

# 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 13, 2022**

*Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Lord, you who have made sky and earth and sea, and everything in them; it is you who said through the Holy Spirit and speaking through our ancestor David, your servant: Why this uproar among the nations, this impotent muttering of the peoples? Kings of earth take up position, princes plot together against the Lord and his Anointed."

... Stretch out your hand to heal and to work miracles and marvels through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (Ac 4: 24-25.30). Fill us with your Spirit as you gave it to the Apostles after this prayer, in the time of trial, so that we can also proclaim the Word openly and give witness as prophets of hope.

## Lectio

### The Context:

The passage concerns the beginning of the discourse of Jesus on the end of the world. The passage 21: 5-36 is a whole literary unit. Jesus is in Jerusalem, in the entrance of the Temple, the Passion is near. The Synoptic Gospels (also see Mt 24; Mk 13) have the so called "eschatological" discourse precede the account of the Passion, Death and Resurrection. These are events to be read in the light of the Passover. The language is the "apocalyptic" one. Attention is not placed on each word, but on the announcement of the total overturn. The community of Luke already knew about the events concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. The Evangelist universalizes the message and makes evident the intermediate time of the Church waiting for the coming of the Lord in glory. Luke refers to the end of time also in other parts (12: 35-48: 17, 20; 18: 18).

### A Possible Division of the Text:

- Luke 21: 5-7 - introduction
- Luke 21: 8-9 - initial warning
- Luke 21: 10-11 - the signs
- Luke 21: 12-17 - the disciples put to the test

- Luke 21: 18-19 - protection and trust

### **Gospel Text - Luke 21: 5-19**

5 When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, he said, 6 'All these things you are staring at now -- the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be destroyed.' 7 And they put to him this question, 'Master,' they said, 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that it is about to take place?'

8 But he said, 'Take care not to be deceived, because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the one" and "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. 9 And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once.'

10 Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven. 12 'But before all this happens, you will be seized and persecuted; you will be handed over to the synagogues and to imprisonment and brought before kings and governors for the sake of my name 13 -and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. 14 Make up your minds not to prepare your defense, 15 because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. 17 You will be hated universally on account of my name, 18 but not a hair of your head will be lost. 19 Your perseverance will win you your lives.

## **A Moment of Prayerful Silence**

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

## **A Few Questions**

- Which sentiments prevail in me: anguish, fear, trust, hope, doubt...
- Where is the Good News in this discourse?
- Do we love what we expect and do we conform ourselves to its demands?
- How do I react to trials in my life of faith?
- Can I make a connection with the present historical events?
- What place does Jesus have in history today?

## **Meditatio**

### **A Key for Reading:**

Let us not allow ourselves to be attracted by the exterior upheavals, typical of the apocalyptic language, but by the interior ones, which are necessary, which pre-announce and prepare the encounter with the Lord. Even being aware that today also, in different parts of the world "apocalyptic" situations are being lived, it is possible to make a personalized reading, certainly not an evasive one which shifts the attention to personal responsibility. Luke, regarding the other Evangelists, underlines that the end has not come, that it is necessary to live the waiting with commitment. Let us open our eyes on the tragedies of our time, not to be prophets of misfortune, but courageous prophets of a new order based on justice and peace.

## Comment:

[5] "When some were talking about the Temple remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings", he said: Probably Jesus was in the entrance of the Temple, considered the reference to the votive offerings. Luke does not specify who are the listeners, it is directed to all, he universalizes the eschatological discourse. This discourse can refer to the end of time, but also to our personal end, the proper time of life. In common there is the definitive encounter with the Risen Lord.

[6] "All these things you are staring at now, the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be destroyed." Jesus introduces a language of misfortune (17: 22; 19: 43) and repeats the admonitions of the prophets concerning the Temple (Micah 3: 12; Jer 7: 1-15; 26: 1-19). It is also a consideration on the caducity of every human realization, no matter how marvelous. The community of Luke already knew about the destruction of Jerusalem (year 70). Let us consider our attitude towards the things that end with time.

[7] They asked him: 'Master, when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that it is about to take place?' the listeners are interested in the external upheavals which characterize this event. Jesus does not respond to this specific question. The "when" is not placed by Luke in relation with the destruction of Jerusalem. He underlines that the end "will not be immediately" (verse 9) and "that before all this..." (v. 12) others things will happen. He questions us on the relation between the historical events and the fulfilment of the history of salvation. The time of man and the time of God.

