

Lectio Divina: What is your opinion?



"Two

Sons" by Kazakhstan Artist Nelly Bube.

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 that both our actions and our words will give evidence of our love for God and our desire to do his will.

Reading Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, "What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, 'My boy, you

go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not go,' but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, 'Certainly, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?" "The first," they said.

Jesus said to them, "I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him."

Questions for Reflection

As you slowly read the passage allow this parable of Jesus regarding forgiveness to soak into your mind. To help you with your personal reflection, Pope Francis tells us that "*Obedience does not consist of saying "yes" or "no", but always of acting, of cultivating the vineyard, of bringing about the Kingdom of God by doing good*". With that in mind:

1. What is this passage saying to you?
2. What word(s), sentence or phrase in the story of the two sons most caught your attention; most touched your heart; most challenged you; most comforted you? Is there anything Jesus said that you found uncomfortable?
3. What is your opinion as to who is doing the will of the Father? When you think over the past week, have your actions spoken louder than your words or have you carried out the will of the Father in words only?
4. What conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of you? Have you ever experienced a conversion of heart, mind and life? Is your mind open to the possibility of change to greater trust and faith in your life?
5. What vineyards is God calling you to work in? How can you be more responsive to God's call? What kind of obedience does Jesus suggest through this parable?
6. Who is a role model of faith and righteousness for you?

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