

Lectio Divina: You are my beloved Son



Baptism of Jesus - Daniel Bonnell

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 too can emerge from the waters changed in the knowledge that that we, like Jesus, have been entrusted by God Our Father to carry out a mission

Reading Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

At that time: As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, ‘I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’

Now when all the people were baptised by John the Baptist and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’

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. *'The people were filled with expectation.'* What do you hope for at the start of this Jubilee Year? Have there been times in the past when you were filled with expectation? Do you ever expect too much of yourself or of others?
4. *'He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'* How can you better serve those in need? How can you grow in humility?
5. *'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'* How does your faith motivate you? When have you felt the fire of the Holy Spirit in your life? How have the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit presented themselves in your life?
6. *'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'* Do you feel like a beloved child of God? When have you felt that God was pleased with you? In what ways can you treat those you encounter as beloved children of God?

Pope Francis tells us:

Today, the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus, let us ponder the day of our Baptism. All of us were baptized, let us give thanks for this gift. I ask you a question: which of you knows the date of your Baptism? Surely not everyone. Therefore, I encourage you to find out the date, by asking, for example, your parents, your grandparents, your godparents, or going to the parish. It is very important to know it, because it is a date to be celebrated: it is the date of our rebirth as Children of God. For this reason, homework for this week: go and find out the date of your Baptism. Celebrating that day means and reaffirms our adherence to Jesus, with the commitment to live as Christians, members of the Church and of a new humanity, in which all are brothers and sisters.

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.