

Lectio Divina: Glory to God in the Highest



Lectio Divina – Listening to God’s Word with our hearts

“And the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us”

In Imaginative Contemplation we pray with the Scriptures, allowing Christ in the Scriptures to speak to us through our imagination. In Lectio Divina we pray with the Scriptures by dwelling on God’s word by listening with our heart. In Imaginative Contemplation, Jesus’ words, actions, teaching and relationships with people become familiar to us when we enter into the Scripture passage using our imagination. In Lectio Divina, God’s word becomes familiar to us by listening with our hearts and dwelling on His words. Listening with our hearts is something we do automatically in everyday life when we for example dwell on the beauty of nature or listening to someone we love or recall a poignant memory.

Lectio Divina or divine reading has four parts: reading, repeating, responding and resting.

Reading: Begin by reading the Scripture Passage slowly until a word or a phrase resonates with you. Then stop for the moment.

Repeating: Dwell on the words you have chosen. Repeat them again and again as though God is saying them to you. Try not to analyse them, just let them speak to you. Savour the words.

Responding: Allow God's heart to speak to your heart. He wants to be close to you so ask yourself what this invitation could mean. Speak to God with your heart. Be open to what he is trying to reveal to you. Share with God whatever is coming into your heart and mind.

Resting: Rest in the embrace and love of God. It is God's response to us. Your whole being is focussed on God so dwell in the moment. When you feel ready, move on.

As you listen to the following passage, note which parts move you but don't analyse anything. Then when you are ready, **read, repeat, respond and rest** and when you have dwelt on the words that initially resonated with you, continue on reading the passage and repeat the process.

Prayer

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!

Reading Luke 2:1-14

Now at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And

here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.'

And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour'

Questions for Reflection

1. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
2. In Palestine, over two thousand years ago, the world was not quite the same for "Unto us a Child was born" into a harsh unforgiving place. Here in Tiverton in the year 2020, with a pandemic raging all around us, our world too may seem like a harsh and unforgiving place but amidst this, is Jesus born in you today? Does the world now seem like a brighter place, full of hope and joy?
3. As you look at your Christmas tree
 - Do the evergreen pines remind you of the eternal life of Christ?
 - Does the Angel at the top of the tree bring you, like the shepherds, news of great joy and peace in your heart?
 - Do you see the Star of Bethlehem the bright lights and do they shine out as a beacon of hope in these uncertain times
 - When you look at the gifts wrapped beautifully under the tree, do they remind you of God's gift to the world, his Son, who gave generously of himself to us.
4. On this Christmas Day, do you feel the presence of Jesus around you in Spirit and in the symbols of Christmas?
5. Christmas is a time for giving gifts. What gift will you give to Jesus and how will you share it with others?

Let us now spend 10 minutes in quiet Reflection

End Prayer

On this Christmas Day let us give thanks for the Light who has been born among us that it will shine through the darkness of our world; for the message of hope and peace that this Light has brought and for love of God who gave us the gift of his Son. On this Christmas Day let us sing with the Angels "Glory to God in the Highest".

Pope Francis tells us On this holy night, while we contemplate the Infant Jesus just born and placed in the manger, we are invited to reflect. How do

we welcome the tenderness of God? Do I allow myself to be taken up by God, to be embraced by him, or do I prevent him from drawing close? “But I am searching for the Lord” – we could respond. Nevertheless, what is most important is not seeking him, but rather allowing him to seek me, find me and caress me with tenderness. The question put to us simply by the Infant’s presence is: do I allow God to love me?

Oh Holy Night

1. O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour’s birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world¹ rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Chorus

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

2. Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land,
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend;

Chorus

He knows our need, To our weakness no stranger!²
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King! your King! before him bend!

3. Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease,
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his Holy name!

Chorus

Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we!³
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!