

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 Devina

Sunday, February 27, 2022

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer

God our Father, You redeem us and make us Your children in Christ. Look upon us, give us true freedom and bring us to the inheritance You promised. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 6: 39-42

Jesus told his disciples a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye."

Reflection

Today's Gospel gives us some of the passages of the discourse which Jesus pronounced on the plain after having spent the night in prayer (Lk 6: 12) and after He had called the twelve to be His apostles (Lk 6: 13-14). Many of the sayings in this discourse had already been pronounced on other occasions, but Luke, imitating Matthew, puts them together in this Sermon on the Plain.

- Luke 6:39: The parable of the blind man who guides another blind man. Jesus tells a parable to the disciples: "Can a blind man guide another blind man? Will not both of them fall into a hole?" A parable of one line, quite similar to the warnings which, in Matthew's Gospel, are addressed to the Pharisees: "Alas for you, blind guides!" (Mt 23:16-17,19,24,26) Here in the context of the Gospel of Luke, this parable is addressed to the animators of the communities who consider themselves the masters of truth, superior to others and because of this, they are blind guides.
- Luke 6:40: Disciple – Master. "The disciple is not greater than the teacher, but the well prepared disciple will be like the teacher" Jesus is the Master, not the professor. The professor in class teaches different subjects, but does not live with the pupils. The Master or Lord does not teach lessons; he lives with the pupils. His subject matter is himself, his life witness, his way of living the things that he teaches. Living together with the Master, the Lord has three aspects:
 - (1) the Master is the model or example to be imitated (cf. Jn 13: 13-15).
 - (2) The disciple not only contemplates and imitates, he commits himself to the

same destiny of the Master, with his temptations (Lk 22:28), his persecution (Mt 10: 24-25), his death (Jn 11: 16);

(3) He not only imitates the model, he not only assumes the commitment, but arrives at identifying himself with Him: "I live, but it is not I who live, but Christ lives in me!" (Gal 2: 20). This third aspect is the mystical dimension of the following of Jesus, fruit of the action of the Spirit.

- Luke 6: 41-42: The splinter in the brother's eye. "Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own? How can you say to your brother: 'Brother, let me take out that splinter in your eye, when you cannot see the great log in your own? Hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter in your brother's eye". In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew treats the same theme and explains a bit better the parable of the splinter in the eye. Jesus asks for a creative attitude which will make us capable of going and encountering others without judging them, without preconceptions and rationalizing, but accepting the brother (Mt 7: 1-5). This total openness toward others considering them as brothers/sisters will arise in us only when we are capable of relating to God with total trust as His children (Mt 7: 7-11).

Personal Questions

- Splinter and log in the eye. How do I relate with others at home and in my family, in work and with my colleagues, in community and with the brothers and sisters?
- Master and disciple. How am I a disciple of Jesus?

Concluding Prayer

Lord, how blessed are those who live in Your house; they shall praise You continually. Blessed those who find their strength in You, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. (Ps 84: 4-5)



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

27 FEB 2022 - EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Lord, that we may see

People of goodwill generally assume they're not complicit in racism or racist practices. That's because we describe racism as attitudes, words, and acts intended to harm or subordinate people whose origins are different from ours. However, racism involves omissions as well as actions: in what we fail to do or say to make equality tangible for everyone. Racism can also be institutionalized in laws, education, hiring practices, economic opportunities, zoning regulations, and voting restrictions. Racism operates best under the surface. As Pope Francis reminds us: Let none of us imagine that the conversion of hearts isn't meant for us.

Today's readings:

Sirach 27:4-7; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58; Luke 6:39-45 (84).

"Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?"

28 FEB 2022

Build it up

Ever wonder what the kingdom of God will be like? Well, look around, because you're already living in it. Not seeing all the love, peace, and justice you were promised? The kingdom of God began with Christ's death and Resurrection and will be brought into perfection by Christ at the end of time. Until then, it's our job as Christians to build the Kingdom up. Pray, discern what God is calling you to do, and act to make this world more harmonious and respectful of the dignity of others. And then of course, wait with hope.

Today's readings:

1 Peter 1:3-9; Mark 10:17-27 (347).

"For men it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

01 MAR 2022

Your Rx for Lent

While many Christians focus on feasting today—ahead of tomorrow's fasting—it's also a good time to survey a smorgasbord of penitential spiritual practices, perfect for the upcoming Lenten season. Saint John Chrysostom identifies five in one of his homilies: "I have shown you five paths of repentance: acknowledgement of your own sins, forgiveness of our neighbor's sins against us, prayer, almsgiving, and humility." Sounding more like a doctor than one of the doctors of the church, he concludes: "Now that we have learned how to heal our wounds, let us apply the cures." How will you fill your prescription?

Today's readings:

1 Peter 1:10-16; Mark 10:28-31 (348).

"Do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance."

02 MAR 2022 - ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Add another step to your Lenten journey

Ash Wednesday is full of rituals and traditions of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. But it includes an extra step. As Pope Francis puts it, it is a time "to find concrete ways to overcome our indifference." So in addition to your regular Lenten practices, try to care more deeply about the suffering and disaffected in your community. Volunteer at your parish, a local charity, or for a social cause. Or simply go for a walk and reflect on how Jesus is present in those you encounter along the way.

Today's readings:

Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (219).

“And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”

03MAR2022 - THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY; MEMORIAL OF KATHARINE DREXEL, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

Exceed expectations

Katharine Drexel was a wealthy heiress in late 19th-century Philadelphia. She rocked that world one day: “Miss Drexel Enters a Catholic Convent—Gives Up Seven Million,” the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* announced when she decided not to simply become a nun but to found her own religious order. Head of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, she used her family fortune to found the nation’s only Catholic university for African Americans (Xavier University in New Orleans), schools for Native Americans, and more. Are you, too, being called by God to do something unexpected?

Today's readings:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25 (220).

“What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?”

04MAR2022 - FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

A cleansing fast

A couple years ago, two young white women decided that they needed to more closely align their spiritual practices of Lent with their commitment to being anti-racist. They chose, as they wrote in *Sojourners* magazine, to try fasting from media that lacked a diversity of voices and to spend Lent engaged with books, films, and podcasts written or directed by women of color. Their goal was to take a step toward repentance, which is one of the hallmarks of Lent. To repent is to turn away from sin, including the sin of racism. What Lenten practice of prayer, fasting, or almsgiving might you contribute toward being more intercultural and helping end racism?

Today's readings:

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15 (221).

“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish.”

05MAR2022 - SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Tax forgiveness

Tax collectors in Jesus’ time were particularly despised. The Roman occupiers auctioned off the right to collect taxes to the highest bidders, who then aggressively collected taxes from their neighbors in order to turn a profit on their “investment.” When Jesus calls Levi the tax collector to follow him and attends a celebration with Levi’s tax-collecting cohorts, the shock among the Jewish leaders is evident. But Levi became Matthew, the evangelist, and wrote a vivid account of the Good News. Jesus sees beyond the worst in us and brings out the best. Follow his lead.

Today's readings:

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32 (222).

“Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, ‘Follow me.’ ”