

# 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, August 14, 2022**

*20th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Shaddai, God of the mountain, You who make of our fragile life the rock of your dwelling place, lead our mind  
to strike the rock of the desert,  
so that water may gush to quench our thirst.  
May the poverty of our feelings  
cover us as with a mantle in the darkness of the night  
and may it open our heart to hear the echo of silence  
until the dawn,  
wrapping us with the light of the new morning, may bring us,  
with the spent embers of the fire of the shepherds of the Absolute who have kept vigil  
for us close to the divine Master,  
the flavor of the holy memory.

# LECTIO

## The Text – Luke 12: 49-53 (59)

49 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! 50 There is a baptism I must still receive, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! 51 'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. 52 For from now on, a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; 53 father opposed to son, son to father, mother to daughter, daughter to mother, mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law to mother-in-law.' 54 He said again to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. 55 And when the wind is from the south you say it's going to be hot, and it is. 56 Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret these times? 57 'Why not judge for yourselves what is upright? 58 For example: when you are going to court with your opponent, make an effort to settle with him on the way, or he may drag you before the judge and the judge hand you over to the officer and the officer have you thrown into prison. 59 I tell you, you will not get out till you have paid the very last penny.'

### A Moment of Silence:

*Let us allow the voice of the Word to resonate within us.*

# MEDITATIO

## Some Questions:

- *I have come to bring fire to the earth:* Fire presupposes a vehemence of sentiment and a center of life because where there is light, heat, force, movement, there is life. And not a life which is stagnant, but a life which is continuously nourished. Does the fire of the life of God burn in me?
- *Why not judge for yourselves what is upright?* The invitation to discern personally is even more urgent in a world in which opinions run after each other and form a "mass"... How much do I allow myself to be conditioned by the judgements and criteria chosen by others?
- *Make an effort to settle with him on the way...* You are walking to go to the tribunal because you think you are right, but the opponent also has the same certainty. How do I feel before the one whom I feel is hostile toward me? Do I feel sure of myself to the point of going to the tribunal or rather do I try to agree with my opponent on the way?

## Detailed Analysis of the Text:

- **v. 49.** *I have come to bring fire to the earth; and how I wish it were blazing already!* The fire which is not extinguished comes from Heaven, it is the fire of the Spirit which makes of all things that exist, the luminous and warm expression of the divine Presence among us. The Baptism of love. The light is born, the bread is born, the water is born, God is born! The Cross, a new Bethlehem, House of the perfect Bread, a new Emmaus, the hostel of the broken Bread, a new Bethany, House of the perfumed Bread offered to men forever.
- **v. 50.** *There is a baptism I must still receive; and what constraint I am under until it is completed!* Anguish, the symptom of those fears which from within get hold of one

and disfigure, distort and leave without breath, Jesus also experienced this. What can one do against anguish? Nothing can be done but only wait so that what is good is fulfilled and that the fears be involved in the event itself. Anguish clasps tightly and can demolish every possibility of interior movement. The anguish of the one who trusts and accepts life, even if it clasps the person tightly in a terrible vice like grip, does not demolish, but rather fortifies in so far as it renders the waiting free or devoid of illusions and of easy hopes.

- **V. 51.** *Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.* Man seeks peace. But what peace? The peace of “do not disturb me”, the peace of “let us not make problems”, the peace of “everything is fine”, a superficial peace. This peace is the earthly peace. Jesus has come to bring us the true peace, the fullness of the gifts of God. This peace then, is no longer called peace, but in so far as it is against the apparent peace, it is called, in the eyes of man “division” It can well be said that the peace of Christ elects or chooses and in so far as it elects, it distinguishes, like a magnet which in a magnetic field attracts to itself what is of the same “nature”, but it does not attract anything which is not of a similar nature.
- **vv. 52-53.** For from now on, a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; father opposed to son, son to father, mother to daughter, daughter to mother, mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law to mother-in-law. Everything which divides does not come from God, because in God there is unity. But in His name it is possible even to go beyond the natural commandment. Honor your father and mother, says the ancient law. And the new law which is that of love without limit even goes to say: He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of me. Division in this case can be understood as the priority of love, a hierarchy of values. To God, the source of life corresponds the first place. To the father and the mother who have accepted, welcomed life, the second place... such an order is in the logical nature of that order. It is not an honor to the father and the mother to disobey God or to love Christ less. Because the love for father and mother is a love of response, the love of God is generating love.
- **vv. 54-55.** He said again to the crowds, “When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. And when the wind is from the south you say it is going to be hot, and it is. Before reproaching the crowds, Jesus appreciates the good that they are capable of. If a cloud comes from the west, it is rain that comes. And man has this certainty as a result that he has been observing the natural phenomena up to the point of formulating laws. If the wind comes from the south, it will be hot. Confirmed and reflected upon, regulates the consequences for us.
- **v. 56.** Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret these times? Why not use the same criteria for the events of the present moment? History speaks for itself. Why not evaluate it on the basis of experience? The logic which binds premises and consequences is the same one on human events and on supernatural ones. The world of relationships, the world of religious convictions, the world of human expectations... everything is subject to the same law. Then, if Christ has been expected for centuries as the fulfilment of the promises of God, and if this Jesus of Nazareth fulfils the works of faith with the finger of God, why doubt that the Kingdom of God has arrived? This is hypocrisy. It is not to want to admit God’s fidelity and to insist and persist to wait for the fulfilment of what we have seen.
- **v. 57.** *Why not judge for yourselves what is upright?* What is upright can always be judged. It does not serve to wait for the judgement of others. And just the same, we are always bound to the thought and the words of others, to what happens and to

