

## Lectio Divina: Put out into the deep



Miraculous Draught of Fishes by John Reilly - 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 to enable us be like Simon Peter who with trust accepted Jesus’ invitation to go out to deeper waters.

### **Reading      Luke 5:1-11**

At that time: The crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear the word of God. He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ And Simon answered, ‘Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.’

And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that

they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.' And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

## 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 in the boat with Simon as he pulls out into unknown waters?

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. *'Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.'* Where is the deep water God calling you to go? Have you ever been asked to go out into unfamiliar territory knowing that your familiar territory yielded nothing? What was your response? What happened?
4. *'They enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them.'* Can you think of anywhere that this miraculous catch of fish is taking place today? Do you join together with other communities to bring in this catch of fish? If not, what is it that stops you?
5. *'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'* Do you too feel unworthy of God's abundant goodness? What separates you from God's unconditional love?
6. *'And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.'* Are you ready to leave everything to follow Jesus? What hinders you from having a deeper relationship with him?

## **Pope Francis tells us:**

Simon (to whom Jesus would later give the name Peter) seems at first to offer an objection; but inspired by the presence of Jesus, and illuminated by His word, Simon does as he is asked. It is the response of faith, the response that that we too are called to give; and the attitude of openness that the Lord asks of all His disciples, especially insofar as they have duties of responsibility in the Church.

It is Simon's trusting obedience that prompts the miraculous catch of fish. When we come with generosity to His service, Jesus accomplishes great things in us.

This is how Jesus deals with each of us: He asks us to welcome Him into the boat of our life, to begin again with Him and set out on a new sea, that turns out to be full of surprises. Jesus' invitation gives new meaning to our existence. If we, like Peter, are sometimes surprised or hesitant at this call, Jesus encourages us. If we trust in Him God will free us from our sin, and open us up to new horizons, to collaborate in his mission.

The greatest miracle accomplished by Jesus for Simon and the other disappointed and tired fishermen, is not so much the nets filled with fish, but to have helped them to not fall victim to disappointment and discouragement in the face of setbacks. He opened the way for them to become heralds and witnesses of His word and of the Kingdom of God.

## **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.