

Day 2, Lesson 2 : Lectio Divina I

Introduction

The previous lesson (Dogma and Spiritual Life) ends by opening the way for us to go back to the fullness of union with Jesus (see diagram of Jesus-Temple on the Cross bringing us back to him). All what we learn from now on are things to practise in order to for us to go back with Jesus-the-Way, to the fullness of Union with Jesus.

In our journey we learn to follow Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus. We use two “legs”: “Lectio Divina” and “the Prayer of the heart”. They are the way to digest the rich Food received in the Mass: the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Body and Blood of Jesus. These two legs constitute the two main columns of the First Level Course. The first one (LD) starts right now, with 3 half days. The second one will occupy the latter third of the Course: two full days.

Introducing Lectio Divina

The first step in this journey of learning practical things is to learn “How to listen to Jesus and to put into practice His word”, i.e. Lectio Divina. We need to know the origin and source of Lectio Divina. We need to become aware that the first fruit of the Incarnation of the Son of God is that the Silent God became audible. Jesus “opened his mouth” (Mt 5:1-2) and uttered words that are [Holy] Spirit and [Divine] Life. The words He used have a double characteristic: 1- their skin is human (part of our vocabulary) 2- the fruit inside is Divine. In this sense they are a Perfect Sacrament (definition of Sacrament: a visible sign of an invisible Grace).

The Mass is for us the Place where Jesus continues to walk among us and speaks directly to us as He was doing 2000 years ago in Galilee and Judea. “He [Christ] is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the Holy Scriptures are read in the Church.” (Vatican II, SC7) Procession of the Word, The Decorative Beauty brought to the Evangeliary or Book of the Gospels, Incensing it, Lifting it, Bowing in front of it, standing up during the Gospel Proclamation,...all add to the solemnity and sacredness of the gospel reading.

How to listen: the Method

Lectio divina is about “listening”, putting into practice Jesus’ word for us today. We ask this in the Our Father: “give us this day our daily Bread”, your Word.

We saw in the previous lesson the state of Adam after the fall, half dead, divided and ill in his body (senses), soul (emotions, thoughts, will, gap between his mind and his will), and separated from God in his spirit (half dead). The strongest nourishment and healing will come to Adam, through Jesus Christ’s Words.

For all that follows in Lectio Divina, **please refer to the book: Lectio divina I, the Method**. It reflects the exact explanation given in the Course. As a handout, you may just as well have the Table of Contents of that book.

Suggested reading list for Lectio divina:

- Daily reading of the Bible. The Gospel. Luke 24 Isaiah 53.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church. nn° 50-141.
- "Dei Verbum", Council Vatican II.
- "Scripture in Tradition", Henri de Lubac.
- "History and the Spirit", Henri de Lubac.
- "The Lord's Sermon on the Mount", Saint Augustine.
- "Saint Augustine’s Homilies on the First letter of John".
- "Letter and Spirit, from written text to living word in the liturgy", Scott Hahn.
- "Lectio Divina I, The Method", Jean Khoury.
- "Lectio Divina II, Mary and the Spirit", Jean Khoury.
- "Lectio Divina III, Lectio Divina and daily life", Jean Khoury (to be published soon).

Here are useful elements that you don't find in the book:

LECTIO DIVINA STEPS

I- PREPARING

- 1- Sit in a quiet place
- 2- In the presence of Christ, entering into my conscience
- 3- Consider His desire to speak to me
- 4- I choose Him again as my First priority
- 5- I give myself to Him, unconditionally

II- LISTENING

Active phase: seeking understanding

- 6- Read (1) in order to understand the text

Listening phase: asking for the help of the Holy Spirit

- 7- Read (2) in order to discover Christ's will
- 8- Read (3) until I see only one light
- 9- Read (4) until the light becomes clear
- 10- Write down the words from the readings that touched me

III- REALISATION

- 11- Asking the Holy Spirit's help in order to put into practice the Word
- 12- Giving thanks, being immersed in Him
- 13- Putting into practice the Word I received
- 14- Echoes during the day
- 15- At the end of the day: giving thanks

Advice in the Bible to practise Lectio Divina

- "Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And **he opened his mouth** and taught them" (Mt 5:1-2) "he began to teach them many things" (Mk 6:34) "Where did this man get **this wisdom** and these mighty works?" (Mt 13:55) "The crowds were astonished at **his teaching**, for he taught them as one **who had authority**, and not as their scribes. " (Mt 7:28-29)

- "As for what was sown on the **Good soil**, this is he who **hears** the word and **understands** it; he indeed **bears fruit**, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Mt 13:23)

- "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word [...] has passed from death to life." (Jn 5:24)

To love Jesus-God is to put into practice his words

- "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, 17 even the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:15-17)
- "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (Jn 14:21)
- "If a man loves me, he will keep my word" (Jn 14:23)
- "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." (Jn 15:10)
- "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment." (Mt 22:37-38)
- We are invited to love God, to put into practice his words "with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind".
- "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Mt 7:21) He who doesn't put into practice Jesus' word and do things (even spiritual things) according to his own will, doesn't know God and God doesn't know him: "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'" (Mt 7:22-23)
- "Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." (Mt 7:24-25)
- "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Mt 12:50)
- "His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." (Jn 2:5)
- "blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." (Lk 1:45)
- "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68)
- "The words that I have spoken to you are [Holy] Spirit and [Divine] life." (Jn 6:63)
[Who can put the word of God into practise?] "'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" (Mt 19:25-26)
- "Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears." (1 Sam 3:9)
- "Is not my word like fire, says the LORD" (Jer 23:29)
- "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:12-13)
- "Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice [Word] echoes in his depths." (Gaudium et Spes, 16)
- "He [Christ] is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church." (Vatican II, SC7)
- "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like." (James 1:22-24)
- "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart." (Ps 50:6)
- "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth." (Jn 17:17)
- "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (Jn 8:31-32)
- "You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (Jn 15:14-15)
- "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." (Jn 14:26)
- "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the Truth" (Jn 16:13)
- "the sword of the Spirit, [...] the word of God" (Eph 6:17)