[8] He answered: "Take care not to be deceived, because many will come using my name and saying: 'I am the one' and 'the time is near at hand'. Refuse to join them." In regard to the other Evangelists, Luke adds the reference to time. The community of the first Christians is overcoming the phase of the next coming of the Lord and prepares itself for the intermediate time of the Church. Jesus recommends not to allow themselves to be deceived or better, to be seduced by impostors. There are two types of false prophets: those who pretend to come in the name of Jesus saying "I am the one" and those who affirm that the time is near at hand, that the day is already known (10: 11; 19: 11).

[9] "When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once." Even the war events, and today we would say, the terrorist acts, are not the beginning of the end. All this happens but it is not a sign of the end. (Dn 3: 28. Luke wants to warn them about the illusion of the imminent end of time with the consequent disillusionment and abandonment of faith.

[10] "Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

[11] There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven." The words "and then he said" is a repetition of the discourse after the initial warnings. This is fully apocalyptic language which means revelation (Is 19: 2; 2 Co 15: 6) and at the same time concealment. Traditional images are used to describe the rapid changes of history (Is 24: 19-20; Zc 14: 4-5; Ez 6: 11-12, etc.). The imaginary catastrophic is like a curtain which hides the beauty of the scene which is behind: the coming of the Lord in glory. (v. 27).

[12] "But before all this happens, you will be seized and persecuted; you will be handed over to the synagogues and to imprisonment and brought before kings and governors for the sake of my name."

[13] "and that will be your opportunity to bear witness." The Christian is called to conform himself to Christ. They have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. Luke recalls the scene of Paul before King Agrippa and Governor Festo (Ac 25: 23-26, 32). Behold the time of trial. Not necessarily under the form of persecution. Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus suffered during 18 months, the absence of God, when she discovered her illness. A time of purification which prepares for the encounter. It is the normal condition of the Christian, that of living in a healthy tension which is not frustration. Christians are called to give witness of the hope which animates them.

[14] "Make up your minds not to prepare your defence;

[15] because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict." The time has come to place our trust completely in God, God alone suffices. It is that same wisdom with which Stephen confused his enemies (Ac 6: 10). The capacity to resist to persecution is guaranteed for the believer.

[16] "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends, and some of you will be put to death."

[17] "You will be hated universally on account of my name. The radical following of Christ implies also the overcoming of blood relations, those which affectively we believed to be more secure. There is the risk of remaining alone, like Jesus in his Passion.

[18] "But not a hair of your head will be lost." Luke repeats the preceding verse (12: 7) to remind us of the divine protection which is assured at the moment of trial. For the believer is also guaranteed the care of his physical integrity.

[19] "Your perseverance will win you your lives." Perseverance (cf. also Ac 11: 23; 13: 43; 14: 22) is indispensable in order to bear fruit (8: 15), in the daily trials and in persecutions. It means the same as the "remain" in Christ of John. The final victory is certain: the Kingdom of God will be established by the Son of man. Therefore, then, it is necessary to be persevering, vigilant and in prayer (v. 36 and 12: 35-38). The life-style of the Christian has to be a sign of the future which will come.

## Oratio

### Psalm 98

Sing a new song to the Lord Acclaim Yahweh, all the earth, burst into shouts of joy!  
Play to Yahweh on the harp, to the sound of instruments;  
to the sound of trumpet and horn, acclaim the presence of the King.  
Let the sea thunder, and all that it holds, the world and all who live in it.  
Let the rivers clap their hands,  
and the mountains shout for joy together, at Yahweh's approach,  
for he is coming to judge the earth;  
he will judge the world with saving justice and the nations with fairness.

# Contemplatio

Good God, whose Kingdom is all love and peace, you yourself create in our soul that silence that you need to communicate yourself to it.

Peaceful acting, desiring without passion, zeal without agitation: all that can only come from You, Eternal Wisdom, Infinite activity, unalterable repose, principle and model of true peace.

You have promised us, by your prophets this peace, you have given it by Jesus Christ, you have given us the guarantee with the effusion of your Spirit.

Do not permit that the envy of the enemy, the anxiety of passions, the scruples of conscience make us lose this heavenly gift, which is the pledge of your love, the object of your promises, the reward of the Blood of your Son. Amen. (*Teresa of Avila, 38, 9-10*).



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

## 13<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> - **Apocalypse soon?**

The approaching end of the church year brings a cascade of dreadful-sounding biblical images in many of the scripture readings. Should we be packing our bags for a mad dash to the end-times? As Malachi says, "Lo, the day is coming"—and of course it is. Time forecloses both personally and cosmically. This is why we're regularly reminded to stay "sober and alert," "awake," and "watchful." The threats are real: climate change, global disease, catastrophes, and random violence, not to mention the genetic time bomb that is our bodies. Live each day with purpose. Meet each moment with love.

