

# 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, January 21, 2024**

*Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

## Opening Prayer

Shaddai, God of the mountain, who make of our fragile life the rock of Your dwelling, direct our minds to strike the rock of the desert, so that water may gush out to quench our thirst.

May our poor feelings cover us as with a mantle in the darkness of the night and open our hearts to hear the echo of the Silence, so that the dawn, which enfolds us with the light of a new day, may lead us to taste the holy memory, together with the remnant ashes of the fire of the pastors of the Absolute who on our behalf have kept watch near the divine Master.

## Lectio – Mark 1: 14-20

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

## A Moment of Silent Prayer

*so that the voice of the Word may echo in our hearts.*

## Meditatio

*Some questions to assist us in our meditation and prayer.*

- The time has come, the Realm is close at hand. Do we believe that we are in Galilee and that the Gospel of God is being preached to us?
- Jesus walks along. In which sea are we casting our nets?
- Follow Me...and immediately they followed Him. Is there urgency in our daily life, or do we go on saying, "Wait a minute"?
- In their boat they were mending their nets. How many rips are there in our nets? In which boat are we dwelling? Is it our boat or is it that of our roots of the past?
- He called them: our name is on the lips of our Lord Jesus. Does His voice echo as the voice of one who leads us away from our sea?

## A Key to the Reading

*for those who wish to go deeper into the text.*

This is a literary genre of vocation stories where the condition of life of the person addressed by God is first described, then the call is expressed in symbolic words or actions, and finally comes the abandoning of the activity first described. The call in our text reminds us of the call of Elisha by Elijah (1 Kings 19: 19-21) and that of Amos (Am 7: 15). The dependence on a typical biblical model does not exclude the substantial historical reality of the Gospel story. The similarity of the calls underscores a clear theological meaning in Mark's Gospel, which is the missionary practice of the disciples who will be sent in pairs (Mk 6: 7). The dynamic of this is in line with the original plan of creation when the Lord, thinking of Adam, said, "It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate" (Gen 2: 18). In their preaching mission, one will witness to the other, as Scripture says, "...the evidence of two or three witnesses is required" (cf Mt 18: 16; Dt 19: 15).

Jesus went to Galilee. There He proclaimed the Gospel from God. Jesus' preaching begins in Galilee and proclaims the Gospel, "the Good News" of God's initiative towards His people, and the establishment of the Realm. The Apostles' preaching will go from Galilee to the ends of the earth and will proclaim the Gospel, "the Good News" of the Christ Word, who has conquered death to make God's glory shine.

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Gospel. The time of waiting (*kairòs*) is over. The decisive moment has come: God is about to begin His reign. John the Baptist belonged to the time of preparation and completed his mission. He was apprehended and put to silence. Jesus belongs to the time of the establishment of the reign. It is the present that demands from human beings their collaboration by repenting. The coming of the reign points to this place of freedom where whoever listens to the proclamation can come to Christ or turn from it by refusing the good news. A Realm that is close to all and present to all who desire it. Conversion, faith, and following are three aspects of the same thing, which is the call to all to follow Jesus and the Good News.

As He was walking along by the Lake of Galilee He saw Simon and Simon's brother Andrew ... The Lake of Galilee is the background for the first phase of Jesus' ministry: a lake that is surrounded by mountains, 208 meters above sea level, 21 km long and 11 km wide. This body of water, in the shape of a cithar, was a source of life because of the abundance of fish in it. On the shore of this lake Jesus chooses a life different from the daily life seen on these shores made up of fishermen, boats, nets and fish. Simon and Andrew are two brothers. The solidarity of this affective bond serves as a basis for the

new bond of faith that makes brothers of them beyond the ties of family. Two brothers who bear one name.

