it is eternal life.
(Maria Evangelista of the Holy Trinity, O. Carm.)

Lectio

Gospel Reading - Luke 20: 27-40

27 Some Sadducees - those who argue that there is no resurrection - approached him and they put this question to him, 28 'Master, Moses prescribed for us, if a man's married brother dies childless, the man must marry the widow to raise up children for his brother. 29 Well then, there were seven brothers; the first, having married a wife, died childless. 30 The second 31 and then the third married the widow. And the same with all seven, they died leaving no children. 32 Finally the woman herself died. 33 Now, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be, since she had been married to all seven?' 34 Jesus replied, 'The children of this world take wives and husbands, 35 but those who are judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry 36 because they can no longer die, for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection, they are children of God. 37 And Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him everyone is alive.' 39 Some scribes then spoke up. They said, 'Well put, Master.' 40 They did not dare to ask him any more questions.

Meditatio

Key for the Reading:

- Context

We can say that the passage proposed to us for our reflection forms a central part of the text which goes from Luke 20: 20 to 22: 4 which deals with the discussions with the chief priests of the people. Already in the beginning of chapter 20, Luke presents us with some conflicts which arose between Jesus, the priests and the scribes (vv. 1-19). Here Jesus finds himself before some conflict with the Philosophical School of the Sadducees, who have taken their name from Zadok, the priest of David (2 Sam 8: 17). They accepted as revelation only the writings of Moses (v. 28) denying the gradual development of Biblical revelation. In this sense one can understand better the expression: "Moses prescribed for us" repeated by the Sadducees in this malicious debate which they use as a trap to get Jesus and "to catch him in a fault" (see: 20: 2; 20: 20). This Philosophical School disappeared with the destruction of the Temple.

- The Law of the Levirate

The Sadducees precisely deny the resurrection from the dead because, according to them, this object of faith did not form part of the revelation handed down to them from Moses. The same thing can be said concerning the faith in the existence of the angels. In Israel, faith in the resurrection of the dead appears in the book of Daniel written in the year 605 – 530 B.C. (Dan 12: 2-3). We also find it in 2 M 7: 9, 11, 14, 23. In order to ridicule the faith in the resurrection of the dead, the Sadducees quote the legal prescription of Moses on the levirate (Dt 25: 5), that is concerning the ancient use of the Semitic peoples (including the Hebrews), according to which, the brother or a close relative of a married man who died without sons, had to marry the widow, in order:

- a) to assure to the deceased descendants (the sons would have been legally considered sons of the deceased man), and
- b) a husband to the woman because women depended on the man for their livelihood. Cases of this type are recalled in the Old Testament in the Book of Genesis and in that of Ruth.
- In the Book of Genesis (38: 6-26) it is said how "Judah took a wife, whose name was Tamar, for his first-born son Er. But, Er, the first born of Judah, offended the Lord and the Lord killed him. Then Judah tells Onan: Take your brother's wife and do your duty as her brother-in-law to maintain your brother's line" (Gen, 38: 6-8). But Onan also was punished by God and he died (Gen 38: 10), because Onan knowing that the line would not count as his, spilt his seed on the ground every time he slept with his brother's wife, to avoid providing offspring for his brother" (Gen 38: 9. Judah seeing this sent Tamar to her father's house, so as not to give her his third son, Shelah as husband (Gen 38: 10- 11). Tamar then, disguising herself as a prostitute or a harlot, slept with Judah himself and conceived twins. Judah on discovering the truth, gave reason to Tamar recognizing "She was right and I was wrong" (Gen 38: 26).

In the book of Ruth the same story is told about Ruth herself, Ruth the Moabite, who remained a widow after having married one of the sons of Elimelech. Together with her mother-in-law Naomi, was obliged to beg for survival and to gather in the fields the ears of corn which fell from the sheaves behind the reapers, up to the time when she married Boaz, a relative of her deceased husband.

The case proposed to Jesus by the Sadducees reminds us the story of Tobias the son of Tobit who married Sarah the daughter of Raguel, the widow of seven husbands, all killed by Asmodeus, the demon of lust, at the moment that they slept together. Tobias has the right to marry her because she belonged to his tribe. (Tobit 7: 9).

