

## **Lectio Divina: Man shall not live on bread alone**



Christ in the Wilderness - Ivan Kramskoy, 1872

### **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 hear. 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 can make a journey of conversion during this time of Lent. Let us ask God to "Lead us not into temptation".

## **Reading      Luke 4:1-13**

At that time: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were over, he was hungry. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone."'

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, 'To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."'

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot

against a stone.” And Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’

And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

### **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 in the wilderness feeling his loneliness and hunger. Perhaps you may want to reflect on the times you have been tempted in the same way Jesus was tempted.

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 startled by the three temptations of Jesus i.e. hunger, power and pride?
3. *“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. Where is the Holy Spirit leading you during this time of Lent? What temptations are you faced with on your faith journey?”*
4. *‘The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’ Have you ever been tempted to put your own personal needs before the needs of others?*
5. *“To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.’ When have you wanted to be influential rather than serving others? How, during this Lenten Season can you grow in humility and seek to serve others?”*
6. *‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you” Have you ever put God to the test by wanting divine intervention for something unreasonable? Do you sometimes want to attract attention so that you can be popular?*

## **Pope Francis tells us:**

There are three paths that will lead us to ruin.

The first, the path of greed for possession. The second temptation: the path of human vainglory. The devil says: "If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours" (v. 7). And then the third temptation: exploiting God to one's own advantage.

These are the paths that are set before us, with the illusion that in this way one can obtain success and happiness. But in reality, they are completely extraneous to God's mode of action; rather, in fact they distance us from God, because they are the works of Satan. Jesus, personally facing these trials, overcomes temptation three times in order to fully adhere to the Father's plan. And he reveals the remedies to us: interior life, faith in God, the certainty of his love — the certainty that God loves us, that he is Father, and with this certainty we will overcome every temptation.

But there is one thing to which I would like to draw your attention, something interesting. In responding to the tempter, Jesus does not enter a discussion, but responds to the three challenges with only the Word of God. This teaches us that one does not dialogue with the devil; one must not discuss, one only responds to him with the Word of God.

Therefore, let us benefit from Lent as a privileged time to purify ourselves, to feel God's comforting presence in our life.

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.