

# CONTENTS

Preface . . . . .	5
How to Use This Book . . . . .	5
January . . . . .	9
February . . . . .	40
March . . . . .	70
April . . . . .	102
May . . . . .	132
June . . . . .	164
July . . . . .	195
August . . . . .	226
September . . . . .	257
October . . . . .	287
November . . . . .	318
December . . . . .	349
Index of Scripture Readings . . . . .	381
Subject Index . . . . .	383

**“Martha . . . there is need of only one thing”**

**T**HE Church (you and I) is very much criticized nowadays because of her alleged lack of social concern. We read a great deal about “horizontal Christianity.” It is Christianity practiced mainly or only in concern and love for the suffering neighbor. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine . . .” (Matthew 25:40) makes headlines. It is said that “prayer of engagement” should have priority over “prayer of withdrawal.”

Is time for withdrawal in silent meditative prayer a waste of time? One thing is sure: concern and love for others or just doing one’s duty usually does not last, unless it is boosted regularly by reflection in prayer. A life of duty and concern for others is not always rewarding. It easily becomes narrowminded and limiting itself to the concern of relatives, friends, and nice people only. But that is not Christianity. Jesus says: “And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what about that is so extraordinary? Even the pagans do as much” (Matthew 5:47).

Genuine Christian concern needs more motivation than just vague emotions. A Christian finds it in periods of withdrawal. For a large part of your prayerful meditation should consist of reflection and listening, as was true of Martha’s sister.

SCRIPTURE READING —

**In the course of their journey, [Jesus] came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what He was saying.**

**But Martha was distracted by her many tasks. So she came to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me.” The Lord answered her: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things, but there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken away from her.”** (Luke 10:38-42)

**“He spent the entire night in prayer to God”**

**R**UNNING off at the mouth”—talking too much—is one of the favorite pastimes of quite a few people. Do these fast-talking busybodies really communicate? They do everything but listen! Yet communication consists of both speaking and listening. Nor must speaking necessarily be done by rattling off many words. It can be carried on very effectively without verbal expression.

Apply this to your encounter with God, Who is in you and around you. Before meditation, quiet down first! Have patience with yourself. Apply some of the techniques described in “How to Use This Book.” In complete silence are you growing in awareness of God’s presence to you?

Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, spending the night in communion with God. He prayed not just to bolster His morale, but because He found communication with His Father precious and rewarding in itself. And we can hardly visualize Jesus sitting under a tree reading a prayerbook by candlelight. Jesus was an Easterner. We do not know whether He sat in the lotus-position, nor whether He was acquainted with the meditation practices of India. In Jesus’ time these techniques were already 3,000 years old, and there was cultural exchange. Whatever the case may have been, we can be sure that for the most part Jesus’ prayer consisted of listening, pure awareness of His Father’s presence.

Your meditation should grow in likeness of Jesus’ meditative prayer.

SCRIPTURE READING —

**During this period of time, He went onto the mountain to pray, and He spent the entire night in prayer to God. Then, when it was daylight, He summoned His disciples and chose twelve of them, whom He designated as Apostles: Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Luke 6:12-16)**

**“Lazarus, come out!”**

**A**LL of us want to make the best of our life. We love life, but we experience daily how brittle it is. There are people who try to live without restraints. They follow the epicurean philosophy of the pagan Romans: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die.” But we could also look at life in the following way: In order to transcend life, I must die to my old, immature, egotistic self. If I want to become a mature and grown-up person, I must leave my youth behind me. Does this make sense? Is it meaningful to be generous and dedicated to ideals, to “mature in Christ,” as the Bible puts it, if everything collapses with death anyway?

John relates Jesus’ miracles as “signs,” earthly realities that indicate a full reality to come. Inspired by God, what does John wish to indicate by relating this miracle of Jesus? We notice that the evangelist places the Lazarus story just before the Passion narrative. Significantly, he remarks: “From that day on they plotted to kill Jesus!” (John 11:53). This passage teaches: Jesus, calling Himself the Resurrection and the Life, will die to inaugurate the resurrection of human beings. “As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so does the Son give life to anyone He chooses” (John 5:21). John suggests that you should put your faith in Jesus as many Jews did when they witnessed the raising of Lazarus.

SCRIPTURE READING —

Deeply moved, Jesus came to the tomb [of Lazarus]. It was a cave, with a stone closing up the entrance. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to Him, “Lord, by now there will be a stench, for he has been dead for four days.”

Jesus replied, “Did I not tell you that if you have faith you will see the glory of God?” And so they removed the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said,

“Father, I thank You for hearing Me.  
I know that You always hear Me,  
but I have said this  
for the sake of the people standing here,  
so that they may believe  
that it was You Who sent Me.”

