

## Lectio Divina: But God Raised him high



Painting of various saints by Fra Angelico

### 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

On this Palm Sunday, let the Spirit enter our hearts and enlighten our minds to hear and reflect on St Paul's great hymn of the Incarnation which outlines Jesus being born as one of us only to lose his life in order that we should live.

## **Philippians 2:6-11**

His state was divine,  
yet he did not cling  
to his equality with God  
but emptied himself  
to assume the condition of a slave,  
and became as men are;  
and being as all men are,  
he was humbler yet,  
even to accepting death,  
death on a cross.

But God raised him high  
and gave him the name  
which is above all other names  
so that all beings  
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,  
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus  
and that every tongue should acclaim  
Jesus Christ as Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

### **Questions for Reflection**

Imagine this passage of St Paul's letter is being addressed to you personally. Perhaps you could reflect on these moving words before a crucifix. Allow the words to soak into your being.

1. What is this passage saying to you?
2. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention; most challenged you; most comforted you?
3. As you read this passage, do you wonder at Jesus' love for his Father in that he became one of us and freely accepted death on a cross for the salvation of humankind? How does it make you feel that he did it out of love us? Are you overawed? How does it make you respond to Jesus?
4. Jesus emptied himself for humankind and assumed the condition of a slave. He died a degrading and humiliating death on a cross for us. He was stripped of all dignity for us. He did this for our salvation. I ask myself, can I show this level of generosity, of love

to those around me? Can I give myself to God with this level of humility? Can I empty myself and surrender into the hands of God with complete faith?

5. 'But God raised him high .....and every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord'. I ask myself, do I acclaim Jesus as Lord in my every day life; in my daily encounter with others? Is this truly the essence of my belief as a Christian that by calling Jesus Lord, I am giving glory to God the Father?

Listen to what Jesus s saying in this passage as you speak to him about your feelings. I ask him for the grace to empty myself of my disordered attachments in the way he has shown me.

### **End Prayer    Suscipe of St. Ignatius of Loyola**

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.  
You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.  
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
that is enough for me.

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