

Lectio Divina – Peace be with you



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 our hearts and enlighten our minds as we read the Gospel and reflect on what it means to have the Risen Lord appear in our midst and hear Him say "Peace be with you".

Reading Luke 24:35-48

Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

They were still talking about all this when he himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you!' In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, 'Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have.'

And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet.

Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumbfounded; so he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes.

Then he told them, 'This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms has to be fulfilled'. He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be

preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.

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. They had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread. Where do you recognise the Risen Christ? Do you recognise Jesus accompanying you in the experiences of your life? Do your hearts burn within you as you hear the Scriptures and see the breaking of bread at Mass each Sunday?
4. "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts?" Have there been times in your life when your faith has been challenged? Was there anyone or any source which helped you overcome these doubts? Did you have the chance to see, touch and ask questions?
5. Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it. Do you remember a time in your life when you felt joy or peace in the midst of a challenging time?
6. He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures. Do you remember a time when you grasped a Spiritual truth for the first time? Did it have implications for the rest of your life? Do you use the Scriptures to help you grow in your relationship with God?

Pope Francis tells us:

The Gospel says that the Apostles "still disbelieved for joy". The joy they felt was such that they could not believe that this was true. And a second detail: they were bewildered, astonished; astonished because the encounter with God always leads you to astonishment: it goes beyond enthusiasm, beyond joy; it is another experience. And they were joyful, but a joy that made them think: no, this cannot be true!... It is the astonishment of God's presence. Do not forget this frame of mind, which is so beautiful. Brothers and sisters, this Gospel passage tells us that Jesus is not a "ghost", but a living Person; that when Jesus draws near to us he fills us with joy, to the point of disbelief, and he leaves us bewildered, with that

astonishment that only God's presence gives, because Jesus is a living Person. Being Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal; it is a living relationship with him, with the Risen Lord: we look at him, we touch him, we are nourished by him and, transformed by his Love, we look at, touch and nourish others as brothers and sisters. May the Virgin Mary help us to live this experience of grace.

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.