

Lectio Divina: Lord, guide me along the right path



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 know the ways of God and follow in his path.

Introduction to Psalm 24

This Psalm, attributed to King David is a plea for God's guidance for every day life. The psalmist acknowledges that it is God and God alone who can instruct him in the way to salvation. The psalmist knows that he cannot learn the path to holiness unless God instructs him, that he cannot know which way to go unless God shows him and he cannot discern the truth unless God teaches him. He also lives in hope that God will not take away his merciful love and goodness from him.

With this in mind, let us now contemplate on the Psalm and listen to what Jesus is telling us about God's love and mercy for his children.

Psalm 24

1. Lord make me know your ways.
Lord teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour.
2. Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord.
3. The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
He guides the humble in the right path;
He teaches his way to the poor.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is the Psalm saying to you?
2. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
3. In verse one of the Psalm, the psalmist recognises his reliance on God to guide him to salvation. Do you look on God as a guide, as a teacher, as a way to the truth? Do you sometimes forget this and try to find your way alone? Jesus told us "I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one can come to the Father except through me.". Perhaps we can ask Jesus to guide us to the Father.
4. In verse two, the psalmist is acknowledging God's love and mercy through his principals and truths as written in the Old and the New Testaments. What passage in the Bible confirms for you God's love, mercy and forgiveness? Do you feel God's love and goodness even in these difficult times? How is God's love and goodness being made manifest for you?
5. In verse three, do you trust that God will show you the way if you are searching? Do you believe that no matter how far you think you have strayed, he will lead you back to his flock? What Bible passage confirms this for you?
6. Like the psalmist, do you pray earnestly or do you feel discouraged particularly in this time of pandemic when the future is uncertain?

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

CAFOD Lent Prayer

God of love, fill my heart with your compassion and mercy. Throughout my Lenten journey inspire me to come to know you better and to reach out in love to others. Amen.

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