

LECTIO DIVINA

of the Family of the Rogate

“Missionary-Disciples:
Witnesses of the Lord in the midst of the harvest.”



*“Do not be afraid of those
who kill the body.” (Mt 10:28)*

(The biblical text and its corresponding meditation may be read individually beforehand.)

1. LECTIO – WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

(Listening to the Word in its literal and salvific-historical sense.)

Leader: Today's *Lectio Divina* invites us to enter the heart of Matthew's "Missionary Discourse" (10:26–33), a spiritual terrain where Jesus does not promise the absence of storms, but assures us of His unfailing presence in the midst of them. As we open the Scriptures, we are called to lay down our daily fears and confront them with the liberating truth of the Gospel, which reminds us of the immense value we hold before the Father. May this prayerful reading be not merely an intellectual exercise, but an intimate encounter with the God of Providence—He who transforms human fear into evangelical boldness, and our silence into courageous proclamation from the rooftops of our lives.

1. Hymn (*invocation of the Holy Spirit*)
2. Reading: Mt 10:26–33
 - Welcome the Word in silence
 - Re-read personally
 - Share a word or phrase that stands out
 - Relate this passage to other texts of Scripture
 - Refrain (*chosen freely*)
3. Understanding the meaning of the text

Reader 1:

This passage stands at the center of Matthew's "Missionary Discourse," where Jesus prepares His apostles for the challenges of mission and the nearness of persecution. In the first verses (vv. 26–27), the Lord summons His disciples to *parrhesia*—evangelical boldness—assuring them that the world's opposition is merely temporal, while the truth of God will inevitably triumph in the eschatological plan. What was taught in intimacy and quiet ("in darkness") must now be proclaimed openly and without reserve ("from the housetops"), unmasking the hypocrisy of persecutors and manifesting the light of the Kingdom to all humanity.

Reader 2:

Then (v. 28), Jesus establishes the proper scale of fear through a clear biblical anthropology that distinguishes the body (*sōma*), the earthly and biological dimension, from the soul (*psychē*), the eternal dimension of the human person. The Gospel warns that the power of worldly oppressors is strictly limited, for they can destroy only the flesh. True discernment lies in directing our fear—understood here as holy reverence—toward God, the One who holds absolute sovereignty over eternity. We are reminded that it is better to lose physical life in this world than to compromise eternal communion with the Creator.

Reader 3:

To ground the disciples' confidence in the face of such radical demands, the text turns to a beautiful theological argument rooted in Divine Providence (vv. 29–31). By invoking the image of the sparrow—the cheapest and most insignificant bird in the marketplace of ancient Judea—Jesus demonstrates that not even a creature of such minimal commercial value falls to the ground without the Father's consent. By realistically affirming that even the hairs of our head are counted, the Lord reveals a God who loves us with intimate, meticulous, and personal attention, assuring us that our worth surpasses infinitely that of any other created reality.

Reader 4:

Finally (vv. 32–33), the pericope culminates in a solemn pact of reciprocal fidelity, bearing profound implications for both the present life and the life to come. Jesus establishes a parallel between historical witness on earth and definitive judgment in heaven: whoever has the courage to profess his faith publicly before others will have Christ Himself as advocate and intercessor before the Father. Conversely, denial—whether through cowardice, human respect, or convenience—results in the disciple's self-exclusion, for he rejects on earth the communion that the Lord desires to confirm for him in eternity.

2. MEDITATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY TO US?

(Pastoral and Rogationist grounding.)

Leader: As we meditate on this Word, the Lord invites us to confront, in a pastoral manner, the daily fears that paralyze our evangelizing mission and suffocate our vocational “yes.” In our community and parish life, the fear of rejection, of others' judgment, and of the subtle forms of persecution present in a secularized world often becomes an obstacle to the explicit proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus pulls us out of this apathy by reminding us that our fragility is safeguarded by the Father's meticulous care. He summons us to leave the comfortable enclosure of our churches and to proclaim His truth “from the housetops,” spending our lives with evangelical boldness (*parrhesia*) in the pastoral service and fraternal care of our brothers and sisters.

Reader 1:

This certainty of God's provident love—He who counts even the hairs of our head and tenderly cares for the little sparrows—is profoundly linked to the heart of the Rogationist Charism. Before the multitudes who today find themselves weary and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd, the disciple who meditates on this text understands that the greatest fruit of his trust in the Father is the fulfillment of the mandate of the *Rogate*: to pray unceasingly to the Lord of the harvest that He may send laborers—men and women—into His vineyard. Intimacy with the Compassionate Heart of Jesus frees us from fear and leads us to embrace prayer and vocational ministry as an urgent response to the spiritual misery and abandonment of humanity.

Reader 2:

Finally, this passage challenges our own fidelity and the manner in which we live our vocation as laborers in the Lord's harvest. To declare oneself for Jesus before others requires the radical commitment to be an authentic sign of His compassion and charity, especially toward the poor, the marginalized, and the abandoned—the privileged recipients of the Rogationist gaze. May this meditation transform our fear into trusting supplication and our selfishness into generous availability, so that, conformed to the Heart of Christ, we may become courageous witnesses of His Providence in the world, generating new vocational responses through the testimony of our own lives.

2.1. SHARING THE WORD

Leader: After welcoming the Word in silence, we are invited to share, as a community, the echoes that the Holy Spirit has kindled within us. By opening our hearts—speaking of the lights received, the fears overcome, and the vocational appeals awakened—we enrich one another and strengthen ourselves for the mission. May this fraternal and safe space be an opportunity for us to grow together in fidelity to the Heart of Jesus.

