

# Lectio Divina with Sunday's Gospel Reading

## 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 29, 2024

*Lectio Divina is Latin for "holy reading." It is an ancient Catholic practice of meditating on Scripture, through which we can hear God speaking to each of us.*

### **REFOCUS:**

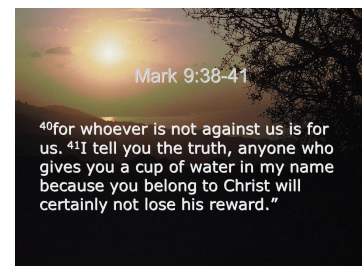
We often come into prayer distracted by many things. Take a moment to quiet your thoughts and open yourself to God. Pray to the Holy Spirit asking for grace to respond to His Word personally.

*Lord, I come before you offering all that I am and all that I hope to be.  
Transform my heart into the heart of a humble servant. Amen.*

### **READ:**

Read Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48 to yourself silently and slowly.

- *What one word stands out to you?*
- *What word or words in this passage comforted you?*
- *What word or words challenged you?*



### **REFLECT:**

Today's Old Testament reading and today's Gospel make the same point: that God surprises us by his generosity and not only gives natural gifts to all; but gives supernatural gifts to those we may consider "outsiders." In both cases the followers of Moses and of Jesus were surprised and even scandalized at his generosity!.

Jesus gives us the principle by which we are to judge peoples' deeds: "By their fruits you will know them." If the fruit is growth in genuine faith, hope and love of God then God is behind that work.

Immediately after Jesus gave his Apostles this big lesson, he gave them another lesson about hell. What he says about hell is more terrifying than the popular image of hell symbolized by fire and torture. Hell is worse than a fire pit or a torture chamber. As Dante said, the sign on hell's gate reads "Abandon all hope, you who enter here."

Sometimes we need to wake up to the horror of sin. Sin and sin alone is capable of sending you to hell. **Hell is real**, and going there for eternity is a real possibility. Therefore, we must do whatever it takes to avoid that frightful possibility. Are you motivated to do all that you can to avoid sin?

The hand, foot and eye in this teaching represent every situation in life that tempts us to sin. Reflect upon those things or persons in your life that have become an occasion of sin for you. Do not fool yourself into believing that you can handle the temptation. If you have some source of ongoing temptation in your life, you need to eliminate it. Like Christ himself, we must be merciful to all men, including ourselves, but **merciless** to our sins. If we refuse to repent and give them up, we will go with them to the eternal garbage dump!

*Journal answers to these questions to help you reflect on the passage:*

- *It's easy to fall into the trap of assessing on our own who is and is not worthy of God's grace and mercy. It's easy to think we know what's best to keep the world, the Church and our own lives in order. But the Spirit of God is free and falls on whomever God wills. Our task as*

*disciples is to point out the Spirit and get out of the way. Where and in whom can you notice the Spirit working in the world? How can you cooperate with that work?*

- *How do you understand Jesus' words, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off?"*
- *In what ways did today's reading affirm you? In what way did they challenge you? What can you do to respond to this challenge?*
- *How should you deal with those who disparage your faith?*
- *What sinful habits or behaviors do you need to remove from your life? When have you been the cause of someone else's sin?*

**RESPOND:**

Lord, You call all of your children to a life of holiness and perfection. Please help me to take your teachings seriously so as to eliminate all occasions of sin from my life. May I have the eyes to see these temptations and the courage to reject them with all my might. Amen.

- *Compose your own prayer to God. What do you want most to say to God?*

**REST:**

- *Sit in silence and listen. Simply be present with God.*

**REACT:**

- *Note how seriously the Lord speaks about sin and its effects. Sin is far more dangerous than physical death because it endangers not just our body but also our immortal soul. Jesus warns us not only about the horror of sin but also the danger of temptation. He reminds us to avoid those areas, places, people and things that lead us into sin. What excuses are you making for allowing sin to remain in your life? To be free from sin, find a confession time and attend. The benefits are out of this world!!*
- *Servant of God Don Dolindo Ruotolo is known for his famous Surrender Novena and for being a friend of St. Padre Pio's. Here are some of the false accusations leveled against Servant of God Don Dolindo Ruotolo by Church authorities between 1907 and 1937. They said he was possessed by a demon. That he was mentally unbalanced. That he denied hell and believed he was Jesus. That he was a heretic and was disrespectful to the Pope. He was*

*called to the Vatican often and forced to undergo trial after trial, where he faced ludicrous, illogical, and unreasonable testimony against him. Never once did Don Dolindo waver from his steadfast devotion to the Church. The accusations about him were false, but it took thirty years to dispel them. The Vatican tribunal dropped the charges against him and found him innocent. Click the link to pray his famous Surrender Novena: [Surrender Novena](#)*

- *Looking for a Powerful Group or Individual Study? If you need a spiritual study that will absolutely ignite your heart and inspire your spiritual life, check out these FIVE incredible studies focused on prayer & the spiritual life that don't just teach...they transform! Click this link to check them out: [Studies on the Spiritual Life](#)*
- *Catholics in the U.S. don't vote as a bloc, and this election cycle there has been considerable debate about whom Catholics should vote for. Even Pope Francis has weighed in, quipping that Americans in November must choose "the lesser evil". The Catholic Church has long supported voting as part of participation in public life — as a contribution to a nation's common good and to the flourishing of its people. What the Church does not do is dictate to Catholics whom exactly they should vote for or exactly which policies to support. However, Catholics have been given numerous guiding principles for making decisions about voting. Click this link to read about these principles before you vote: [Guiding Voting Principles](#)*
- *What is this journey in between the event we call "birth" and the one we call "death"? Is the journey taking you somewhere, or are you leading yourself to some kind of destination— a destination that could extend beyond your last breath? What do you want from your life during the in between? This series called "The Search" offers some answers to what we are searching for in life. It is a great series to watch with someone thinking about becoming Catholic. Click this link on Formed to begin The Search: [The Search](#)*

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