

Lectio Divina: I am sorely afflicted



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

We acknowledge we are in the presence of God so let us say:

Direct O Lord and guide and influence all that is happening in my mind and heart during this time of prayer: all my moods and feelings, my memories and imaginings; my hopes and desires; may all be directed and influenced to your greater glory, praise and service and to my growth in your Spirit.
Amen

Let the Spirit enter our hearts and enlighten our minds so that we can ask for the grace to trust in the Lord amidst the turmoil of our life.

Introduction to Psalm 115

This Psalmist of this personal prayer of thanksgiving is unknown. In these verses, the psalmist recalls his troubles and how the Lord delivered him from them and he tells the Lord what he will offer in thanksgiving for what the Lord has done. This Psalm is not just a testimony to what God has done for his people in the past, but it gives also hope for us here in the present as we cope with the pandemic and also in the future, It also gives us both hope and courage as we journey with Jesus in this Lenten time during His suffering for our deliverance.

Let us now pray with this Psalm with the hope and trust of the psalmist for the belief in God love for us.

Psalm 115

1. I trusted, even when I said:
"I am sorely afflicted."
O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
2. Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
and you have loosened my bonds.
A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord's name.
3. My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is the Psalm saying to you?
2. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
3. Verse one of the Psalm is quoted by the Saint Paul in 2 Cor. 4:13 as he can relate to the psalmist regarding his complete trust in God despite all his weaknesses. Think of a time you have struggled to trust God when all manner of things have overwhelmed you. Talk to God about it.
4. In the second verse, the psalmist recognises the times when God has freed him from his sin and is thankful. Can you remember with gratitude times in your life when you have been freed from the bonds which have kept you from God's goodness? Can you think of times you have trusted the Lord in the midst of great turmoil in your life? Perhaps now is the time to trust that God will loosen the bonds of covid which are tying us to our homes and keeping us from friends and family.

5. In the third verse, the Psalmist vows that he will witness to the goodness of the Lord publicly. When and where are you been called to give witness to the love of God either by what you do or by what you say? Perhaps this Lent we can make a special effort to give witness to God by our prayer, fasting and alms-giving.

6. What do you think God is saying to you in this Psalm? What do you want to say to God?

Prayer for 2nd Sunday in Lent

<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/Daily-prayers-02.html>

Loving God,
there is so much darkness in my life
and I hide from you.
Take my hand
and lead me out of the shadows of my fear.
Help me to change my heart.
Bring me to your truth
and help me to respond to your generous love.
Let me recognize the fullness of your love
which will fill my life.
Free me from the darkness in my heart.

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