

## **Lectio Divina: Love one another**

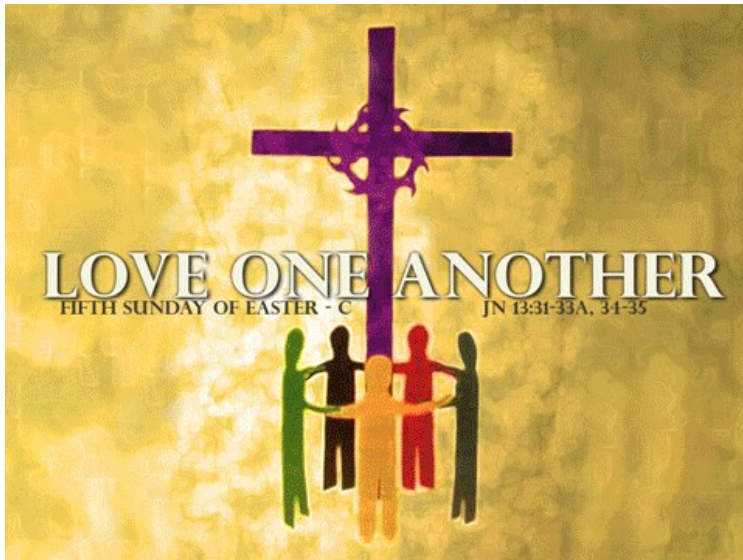


Image from the World Wide Web

### **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 to the love that Jesus has for us and to be able to love others with that same love, even the people that we find difficult to like.

## **Reading      John 13:31-33a, 34-35**

When Judas had gone out from the upper room, Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you.

‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

## **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 that you are in the upper room at the Last Supper listening to

Jesus giving you a new commandment and reflect on the emotions stirred up in you by Christ's Farewell Discourse and his testament of love.

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. *'Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him'.* How does your life give glory to God? How can you show gratitude to God for his glory?
4. *'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you'* When have you deeply felt the love of God? How have you experienced the love of Jesus in your life? How can you share this love with others?
5. *'By this all people will know that you are my disciples'* How do you strive to share you faith with others through your words and actions? How do you reach out to those you encounter in your daily life?

### **Pope Francis tells us:**

Jesus loved us first. He loved us despite our frailties, our limitations and our human weaknesses. It was he who ensured we become worthy of his boundless and never-ending love. By giving us this new commandment, he asks us to love one another, not only and not so much with our love, but with his, which the Holy Spirit instils in our hearts if we invoke him with faith. In this way — and only in this way — can we love one another not only as we love ourselves but as he loved us, that is, infinitely more. Indeed, God loves us much more than we love ourselves. And thus, we can spread everywhere the seed of love that renews relationships between people and opens horizons of hope. Jesus always opens horizons of hope. His love opens horizons of hope. This love makes us become new men, brothers and sisters in the Lord, and makes us the new People of God, that is the Church, in which everyone is called to love Christ and to love one another in him.

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.