Lectio Divina: Blessed is the King

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 out 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 as we ask for the grace to journey with Jesus during this Holy Week.

Reading Luke 19:28-40

At that time: Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, 'Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" you shall say this: "The Lord has need of it."'

So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of it.'

And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near— already on the way down the Mount of Olives— the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him,

‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples.’ He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.’

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 might want to imagine you are amongst the crowd watching Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem..

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. *'He sent two of the disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied.’* Where is Jesus sending you as you journey with him during Holy Week and in this Jubilee Year? What is he asking you to do? Who or what is he asking you to bring to him?
4. *‘So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.’* Have you ever been surprised at the simplicity of your mission when you have surrendered yourself into God’s hands?
5. *‘And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road’.* How do you welcome Jesus into your life?
6. *‘The whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.’* What mighty works do you need to show your gratitude to God for? How can you be more whole hearted in how you express this gratitude?
7. *‘I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.’* When have you been silent in matters of truth and justice when you should have spoken out? How can you be braver in sharing your faith?

Pope Francis tells us:

Why does Jesus enter Jerusalem? Or better: how does Jesus enter Jerusalem? The crowds acclaim him as King. And he does not deny it, he does not tell them to be silent. But what kind of a King is Jesus? Let us

take a look at him: he is riding on a donkey, he is not accompanied by a court, he is not surrounded by an army as a symbol of power. He is received by humble people, simple folk who have the sense to see something more in Jesus; they have that sense of the faith which says: here is the Saviour. Jesus does not enter the Holy City to receive the honours reserved to earthly kings, to the powerful, to rulers; he enters to be scourged, insulted and abused, as Isaiah foretold in the First Reading. He enters to receive a crown of thorns, a staff, a purple robe: his kingship becomes an object of derision. He enters to climb Calvary, carrying his burden of wood. Jesus enters Jerusalem in order to die on the Cross. And it is precisely here that his kingship shines forth in godly fashion: his royal throne is the wood of the Cross! Why the Cross? Because Jesus takes upon himself the evil, the filth, the sin of the world, including the sin of all of us, and he cleanses it, he cleanses it with his blood, with the mercy and the love of God. Let us look around: how many wounds are inflicted upon humanity by evil! Wars, violence, economic conflicts that hit the weakest, greed for money that you can't take with you and have to leave. Love of power, corruption, divisions, crimes against human life and against creation! And our personal sins: our failures in love and respect towards God, towards our neighbour and towards the whole of creation. Jesus on the Cross feels the whole weight of the evil, and with the force of God's love he conquers it, he defeats it with his resurrection. This is the good that Jesus does for us on the throne of the Cross.

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.