

Lectio Divina: Which is the greatest Commandment of the Law?



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 as we contemplate on the importance of love in our lives; the love of God and the love of our neighbour. Let us pray for a truly loving heart.

Reading Matthew 22:34 – 40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together and, to disconcert him, one of them put a question, 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?'

Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

Questions for Reflection

As you slowly read this Gospel passage allow Jesus' words regarding the greatest commandment to soak into your mind. You may want to ponder on the words of Saint John of the Cross, "In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone" or those of St Ignatius of Loyola, "Love is shown more in deeds than in words".

1. What is this passage saying to you?
2. What word(s), sentence or phrase in this Gospel passage regarding the greatest commandment most caught your attention; most touched your heart; most challenged you; most comforted you? Is there anything Jesus said that you found uncomfortable?
3. As you reflect on Jesus' words about love, what conversion of mind, heart, and life do you feel he asking of you?
4. How will loving God with all your heart soul and mind change your pattern of lifestyle? Have you ever thought that God lives in your neighbour so loving your neighbour is also loving God?
5. What practical way can you show your love of God and for God this week? What practical way can you show your love to those you encounter this week?
6. What do you think being loving of yourself means? What do you notice in your relationship with others, when you "love your neighbour as yourself"?

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