

## *Lectio Divina: Divine Reading for Difficult Times*

### Reading 18

As we navigate difficult and challenging times, and we are unable to attend Church services, we offer some divine reading passages and guidance for following an ancient approach to contemplating passages from Scripture. Below, we will offer a text for you to follow this week.

We follow guidance from a wonderful little book entitled *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*, by Thelma Hall.

This exercise can be carried out alone, or with others.

There are four steps to the *Lectio Divina* exercise:

1: *Lectio* – Reading and listening to the Word of God.

2: *Meditatio* – Reflecting on the word.

3: *Oratio* – The Word touches the heart.

4: *Contemplatio* – Entering the Silence “Too Deep for Words.”

Thelma Hall writes, “I prepare for this sacred reading by taking time to quiet my body and mind.” Take time to find a comfortable and favoured place to sit. Perhaps go through a few minutes of being conscious of your breathing.

Next, read the scripture passage with your full attention. This is step 1: *Lectio* – Reading and listening to the Word of God. Just read and re-read enough to take it all in.

Now, it’s time for *Meditatio* – Reflecting on the word. Perhaps think of fully seeing and understanding the passage for the very first time; even if you have read the passage before. You may find that a specific word or phrase seems to stand out from the rest of the passage. Take time to wonder why.

Thirdly, turn to *Oratio* – The Word touches the heart. Let the words tell you why you must listen to these words at this specific time. This is a ‘settling down’ moment where you can take as much time as you need to fully *be* with the words. You may wish to ask yourself, “Why is God focussing me on these specific words?”

Finally, turn to *Contemplatio* – Entering the Silence “Too Deep for Words.” Think of this as new beginning rather than the end of the process. Take time to imagine hearing these words for the very first time in terms of the depth of their guidance to you. God is taking over. Sit still. Do nothing for a little while.

With all this in mind, here are a couple of passages for you to take on in your *Lectio Divina* exercise this week:

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. <sup>2</sup> Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith. <sup>3</sup> You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. <sup>4</sup> Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal. <sup>5</sup> He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust. <sup>6</sup> Feet trample it down-- the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor. <sup>7</sup> The path of the righteous is level; O upright One, you make the way of the righteous smooth. <sup>8</sup> Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. <sup>9</sup> My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. (Isa 26:1 NIV)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1Pe 5:6 NIV)

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