Come after Me and I will make you into fishers of people. This following is determined by a clear order. It is not an invitation; it is a command. The creative Word of God that called the light and the other creatures into being now calls His image to take part in the new creation. This act of following does not come from a mere personal decision, but from a meeting with the Person of Jesus who calls. It is an action of grace which allows these disciples to respond to His call. Jesus calls with divine authority as God called the prophets in the Old Testament. It is not the disciples who choose their master as was the custom with rabbis in those days, but the Master who chooses His disciples as repositories, not of a doctrine or teaching, but of God's inheritance. The call means abandoning one's family, profession, a complete change of life in order to adhere to a life that does not allow for personal space. The disciples are men of the Realm. The call to become disciples of Jesus is an "eschatological call."

At once they left their nets and followed Him. The response is immediate. A response that tears even the strongest ties. The verb used to indicate the following is *akolouthèin*, a biblical term to indicate the action of a servant who goes with his master to render him a service. It is a material following, a literal "going after." When it refers to the disciples, it expresses full participation in the life of Jesus and His cause.

Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. He called them. The verb to call, *kalein*, is another term typical of following. There is an added element compared to the call of the first two: the figure of the father and of the workers. The father also has a name. The fact that he is deprived of his two sons gives him a unique dignity. He remains alone with the workers who will take the place of the sons. The solitude of those left behind is never a senseless solitude.

### **Reflection**

John had been apprehended and Jesus walks in Galilee: two paths at the service of the one Lord. The time has come. That time that humankind cannot seize and possess is fulfilled and demands a change of direction. The time for a sea and nets to fish elsewhere. Men and women are called so that nothing of who they are may be lost. Their identity remains, what changes is only the object of their actions. No more fish, but men. No more relationship with inferior creatures, but a relationship of equality with creatures of equal dignity. New nets to be mended, the nets of a demanding kind of fishing: they are the nets of preaching that will be cast into the hearts of people during the night of pain and lack of feeling. The words "Follow Me," like a key, opens up new horizons. One does not embark on this venture alone. Bonds are not broken. The brothers become more so. They still share the bitter experience of earning a living, but now they are not seeking for themselves but giving to others. The sea, symbol of everything that cannot be controlled, is there with the familiar and calm movement of the waters that break on the shore and say, "Go." Jesus, a man among so many, is the God who approaches the shores of the sea, a God who walks into the life of human beings, a God who sees with human eyes, a God who speaks with new authority, saying "Follow Me." And those men who were fishermen at once left and followed Him. They leave for another sea, the sea of firm land, the sea of villages, the sea of the temple, the sea of the streets. They leave at the call of a gaze that beckons, a gaze capable of convincing them to leave everything, not just their boats, the sea, the nets, but even their father, their history, their affections, to the very origin of their being. Friends who at night entrusted themselves to the waves of the Sea of Galilee, leave their zone of safety for far away seas. It is an old friendship that leaves not knowing for where, but with hearts bearing the warmth of a voice and a look: "Follow Me."

## Oratio – Psalm 86 (85)

All the nations You have made shall come to bow before You, Lord,  
and give honor to Your name.

For You are great and do wondrous deeds;  
and You alone are God. Teach me, Lord, Your way that I may walk in Your truth,  
single-hearted and revering Your name.  
I will praise You with all my heart, glorify Your name forever, Lord my God.

## Contemplatio

Lord, my expectations are fulfilled in Your temple. You, the Living One, who continue to go to the shores of human life, that like a lake in the shape of a cithar silently marks the scanning of its hours, pass and see, call... I shall know You when You call me by name and I shall follow You like a wayfarer who picks up his walking stick to go to paths of friendship and of meeting, where the heart crosses into the Absolute of God, to be a living flame in the darkness of human desire, a warmth that spreads where the cold wind of evil destroys and diverts from the horizons of truth and beauty. I know that without You I shall catch nothing in the night of my solitude and delusion. My nets will rip when You tear me away from the bitter waters of my exertions and You will give me to myself, transformed with pardon, received and given with full hands. I shall then proclaim Your name to my brothers and sisters. Amen.

