

## Lectio Divina:

## The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

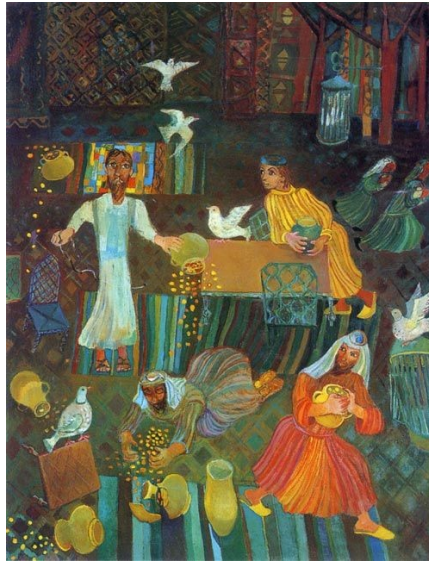


Image from the World Wide Web

## 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 the knowledge that we are temples of God and that there is a sacred place within each of us where love can dwell and flow from us, a place of peace and light, a place where God is

## **Reading      John 2:13-22**

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the Temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

## 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 with Jesus as overturns the tables and scatters the money. How does his behaviour make you feel?

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. *And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen..* Can you remember a time when you were consumed by rage at what you knew to be a terrible injustice? How do you feel about those unfair practices that you witness in the world today? Can you remember a time of seeing someone, or perhaps yourself, confront an injustice or an abuse courageously?
4. *'What sign do you show us for doing these things?'* Are you able to entrust yourself completely to God's hands in an act of faith, or do you ask for signs? When have you see the signs of God's presence in your life? How can you be more attentive to God's loving presence in your daily life?
5. *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'* Knowing that you, yourself are a temple of God, what are the things in your life that need to be driven out in order for you to follow Jesus more faithfully? In what ways can you place God more centrally in your life without all the disordered attachments around you?
6. *'They believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.'* Who are the people or what are the resources that help strengthen your faith? How do you share your faith with others?

## Pope Francis asks us:

- Does the Lord feel at home in my life?
- Do we allow Him to "cleanse" our hearts and to drive out the idols, those attitudes of cupidity, jealousy, worldliness, envy, hatred, those habits of gossiping and tearing down others?
- Do I allow Him to cleanse all the behaviours that are against God, against our neighbour, and against ourselves?
- Each one can answer for him/herself, in the silence of his/her heart: "Do I allow Jesus to make my heart a little cleaner?"

Jesus cleanses with tenderness, mercy, love. Mercy is the His way of cleansing. Let us, each of us, let us allow the Lord to enter with His mercy — not with the whip, no, with His mercy — to cleanse our hearts. With us, Jesus' whip is His mercy. Let us open to Him the gates so that He will make us a little purer.

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.