

**Lectio Divina: Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes**

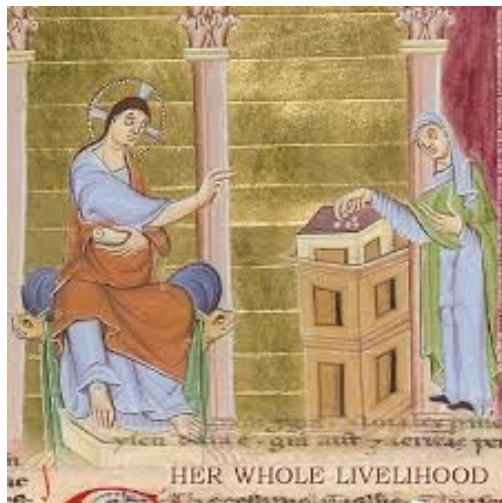


Image from the World Wide Web

**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, like the poor widow can empty ourselves in an act of generosity and put our trust in God’s providence.

### **Reading      Mark 12:38-44**

In his teaching Jesus said, 'Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.'

He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on'.

## 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. *"Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares."* Are you obsessed with what others think of you or are you true to who you are? Does your status in the community influence your behaviour in a way that is beneficial to the community or in a way that you think makes you look good amongst your peers? When have you found yourself behaving like the scribes?
4. *"These are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers."* How can you learn to love God and pray to him with a fullness of heart? Do you tend to pay more attention to external appearances or to those those in the community whose voice is unheard or ignored?
5. *"Many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny."* Do you ever judge others because of their economic status? Have you ever given all you had to the service of God for example, your time, your energy, your resources; trusting that God would take care of your needs?

## Pope Francis tells us:

The wealthy contributed with great ostentation what for them was superfluous, while the widow, Jesus says, "put in everything she had, her whole living" (v. 44). For this reason, Jesus says, she gave the most of all. Because of her extreme poverty, she could have offered a single coin to the temple and kept the other for herself. But she did not want to give just half to God; she divested herself of everything. In her poverty she understood that in having God, she had everything; she felt completely loved by him and in turn loved him completely. What a beautiful example this little old woman offers us!

Today Jesus also tells us that the benchmark is not quantity but fullness. There is a difference between quantity and fullness. You can have a lot of money and still be empty. There is no fullness in your heart. This week, think about the difference there is between quantity and fullness. It is not a matter of the wallet, but of the heart. There is a difference between the wallet and the heart.... There are diseases of the heart, which reduce the heart to the wallet.... This is not good! To love God "with all your heart" means to trust in him, in his providence, and to serve him in the poorest brothers and sisters without expecting anything in return.

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.