

Lectio Divina: Strive to enter through the narrow door



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 help us be aware of the unwanted baggage that prevents us from meeting Jesus at the narrow door.

Reading Luke 13:22-30

At that time: Jesus went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem. And someone said to him, 'Lord, will those who are saved be few?' And he said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us", then he will answer you, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets." But he will say, "I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!" In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.

And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.'

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 the in the crowd when Jesus said 'Strive to enter through the narrow door'.

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. *"Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."* What unwanted baggage is preventing you from entering through the narrow door? How can you rid yourself of this unwanted baggage?
4. *"Lord, open to us", then he will answer you, "I do not know where you come from."* Do you think that you are guaranteed a place in the Kingdom of Heaven by virtue of your Baptism and fulfilling religious obligations? How can you be more actively committed to living the Gospel in your daily life?
5. *'People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.'* Do you sometimes find yourself excluding others just because they are a different – a different religion, or do not think as you do, or do not appear to be following the "laws" and "commandments" of your church community?
6. *'And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last'*. How welcoming are you to those considered last or ignored in your community – the stranger, the homeless, the refugee? How can you help to make them feel included?

Pope Francis tells us:

In the passage from the Gospel of Luke for this Sunday's liturgy, someone asks Jesus, "Will those who are saved be few?" And the Lord responds: "Strive to enter by the narrow door" (Lk 13:24). The narrow door is an image that could scare us, as if salvation is destined for only a select few, or for perfect people. But this contradicts what Jesus has taught us on many occasions; and, as a matter of fact, a little further ahead, he confirms, "Men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God" (v. 29). Therefore, this door is narrow, but is open to everyone! Do not forget this: to everyone! The door is open to everyone!

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.