

**Lectio Divina: Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind**



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 of God enter our hearts and enlighten our minds to "serve as you deserve and to give without counting the cost" (Prayer for generosity attributed to St Ignatius of Loyola, see below).

## **Reading      Luke 14:1, 7-14**

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.

Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honour, saying to them, 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honour, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, "Give your place to this person", and then you, with shame, will take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher." Then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'

He said also to the man who had invited him, 'When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends, or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.'

## 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 crowd listening to Jesus giving advice on how to behave as a guest and how to behave as a host.

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. *'One Sabbath, when Jesus went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully'*. Who do you watch carefully so that you can learn from them? How can you provide a good example to those who watch you?
4. *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."* What does the word humble mean to you? Do you seek the praise of others or you are happy in your own skin and content with your God-given talents? How can you ensure that you use these God-given talents for the right reasons?
5. *'But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you.'* When you invite people into your company, are you thinking of how your invitation can be repaid? Do you reach out to them because you are more interested in their company? How can you reach out to those in the margins of society in love - to "give and not count the cost", to "labour and not look for any reward" (see prayer below).

## Pope Francis tells us:

Jesus' teaching is clear: "do not do things out of self-interest", do not choose your friendships on the basis of convenience.

Reasoning on the basis of one's own advantage is a form of selfishness, segregation and self-interest whilst Jesus' message is exactly the opposite.

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory but humbly regard others as more important than ourselves.

Gossip, stems from rivalry and is used to destroy others. Rivalry is ugly: you can perpetrate it openly, in a direct way, or with white gloves. But it always

aims to destroy the other and to 'raise oneself up' by diminishing the other.  
Rivalry stems from self- interest.

Equally harmful, is someone who prides himself on being superior to others.  
This attitude, destroys communities and families: "Think of the rivalry between siblings for the father's inheritance for example", it is something we see every day.

Christians, must follow the example of the Son of God, cultivating "gratuitousness": doing good without expecting or wanting to be repaid, sowing unity and abandoning rivalry or vainglory.

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.

### **Prayer for Generosity attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola**

Lord, teach me to be generous,  
to serve you as you deserve,  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labour and not to look for any reward,  
save that of knowing that I do your holy will.

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd.