

Lectio Divina: This is the carpenter's son, surely



Rejecting the Carpenter – Picture 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:** Be like Mary and “ponder these things in your heart”. 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 so that we can be open to the words and deeds of Jesus who is present in the people we know. Let us pray that we do not close our hearts to them because they are familiar to us.

Reading Mark 6:1-6

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and

these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?' And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house'; and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

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. '*What is this wisdom that has been granted him*' What sources of wisdom do you rely on? Do these sources strengthen your faith?
4. *This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon?* Have you ever rejected someone because of their status or because you feel you know them? Has someone ever rejected you because they think they know you? How did that make you feel? How well do you know Jesus? How can you ensure that you keep your heart and mind open to the familiar?
5. '*A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house.*?' Do you ever experience rejection and criticism from your own family and friends because of your faith beliefs? How does that make you feel? Who do you turn to for support?

We shall now spend 10 minutes reflecting on this scripture passage by reading, repeating, responding and resting as described above. We will then share what we thought, felt etc. only if you are comfortable to do so.

Pope Francis tells us:

Let us reflect on the attitude of Jesus's fellow villagers. We could say they knew Jesus, but they did not recognise him. There is a difference between knowing and recognizing. In essence, this difference makes us understand that we can know various things about a person, form an idea, rely on what others say about that person, we might perhaps meet that person every now and then in the neighbourhood; but all that is not enough. This is a knowledge, I would say ordinary, superficial, that does not recognise the uniqueness of the person. We all run this risk: we think we know so much about a person, even worse, we use labels and close the person within our own prejudices. Jesus's fellow villagers knew him for thirty years in the same way and they thought they knew everything! "But isn't this the boy we saw growing up, the son of the carpenter and Mary? Where do these things come from?". The distrust...in reality, they never realised who Jesus truly was. They remained at the exterior level and refused what was new about Jesus.

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.

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd