

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

### **Reading 1**

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 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:

“Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. <sup>6</sup> He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. <sup>7</sup> My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. <sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.” (Psalm 62:5-8NIV)

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can a human do to me?" <sup>7</sup> Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. <sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. <sup>9</sup> Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them”. (Hebrews 13:5-9 NIV)

Have a blessed week.

The Reverend Sue-Ann Ward      The Reverend Deacon Paul K. Bates