

## Suggested biblical verses for *lectio divina*.

(Verses from the New Testament are italicized, i.e. *John 7:37*.)

Before beginning *lectio divina*, remember that God is present in His word. Ask for the grace to hear God speaking to you as you ponder the words of sacred scripture. Seek/ask to encounter the heart of God which is revealed in His word. Listen with the ear of your heart as God speaks to your deepest self.

### Hope and Trust in God

Jeremiah 29: 11-14 For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—says the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope. When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me—says the LORD—and I will change your lot; I will gather you together from all the nations and all the places to which I have banished you and bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you.

Deuteronomy 31:8 It is the LORD who goes before you; he will be with you and will never fail you or forsake you. So do not fear or be dismayed.”

Psalms 23:1-4 The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures he makes me lie down; to still waters he leads me; he restores my soul. He guides me along right paths for the sake of his name. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.

Psalms 27:1-5 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? The LORD is my life’s refuge; of whom should I be afraid? When evildoers come at me to devour my flesh, These my enemies and foes themselves stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart does not fear; Though war be waged against me, even then do I trust. One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek: To dwell in the LORD’s house all the days of my life, To gaze on the LORD’s beauty, to visit his temple. For God will hide me in his shelter in time of trouble, He will conceal me in the cover of his tent; and set me high upon a rock.

Psalms 34:5-10 I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to him and be radiant, and your faces may not blush for shame. This poor one cried out and the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he saves them. Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the stalwart one who takes refuge in him.

Psalms 37:3-5 Trust in the LORD and do good that you may dwell in the land and live secure. Find your delight in the LORD who will give you the desire of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will act.

Psalms 139:13-17 ”You formed my inmost being ; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me. Wonderful are your works ! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. Your eyes foresaw my actions; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be. How precious to me are your designs, O God, how vast the sum of them.

*John 7:37-39* On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: ‘Rivers of living water will flow

from within him.” He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

*John 15:5* I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

### **Anxiety and Worry**

*Luke 12:22-32* He said to [his] disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds! Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your lifespan? If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? As for you, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore. All the nations of the world seek for these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides. Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.

*Mark 1:40-42* A leper came to him [and kneeling down] begged him and said, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean.” The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean.

*Matthew 11:28-30* “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

*2 Corinthians 12:9* My grace is sufficient for you, for [my] power is made perfect in weakness.

*Psalms 103:1-3* Bless the LORD, my soul; all my being, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, my soul; and do not forget all his gifts, Who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills.

### **Addiction**

*Romans 7:19-25* For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want. Now if [I] do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. So, then, I discover the principle that when I want to do right, evil is at hand. For I take delight in the law of God, in my inner self, but I see in my members another principle at war with the law of my mind, taking me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with my mind, serve the law of God but, with my flesh, the law of sin.

*2 Corinthians 12:9* The Lord says, “My grace is sufficient unto you, for power is made perfect in weakness.”

### **Belief/Unbelief**

*Mark 9:17-29* “Teacher, I have brought to you my son possessed by a mute spirit. Wherever it seizes him, it

throws him down; he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they were unable to do so.” Jesus said to them in reply, “O faithless generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I endure you? Bring him to me.” They brought the boy to him. And when he saw him, the spirit immediately threw the boy into convulsions. As he fell to the ground, he began to roll around and foam at the mouth. Then he questioned his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” He replied, “Since childhood. It has often thrown him into fire and into water to kill him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Jesus said to him, “‘If you can!’ Everything is possible to one who has faith.” Then the boy’s father cried out, “I do believe, help my unbelief!” Jesus, on seeing a crowd rapidly gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit and said to it, “Mute and deaf spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter him again!” Shouting and throwing the boy into convulsions, it came out. He became like a corpse, which caused many to say, “He is dead!” But Jesus took him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up. When he entered the house, his disciples asked him in private, “Why could we not drive it out?” He said to them, “This kind can only come out through prayer.”

*Hebrews 11:1-3* Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Because of it the ancients were well attested. By faith we understand that the universe was ordered by the word of God, so that what is visible came into being through the invisible. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

### **Despair**

*Mark 4: 35-41* (Jesus sleeps while the storm rages.) On that day, as evening drew on, he said to them, “Let us cross to the other side.” Leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” They were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?”

