

Meditations on
Lectio Divina



***With Insights From
St. John Of The Cross***

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Table Of Contents

Introduction	2
Hearing the Word	3
Meditating on the Word	4
Praying The Word.....	5
Contemplating The Word.....	7
References	8
Copyright Notice	8

Introduction

It is good to sow the Word of God deep in one's being in the practice of **Lectio Divina** (Divine Reading). Each of us is called to cultivate an inner garden in which the Divine Word may grow and flourish. In **lectio** (reading), the seed of the Word is planted deep in the soil of one's spirit. In **meditatio** (meditation), the Word swells, sprouts, and takes root in the faculties of the soul. In **oratio** (praying), this Word is strengthened with the nutrients of love and faith as the soul responds to the Word. In **contemplatio** (contemplating), the seedling of the Word basks in the warm light of the Loving Presence which shines down on the inner garden.

Hearing the Word

Reading the Word slowly and reflectively within the context of its scripture passage provides the setting and background for **lectio**. This context provides the ways and means for us to plant the seeds of the Word.

“He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.' Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, 'Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.'” (Luke 4.16-21)

Lectio

Within her sacred space He stands;
She settles at His feet to hear.
He holds the Truth with open hands;
She listens as His Word draws near.

He speaks each word with gentle tone:
Slowly, clearly, with frequent pause.
Each word He speaks becomes her own --
To hold His Word is her sole cause.

Though distraction may turn her head,
And weakness may draw her away;
She turns back to His feet instead --
She treasures all He has to say.

His Word is truth and love and light:
It makes the broken-hearted whole;
It opens ears and restores sight;
It frees the heart and lifts the soul.

The one who hears will be fulfilled;
His Word enters the soul that's stilled.

May the Word Himself teach us to listen and treasure each of
the words He speaks to us in Holy Scripture.

Meditating on the Word

Meditatio involves pondering the meaning of the Word in the context of its original story, in the Lord's teaching, and in one's own life. In this way, the Word swells and takes root in the faculties of the soul.

“Blessed is the man who meditates on wisdom and who reasons intelligently. He who reflects in his mind on her ways will also ponder her secrets...he will pitch his tent near her, and will lodge in an excellent lodging place;...he will be sheltered by her from the heat, and will dwell in the midst of her glory.”
(Sirach 14. 20,21,25,27)

“But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.”
(Luke 2.19)

Meditatio

Onto her soul He scribes His Word --
Carved in the wall, crystal and clear.
She focuses on what she's heard,
And recollects her senses here.

The light of Truth shines through this wall,
Projecting on her faculties.
Discursively, she sifts It all,
And intuits Its subtleties.

The gentle warmth of the rays shine,
And fill her soul with loving grace;
The presence of the love divine
Prepares for Him her sacred space.
The divine light and love outpour
On recollected souls that yield
To grace and truth, whose rays restore,
His presence as they are revealed.

The presence of The Word shines through
Souls to enlighten and imbue.

May the Presence of the Word enlighten our souls with His
Truth and imbue them with His Love as we recollect ourselves
and meditate on His Word.

Praying The Word

Oratio is the loving response of faith to the Word as His message is received deeply in the interior of one's being. The Word is nourished and grows in the rich spiritual humus of humility which is cultivated in response to hearing and absorbing the Word.

“O God, you are my God-- for you I long! For you my body yearns; for you my soul thirsts, like a land parched, lifeless, and without water. So I look to you in the sanctuary to see your power and glory. For your love is better than life; my lips offer you worship! I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands, calling on your name. My soul shall savor the

rich banquet of praise, with joyous lips my mouth shall honor you! When I think of you upon my bed, through the night watches I will recall that you indeed are my help, and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy. My soul clings fast to you; your right hand upholds me.” (Psalm 63.1-9)

“And Mary said: ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior.’” (Luke 1.46-47)

Oratio

Remembering her lowly place
Before His Awesome Majesty,
She dares approach the Font of Grace
To bow and beg on bended knee.

His greatest attribute is love:
He condescends, humbly, to hear
Her heart-felt pleas that rise above
In truth, with faith, deep and sincere.

She consecrates herself once more,
To live His love and walk His ways;
As gratitude and love outpour,
Prayer culminates with grateful praise:

"Lord of all love and tenderness,
All life streams from Your Living Word,
You change our hearts with gentleness
As we absorb all that we've heard."

Her prayer resounds deep in her soul;
In love, His Word makes her joy whole.

May the Divine Word teach us to pray with pure and loving
hearts opened completely to the Father's will.

Contemplating The Word

Contemplatio is the full reception of His Word within. As the strength of His grace is absorbed, the means of living His Word is received. The seedlings of the Word grow and thrive, absorbing the nourishment provided by the rays of divine light.

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ ...those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked...Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Matthew 25.1-6,10b,13)

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ Let the hearer say, ‘Come.’ Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water.” (Revelations 22.17)

Contemplatio

Her distracting senses are stilled;
Her heart and mind passively lay.
Deep yearning for His love has filled
Her soul -- she thirsts in His delay.

Though thirst has parched her to the core,
Her faith and hope in Him are strong:
They burn more brightly than before;
She trusts He will not delay long.

This thirst and trust enlarge her soul --
The banquet hall which hosts His feast;

When He arrives, she'll be made whole --
His love is lavished on the least.

No one can tell when He'll arrive;
She holds vigil with lantern bright.
In faith and hope, her soul will strive,
To wait for Him throughout the night.

Maranatha! He will come soon,
To pierce the night with love's high noon.

May the Bridegroom be drawn to the banquet halls of our souls
as we yearn in faith and hope for His coming.

References

Scripture quotations are adapted from several Catholic editions

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