

# Lectio Divina – I am the True Vine



Eastern Orthodox icon of Jesus Christ as the True Vine

(Taken from the World Wide Web)

## 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 our mind as we read the Gospel and reflect on the intimacy of our relationship with Jesus as we ask for the grace to bear much fruit.

## **Reading      John 15:1-8**

Jesus said to his disciples  
'I am the true vine,  
and my Father is the vine dresser.  
Every branch in me that bears no fruit  
he cuts away,  
and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes  
to make it bear even more.  
You are pruned already,  
by means of the word that I have spoken to you.  
Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.

As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,  
but must remain part of the vine,  
neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine,  
you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in him,  
bears fruit in plenty;  
for cut off from me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me  
is like a branch that has been thrown away –  
he withers;

these branches are collected and thrown on the fire,  
and they are burnt.

If you remain in me  
and my words remain in you,  
you may ask what you will  
and you shall get it.

It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you  
will be my disciples.

### **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?
3. *'Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit the vine-dresser prunes to make it bear even more'*. What have the pruning moments been in your life experiences that have helped you to grow and bear fruit? What special fruits or gifts is the vine-dresser specifically cultivating in you?
4. *'I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty.'* Do you feel connected with Jesus, with the community, with the earth? Do you appreciate that you are part of the living vine? What is the sap, the life-giving force which flows through you and your community to keep it alive and capable of bearing fruit?

5. *'If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it'*. Do these words strengthen your relationship with Jesus? When in your life has this been a life-giving force for you?

**Pope Francis tells us:**

May the Lord help us to understand, to experience this mysticism of remaining on which Jesus insisted so, so, so much. Many times, when we speak of the vine and the branches, we stop at the image, the work of the vine grower, of the Father: who prunes the one [the branch] that bears fruit, and who cuts and throws out the one that does not (see Jn 15:1-2). It is true, He does this, but that is not everything, no. There is something else. And this is the help: the trials, the difficulties of life, even the corrections that the Lord gives us. But we should not stop here. Between the vine and the branches there is this intimate remaining. We the branches need the sap, and the vine needs the fruit of our witness.

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.