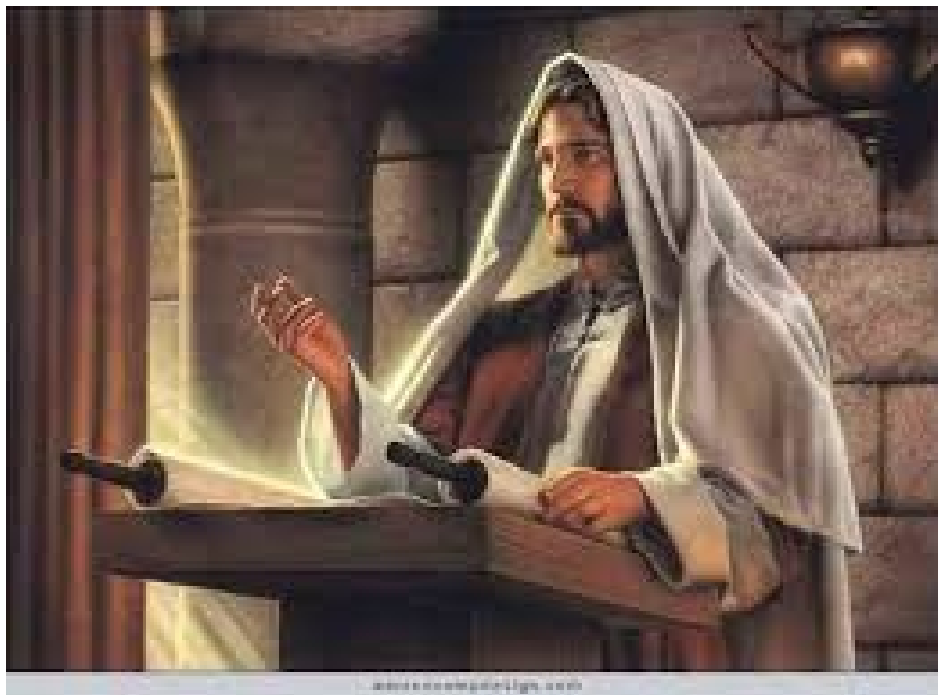


Lectio Divina – And he taught them with Authority



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 so that the teaching and authority of Jesus can also make a deep impression on us and enable us to help spread the joy of the Gospel through the countryside.

Reading Mark 1:21-28

They went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the Sabbath came Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

In the synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit and it shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God".! But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit

threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new' they said 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.'

And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

Questions for Reflection

As you slowly read this Gospel passage allow the combination of Jesus' teaching and healing in the temple to soak into your mind. You may want to ponder on the picture at the top of the page or light a candle as you reflect on the passage.

1. What is this passage saying to you?
2. What word(s), sentence or phrase in this Gospel passage most caught your attention; most touched your heart; most challenged you; most comforted you? Is there anything in this passage that you found uncomfortable?
3. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority. What is your response to authority in the Church? What teachings in the Church today make a deep impression on you?
4. In the synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit and it shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? I know who you are: the Holy One of God". Do you know anyone on the margins of society, someone whom you might dismiss as unclean, and yet who knows that Jesus is the Holy one of God? Who are the people in your life that you try to avoid?
5. Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' What spirits are you burdened with that you would like to cast out? Perhaps the spirit of fear or anger or prejudice? Have you thought of asking for the help of Jesus to expel them?
6. The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new' they said 'and with authority behind it. Is there anyone who has brought you new life by their teaching and their witness to God's love?

Let us now spend 10 minutes reading, repeating, responding and resting and then share what we thought, felt etc. only if you are comfortable to do so.

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
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