*Mark 15:33-34* At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*”<sup>\*</sup> which is translated, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Psalms 22:1-24 O God . . . my God! Why did you dump me miles from nowhere?

Doubled up with pain, I call to God all the day long. No answer. Nothing.

I keep at it all night, tossing and turning.

And you! Are you indifferent, above it all, leaning back on the cushions of Israel’s praise?

We know you were there for our parents: they cried for your help and you gave it; they trusted and lived a good life.

And here I am, a nothing—an earthworm, something to step on, to squash.

Everyone pokes fun at me; they make faces at me, they shake their heads:

“Let’s see how GOD handles this one; since God likes him so much, let *him* help him!”

And to think you were midwife at my birth, setting me at my mother’s breasts!

When I left the womb you cradled me; since the moment of birth you’ve been my God.

Then you moved far away and trouble moved in next door. I need a neighbor.

Herds of bulls come at me, the raging bulls stampede, Horns lowered, nostrils flaring,  
like a herd of buffalo on the move.

I'm a bucket kicked over and spilled, every joint in my body has been pulled apart.

My heart is a blob of melted wax in my gut. I'm dry as a bone, my tongue black and swollen.

They have laid me out for burial in the dirt.

Now packs of wild dogs come at me; thugs gang up on me. They pin me down hand and foot,  
and lock me in a cage—a bag of bones in a cage, stared at by every passerby.

They take my wallet and the shirt off my back, and then throw dice for my clothes.

You, GOD—don't put off my rescue! Hurry and help me! Don't let them cut my throat;  
don't let those mongrels devour me.

If you don't show up soon, I'm done for—gored by the bulls, meat for the lions.

Here's the story I'll tell my friends when they come to worship, and punctuate it with Hallelujahs:

Shout Hallelujah, you God-worshippers; give glory, you sons of Jacob; adore him, you daughters of Israel.

He has never let you down, never looked the other way when you were being kicked around.

He has never wandered off to do his own thing; he has been right there, listening. (*from The Message*  
a Devotional Bible, translated by Eugene Peterson, Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by E. H Peterson)

Psalms 130 "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord."

### **Fear:**

*John 20:19-22* "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were out of fear, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit."

*Isaiah 43:1-2* Thus says the LORD, who created and formed you,: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, nor will flames consume you. You will walk through fire and not be burned.

*Psalms 70:2* Rescue me, God! Come quickly to help me, Lord!

(O God! Come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me.)

*Matthew 14:22-33* (Jesus rescues the apostles from the stormy sea) Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once [Jesus] spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you

on the water.” He said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how [strong] the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, “Truly, you are the Son of God.”

*Mark 5: 21-43* (Fear is useless; what is needed is faith.) There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, “If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.” Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?” But his disciples said to him, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”

*Lk 10:38-42* (Martha, you are anxious about so many things.) As they continued their journey, he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.<sup>40</sup> Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me. The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”

## **Forgiveness**

Psalm 51:12 Create a clean heart within me, O God, renew within me a steadfast spirit.

*Matthew 18:21-22* Then Peter approaching asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.

## **Losing a Loved One**

*Luke 22:39-46* (Not my will, but yours be done.) Jesus went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, “Pray that you may not undergo the test.” After withdrawing about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done.”

*John 14:1-3* “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.”

**Love:**

*1 Corinthians 13:4-13* Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing.... At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*Hebrews 8:10-12* But this is the covenant I will establish with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his fellow citizen and kinsman, saying, 'Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from least to greatest. For I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sins no more.'

**Thanksgiving/gratitude**

*Psalm 116:1-9* I love the LORD, who listened to my voice in supplication, who turned an ear to me on the day I called. was caught by the cords of death; the snares of Sheol had seized me; I felt agony and dread. Then I called on the name of the LORD, "O LORD, save my life!" Gracious is the LORD and righteous; yes, our God is merciful. The LORD protects the simple; I was helpless, but he saved me. Return, my soul, to your rest; the LORD has been very good to you. For my soul has been freed from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

**Wisdom**

*Proverbs 4:7-9* The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom; whatever else you get, get understanding. Extol her, and she will exalt you; she will bring you honors if you embrace her; She will put on your head a graceful diadem; a glorious crown will she bestow on you."