

Lectio Divina -- Session 3

Reading About Lectio

We begin by stilling the body and mind, reflecting in our action our inner resolve to be only with God and his word for the four "moments" of *lectio divina*: reading, meditating, praying, contemplating.

from Michael Casey in *Sacred Reading*:

We begin to defer to another time the tasks remaining undone. This is the negative phase of moving into prayer or lectio: we place a temporary block on activities and concerns that belong to another part of the day. This is easier said than done, but it is not impossible. As the evacuation of thoughts proceeds, we gradually turn our minds and hearts to things of God.

Opening Prayer: (Simple Prayer of Intention)

Let me be open to your Word.

Scripture passage: Cure of a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath--Luke 13, 10 - 17

Reading (lectio): Immersing ourselves in the word.

Again, Michael Casey:

Lectio divina is like reading poetry: we need to slow down, savor what we read, and allow the text to trigger memories and associations that reside below the threshold of consciousness. . . .One useful technique is to revert to the ancient practice of verbalizing as we read. This means that as we read we vocalize the words saying them quietly to ourselves or even aloud. . . .By adding sound to sight, reading aloud increases its power to both capture our attention and to evoke latent memories.

Meditating (meditatio): Finding the word or phrase that seems to call to us, to well up from the Spirit within.

From *Lectio Divina* by Painter and Wynkoop.

Meditation is like a key that unlocks something in our hearts and minds. Another image for meditation is the kaleidoscope that opens up new associations and patterns. . . .Meditation allows us to withdraw, to listen deeply and to be attuned to the Holy Spirit so that we can see our problems in a fresh new way.

If having difficulty with either Meditating or the next step, Praying, you might try journaling. Simply write the word that has seemed to engage you and any other words that seem to come to you. Then look at what you have written and listen to any connections the Spirit may be making in you. Surrender to the repetition of the word and any connections you might feel.

Praying (oratio): Responding to God in prayer

Michael Casey in *Sacred Reading*:

Sometimes prayer wells up naturally during our lectio divina; in such cases we do not need much external guidance. At other times our reading may seem dry; then we have to prime the pump. If no prayer rises spontaneously from the text, we have to make a positive effort to add prayer. If prayer is slow in coming, it makes sense for us to go out and meet it halfway.

Again, a practical hint at this stage might be to journal a prayer. Just writing "Dear Lord" might get you started. Or the prayer might flow naturally out of the journaling done in meditating.

Contemplating (contemplatio): Responding to God in silence

Painter & Wynkoop, *Lectio Divina*

We move from reading the Word, to savoring individual words and allowing them to unfold within us. God touches our hearts and we respond with a yes to an invitation toward transformation. This leads to contemplatio, which is a prayer of soaking, of simply basking in the experience of love, of allowing that love to work its transforming renewal within.

Suggestion for taking the Word into your day

We take the word, backed up by the insights and prayer we experienced, into our day. We say it whenever we have a lull in activity, when we are impatient, when we become aware of a special grace in our day. In this way, we become the word and the word shapes our life. One Lectio practitioner puts her word or phrase into a melodic line to better remember it.

Additional Thoughts about Lectio

From Fr. Thomas Keating:

The ripe fruit of the regular practice of Lectio Divina is assimilating the Word of God and being assimilated by it. It is a movement from conversation to communion. It also enables us to express our deep spiritual experience of union with God in words or symbols that are appropriate. There is thus a movement, not only into silence, but from silence into expression.

From M. Robert Mulholland's **Shaped by the Word**

Keep asking yourself, "What is God seeking to say to me in all of this?" By adopting this posture toward the text, you will begin the process of reversing the learning mode that establishes you as the controlling power that seeks to master a body of information. Instead, you will begin to allow the text to become an instrument of God's grace in your life. You will begin to open yourself to the possibility of God setting the agenda for your life through the text.

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