

## Lectio Divina – An Unclean Spirit is in him



(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 to give us the courage to be true to ourselves and to our convictions about what is true and worthwhile..

## **Reading      Mark 3:20-35**

Jesus went home with his disciples, and such a crowd collected that they could not even have a meal. When his relatives heard of this, they set out to take charge of him, convinced he was out of his mind.

The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, "Beelzebul is in him," and, "It is through the prince of devils that he casts devils out." So he called them to him and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan! If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last. And if a house-hold is divided against itself, that household can never stand. Now if Satan has rebelled against himself and is divided, he cannot stand either — it is the end of him. But no one can make his way into a strong man's house and burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first. Only then can he burgle his house.

“I tell you solemnly, all men’s sins will be forgiven, and all their blasphemies; but let anyone blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and he will never have forgiveness: he is guilty of an eternal sin.” This was because they were saying, “An unclean spirit is in him.”

His mother and brothers now arrived and, standing outside, sent m a message asking for him. A crowd was sitting round him at the time the message was passed to him, “Your mother and brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.” He replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking round at those sitting in a circle about him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother.”

### **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. *“Jesus went home with his disciples, and such a crowd collected that they could not even have a meal. When his relatives heard of this, they set out to take charge of him, convinced he was out of his mind.”* Have there been times when your family made it difficult for you to participate in the Christian Community? How did you respond to them? What other obstacles prevent you from your commitment in your community?
4. *‘And if a house-hold is divided against itself, that household can never stand.’* In what ways can you be a unifying force in your family, in your community and in your parish? How can you try to repair the broken relationships in your life?
5. *“For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”* How does your family, your Parish, your community help you grow in faith? Has your faith commitment led you to new communities where your family will not go?

### **Pope Francis tells us:**

Jesus reacted with firm and clear words; he did not tolerate this, because those scribes, perhaps without realizing it, were falling into the gravest sin: denying and blaspheming against God’s Love which is present and active

in Jesus. And blasphemy, the sin against the Holy Spirit, is the one unforgivable sin — as Jesus said — because it comes from closing the heart to God's mercy which acts in Jesus. But this episode contains an admonishment which is useful to all of us. Indeed, it can happen that deep envy of a person's goodness and good works can drive one to falsely accuse him or her. Here there is true, lethal poison: the malice with which, in a premeditated manner, one wants to destroy the good reputation of the other. May God free us from this terrible temptation! Be careful, because this attitude destroys families, friendships, communities and even society. (Angelus, 10 June 2018)

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.