

Lectio Divina: Can a blind man lead a blind man?



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 guide our hearts and enlighten our minds as we ponder our relationship with others and to pray for the grace we need to accept them for who they are – a beloved child of God.

Reading Luke 6:39 - 45

At that time: Jesus told his disciples a parable: 'Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye", when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

'For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.'

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. You may even want to imagine you are with Jesus listening to the challenges of how we should live if we want to be his disciple.

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 or startling?
3. *“Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?”.* What pitfalls have you encountered on your spiritual journey? Have you ever led anyone astray or has someone ever led you astray.
4. *‘Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?’* Are you quick to criticise people; are you ready to judge them; do you have preconceptions and rationalise them instead of accepting them as brothers and sisters? What is the speck or log you fail to see in your own eye?
5. *‘For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit.’* What good fruits does your faith life produce? How do you share this good fruit with those you encounter.
6. *‘For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.’* How does what you say reflect what is going on in your heart? How can you draw from the store of goodness in your heart so that you can treat others with warmth, affirmation, encouragement and compassion.

Pope Francis tells us:

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord invites us to clean up our gaze. To clean up our gaze. He first asks us to look within ourselves to recognize our failings. Because if we are not capable of seeing our own defects, we will always be inclined to magnify those of others. If instead we acknowledge our own mistakes and our own flaws, the door of mercy opens up to us. And after looking within ourselves, Jesus invites us to look at others as he does – this is the secret, to look at others as he does – looking first not at evil, but at

goodness. God looks at us in this way: he does not see irredeemable errors in us, but children who make mistakes. It is a change in outlook: he does not concentrate on the mistakes, but on the children who make mistakes. God always distinguishes the person from his errors. He always saves the person. He always believes in the person and is always ready to forgive errors. We know that God always forgives. And he invites us to do likewise: not to look for evil in others, but good.

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.