

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

### **Reading 10**

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:

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. <sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." <sup>3</sup> Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. <sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, <sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. <sup>8</sup> You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. <sup>9</sup> If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- <sup>10</sup> then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; <sup>12</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. <sup>13</sup> You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. <sup>14</sup> "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. <sup>15</sup> He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. <sup>16</sup> With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." (Psalm 91:1 NIV)

I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. <sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:9 NIV)

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