**LECTIO DIVINA PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE**

**THERE IS A RESOURCE FOR LECTIO DIVINA WITH WEEKLY SUNDAY GOSPEL WHICH CAN BE USED ALONE OR WITH FAMILY / FRIENDS**

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Perhaps the oldest method of scriptural prayer known to Christians is **lectio divina or “holy reading.”** This method of prayer is characterized by the slow reading and consideration of a text from Scripture, with repetition and meditation on key words or phrases. Lectio divina is rooted in the belief that the scriptural word speaks in the human heart as the word of God and can reveal the thoughts of our hearts in response to God. In this way, lectio divina leads to a deeper communion with the Divine.

During Lectio Divina, we listen to the text of the bible with “the ear of the heart”, as if we are in a conversation with God, and God is suggesting the topics for discussion. It is about listening for the inspiration and movement of God in the words and images that seem to leap out and speak to us in the here and now of our lives. It is a means of going to the level of the heart and finding God there.

Here, our concerns, our relationships, our hopes and fears naturally intertwine with our meditations on the scriptures as we attend with the ears of the heart, listening for the “small voice” that says, “I am with you today.” We take the word that reaches out to us back into our inner pondering.

**Choose a short passage of scripture** that you wish to pray. Be open to the lead of the Spirit in choosing the text.

**Place yourself in a comfortable position** and allow yourself to become still and silent. Become of God’s presence with you. To begin, open with a short prayer, asking God to guide your prayer time. Perhaps “Come, Holy Spirit, Come.” Take a few deep breaths, letting go of distractions and opening your heart to God’s word.

**STEP ONE: READ** Slowly and thoughtfully, read the scripture passage the first time. Listen with the “ear of the heart”. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart? Linger with it whenever this happens. Let it settle deeply in your heart. Simply return to the repetition of the phrase, sentence or one word, savouring it in your heart. (You can read the passage a second time to further listen.)

**STEP TWO: REFLECT** Slowly and prayerfully, read the passage again. Why might these words have jumped out at you? What is God saying to you in this passage? Offering you? Asking you? What feelings are arising in you?

**STEP THREE: RESPOND** Slowly and prayerfully read the passage again. Respond to God in your heart. Speak to God of your feelings and insights. Offer them to God. Ask for help, guidance, insight and direction and speak naturally to God.

**STEP FOUR: REST** Sit quietly in God’s presence, asking, “What are you saying to me” Rest in God’s love, and listen.

**As you end of your prayer period**, you might close with an Our Father or another short prayer. Thank God for this moment, for the fruit of this prayer time and for any clarity or insight given. Commit to any steps God is asking of you and trust in God’s guidance. It might be helpful to jot down in a journal what arose during this time. What did you speak to God and what did God offer you?

**SOME PASSAGES YOU CAN CHOOSE RELATED TO THEMES OF OUR JUBILEE YEAR**

**Genesis 12:1 – 7** the calling of Abraham. Abraham is a pilgrim, called by God and told, “Leave your country, your relatives and your father’s house for a country that I shall show you.” (12:1) With these words, Abraham’s adventure begins, a journey to the Promised Land.

**Genesis 12: 1 – 7** The Lord said to Abram: Go forth from your land, your relatives, and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will find blessing in you. Abram went as the Lord directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai, his brother’s son Lot, all the possessions that they had accumulated, and the persons they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land as far as the sacred place at Shechem, by the oak of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said: To your descendants I will give this land. So, Abram built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.

**Leviticus 25: 8 – 17** This is the instruction for the Old Testament Jubilee. Honouring its Jewish roots, the Catholic Church continues this custom of celebrating the Jubilee as a year of renewal. This passage is an opportunity to reflect on what the Jubilee meant to the ancestors of our faith.

**Leviticus 25: 8 – 17** You shall count seven weeks of years—seven times seven years—such that the seven weeks of years amount to forty-nine years. Then, on the tenth day of the seventh month, let the ram’s horn resound; on this, the Day of Atonement, the ram’s horn blast shall resound throughout your land. You shall treat this fiftieth year as sacred. You shall proclaim liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to your own property, each of you to your own family. This fiftieth year is your year of jubilee; you shall not sow, nor shall you reap the aftergrowth or pick the untrimmed vines, since this is the jubilee. It shall be sacred for you. You may only eat what the field yields of itself. In this year of jubilee, then, each of you shall return to your own property. Therefore, when you sell any land to your neighbor or buy any from your neighbor, do not deal unfairly with one another. On the basis of the number of years since the last jubilee you shall purchase the land from your neighbor; and so also, on the basis of the number of years of harvest, that person shall sell it to you. When the years are many, the price shall be so much the more; when the years are few, the price shall be so much the less. For it is really the number of harvests that the person sells you. Do not deal unfairly with one another, then; but stand in fear of your God. I, the Lord, am your God.

**Isaiah 40:31** As pilgrims of hope, the prophet Isaiah lets us reflect on what it means to put our hope in the Lord so that we can “run and not grow weary, walk but never tire” on life’s pilgrimage. (40:31)

**Isaiah 40: 31** They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on eagles’ wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint.

**Matthew 2:13 – 15** This is the gospel account of the Holy Family’s escape from Bethlehem to Egypt which highlights the importance of listening deeply to the voice of God on our journey.

**Matthew 2: 13 – 15** When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

**Luke 4: 16 – 21** Jesus begins his ministry by announcing “a year of the Lord’s favour”. Which is explicitly the language of Jubilee (4:19). To live under the Lordship of Christ is to live a spirituality of Jubilee, to live the mercy that sets captives free.

**Luke 4: 16 – 21** 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 24: 13 – 35** The road to Emmaus reveals how Jesus comes to us on pilgrimage, even in our confusion and doubt, and that the Eucharist – Jesus revealed in the “breaking of bread” (24:35 – is spiritual food for our journey.

**Luke 24: 13 – 35** On the first day of the week, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about eleven kilometres from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him. Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. These were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.