

# LECTIO DIVINA

*of the Family of the Rogate*

“The Laborers in the Vineyard  
and the Justice of Grace:  
The Generosity of the Lord  
of the Harvest”



## Invocatory Hymn to the Holy Spirit / Reading: Mt 20:1–16a

- a. Receive the Word in silence.
- b. Re read the passage personally.
- c. Share a word or phrase that strikes the heart.
- d. Connect this text with other passages of Sacred Scripture.
- e. Prayerful refrain (as chosen)

Understanding the meaning of the text

### LECTIO – WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

#### *Listening to the Word in its literal and salvation historical meaning*

**GUIDE:** We place ourselves in the presence of the Lord with hearts overflowing in gratitude, ready to immerse ourselves in one of the most beautiful and challenging teachings on the mystery of the Kingdom. In the Gospel of Matthew (20:1–16a), we stand before the parable of the laborers in the vineyard—a theological jewel that uproots us from our human logic of merit and reward. Throughout this Lectio Divina, Jesus invites us to contemplate the mystery of the call, which is pure initiative of the Father’s love. May this prayerful journey purify our motivations and enkindle within us the spirit of the Rogate, so that we may recognize our need for His grace and become generous and joyful laborers in His vast harvest.

**L1:** Matthew 20:1–16a opens with a direct comparison describing the dynamic of divine action: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder” (ἄνθρωπος οἰκοδεσπότη / anthrōpō oikodespotē) who goes out at dawn to hire laborers (ἐργάτας / ergatas) for his vineyard (v. 1). The term oikodespotēs signifies not merely a landowner but the lord of a household who cares for its administration and sustenance. Agreeing with the first laborers for a denarius—a just and necessary wage for a family’s daily support at the time—he sends them into his vineyard, establishing a covenant grounded in the justice of the first hour.

**L2:** The narrative gains depth as the owner goes out again at nine in the morning, at noon, at three, and at five in the afternoon, finding other men standing idle in the marketplace. His question to those of the last hour—“Why do you stand here idle all day?”—reveals the social drama of those excluded from the labor market. Their reply, “Because no one has hired us,” exposes the vulnerability of day laborers. The master, moved by a logic that surpasses mere economic productivity, commands them: “You also go into the vineyard” (ὑπάγετε καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα / Hypagete kai hymeis eis ton ampelōna), promising to give them what is just.

**L3:** When evening comes, the moment of reckoning introduces the great eschatological turning point of the parable. The master orders his steward to pay the laborers, beginning with the last and ending with the first (v. 8). When those of the final hour receive a denarius each, the first expect to receive more. Yet, receiving the same amount, they begin to murmur (ἐγόγγυζον / egongyzon) against the householder (v. 11). This murmuring evokes the historical attitude of Israel in the desert and reveals a deep interior resistance to accepting that divine goodness can reach all equally, regardless of time or effort.

**L4:** In the concluding dialogue (vv. 13–16a), the master addresses one of them as “Friend” (ἑταῖρε / hetaire) and shows that he has committed no injustice, having honored the original agreement. The final rebuke strikes at the heart of the teaching: “Are you envious because I am good?”—literally, “Is your eye evil because I am good?” (ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός ἐστίν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαθός εἰμι / ē ho ophthalmos sou ponēros estin hoti egō agathos eimi). The “evil eye” is a Semitic expression indicating envy and jealousy. The text concludes with the solemn evangelical reversal: the last will be first, and the first last, confirming that in the logic of the Kingdom, grace precedes and crowns every human effort.

## **MEDITATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY TO US?**

### *Pastoral and Rogationist Foundation*

**GUIDE:** The question posed by the master of the vineyard to those who murmur resounds powerfully within our ecclesial and pastoral journey. We are placed before the mirror of our own spiritual attitudes, which so often fall into the temptation of demanding from God privileges or recognition based on the years we have dedicated to the Church. When we look with suspicion or jealousy upon brothers and sisters who arrive later to the faith, we reveal that we have not yet understood the gratuity of the Kingdom. Laboring in the harvest is not a burden for us to lament, but a blessed privilege; the toil of the day and the heat endured in service to the Gospel must be lived with the joy of those who know they have already been immeasurably rewarded by the original call.

**L1:** The Rogationist Charism finds in this pericope a luminous foundation for understanding the nature of the evangelical laborer. To pray for vocations, in obedience to the mandate of the Rogate, requires us to contemplate this God who continually goes out in search of workers. The gaze of Jesus cannot bear to see human beings idle in the marketplace of life, without purpose and without meaning. To implore laborers for the harvest is to ask the Father for men and women who possess this same impulse to go out toward the marginalized—toward those whom the world and its structures have discarded—in order to restore them to the dignity of working in the Kingdom. Let us pray for shepherds who rejoice in the salvation of their brothers and sisters without envy, but with the joy of seeing the banquet of grace ever more abundant.