Jesus makes the Sadducees notice that the purpose of marriage is procreation, and therefore it is necessary for the future of the human species, since none of the "sons of this world" (v. 34) is eternal. But "those who are judged worthy of a place in the

other world" (v. 35) neither take husband nor wife in so far as they can no longer die" (v. 35- 36), they live in God: "they are the same as the angels and, being children of the resurrection, are sons of God" (v. 36). Both in the Old and in the New Testament, the angels are called sons of God (see for example, Gen 6: 2; Ps 29, 1; Lk 10: 6; 16: 8). These words of Jesus remind us also of St. Paul's letter to the Romans, where it is written that Jesus is the Son because of His Resurrection, He is the First risen from the dead and, par excellence, is Son of the Resurrection (Rm 1: 4). Here we can also quote the texts of St. Paul on the Resurrection of the dead as an event of salvation of a spiritual nature (1 Co 15: 35-50).

- **I am: The God of the Living**
Jesus goes on to confirm the reality of the resurrection by quoting another passage taken from Exodus, this time from the account of the revelation of God to Moses in the burning bush. The Sadducees make evident their point of view by quoting Moses: Jesus, at the same time, refutes their argument by quoting Moses also: "That the dead resurrect has also been indicated by Moses about the bush, when he calls the Lord: the God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob" (v. 37). In Exodus we find that the Lord reveals himself to Moses with these words: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex 3: 6). The Lord then continues to reveal to Moses the divine Name: "I am" (Ex 3: 14). The Hebrew word *ehje*, from the root *Hei-Yod-Hei*, used for the divine name in Exodus 3: 14, means I am he who is; I am the existing One. The root may also mean life, existence. And this is why Jesus can conclude: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (v. 38). In the same verse Jesus specifies that "all live for Him [God]." This can also mean "all live in Him." Reflecting on Jesus' death, in the letter to the Romans, Paul writes: "For by dying, he is dead to sin once and for all, and now the life that he lives is life with God. In the same way, you must see yourselves as being dead to sin but alive for God in Jesus Christ" (Rm 6: 10).
- We can say that Jesus, once more, makes the Sadducees see that God's fidelity, whether for His People, or for the individual, is not based either on the existence or not of a political kingdom (in the case of God's fidelity to his People), neither on having or not prosperity and descendants in this life. The hope of the true believer does not reside in the things of this world, but in the Living God. This is why the disciples of Jesus are called to live as children of the resurrection, that is, sons of life in God, as their Master and Lord, "having been regenerated not from any perishable seed but from imperishable seed, that is, of the living and enduring Word of God" (1 P 1: 23).

Questions to Help in the Reflection

- What has struck you most in this Gospel? Some word? Which particular attitude?
- Try to reread the Gospel text in the context of the other Biblical texts quoted in the key to the reading. You also find others.
- How do you interpret the conflict which arose between the chief priests of the People and the Sadducees with Jesus?
- Stop and think about how Jesus confronted the conflict. What do you learn from his behavior?
- Which do you think is the central point in the discussion?
- What does the resurrection from the dead mean for you?
- Do you feel as a son or daughter of the resurrection?

- What does it mean for you to live the resurrection beginning now at the present moment?

Oratio

From Psalm 17

We will be filled, Lord, by contemplating your Face Listen, Yahweh, to an upright cause, pay attention to my cry, lend an ear to my prayer, my lips free from deceit. My steps never stray from the paths you lay down, from your tracks; so my feet never stumble.

I call upon you, God, for you answer me; turn your ear to me, hear what I say. Shelter me in the shadow of your wings But I in my uprightness will see your face, and when I awake I shall be filled with the vision of you.

Contemplatio

From the mystical diary of Sister Maria Evangelista of the Most Holy Trinity, O. Carm.

This earthly life is also filled with love, with gifts of "truth", hidden gifts and at the same time, revealed by the sign... I feel an immense gratitude for every human value. To live in communion with creation, in friendship with the brothers, in openness toward the work of God and the work of man, in a continuous experience of the gifts of life, even if in the midst of suffering, even is simply only human, it is a continuous grace, a continuous gift.



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

06NOV₂₀₂₂ - Formation information

Did you know there are more than 700 religious institutes and societies of apostolic life at work in the United States? That women religious outnumber men religious by more than three to one? That nearly three-fourths of those currently in formation for religious life are Millennials (born roughly from the early 1980s to late 1990s)? That 30 percent of newer entrants to religious life are ethnically and racially diverse, including Asian/Pacific Islander (13 percent), Hispanic (10 percent), black (6 percent), and mixed race (1 percent)? We can't list all 50 facts here, but to download your own post-able, share-worthy list for National Vocation Awareness Week (which starts today), check out [Fifty Fun Facts](#) about vocations on the National Religious Vocation Conference website.

