

## Lectio Divina of 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time - A (September 20,2020)

### **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**

**Opening Prayer:** Heavenly Father, Thank you for your generosity in giving us your Son Jesus the generous lover and giver of our life on earth and eternal life in heaven with you. He goes out continuously searching for us and offering us His infinite love through his words in the Holy Mass and the teaching of the church and through people and events although at times due to our limitations, we are unworthy and ignorant of his love. Continue to guide us as we are going to spend this moment for Lectio Divina so that we may be able to transform our lives and bear fruits in your kingdom.

**First Reading: A reading from the book of Prophet Isaiah 55:6-9** Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,* says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

### **The Word of the Lord/Thanks be to God**

**Commentary:** Isaiah appeals to the people of Israel who were exiles in Babylon to change their sinful behavior and call God while He is near. They were acting foolish as if they knew what God was thinking and planning. His knowledge and wisdom are far greater than our's. We will be at fault if we try to fit God into our mold - to make his plans and purposes conform to ours. Instead we must strive to fit into his plans

### **Responsorial Psalm (145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18) The Lord is near to all who call upon him.**

Every day will I bless you, and I will praise your name forever and ever.  
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.  
R. **The Lord is near to all who call upon him.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.  
The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.  
R. **The Lord is near to all who call upon him.**

The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works.  
The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.  
R. **The Lord is near to all who call upon him.**

**Second Reading: A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians 1: 20c-24, 27a**  
Brothers and sisters: Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.  
*For to me life is Christ, and death is gain.* If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful

labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better. Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit. Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

### **The Word of the Lord/Thanks be to God**

**Commentary:** Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome. Awaiting trial, he knew he could either be released or executed. However, he trusted Christ to work it out for his delivery. His prayer was that when he stood trial, he would speak courageously for Christ and not be timid and ashamed. Whether he lived or died, he wanted to exalt Christ. For Paul, to live meant to develop eternal values and tell others about Christ who alone could help them see life from an eternal perspective. Paul's whole purpose in life was to speak out boldly for Christ and to become like him. Thus Paul could confidently say that dying would even be better than living because in death he would be removed from worldly troubles and he would see Christ face to face.

### **Gospel Reading: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew 20:1-16a**

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.' So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.' When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.' He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

### **The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Commentary:** First of all, the parable of the workers in the vineyard is not about Rewards but about Salvation. It is about Salvation History. It is a strong teaching about *Grace*, God's generosity. Entrance into God's kingdom is by God's Grace alone. In the parable, God is the landowner, Vineyard is the kingdom and those hired at dawn are the Israelites to whom He first offered His covenant. Those hired later in the day are the Gentiles, the non-Israelites, who, until the coming of Christ, were strangers to the

covenants of promise. In the Lord's great generosity, the same wages, the same blessings promised to the first-called, the Israelites, will be paid to those called last, the rest of the nations. This provokes grumbling in today's parable. Doesn't the complaint of those first laborers sound like that of the older brother in Jesus' prodigal son parable ( Luke 15:29-30)? *God's ways, however, are far from our ways, as we hear in today's First Reading.*

And today's readings should caution us against the temptation to resent God's lavish mercy. Like the Gentiles, many will be allowed to enter the kingdom late, after having spent most of their days idling in sin. But even these can call upon Him and find Him near, as we sing in today's Psalm. We should rejoice that God has compassion on all whom He has created. This should console us, too, especially if we have loved ones who remain far from the vineyard. Our task is to continue laboring in His vineyard. As Paul says in today's Epistle, let us conduct ourselves worthily, struggling to bring all men and women to the praise of His name. Let us be broad in our mind and heart if they are closed and cold. Let us not entertain superiority complex because of our heritage or favored position as Catholic Christians. We should not begrudge those who turn to God in the last moments of life because in reality, no one deserves eternal life. It is purely a God's gift. Many people we don't expect to see in the kingdom will be there. The criminal who repented as he was dying (Luke 23:40-43) will be there along with the people who who have believed and served God for many years. Do we resent God's gracious acceptance of the despised, the outcast, and the sinners who have turned to him for forgiveness? Are we ever jealous of what God has given to another person? Instead, let us focus on God's gracious benefits to us and be thankful for what we have.

**Are you envious because I am generous?** Jesus calls us to be generous like him. Everywhere he went, he did good, touched people, changed them and made them better. Whether through a kind word, a powerful rebuke, a touch of his hand, a spoken word of healing, or through prayer, everywhere he went, he left in his path a wake of change. He calls us to be **generous** in every way as we go through life. Our call is to reach out and to provide a good word, a healing touch, an act of kindness. The world has never been the same since **Jesus**, and he intends that we too make this world a better place to live for everyone through our generosity, kindness, mercy, and compassion for everyone who come in our life.

**Concluding Prayer for the Bible Study and Lectio Divina:** Lord Jesus, Thank you for this evening and the time to be with our spiritual family. Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. May the things that you have revealed in our Bible study and the thoughts that we have shared in the Lectio Divina dwell in our hearts and stir us to action in the days to come. Help us to share your love with everyone that we encounter this week. May we lavish your abounding goodness upon our families, friends and colleagues. May we be your hands and feet to the needy and homeless, source of comfort and encouragement to the oppressed and the lonely. Give us serene and restful sleep. (Hail Mary/ Blessing)