**L2:** Between the lines of this parable, we are also invited to reevaluate our methods of vocational promotion. Many times we limit our appeals to traditional environments, forgetting that the Lord

continues to pass through the marketplaces of the world—even in the most improbable hours of history. An authentic “culture of the Rogate” (or vocational culture) urges us to widen the horizons of our communities so as to listen to and welcome late vocations, wounded young people, and those who believe it is now too late to consecrate themselves to God. The logic of the leaven and the vineyard assures us that the Lord of the Harvest is sovereign and generous, capable of making suitable and sanctifying the response of faith of any laborer who makes himself available to work in His field, whatever the hour of his “yes.”

### **Meditation Hymn (as chosen)**

In the silence of prayer, let us allow ourselves to be questioned by the Word, and let us welcome these reflections in truth, so that the light of Christ may illumine and guide our path.

Joy for the brother who arrives: How do we react when new people or young members take on roles of leadership within our community, parish, or movement? Do we sincerely rejoice at their arrival, or does some form of resistance arise within us?

The gaze of the Rogate upon today’s marketplaces: Who are the people who today find themselves “idle” and abandoned in the marketplaces of our society because no one has welcomed or evangelized them? In what way can our vocational prayer be translated into concrete gestures that go out to meet them?

The gratuity of our “yes”: Do we live our community service as a grateful response of love, or do we sometimes feel weary and victimized by perceived injustices, expecting applause or privileges for the time we dedicate to the Church?

### **SHARING THE WORD**

**GUIDE:** To welcome this “astonishing justice” of grace challenges us to share our experiences with humility.

*A moment of free sharing follows.*

### **ORATIO – WHAT DO WE SAY TO GOD?**

*Responding to the Word that has visited us*

**GUIDE:** Recognizing the immensity of Your goodness, which surpasses all our human calculations, we draw near to You, God of Grace, and lift up our sincere prayer, responding to You—who question and invite us—with this supplication of gratitude and intercession:

**ALL:** Lord of the harvest and Father of goodness, You came out to meet us when we were without direction, and out of pure love You called us to labor in Your vineyard. Remove from our sight all envy and selfishness, and free us from the temptation to measure Your love by our own merits.

Teach us to rejoice in Your infinite generosity, which welcomes with equal affection both the first and the last. Grant us the grace to endure the toil of the day with a joyful heart, knowing that serving Your Kingdom is our greatest reward.

Hear, O Lord, the cry of our ardent Rogate: send holy laborers into Your vast harvest— workers who run toward the marketplaces of this world and tenderly call those who feel forgotten. May our community reflect the beauty of Your Compassionate Heart, where grace is the only law and Your love the wage of all. Keep us forever in the work of Your vineyard. Amen.

*Vocational hymn – chosen freely*

## **CONTEMPLATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD DO WITHIN US?**

*Adoring silence; welcoming the mystery. A soft musical background may accompany this moment.*

**LEADER:** In the silence that now becomes welcome and rest in the Spirit, let us allow the sovereign goodness of God to bring peace to our hearts.

Contemplate the Lord who comes out to seek you: Imagine the gaze of the Master of the house resting upon you in the marketplace of life, calling you by name and placing you in His vineyard. Feel the profound dignity and sheer gratuity of this vocational call.

Contemplate the hands that give the wages: Fix your attention on the generosity of the Lord of the harvest as He grants the workers of the last hour the sustenance they needed. Adore the mystery of a God whose justice is synonymous with mercy.

Be silent before the sovereignty of Love: Let silence dismantle every claim of merit or superiority. Rest in the certainty of being loved not for what you do, but because the Lord is infinitely good.

## **ACTIO – HOW DOES THE WORD SEND US INTO LIFE?**

*The Word becomes action; the Gospel becomes choice.*

**LEADER:** So that the Gospel we have heard may become flesh within the Rogationist horizon, we open ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit, ready to translate into life whatever He inspires in our freedom.

Each person personally becomes aware of the fruits of the Lectio.

## **CONCLUSION OF THE LECTIO DIVINA**

**LEADER:** As we conclude this journey of prayer and listening, we go forth strengthened by the certainty that God's call is a permanent gift and His generosity knows no limits. Motivated by the urgency to share this grace, we prepare to return to our daily realities, carrying with us the dynamism of our vocational commitment.

Let us now turn our trusting gaze to She who responded perfectly to the Creator's plan. Let us pray:

**ALL:** O Mary, humble Servant and Mother of the Family of the Rogate, who welcomed the Father's call with total detachment and became a faithful worker of salvation, to You we entrust our lives. Teach us to serve in the vineyard of Your Son without ever seeking human rewards, but rejoicing solely in the gratuity of His love. Look with compassion upon the marketplaces of today's world, filled with sons and daughters longing for meaning in their lives. Intercede with the Lord of the harvest, that He may send many workers capable of proclaiming the Gospel with generosity and caring for every life with the same affection with which You cared for Jesus. Amen.

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