

Lectio Divina



Lectio Divina for the Fourth Week of Lent

We begin our prayer:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,

grant, we pray,

that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

(Collect, Fourth Sunday of Lent)

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture two or three times.

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them Jesus addressed this parable: "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine

fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me



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always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.”

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

*If practicing **lectio divina** as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.*

Prayer (*Oratio*)

Read the Scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:

What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. Do I seek the mercy of God in regular examination of conscience and recourse to the Sacrament of Penance? How do I welcome fellow sinners with a generous heart?

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. When have I felt the mercy and compassion of God? How can I witness to God’s compassion among those who are lonely and afraid?

He became angry, and ... he refused to enter the house. When have I refused to extend forgiveness to someone who hurt me? What grudges am I carrying?

After a period of silent reflection and/or discussion, all recite the Lord’s Prayer and the following:

Closing Prayer:

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.

(From Psalm 34)

Living the Word This Week

How can I make my life a gift for others in charity?

Read *God’s Gift of Forgiveness: A pastoral Statement on Penance and Reconciliation*,

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/penance/upload/Penance-Statement-ENG.pdf>

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