When He had said this, He cried out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with linen bands, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Then Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go free.”

(John 11:38-44)

**“He remained . . . [in the desert] for forty days”**

SEEING New York from the Empire State Building gives a view that the person in the street cannot have. The astronauts saw the earth and life on it from a distance. This has changed them. Many of them have admitted that they experienced a new sense of God. We can only surmise their experience by looking at their pictures of that bluish ball silently circling around in an unfriendly universe. The POWs in Vietnam had a similar experience. That time of isolation did something to them.

In the Catholic tradition, we have our retreat houses, parish missions, and annual Lenten observance. It is the idea of getting off “the merry-go-round” for a while and standing away from life in order to take a realistic look at ourselves. Through the mass media, modern life is constantly imposing its neon-light values on all of us. These values are glittering and tempting.

In this passage, we read about the test (temptations), Satan (the devil), the wild beasts (every kind of threat and evil), and angels (God’s protection). Nothing has changed. All of this is still in and around us! The temptation to fall for warped values is perhaps even more powerful than it has ever been. Jesus gives the example of going into solitude. Making a retreat occasionally is very beneficial. Observing Lent can be done by all. Jesus is victorious over the powers of evil. Angels will wait on us, if only we ask God for help. Have a realistic look at yourself and reform your life.

SCRIPTURE READING —

**The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the desert. He remained there for forty days, during which time He was tempted by Satan. He lived there among the wild beasts, while the angels ministered to Him.**

**After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God, and saying, “The time of fulfillment has arrived, and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.”**

(Mark 1:12-15)

**“For this I came into the world: to testify to the truth”**

**A**RE you satisfied with the achievement of your Church? First, we should make a distinction between Jesus’ movement to establish God’s Kingdom of justice, love, and peace on earth, and the Church as institutionalized over the centuries. Let us confine our question to the Christian movement as such and ask again: Has it achieved its goal of establishing God’s Kingdom on earth during the 2,000 years of its existence? The answer is obviously: We may speak only of a partial success! Seeing so much evil around us, we cannot state that God’s Kingdom of love, justice, and peace has been fully realized on planet earth. But was the Christian movement designed to be a one-hundred-percent success?

In today’s reading, Christ, stating that He is King, says also: “For this I came into the world: to testify to the truth.” Earlier our Lord had said that the Church would be like yeast in dough (Matthew 13:33). The dough is the world. Jesus never promised that the whole world would become yeast! The Church (God’s people), as yeast in the dough, should have a constant uplifting impact in the community in which she is situated, and testify to the truth!

If you have an uplifting impact, wherever you are, and testify to the truth by word and example, you are establishing God’s Kingdom of which Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the anointed King. What is your prayerful response?

SCRIPTURE READING —

**Pilate went back into the praetorium, and having summoned Jesus he asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered,**

**“My Kingdom does not belong to this world.**

**If My Kingdom did belong to this world,**

**My followers would have fought**

**to prevent Me from being handed over to the Jews.**

**The fact is that My Kingdom is not here.”**

**Pilate then said to Him, “So You are a King!” Jesus answered,**

**“It is you who say**

**that I am a King.**

**For this was I born,**

**and for this I came into the world:**

**to testify to the truth.**

**Everyone who is devoted to the truth**

**listens to My voice.”**

(John 18:33, 36-37)

**“For the Lord will take delight in you”**

**W**HEN in a marriage two people have grown into a mature love for one another, one of them can be heard to say in the course of a lively conversation: “But my wife and I think. . . .” Such partners have grown into the conjugal oneness mentioned by the Bible: “The two become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6: note that in Biblical language “body-flesh” stands for the whole person!). It can also happen that the marital oneness is overly stressed by one of the partners. The man, who once loved that charming little woman so much because of certain beautiful qualities of character, may become a tyrant and seek to mold his wife into a blueprint of himself. This is love turned into egotism.

Real love is participation in one another’s personality with great respect, never destroying it! In the awareness of the Bible, human beings are related to God in a sacred Partnership (Covenant) that has conjugal overtones. But in His great love, God does not destroy us as persons. We are and should be different, though the same Spirit of love has been given to all of us. Christians should live in the joy of the wedding (Partnership-Covenant) between God and humans.

In today’s reading it is one of Isaiah’s disciples who takes up this theme to console the people of his day. He assures them that although past infidelity was punished with defeat and exile to Babylon, God forgives and takes His people back as His spouse. God’s word to you in this passage could be a question: How do you see yourself in relation to God? Is the promised reward or love the main incitement of your Christian life-style? God loves you.

