

Lectio Divina – He saw and he believed



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 guide and enlighten your mind as you read the Gospel and reflect on what it meant to find the empty tomb so that you too can understand what it meant.

Reading John 20:1-9

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in.

Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Questions for Reflection

As you slowly read this Gospel passage, allow its words to soak into your mind. You may want to light a candle to help you ponder the passage, reflect on the image above or on the words of Pope Francis below.

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 or even distressing?
3. Mary Magdala saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. Who have you gone out to communicate and invite to seek the signs of the Risen Lord? In what ways can you share the risen Christ with others?
4. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. What people, events or books have led you to believe without a doubt that Jesus is alive, that He is present in our midst, today? In what ways do your words and actions help others to also believe?
5. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead. How often do you read Scripture, pray with it and reflect on its meaning? Is there a stone in your life that has blocked your understanding of Scripture? Are there people in your life or resources that help you move the stone to enable you to grow in your understanding of the faith?

Pope Francis tells us:

Today the Church repeats, sings, shouts: "Jesus is Risen!". But why is this? Peter, John, the women went to the Sepulchre and it was empty. He was not there. They went away with their hearts closed in sadness, the sadness of defeat: the Teacher, their Teacher, the One whom they loved so much had been put to death; He is dead. And there is no return from death. This is the defeat. This is the path of defeat, the path towards the sepulchre. But the Angel says to them, "He is not here, He is Risen".

Today, the Church continues to say: "Stop. Jesus is Risen". And this is not a fantasy. The Resurrection of Christ is not a celebration with many flowers. This is beautiful, but this is not it. It is something more. It is the mystery of the discarded stone which becomes the foundation of our existence. Christ is Risen. This is what it means.

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.