

Lectio Divina: The Word was made Flesh



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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 John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word:
and the Word was with God and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.
A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.
The Word was the true light that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us, and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

John appears as his witness. He proclaims:

'This is the one of whom I said:

He who comes after me ranks before me
because he existed before me'.

Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received –
yes, grace in return for grace,

since, though the Law was given through Moses,
grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God;

it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart,

since, though the Law was given through Moses,
grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God;

it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart,

who has made him known.

Questions for Reflection

1. In this very rich and powerful text, what word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
2. As you gaze on the baby Jesus, so small and so helpless lying in your crib, do you see him as the Word of God? Do you see Him as hope being born? Do you see that through the Word made flesh, God is expressing his very self – something we can see and touch, someone who reaches out to us?
3. The birth of Jesus is a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower, take time to reflect back on how the light of Jesus' presence has influenced your life during this past year.
4. Do you realise that the Word made Flesh is the love of God? The love he has for his children? That it is this love that shines a light in the life of other? How in this coming year can you be a light in the life of others?

5. How has the Word been born in you this Christmas? What word does the Lord desire me to take with me as I enter the New Year? How in this coming year will you spend some time getting to know Jesus better?

Let us now spend 10 minutes in quiet Reflection

End Prayer

Let us pray that Jesus' arrival this Christmas will have a whole new meaning to my life as a child of God, that my darkness is overcome and that I can meet, love and praise God in the quiet of my own heart.

Pope Francis says "Let us share the joy of the Gospel: God loves us, he so loves us that he gave us his Son to be our brother, to be light in our darkness. To us the Lord repeats: "Do not be afraid!" (Lk 2:10). And I too repeat: Do not be afraid! Our Father is patient, he loves us, he gives us Jesus to guide us on the way which leads to the promised land. Jesus is the light who brightens the darkness. He is our peace".

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