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### **Metanoia** \me-tə-'noi-ə \

Greek word in the New Testament translated as "change of mind" or "change of heart." It corresponds with the Old Testament word for repentance and the Latin *conversio*, turning or returning, from which derives the idea of *conversion*. *Turning* is key, assuming we have lost our way or gone off course.

🔊 Take Five Word of the Week: Metanoia <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-metanoia>

### CONTEXT

Community takes transformation. Being people of communion requires **metanoia** that results from encounter and dialogue.

—Sister Nicole Trahan, F.M.I.

Far from being a demand to feel lousy about our screw-ups, **metanoia** invites us to radically transform the way we perceive others, ourselves, and the world.

—David Anderson

**Metanoia** invites us to meet all situations, however unfair, with understanding and an empathetic heart.

—Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I.

### WHY IT MATTERS

The willingness to change is a crucial ingredient in a life of integrity. On the journey through the years, we will all be confused or misdirected and swerve off the path of truth. **Metanoia** is the much-needed spiritual course correction. Consider **metanoia** the vital summons to recalculate where we're headed and what needs to change for us to get there.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Jesus' call to conversion and repentance, does not aim first at outward works, but at the *conversion of the heart, interior conversion*. [H]owever, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures, and works of penance (1430).

### RELATED WORDS

Conversion | Penance | Contrition | Transformation

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### What does it mean to repent?

Repentance doesn't necessarily require falling on our knees and beating our breasts, though sometimes that may be the appropriate response—as it was for skeptical Thomas, when the resurrected Lord whom he'd doubted stood before him. Basically, to repent means to change course. That can mean movement if we've been standing still, or stopping if we've been in frantic motion. It can mean changing our minds or our hearts, our direction or our behavior.

The word has several important root meanings. The earliest is the Hebrew word *t'shuvah*: return. It's a crucial concept to prophets like Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah. Their fellow citizens have wandered far from God's ways, and it's time for them to return home. **Metanoia** is the New Testament Greek term that carries a similar meaning. John the Baptist first issues the call to change direction, signaled by Baptism. Jesus uses this term when he invites his listeners to change their dispositions—to turn their hearts and lives around—in response to his teaching. Repentance carries the additional meaning of expressing regret for past actions and attitudes—along with the expectation that real change is forthcoming. In addition, the word *conversion* means turning around, implying a reorientation of intentions and actions. In the sacrament of Reconciliation, we include the stipulation of "making reparation" for what we've done or failed to do that has caused harm.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <https://tinyurl.com/QCA-repent>

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

### FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE (JANUARY 25)

#### Take the next turn toward truth

The amazing thing about Saint Paul's conversion was that he went from persecutor of Christians to a devout Christian himself. The change in him was so incredible not everyone believed it at first. His turnaround was a complete about-face toward Jesus.

**READINGS:** Acts 22:3-16 or 9:1-22; Mark 16:15-18 (519 <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/012518.cfm>): "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

## **FAITH IN ACTION**

With God's help, you can bring about conversion in your own life. Start with a simple act of forgiveness.

## **REFLEXIÓN DE LA SEMANA**

### **FIESTA DE LA CONVERSIÓN DE SAN PABLO, APÓSTOL (25 ENERO)**

#### **Volvemos gente de justicia y de paz**

El proceso de arrepentimiento se describe en las escrituras cristianas con la palabra griega *metanoia*, que puede entenderse como "un cambio de corazón o de mente" o un replanteo de prioridades. Si bien la arpillera y las cenizas podrían ayudar a tomar conciencia sobre el punto, la verdadera acción de arrepentimiento sucede en los ámbitos más profundos del corazón y de la mente, cuando ponderas tus acciones, reconoces tus defectos, y resuelves actuar de otra manera en el futuro.

**LECTURAS:** Hechos 22:3-16; Marcos 16:15-18 (519 <https://bible.usccb.org/es/bible/lecturas/012524.cfm>): "Levántate, recibe el bautismo, reconoce que Jesús es el Señor y queda limpio de tus pecados."

#### **FE EN ACCIÓN**

Prepárate para un arrepentimiento sincero!

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