

**Lectio Divina:        There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars**



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 in the knowledge that Jesus’ words will not pass away despite the passing away of heaven and earth.

### **Reading      Luke 21:25-28, 34-36**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples; “There will be signs in sun, and moon, and stars; and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity, because of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; people fainting with fear and foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. No when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near.

And watch yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times praying that you may have

strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man.”

## 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 will be signs in sun, and moon, and stars'*. How do you experience God's presence in the world around you? This Advent, how can you become more mindful of God's gift of creation and the natural world?
4. *'On the earth distress of nations in perplexity'*. What are the problems in the world that cause you distress? Is there anything you can do this Advent to respond to these problems?
5. *'And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory'*? When have you been most aware of God's power acting in your life? What can you do this Advent to give glory to God?
6. *Stay awake at all times praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man'*. Are there times in your life when you fall asleep and lose hope? In this Advent, how can you stay awake and prepare your heart for Christ's coming? What distracts you from praying? How can you learn to be still and avoid these distractions?

## Pope Francis tells us:

Jesus says: “Be vigilant at all times and pray” (Lk 21:36). Prayer is what keeps the lamp of the heart lit. This is especially true when we feel that our enthusiasm has cooled down. Prayer re-lights it, because it brings us back to God, to the centre of things. Prayer reawakens the soul from sleep and focuses it on what matters, on the purpose of existence. Even during our

busiest days, we must not neglect prayer. The prayer of the heart can be helpful for us, repeating often brief invocations. For example, during Advent, we could make a habit of saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." Only these words, but repeating them: "Come, Lord Jesus". This time of preparation leading to Christmas is beautiful: we think of the nativity scene and Christmas, so let us say from the heart: "Come, Lord Jesus". Let us repeat this prayer all throughout the day: the soul will remain vigilant! "Come, Lord Jesus".

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.