

Lectio Divina – I have sent them into the world



The Last Supper, Hand painted orthodox icon, Byzantine orthodox icon

(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

As we reflect on the Gospel passage, let the Spirit fill our heart with the joy that Jesus wants to share with us, with gratitude for the protection that he has promised us and for the wisdom to discern his truth.

Reading John 17:11-19

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said,
"Holy Father,
keep those you have given me true to your name,
so that they may be one like us.
While I was with them,
I kept those you had given me true to your name.
I have watched over them and not one is lost
except the one who chose to be lost,
and this was to fulfil the scriptures.
But now I am coming to you

and while still in the world I say these things
to share my joy with them to the full.
I passed your word on to them,
and the world hated them,
because they belong to the world
no more than I belong to the world.
I am not asking you to remove them from the world,
but to protect them from the evil one.
They do not belong to the world
any more than I belong to the world.
Consecrate them in the truth;
your word is truth.
As you sent me into the world,
I have sent them into the world,
and for their sake I consecrate myself
so that they too may be consecrated in truth.”

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. *'Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name'*. What words and actions show that you are true to the name of Jesus? Have you ever felt Jesus praying for you in times of difficulty?
4. *'The world hated them, because they belong to the world'* In what ways do you demonstrate that you belong to the world so that you can proclaim the Good News? Are there times you have distanced yourself from the world because of the hostilities you have faced whilst proclaiming Jesus message?
5. *'Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.'* How do you ensure that when speaking the truth you do so in charity, sincerity and integrity according to the will of God? How do you uphold the truth in a world with conflicting messages?
6. *'As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world'* How do you feel to have been chosen? What specific mission has

Jesus chosen you to do? Is anything preventing you from the mission Jesus has called you for?

Pope Francis tells us:

Jesus asks the Father to consecrate his disciples in truth as they will be sent throughout the world to carry on his mission. Keeping the truth does not mean defending ideas, becoming guardians of a system of doctrines and dogmas, but remaining bound to Christ and being devoted to his Gospel. Truth, for the apostle John, is Christ himself, the revelation of the Father's love. Jesus prays that his disciples, although living in the world, will not follow the criteria of this world. They are not to let themselves be enticed by idols, but to keep their friendship with him; they are not to bend the Gospel to human and worldly ways of thinking, but to preserve his message in its integrity. To keep the truth means to be a prophet in every situation in life, in other words to be consecrated to the Gospel and bear witness to it even when that means going against the current. At times, we Christians want to compromise, but the Gospel asks us to be steadfast in the truth and for the truth, offering our lives for others. The Lord has no use for the lukewarm. He wants us to be consecrated in the truth and the beauty of the Gospel, so that we can testify to the joy of God's kingdom even in the dark night of grief, even when evil seems to have the upper hand.

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.