

## Lectio Divina: My Soul Glorifies the Lord



### 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      Luke 1:39-56**

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord  
and my spirit exults in God my saviour;  
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.  
Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Almighty has done great things for me.  
Holy is his name,  
and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him.

He has shown the power of his arm,  
he has routed the proud of heart.  
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.  
The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.  
He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors  
of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention? What has comforted you? What has challenged you?
2. Mary is a young girl rushing to Elizabeth because she was told by the Angel she in her old age is pregnant and also to tell her her own news. What does this say to you about Mary, the kind of person she was to undertake this journey to bring God's presence to her cousin? Has there been a time in your life you have felt the need to set out in haste to bring God's presence to the world?
3. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Here we see the Spirit of God in Elizabeth rejoicing in the presence of Mary. When have you rejoiced in the presence of those people who have lifted your spirits and been a friend to you?
4. Elizabeth said to Mary 'The the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy'. Has there been a time this week that has brought you to joy? How can I pass this joy to others?
5. Elizabeth said to Mary, 'Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled'. Are there times you have struggled to believe in the words of God? In these cases, what have you done to strengthen your faith?
6. Mary told Elizabeth ' The Almighty has done great things for me'. As you recall your own history, what great things has the Almighty done for you? What have you done to show your gratitude?
7. In Mary's great prayer of joy and thanksgiving, she reveals God's activity in our world. Do you see God's activity in the world today; amidst the pandemic; amidst the effects of climate change; amidst the marginalised?

Let us now spend 10 minutes in quiet Reflection

## **Prayer for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
You have taken up body and soul  
into the heavenly glory the Immaculate Virgin Mary,  
Mother of Your Son: Grant, we beseech You,  
that, ever intent upon heavenly things,  
we may be worthy to be partakers of her glory.  
Through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever.  
Amen.

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