1. **Overcoming fear in evangelization:** Jesus repeats several times in the text, “*Do not be afraid.*” What are the greatest fears or forms of “human respect” that today hinder our pastoral action in the community and prevent us from proclaiming the Gospel—and the *Rogate*—with greater boldness (“from the housetops”) in our daily environments?
2. **Trust in the Father and the vocational cause:** Looking at the image of the sparrows and the hairs counted, how can the certainty of Divine Providence strengthen our response to the mandate of the *Rogate* (praying for vocations)? Do we feel truly co-responsible for praying for and fostering new laborers for the harvest, trusting that God Himself cares for His Church?
3. **Rogationist witness and compassion:** Declaring oneself for Jesus before others demands coherence of life. In what concrete ways can our group and our community translate this “standing for Christ” into gestures of compassion and care for the poorest and most abandoned—the privileged recipients of the Rogationist gaze—revealing to them that they are worth far more than sparrows in the eyes of the Father?

3. ORATIO – WHAT DO WE SAY TO GOD?

(Responding to the Word that has visited us.)

Leader: United to the Heart of Jesus, who frees us from fear and calls us to mission, let us lift up to God our response of love, imploring the courage to bear witness to His Providence and to live faithfully the mandate of the *Rogate*:

Side A:

Lord Jesus, Compassionate and Missionary Heart of the Father, we praise and bless You, for Your Word delivers us from fear and fills us with holy boldness. Before Your promise that we are guarded by a Divine Providence that counts even the hairs of our head, we place into Your hands our fragilities, our human fears, and our lack of courage. Forgive the times we remained silent out of convenience, and grant us the grace to proclaim Your Kingdom “from the housetops” of our daily life, bearing firm witness to Your love before the world.

Side B:

Inflame our hearts with the fire of the *Rogate*. As we contemplate today’s multitudes—so often weary and downcast like sheep without a shepherd—we desire to respond to Your appeal with unceasing prayer for vocations. Make us courageous laborers in Your harvest, attentive and compassionate toward the smallest and most abandoned, who are so precious in Your sight. May our life be a public declaration of love for You, so that one day, in eternity, we may praise and glorify You forever. Amen.

Vocational hymn of choice

4. CONTEMPLATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD DO WITHIN US?

(Prayerful silence; welcoming the mystery. Soft instrumental music may accompany this moment.)

Leader: Let us now quiet our words and thoughts, entering into the loving contemplation of a God who knows us and sustains us in the palm of His hand. Let us allow ourselves to be enveloped by the compassionate gaze of Jesus, permitting His peace to heal our fears and strengthen our vocational response.

- **Contemplate the Father’s meticulous gaze:** Imagine God caring for the smallest realities of creation—like the sparrows—and touching your own life with a love so detailed that He knows even the hairs of your head. Rest in this absolute Providence.
- **Contemplate the fearless Heart of Jesus:** Fix your inner gaze on Christ, who faces misunderstanding and the cross with total trust in the Father. Allow His courage and His desire to send laborers into the harvest to pass into your own heart.
- **Contemplate your place in the world:** See yourself in your environment of life and mission—no longer paralyzed by fear or human respect, but transformed into a serene, free, and courageous witness of the Lord’s tenderness and compassion.

5. ACTIO – HOW DOES THE WORD MOVE US INTO LIFE?

(The Word becomes action; the Gospel becomes choice.)

Leader: The Word of God completes its cycle when it becomes life and shapes our concrete decisions. After listening to, meditating on, and contemplating the mystery of God’s provident

love that conquers our fears, we are moved by the Holy Spirit to embrace practical commitments that bear witness to the Kingdom and animate the Rogationist charism in our daily lives.

- **Courageous proclamation in simplicity (Overcoming fear):** Identify one environment in your routine—family, workplace, or digital space—where you often remain silent about your faith out of human respect. Make the resolution this week to offer a clear and serene witness to Christ in that setting, “proclaiming from the housetops” through a word of hope or an ethical stance.
- **Concrete commitment to the Rogate (Vocational cause):** Embrace the mission of praying daily and intentionally for priestly and religious vocations, especially during the most tiring moments of your day. You may also share a message, video, or vocational prayer with a young person in your circle, encouraging them to listen to the voice of God.
- **Pastoral care for the “little ones” (Rogationist compassion):** Seek out someone this week who feels invisible, abandoned, or “without worth”—a sick person, an isolated elderly person, or someone in a vulnerable situation. Offer them your time, your listening, and your affection, becoming for them a visible channel of Divine Providence that reminds them they are “worth far more than many sparrows.”

CONCLUSION OF THE LECTIO DIVINA

Leader: Strengthened by the Word and renewed in the charism of the *Rogate*, we leave this encounter with hearts freed from fear and ready for mission. May the certainty of Divine Providence guide our steps and make of us faithful, bold, and compassionate laborers in the Lord’s harvest. With Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of Vocations, let us pray:

All:

O Mary, Virgin of the *Rogate* and Queen of the Apostles, who welcomed the Father’s plan without fear and treasured His Word in your heart, to you we entrust our life and our vocation.

You who accompanied the first disciples in their mission, teach us to proclaim the wonders of God “from the housetops” of our own history, with the same courage and fidelity of your fiat.

Look with tenderness upon the harvest of your Son and intercede that the Lord may send holy and generous laborers to His Church. Mother of Providence, sustain us in our daily witness and keep us always within the Compassionate Heart of Jesus. Amen.

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