

Lectio Divina – Love one another



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

Let the Spirit guide our heart and enlighten our mind as we read the Gospel and reflect on the commandment Jesus has given us; to love one another.

Reading John 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.

Remain in my love,

If you keep my commandments

you will remain in my love,

just as I have kept my Father's commandments

and remain in his love.

I have told you this

so that my own joy may be in you

and your joy be complete.

This is my commandment:
Love one another, as I have loved you.
A man can have no greater love
than to lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends, if you do what I command you.
I shall not call you servants any more,
because a servant does not know his master's business;
I call you friends, because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me, no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last;
and then the Father will give you
anything you ask him in my name.
What I command you is to love one another.”

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. *'I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete.'* Does being told by Jesus that you are loved by the Father make you feel joyful? What do you need to complete your joy? How can you share with others the joy that God has given you?
4. *'Love one another, as I have loved you.'* How does this concept of love resonate with you? How do you consider your relationship with others? How do you live this love in your family, in your community and in the wider context.
5. *'I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father'.* Who are your friends? Do you share with them the gifts and fruits that have been bestowed on you from your Father in heaven? Do you make known to them the good news of salvation?
6. *'It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.'* How do you feel to have been chosen? What specific mission has Jesus

chosen you to do? In what ways can you participate in the mission of the Church through your chosen mission?

Pope Francis tells us:

To love like Christ means saying ‘no’ to other ‘loves’ that the world offers us: love of money – those who love money do not love as Jesus loves -, love of success, vanity, [love] of power.... These deceptive paths of “love” distance us from the Lord’s love and lead us to become more and more selfish, narcissistic, overbearing. And being overbearing leads to a degeneration of love, to the abuse of others, to making our loved ones suffer. To love as the Lord loves us means to appreciate the people beside us, to respect their freedom, to love them as they are, not as we want them to be, gratuitously. Ultimately, Jesus asks us to abide in his love, to dwell in his love, not in our ideas, not in our own self-worship. Those who dwell in self-worship live in the mirror: always looking at themselves. Those who overcome the ambition to control and manage others. Not controlling, serving them. Opening our heart to others, this is love, giving ourselves to others.

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.