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### **Today's readings:**

Malachi 3:19-20a; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; Luke 21:5-19 (159).

*"There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs."*

## 14<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> - **Call upon his names**

We often call people close to us by special names: Sweetheart, Honey, Angel. The names both describe the person and reveal how we feel about them. The same goes for our names for God and Jesus in particular. We call him Christ, Messiah, Son of David, Son of God as well as Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd, King of Kings, Light of the World, Bread of Life, the Living Word—among many others. Say a Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus today to ponder the meaning of his names. In the end, remember his birth name, Jesus, means, "God saves." The catechism says: "The name 'Jesus' contains all: God and man and the whole economy of creation and salvation." Shakespeare famously asked, "What's in a name?" In our Lord's case, everything!

### **Today's readings:**

Revelation 1:1-4; 2:1-5; Luke 18:35-43 (497).

*"Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!"*

## 15<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> - **With passion, pursue the good**

You could say Saint Albert the Great was a real renaissance man, even though he died in 1289, before the Renaissance flourished. As a learned Dominican friar, he was an astute professor of philosophy, mentoring his famous pupil Thomas Aquinas and thus laying the groundwork for scholasticism. But Albert also wrote on other subjects he was passionate about: chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, and geography—and served as bishop and theologian to the pope. "Knowledge of divine things is imprinted on our minds by union with God, who is Wisdom itself," said Albert. Thank God for the good things you are passionate about, using them wisely to honor our Creator.

MEMORIAL OF ALBERT THE GREAT, DOMINICAN, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### **Today's readings:**

Revelation 3:1-6, 14-22; Luke 19:1-10 (498).

*"Because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."*

## 16<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> - **Demonstrate a mother's love**

On this day 160 years ago, one of America's most influential nuns died in her hometown of New Orleans. A Creole, Venerable Henriette DeLille—founder of the Sisters of the Holy Family and their first mother superior—toiled for decades in education and philanthropy on behalf of the region's black community. She founded her

convent in 1834 as a place where black women with a religious calling could serve the community, despite racist opposition from many in the church. Following her death, DeLille's reputation for holiness resulted in her cause for canonization being opened in 1997, the first for a U.S.-born African American. May her spirit of indefatigable service inspire us all to grow in sanctity and serve the forgotten in a country where racism continues to damage church and society. Mother Henriette, pray for us!

**Today's readings:**

Revelation 4:1-11; Luke 19:11-28 (499).

*"He called ten of his servants and gave them ten gold coins and told them, 'Engage in trade with these until I return.'"*

## 17<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> Carry on the healing tradition

Christianity has always elevated care for the sick as a key virtue. From Jesus' focus on healing to modern medical systems built by religious orders, helping the ill has been central from day one. Today's saint, Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, built two hospitals. After she lost her fortune, she gave hands-on care to the sick, the aged, and the poor. The next time you shoulder extra work for a sick co-worker or make a late-night run for medicine for a family member, think of it as an opportunity to practice your faith.

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, QUEEN, THIRD ORDER FRANCISCAN

**Today's readings:**

Revelation 5:1-10; Luke 19:41-44 (500).

*"[Jesus] saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If this day you only knew what makes for peace.'"*

## 18<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> Learn the language

Making Jesus known to others is a gospel imperative. Saint Philippine Duchesne, R.S.C.J. possessed that evangelizing spirit when she left Paris for New Orleans to serve the French-speaking people in U.S. territories. As a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart, her mission was education. She not only taught people to read and write, but she watched as newly baptized adults, particularly members of the Potawatomie tribe, began spreading the gospel in their own language. As you play your own part in making Jesus known, remember to start with the language of love. That is always an attention getter.

MEMORIAL OF ROSE PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE, SACRED HEART MISSIONARY

**Today's readings:**

Revelation 10:8-11; Luke 19:45-48 (501).

*"It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."*

## 19<sup>NOV</sup><sub>2022</sub> Make men whole

International Men's Day is a little-known commemoration held today that needs more notice. Wounded (some would say toxic) masculinity—a distorted and often violence-oriented view of "what it means to be a man"—is manifest in so many ills in our society, starting with what Father Richard Rohr calls the "father wound." Rohr tells a story from when he was a prison chaplain: He found great demand among the imprisoned men for Mother's Day cards to send. When he offered them cards to send on Father's Day, however, he had no takers. Real men can be strong without violence, kind without coercion. Help the men in your life (men, this starts with you!) to heal their wounded masculinity.

**Today's readings:**

Revelation 11:4-12; Luke 20:27-40 (502).

*"Teacher, you have answered well."*