

Lectio Divina: Rejoice!



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.

Reading Isaiah 61:1-2.10-11

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;
to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.
'I exult for joy in Yahweh,
my soul rejoices in my God,
for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.
'For as the earth makes fresh things grow,
as a garden makes seeds spring up,
so will the Lord Yahweh make both integrity and praise
spring up in the sight of the nations.'

Questions for Reflection on Gaudete Sunday

1. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
2. Like Isaiah, do you feel the Spirit of the Lord has been given to you?
3. Are you aware of your wonderful mission in spreading the Good News of Salvation to everyone?
4. Are you aware that as a Christian you are both called by God and sent by him?
5. Does Isaiah's images of how God has clothed you make you think how God wants to work in your life?
6. Does the image of the garden give you an insight as to how God wants you to be fruitful?
7. Does your soul rejoice in your God? Are you giving thanks to God for his spirit who lives in us? Does this Spirit give you a deep peace because the God who called and sent us will not fail us?

Let us now spend 10 minutes in quiet Reflection

End Prayer

Let us pray on this Gaudete Sunday, that God fills our hearts with hope and joy and takes away all that hinders us from feeling his loving presence.

Pope Francis tells us: "t Isaiah suggests another dimension that will help us to have joy. It is to bring others the Good News: We are Christians. "Christian" comes from "Christ", and "Christ" means "anointed". And we too are "anointed". The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord consecrated me with unction. We are anointed: Christians mean "anointed ones". And why are we anointed? To do what? "He sent me to bring the good news" to whom? "To the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (cf. Is 61:1-2). This is the vocation of Christ and the vocation of Christians as well. To go to others, to those in need, whether their needs be material or spiritual..

The “O” Antiphons

A series of seven ancient antiphons, called the “O” Antiphons, feature in the last seven days of Advent (Dec 17 – 24) – the Octave before Christmas. They express the Church’s faith and each one highlights a different title for the Messiah. Each one also refers to the prophecy of Isaiah looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. They are used at Mass as verses before the Gospel and are also said before the Magnificat in Evening Prayer. They can also become our own prayer as we wait expectantly this Advent for the birth of Christ..

O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

O Root of Jesse’s stem, sign of God’s love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

O Key of David, opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death!

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save us, whom you formed from the dust!

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

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd