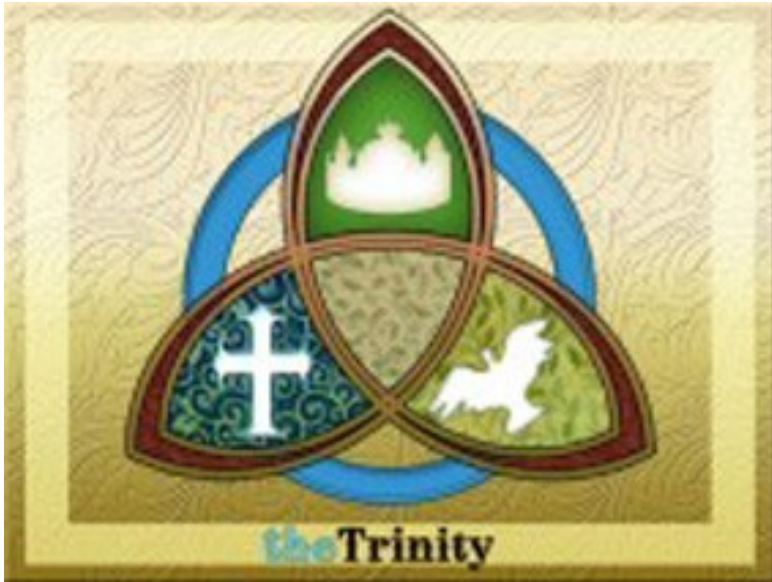


Lectio Divina – Go and make disciples of all nations



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 hear. 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 minds as we as we are invited to reflect on the mystery of God who has revealed himself to us in the persons of the Father, his Son, Jesus and his Spirit who dwells in us.

Reading Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."

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. *“The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them”* How do you discern God’s will for you? How can you become more open to the will of God in your every day life? Where has Jesus arranged to meet you?
4. *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations’* How do you share your knowledge of Jesus with those you encounter each day? When was the last time you shared your faith with someone?
5. *‘Know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time’*. Does knowing this fill you with empowerment and confidence to carry out your mission to “make disciples of all nations”?

Pope Francis tells us:

Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". The contents of the mission entrusted to the Apostles are these: to proclaim, baptize, and to teach how to walk the path laid down by the Master, that is the living Gospel. This message of salvation implies first of all the duty of witness - without witness one cannot proclaim - to which we, today's disciples, are also called to explain the reason for our faith. Faced with such a demanding task, and thinking of our weaknesses, we feel inadequate, as the Apostles themselves surely felt. But we should not be discouraged, remembering the words Jesus addressed to them before ascending to Heaven: "I am with you always until the end of the age".

This promise ensures the constant and consoling presence of Jesus among us. But how is this presence be realized? Through his Spirit, which leads the Church to walk through history as a companion of every person. That Spirit, sent by Christ and the Father, works the remission of sins and sanctifies all those who are repentant and open themselves with confidence to his gift. With the promise to remain with us until the end of time, Jesus inaugurates the style of his presence in the world as the Risen One. Jesus is present in the world but in another style, the style of the Risen One, that is, a presence that is revealed in the Word, in the Sacraments, in the constant and inner action of the Holy Spirit.

Let us now spend 10 minutes in silence 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.