what is projected, to perspectives of success and to thousands of hesitations. To trust one's correct judgement is wise!

- **v. 58.** When you are going to court with your opponent, make an effort to settle with him on the way, or he may drag you before the judge and the judge hand you over to the officer and the officer have you thrown into prison. The wisdom and the judgement of Jesus are directed toward something truly useful. Do not expect to receive justice, because no one is just to the point of being able to avoid being condemned to prison. We are all sinners! And therefore, instead of appealing to a false justice, that for which you consider yourself worthy to be absolved, better appeal to harmony. Try to reach an agreement so as not to be led before the judge. You judge the facts and conclude that it is always better not to feel oneself free from guilt. Saint Paul says it: Neither do I judge myself... my judge is the Lord. Yes He...
- **v. 59.** *I tell you, you will not get out till you have paid the very last penny.* Who has no debts? Why do we want to live our life in a court to constantly decide who is guilty and who is innocent? Would it not be better to live simply, in agreement and harmony with everyone, since all seek to want what is good and all have fragility and weakness as the coin with which to pay?

## Reflection:

If we too could bring fire to the earth of our heart! A fire capable of extending itself without causing a great fire, but creating cordial bonds of union and a lively exchange... The one who plays with fire will certainly have his hands burnt, but what a great benefit for all. Fire divides, it creates circles of encounter and barriers of inaccessible passages. Like in all divine things we find ourselves in at a crossroads section: with Christ or against Him. Yes, because we must never forget that He is a sign of contradiction for all times, a stumbling stone for those who look to the top expecting miracles and prodigies and a corner stone for the one who looks at His tired hands and grasps tightly the hands of a carpenter trying to construct the house of hope, the Church. A time of grace: How not recognize it? If you go by a lighted fire, you feel the heat. Christ is the lighted fire or flame! If you cross a torrent flowing with water, on a suffocating hot day of summer, you feel the freshness and feel attracted by the movement of the water which comes toward you to quench your thirst and to give you moments of relief. And Christ is the water which gushes out for eternal life! If at night you listen to the silence, you cannot but feel anxious waiting for the light of the new day which will rise. And Christ is the Sun who rises! It is the word which at night is silence and in the East it becomes a syllable of a new dialogue. Why not become aware that it is just that all hostility falls and walk with anyone recognizing him as a brother? If you consider him an enemy, you are going to seek justice... If you consider him as a brother, the thought comes to your mind to take care of him and to walk together a part of the road, to share with him your anguishes and your anxieties, and to listen to him about his difficulties. Why do you want at all costs to pay your debt up to the last penny?

## ORATIO

*Psalms 32*

How blessed are those whose offence is forgiven, whose sin blotted out.  
How blessed are those to whom Yahweh imputes no guilt, whose spirit harbors no deceit.  
I said not a word,

but my bones wasted away from groaning all the day; day and night your hand lay heavy upon me;  
my heart grew parched as stubble in summer drought. I made my sin known to you, did not conceal my guilt.  
I said, 'I shall confess my offence to Yahweh.' And you, for your part, took away my guilt, forgave my sin.  
That is why each of your faithful ones prays to you in time of distress.  
Even if great floods overflow, they will never reach your faithful. You are a refuge for me, you guard me in trouble,  
with songs of deliverance, you surround me.  
I shall instruct you  
and teach you the way to go;  
I shall not take my eyes off you. Be not like a horse or a mule;  
that does not understand bridle or bit; if you advance to master them, there is no means of bringing them near. Countless troubles are in store for the wicked, but one who trusts in Yahweh  
is enfolded in his faithful love. Rejoice in Yahweh,  
exult all you upright, shout for joy,  
you honest of heart.

## CONTEMPLATIO

Lord, you who search into my heart and make of my fears the paths to create the newness of gifts, enter into my anguishes. There where I lose my hope and where the tremor devours me, there where every spark of grace burns my securities and makes of me a pile of ashes, there enkindle anew the fire of your love. Give a look or gaze capable of penetrating reality and of fixing it on your gaze which waits for me beyond the veil of all appearances. Do not allow that I be driven away from my desire of communion. And also there where in your name I would find opposition, resistance, adversity, may be able to enter into the anguish of division to maintain alive the flame of the encounter with you!