SCRIPTURE READING —

**You will be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will  
reveal.**

**You will be a glorious crown in the  
hand of the Lord,  
a royal diadem held by your God.  
No longer will you be called “For-  
saken,”**

**nor will your land be known by  
the name “Desolate.”**

**Rather you will be called “My De-  
light Is in Her,”**

**and your land will be known as  
“Married.”**

**For the Lord will take delight in you,  
and your land will be His spouse.**

**As a young man marries a virgin,  
so will your Builder marry you,  
and as a bridegroom rejoices in his  
bride**

**so will your God rejoice over  
you.**

(Isaiah 62:2-5)

# INDEX OF SCRIPTURE READINGS

<b>Genesis</b>	<b>Hosea</b>	
1:27-31 ..... 50	2:21-22, 25 ... 46	1:32-34 ..... 201
3:1-7 ..... 85	11:1-4 ..... 45	1:40-45 ..... 203
3:9-15 ..... 356		2:3-12 ..... 204
11:4-9 ..... 132	<b>Matthew</b>	2:13-17 ..... 37
12:1-4 ..... 40	1:16, 18-21, 24. 88	2:18-20 ..... 205
15:1-6 ..... 41	1:22-25 ..... 368	3:20-25 ..... 207
22:1-8 ..... 42	2:1-2, 9-12. ... 14	4:26-32 ..... 208
	3:7-12 ..... 351	4:35-41 ..... 209
<b>Exodus</b>	3:13-17 ..... 379	5:21-24, 35-42. 210
3:4-10 ..... 18	4:1-11 ..... 84	6:1-6 ..... 211
3:11-15 ..... 43	4:12-14, 16-22. 165	6:7-13 ..... 212
13:3-10 ..... 198	5:1-12 ..... 166	6:30-34 ..... 213
20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17 ..... 93	5:13-16 ..... 167	7:5-8 ..... 219
24:5-8 ..... 44	5:20-22, 27-28. 168	7:31-37 ..... 220
	5:38-48 ..... 169	8:31-34 ..... 221
<b>Leviticus</b>	6:5-8 ..... 342	9:33-37 ..... 222
13:1-2, 45-46. . 202	6:24-30 ..... 170	9:38-41 ..... 223
<b>Deuteronomy</b>	7:24-29 ..... 171	10:2-12 ..... 224
5:12-13, 15 ..... 206	8:14-15 ..... 183	10:17-22, 28-30. 225
11:1-5 ..... 30	9:10-13 ..... 172	10:42-45 ..... 226
	9:36-37, 10:1, 5-7 ..... 173	10:46-52 ..... 227
<b>Joshua</b>	10:26-33 ..... 174	12:28-34 ..... 228
5:9, 10-12 .... 100	10:37-42 ..... 175	12:38-44 ..... 229
<b>1 Kings</b>	11:2-6 ..... 21	13:33-37 ..... 353
19:9-13 ..... 9	11:25-30 ..... 176	14:22-26 ..... 125
	13:4-9 ..... 177	14:32-36 ..... 29
<b>Job</b>	13:24-30 ..... 178	15:31-37 ..... 277
19:1, 23-27 ... 319	13:33-34 ..... 179	
	14:13-20 ..... 180	<b>Luke</b>
<b>Psalms</b>	14:22-25, 28-31. 181	1:26-38 ..... 369
126. .... 38	15:21-28 ..... 182	1:39-41, 46-55. 240
<b>Song of Songs</b>	16:15-19 ..... 184	1:39-45 ..... 370
