

Lectio Divina – In the one Spirit we are all baptised



Image by Gerd Altmann , from Pixabay. CC0

(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 enter our hearts and minds as we contemplate on this Feast of Pentecost, the versatility of the Spirit who bestows on us a variety of gifts with the ultimate aim that we should all work together to build the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3-7.12-13

No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

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. *“There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people”*?. What special gifts have been bestowed on you by the Lord? Do you use these gifts in loving service for the community in which you live? Do you sometimes notice the gifts and talents of others and fail to see that you too have been generously endowed with bountiful gifts?
4. *‘The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.’* How does it make you feel knowing that your gifts are unique to you the same as other peoples gifts are unique to them? How does it make you feel that your particular gifts have been given to you because God has chosen you for a particular purpose?
5. *‘In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.’* Does this make you see those you encounter each day in a different light? Do you feel your connectedness with your community and the wider world?

Pope Francis tells us:

Here we come to understand what the secret of unity is, the secret of the Spirit. The secret of unity in the Church, the secret of the Spirit is gift. For the Spirit himself is gift: he lives by giving himself and in this way he keeps us together, making us sharers in the same gift. It is important to believe that God is gift, that he acts not by taking away, but by giving. Why is this important? Because our way of being believers depends on how we understand God. If we have in mind a God who takes away and who imposes himself, we too will want to take away and impose ourselves: occupying spaces, demanding recognition, seeking power. But if we have in our hearts a God who is gift, everything changes. If we realize that what we are is his gift, free and unmerited, then we too will want to make our lives a gift. By loving humbly, serving freely and joyfully, we will offer to the world the true image of God. The Spirit, the living memory of the Church,

reminds us that we are born from a gift and that we grow by giving: not by holding on but by giving of ourselves.

Brothers and sisters, let us pray to him: Holy Spirit, memory of God, revive in us the memory of the gift received. Free us from the paralysis of selfishness and awaken in us the desire to serve, to do good. Even worse than this crisis is the tragedy of squandering it by closing in on ourselves. Come, Holy Spirit: you are harmony; make us builders of unity. You always give yourself; grant us the courage to go out of ourselves, to love and help each other, in order to become one family. Amen.

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.