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

## 14 AUG 2022 **Make some noise for justice**

Civil rights activist and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Congressman John Lewis hoped young Americans might get in trouble. "Good trouble, necessary trouble," he specified. Lewis wished that a passion for what's right might compel our young citizens to "find a way to get in the way" of injustice. A young prophet named Jeremiah once got in the way, winding up at the bottom of a well and nearly starving to death for causing trouble for his king. Jesus promises the same sort of trouble in our families if some members are baptized with fire while others don't feel the burn. Find yourself some good trouble.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10; Hebrews 12:1-4; Luke 12:49-53 (120).

*"He will die of famine on the spot, for there is no more food in the city."*

## 15 AUG 2022 **Grief requited**

Given that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was likely in her teens when she gave birth, she was probably only in her late 40s when Jesus died 33 years later. Life expectancy was a lot shorter then, but potentially Mary could have been alive for many years after seeing her son for the last time. One ancient historian wrote that she died 11 years later. It must have been a time of intense longing for her. Whether she died before she was bodily assumed into heaven or was assumed before she died is left open-ended by the church. Either way, it was an extraordinary reunion with the Lord befitting her status. Consider your own reunion with God. Plan ahead!

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (NOT AN OBLIGATORY SOLEMNITY THIS YEAR)

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

Vigil: 1 Chronicles 15:3-4, 15-16; 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:54b-57; Luke 11:27-28 (621); Day: Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56 (622).

*"He has looked with favor on his lowly servant."*

## 16 AUG 2022 **Embrace the mystery of communion**

Brother Roger Schütz, founder of the Taizé movement, died on this date in 2005. Brother Roger began Taizé in 1940 in the French countryside, envisioning a humble monastic community to respond to the needs of war-torn refugees—but also to welcome followers from all Christian denominations. The simple house he purchased eventually blossomed into a global place of pilgrimage, especially for young people. Taizé is especially known for beautiful chants still used in congregations all over the world. "The Church is a mystery of communion," Brother Roger wrote, where we "can discover an aurora of reconciliation and the practicing of a simple joy." Pray with Taizé through their [website](#).

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

Ezekiel 28:1-10; Matthew 19:23-30 (420).

*"For God all things are possible."*

## 17 AUG 2022 **To each is given a mission**

On this day in 1887, Marcus Garvey, one of the most influential black activists of his generation, was born in Jamaica. Founder of Universal Negro Improvement Association, a fraternal organization that he grew into an international powerhouse after emigrating to the United States, he is credited with coining the term "Black is beautiful" to encourage racial pride. Though controversial in many of his views, he is remembered for his advocacy for racial equality and economic justice. Be a voice for equality and justice as you live out your unique Christian mission.

**Today's readings:**

Ezekiel 34:1-11; Matthew 20:1-16 (421).

*"You have made them equal to us."*

## 18 AUG 2022 Be willing to look closely

On this day in 1998 the renowned Holocaust scholar Harry James Cargas died. Most of his teaching and writing focused on the Christian response to the Holocaust. What haunted him, he once said, was that "probably every Jew killed in the Holocaust was murdered by a baptized Christian." Cargas could have chosen an easier academic path, but instead he forced Christians to take stock of their complicity. Today's Psalm is a good help for examining our own cooperation with contemporary sin: "A clean heart create for me, O God."

**Today's readings:**

Ezekiel 36:23-28; Matthew 22:1-14 (422).

*"Many are invited, but few are chosen."*

## 19 AUG 2022 Keep it simple

Saint John Eudes, a 17th-century priest and mystic, worked tirelessly to spread the gospel message, which he feared was being corrupted by various heresies. For Saint John, Christianity wasn't complicated: "The Christian life is a continuation and completion of the life of Christ in us. We should be so many Christs here on Earth, continuing His life and His works, laboring and suffering in a holy and divine manner in the spirit of Jesus." And just what was Christ's work? Look no further than the two great commandments he gave us: "Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind," and "Love your neighbor as yourself."

**Today's readings:**

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Matthew 22:34-40 (423).

*"The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."*

## 20 AUG 2022 Schism-saver

In 1130, Pope Honorius II was dying. In anticipation of his death, a group of cardinals agreed on Cardinal Gregory Papareschi as the next pope. Upon Honorius' death, Papareschi was elected Pope Innocent II. But another group of cardinals had another cardinal in mind for the position, Cardinal Pietro Pierleoni, and elected him as Pope Anacletus II. The church then had a pope and an antipope. Question was, which was which? Saint Bernard of Clairvaux threw his considerable weight and hard work behind Pope Innocent, who eventually prevailed, preventing what easily could have spiraled into a schism. Remember this lesson from Bernard: "If you are to do the work of a prophet, what you need is not a sceptre but a hoe."

MEMORIAL OF BERNARD, ABBOT, FOUNDER, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

**Today's readings:**

Ezekiel 43:1-7a; Matthew 23:1-12 (424).

*"The greatest among you must be your servant."*