2:10-12, 14 ... 344	16:24-26 ..... 186	2:15-20 ..... 375
6:1-3; 8:6-7 ... 25	17:14-21 ..... 24	2:22-25, 27-28, 33-35 ..... 380
	18:15-18 ..... 187	3:1-3 ..... 358
<b>Wisdom</b>	18:21-31 ..... 188	3:10-18 ..... 359
9:13-17 ..... 162	20:1-16 ..... 189	4:1-13 ..... 97
<b>Sirach</b>	21:28-32 ..... 190	4:16-21 ..... 232
24:1-3, 8, 10-12, 21-22. .... 39	22:1-10 ..... 192	4:22-30 ..... 233
	22:15-21 ..... 193	5:6-11 ..... 234
<b>Isaiah</b>	22:34-40 ..... 194	6:12-16 ..... 11
2:3-5 ..... 350	22:35-40 ..... 28	6:20-26 ..... 235
5:1-7 ..... 191	24:37-44 ..... 349	6:31-34, 36-38. 236
9:1-5 ..... 374	25:1-13 ..... 195	6:39-45 ..... 237
11:1-3 ..... 161	25:14-15, 19-20, 24-26 ..... 196	7:2-10 ..... 238
35:1-6 ..... 352	25:31-40 ..... 197	7:11-17 ..... 239
40:1-5 ..... 354	28:1-10 ..... 102	7:36-40, 44-47. 27
54:5-10 ..... 16	28:16-20 ..... 112	9:18-24 ..... 241
61:1-3 ..... 355		9:28-35 ..... 98
62:2-5 ..... 231		9:57-62 ..... 242
62:2-5 ..... 372		10:1-3, 5-6, 8-9. 243
<b>Jeremiah</b>	<b>Mark</b>	10:25-37 ..... 69
1:4-10 ..... 13	1:12-15 ..... 91	10:38-42 ..... 10
33:14-16 ..... 357	1:14-20 ..... 199	10:38-42 ..... 244
	1:21-28 ..... 200	11:9-13 ..... 245
<b>Ezekiel</b>		12:13-21 ..... 246
16:9-15 ..... 48		12:35-40 ..... 247
33:14-20 ..... 339		12:49-53 ..... 248
		13:1-9 ..... 99
		13:23-30 ..... 249
		14:7-11 ..... 250
		14:25-30, 33 ... 251
		15:1-10 ..... 252
		15:11-13, 21-23, 25, 28-32. ... 253
		16:1-8 ..... 340
		16:10-13 ..... 254
		16:19-31 ..... 255
		17:5-10 ..... 256
		17:11-19 ..... 257
		18:9-14 ..... 259
		19:1-10 ..... 260
		20:27-38 ..... 261
		21:5-9 ..... 262
		21:25-28, 34-36. 366
		23:35-43 ..... 263
		24:13-35 ..... 107
		24:44-49 ..... 116
		<b>John</b>
		1:1-5, 14 ..... 376
		1:29, 31-34 ..... 164
		1:35-39 ..... 36
		3:1-7 ..... 348
		3:14-18 ..... 94
		4:7-14 ..... 87
		6:3-11 ..... 214
		6:24-27 ..... 215
		6:47-51 ..... 216
		6:54-56 ..... 217
		6:60-69 ..... 218
		8:1-11 ..... 101
		8:31-36 ..... 20
		9:1, 6-7, 13-21, 35-38. .... 89
		10:1-5 ..... 108
		10:11-15 ..... 117
		11:38-44 ..... 90
		12:20-25 ..... 96
		12:44-47 ..... 347
		13:12-15 ..... 346
		14:6-10 ..... 109
		14:15-17 ..... 110
		14:23-27 ..... 129
		15:1-6 ..... 118
		15:9-13 ..... 119
		16:20-23 ..... 23
		17:1-2, 4-9 ... 113
		17:11-12 ..... 120
		17:20-24 ..... 130
		18:33, 36-37 ... 230