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Today's readings:

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16—3:5; Luke 20:27-38 ([156](#)).

“Pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may speed forward and be glorified as it did among you.”

07NOV₂₀₂₂ - Until we rest in You

National Vocation Awareness Week runs annually the first full week of November (this year, Nov. 6-12) to promote vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to pray and support those who are considering these vocations. Have you ever thought about a vocation to religious life? Do you know someone who could use help discerning such a vocation? Take some time this week to visit [Vision Vocation Network](#) for resources to help you discern your path, including a calendar of discernment events, a “Vocation Match” tool to find religious communities, and a treasure trove of helpful articles. This year’s theme: “Pathways for a restless heart.” Does that speak to you?

Today's readings:

Titus 1:1-9; Luke 17:1-6 ([491](#)).

“And the Apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’”

08NOV₂₀₂₂ - A day to vote your values

“When it comes to labor and politics, I am inclined to be sympathetic to the left, but when it comes to the Catholic Church, then I am far to the right.” So said Dorothy Day—born this day 125 years ago—voicing the struggle many U.S. Catholics feel on Election Day. Though Day, born in 1897, was a suffragette, arrested for demanding that women get to vote, she never voted in her lifetime once women finally got the right in 1920. Her reasons were complicated. But the U.S. Catholic bishops [offer guidance](#) for all who wonder about the worth of their vote, insisting that “participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

Today's readings:

Titus 2:1-8, 11-14; Luke 17:7-10 ([492](#)).

“We have done what we were obliged to do.”

09NOV₂₀₂₂ - Build your vocation steeped in love

For nearly a millennium, the Catholic Church has marked on this day the dedication of the Lateran Basilica, so named for the hill upon which it sits just east of the Colosseum in Rome. The cathedral of the Diocese of Rome, it is the official seat of the pope (the bishop of Rome) and is dedicated to both of the New Testament’s two most famous Johns: the Baptist and the Apostle. At this halfway point of National Vocation Awareness Week, consider the far-reaching impact of these servants honored in the Catholic Church’s highest-ranking edifice. Let’s dedicate

ourselves as they did to spreading the Good News of love, and through our own holy vocations attain our heavenly reward!

FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

Today's readings:

Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22 ([671](#)).

"His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me."

10^{NOV}₂₀₂₂ - Make peace with your vocation

Saint Leo the Great is one of the few popes remembered as the "Great." This accomplished preacher and writer was also such a skilled diplomat that he convinced Attila the Hun to spare Rome from attack in 452 and later kept a plundering Vandal army from burning the city. We recognize Saint Leo during National Vocation Awareness Week, a time to recall that God has called us each by name to love and serve in our own way. Saint Leo used his gifts to uplift Christ. How do you use yours? Sharing God's peace is a good place to start.

MEMORIAL OF LEO THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Today's readings:

Philemon 7-20; Luke 17:20-25 ([494](#)).

"For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you."

11^{NOV}₂₀₂₂ - Holiness cut to fit

Humility and generosity are the key attributes associated with many saints, and fourth-century Saint Martin of Tours is no exception. While on patrol in Gaul as a soldier in the Roman Army, it is said that Martin took pity on a half-naked beggar by cutting his officer's cloak in half and sharing it with the shivering man. The incident is immortalized in Christian art and iconography throughout Europe and became a defining image of what it means to be Christian. Martin took to heart the words of Jesus: "Whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:45). In Martin's honor, extend your compassion beyond your comfort zone today.

MEMORIAL OF MARTIN OF TOURS, BISHOP

Today's readings:

2 John 4-9; Luke 17:26-37 ([495](#)).

"For this is love, that we walk according to his commandments."

12^{NOV}₂₀₂₂ - Seek unity where possible

For the first thousand years Christianity was one big, mostly happy family. But for a number of reasons the church was divided in the Great Schism of 1054. Saint Josaphat (c.1580-1623) was a Catholic bishop trying to reunite the Eastern Church with Rome. But, alas, he was a little heavy-handed. When he discovered a priest in his diocese was celebrating Mass according to the Byzantine practice, he had him arrested and thrown in jail. This angered a mob of unruly citizens who attacked and violently dispatched Josaphat, tossing his body in a river. We can honor his good intentions today, while perhaps choosing another approach to unity. Pray we unite in those things that matter most.

MEMORIAL OF JOSAPHAT, BISHOP, MARTYR

Today's readings:

3 John 5-8; Luke 18:1-8 ([496](#)). *"I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily."*