

## Lectio Divina: The Beatitudes



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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.

## **Prayer**

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

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 to enable us reflect on the qualities that are expected of us if we want to be a disciple of Christ.

## **Reading      Luke 6:17.20-26**

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases.

Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said:

'How happy are you who are poor: yours is the kingdom of God.  
Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied.  
Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh.  
Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.  
'But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now.  
Alas for you who have your fill now: you shall go hungry.  
Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep.  
Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.'

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. In this Gospel Reading, what word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention? Most challenged you? Most comforted you? Ask yourself why?
2. Do the Beatitudes challenge your comfort zone? Is there a particular one which challenges you more than the others?
3. Do the Beatitudes challenge your conscience? The fact that those who are poor, hungry, weeping, or persecuted are considered happy and those whom we think are blessed i.e. the rich, those who appear to be happy, have status in life, are those according to Jesus, are the unfortunate ones? How does that make you feel?
4. Do you know anyone who is poor, hungry, sad, in conflict, excluded or humiliated? Is there anything you can do to help them? What can you do to share God's love with them?
5. Have you, yourself ever felt poor, hungry, sad, in conflict, excluded or humiliated? Have you ever turned your painful situation into an opportunity? Did you feel the love of God perhaps through someone unexpected?
6. As you contemplate the Beatitudes, what are you learning about Jesus, God and yourself? How can you apply the Beatitudes to your daily life? Do you know someone who lives out the Beatitudes in their daily life?

Let us now spend 10 minutes in quiet Reflection and let the words of this passage speak to us.

## **End Prayer    Your Love**

Dear Father in Heaven, give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness; fill our hearts with love, overflowing with mercy; make our hearts pure, and give us a vision of your glory. Gracious God, you have so richly blessed us with life, with love and joy, with hope in the midst of despair. Help us to be the salt of the earth.

Amen

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