# SUBJECT INDEX

- Acceptance . . . 25, 175
- Adversity . . . 127, 160
- Aging and spiritual growth . . . 275, 360
- Alertness . . . . . 262
- Alienation 24, 150, 220
- Anxiety . . . . . 170
- Authority . . . . . 33
- Banquet . . . . . 180, 192
- Baptism . . . . . 48, 137
- Beatitudes . . . . . 166
- Belonging . . . . . 118
- Bible . . . . . 17, 175, 232, 258, 265, 327
- Biblical symbols . . . 87
- Capitalism . . . . . 299
- Challenge . . . . . 71
- Change . . . . . 99, 212, 301
- Christian concern. 10
- Christian optimism . . . . . 101
- Christianity as a person . . . . . 302
- Christianity up-dating of . . . 80, 81
- Christians, task of 113
- Church
  - as institution . . . 52, 270
  - as people . . . . . 52
  - as yeast . . . . . 230
  - authority of . . . 184
  - continuity and renewal . . . . . 338
  - mission to serve 226
  - unity of . . . . . 53
- Citizenship . . . . . 193
- Clemency . . . . . 252
- Commandments . . . 93
- Commitment . . . 26, 43, 49, 153, 188, 196, 218, 242, 358
- Communism . . . . . 299
- Community . . . . . 138
- Compassion . . . . . 178
- Concern for others 255, 278, 346
- Concupiscence . . . 19
- Condemnation . . . 347
- Confusion . . . . . 51, 203, 305, 323
- Conscience 33, 35, 58
- Consideration . . . 267
- Consolation . . . 337, 354
- Contemplation . . . 285
- Controversy . . . . . 380
- Conversion . . . . . 349
- Coping . . . . . 54, 337
- Correction . . . . . 187, 248
- Courage . . . . . 352
- Covenant . . . . . 205
- Creation, new . . . . 310
- Creative fidelity . . . 196
- Darkness of faith . . 42
- Death 63, 82, 96, 195, 239, 304
- Dedication . . . . . 266, 340
- Detachment . . . . . 31, 141
- Discipleship and service . . . . . 165
- Disclosure - experience . . . . . 164
- Discouragement . . . 43
- Dope . . . . . 20, 21
- Encouragement . . . 181
- End-time . . . . . 83
- Enemies, love of . . 169
- Enthusiasm . . . . . 335
- Eucharist . . . . . 100, 103, 107, 122, 124, 125, 180, 214, 332
- Evil . . . . . 207, 356
- Example, good . . . . 78, 176, 179
- Exile . . . . . 94
- Expectation . . . . . 369
- Failure . . . . . 260
- Faith 24, 29, 41, 60, 64, 89, 92, 97, 105, 106, 115, 116, 181, 233, 256, 270, 271, 276, 289, 316, 348, 365
- Faith and works . . 287, 329
- Family, Holy . . . . . 377
- Fanaticism . . . . . 238
- Father, access to . . 281
- Fear . . . . . 336
- Fidelity . . . . . 88
- Forgiveness 145, 188, 204
- Freedom . . . . . 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 30, 31, 32, 34, 168, 206, 309, 332
- Friendship . . . . . 81
- Generosity . . . . . 159, 236, 322
- Giving, reason for. 229
- God
  - alienation from. 220
  - as Father . . . . . 28
  - as person . . . . . 70
  - as Trinity . . . . . 121
  - awareness of . . . 378
  - Bible as his letter . . . . . 17
  - communion with 11
  - covenant of 46, 47
  - coworkers of . . . 50
  - encounter with 9, 259
  - expectations of 45, 191
  - experience of . . . 70
  - faith in . . . . . 29, 41
  - glorification of . . 264
  - help of . . . . . 66
  - helps us pray . . . 15
  - hope in . . . . . 65
  - in our lives . . . . 67
  - infidelity to . . . . 48
  - in history . . . . . 36
  - kindness of 77, 173
  - knowledge of 70, 272
  - knows us by name . . . . . 108
  - laws of . . . . . 93
  - life in . . . . . 261
  - love for 48, 69, 119, 194, 228, 334
  - love for sinners 253
  - love of . . . . . 25, 49
  - message of 80, 321
  - negative figure. 23
  - partners of . . . . . 73, 166, 231
  - patience of . . . . 178
  - peace of . . . . . 76
  - plan of . . . . . 71
  - presence of . . . . 17
  - promise of . . . . . 61
  - reign of . . . . . 208
  - relationship with 16, 44, 82, 192, 205, 246
  - service of . . . . . 189
  - surrender to . . . . 125
  - transcendence of 12
  - trustworthiness of . . . . . 268
  - turning in to . . . 234
  - wants to take care of us . . . 215
  - will to save all . . 182
  - wisdom of . . . . . 162
  - word in Bible . . . 156
  - word of . . . . . 177, 293
- Good example . . . 155
- Gospels . . . . . 183, 306
- Gratitude . . . . . 257
- Greed . . . . . 246
- Happiness . . . . . 159, 235
- Harmony . . . . . 361
- Heaven on earth . . 111
- Heroes, Christian . 318
- Holy Spirit, see Spirit, Holy 114
- Honesty . . . . . 171
- Hope . . . . . 40, 61, 65, 67, 330, 372
- Hospitality . . . . . 244
- Human limitations 273
- Human relationships . . . . . 13
- Humility . . . . . 222, 250
- Hypocrisy . . . . . 171
- Ignorance . . . . . 115
- Jesus
  - acceptance of . . . 233
  - as King . . . . . 263
  - authority of . . . . 184
  - bearer of light . . 375
  - birth of . . . . . 374
  - blindness . . . . . 227
  - body of . . . . . 299
  - brings life . . . . . 210
  - changes lives . . . 216
  - coming . . . . . 131, 349
  - commitment to 153, 242
  - compassion of . . . 213
  - consolation of . . 337
  - controversy over 380
  - cornerstone . . . . 334
  - cross of . . . . . 186
  - death and resurrection . . 123, 201
  - dedication to . . . 144
  - encountering . . . 119
  - faith in . . . . . 24, 90, 181, 302, 365
  - God-with-us . . . . 368
  - harmony in . . . . . 361
  - identity with his people . . . . . 148