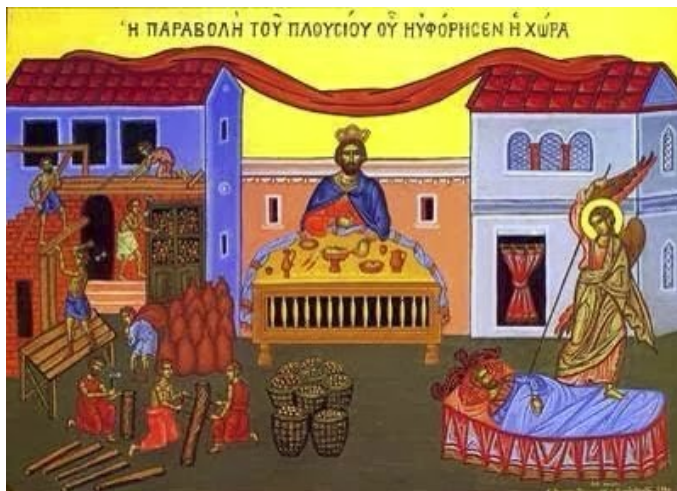


Lectio Divina: The Rich Fool



Orthodox icon of the Parable of the rich fool - 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 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 open our hearts and minds to the fact that life does not consist of the possessions we have but in sharing what we have with others.

Reading Luke 12:13-21

At that time: Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?' And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions.' And he told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?" And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So is the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

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 when Jesus tells the parable about greed and abundance of possessions.

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. *'Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'* What do you ask Jesus for in your prayer? What is your attitude to material wealth?
4. *'Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?'* How often do you judge others? How can you begin to view others with love rather than judgment?
5. *'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness,'* Do you ever feel envious that someone has more possessions than you? Do you ever think if only you had this or that, you would be happier? What do you do so as not to be a victim of gain brought about by consumerism?
6. *'One's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions.'* What do your possessions say about your priorities? Is your life full of freedom, peace, security and happiness, things money cant buy?
7. *'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'* What legacy do you want to leave behind?

Pope Francis tells us:

"Money is needed to bring about many good things, but when your heart is attached (to money), it destroys you. How many destroyed families have we seen because of money problems, sibling against sibling, father against child. When a person is attached to money, he destroys himself, destroys the family and destroys relationships. Jesus warns people to "guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions. It is not money that is destructive, but the attitude called greed. Greed makes you ill because it makes you think about everything only in relation to money. Greed is an instrument of idolatry because you play god out of vanity and because it leads to the path that is opposed to what God did for us. Jesus made himself poor to enrich humanity, and the path to God is through Christ's same humility and "lowering oneself in order to serve. When Jesus said, "No

one can serve two masters,” one can either serve God or money, Jesus was asking people to trust in God to provide. However walking the path of poverty isn’t for poverty’s sake; poverty is an instrument to help people remain focused on God, who is the only master, “not the idol of gold. All the goods we have, the Lord gives us” in order to help the world and humanity progress, and to help others.

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.