

Lectio Divina: You do not know what you are asking



Image 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 enlighten our minds so that we may understand that the meaning of real greatness is indiscriminate love, service and care of others.

Reading Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him. 'Master,' they said to him 'we want you to do us a favour.' He said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?'

They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory'. 'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?' They replied, 'We can'. Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted'.

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

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. *"Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory".* What do you seek as a disciple of Jesus? What do you seek in your relationship with God? Do you assume that a place in God's Kingdom is yours because you pray? Do you think that your status in life defines your worth?
4. *"You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt".* How do you exercise authority? Where do you exert your authority among those in your community? Who do you model your position of leadership on? How do you respond to authority?
5. *'Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all'.* How can you follow this example in your own day to day living? In what ways do you give service to those you encounter in your life? Do you resist serving others because it demands too much? What gifts and talents have you been blessed with that you can use to serve others?

Pope Francis tells us:

Dear brothers, all of us love Jesus, all of us want to follow him, yet we must always be careful to remain on the road. For our bodies can be with him, but our hearts can wander far afield and so lead us off the road. We can think of so many kinds of corruption in the priestly life. The scarlet of a Cardinal's robes, which is the colour of blood, can, for a worldly spirit, become the colour of a secular "eminence". In that case, you will no longer be a shepherd who is close to his people. You will simply think that you are an "eminence". Once you feel that way, you are already off the road.

In this passage of the Gospel, we are always struck by the sharp contrast between Jesus and his disciples. Jesus is aware of this; he knows it and he accepts it. Yet the contrast is still there: Jesus is on the road, while they are off the road. Two roads that cannot meet. Only the Lord, through his cross and resurrection, can save his straying friends who risk getting lost. It is for them, as well as for all the others, that Jesus is journeying to Jerusalem. For them, and for everyone, will he let his body be broken and his blood shed. For them, and for all, will he rise from the dead, and forgive and transform them by the gift of the Spirit. He will at last put them back on his road.

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.

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.