



The Word of God for the People of God

Closing Liturgy

Note: Italicized portions are to be said by all.

Opening

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 236, "Proper 28"

Presider: May God be with you,

Response: *And also with you.*

Presider: Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Response

V. Word of God, Bearer of truth

R. Set us free.

V. Word of God, Teller of our story

R. Set us free.

V. Word of God, Proclamation of the Good News

R. Set us free.

V. Word of God, Manifest in history

R. Set us free.

V. Word of God, Sender of light

R. Set us free.

V. Word of God, Breaker of chains

R. Set us free.

Reading John 1:1-14

New Revised Standard Version

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not

overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Reflection

Lectio Divina on John 1:1-14 (see notes at the end of this section)

Blessing

Go out into the world, proclaiming the Good News to all, knowing that your words are filled with the inspiration of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*



The Word of God for the People of God

Lectio Divina

from *Lectio Divina: A Method of Bible Reflection* by Michel de Verteuil
<http://www.clubi.ie/shalom/lectio/method.html>

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means sacred reading) is done in four stages:

- *lectio* (reading): in which you read the passage slowly and reverently, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness
- *meditatio* (meditation): in which you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life
- *oratio* (prayer): in which you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer – thanksgiving, humility and petition
- *contemplatio* (contemplation): in which you rest in the presence of God, having used God’s word as a means to invitation to accept God’s transforming embrace.

The basic principle of *lectio divina* is that Bible reading is a personal encounter with God, a communion. In *lectio divina*, we love the text, linger over it, read it over and over, let it remain with us.

Once we approach the text in this way, we come face-to-face with the fact that it speaks to the imagination. A Bible text is not like a textbook or a newspaper, providing us with objective information. It was not written like that. Instead, it stirs up feelings; we find ourselves identifying with the characters, we feel for them, admire them or dislike them. We are caught up in the movement of the text, its suspense, its dramatic reversals of fortune, its unanswered questions.

Gradually, we *recognize* the text; we find that we have lived the sequence of events ourselves, or have seen them lived in others who have touched our lives, for good or for ill. Reading the text becomes a homecoming – and a lifting up.

Lectio divina, like all imaginative communication – especially story-telling – teaches not directly but by changing the consciousness of those who practice it. By identifying ourselves with God’s people – Jesus, the prophets and the great men and women of the Old and New Testaments – we find ourselves adopting their attitudes. We also recognize

ourselves in the bad characters of the text – the Pharisees, Pharaoh, the apostles when they were jealous of each other – and find that we want to give up these attitudes.

The Bible, recognized as coinciding with our experience, reveals to us the truth about life – not abstract truth, but an ideal we hunger and thirst for and, from another perspective, an evil we recoil from. In the Bible text, therefore, we discover the double reality of every human person – a story of sin and a story of grace.

In *lectio divina* we experience the true meaning of theology – entering through Bible reading into the wisdom of God or, more accurately, allowing God to lead us into wisdom, humbly, gratefully and with awe. The wisdom of God gives us God’s perspective on every aspect of life: interpersonal relationships, economics, politics, agriculture, etc.

Additional Lectio Divina Resources

- <http://www.osb.org/lectio/>
- <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>
- <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~salomon/ld/lectio.html>
- <http://www.ocarm.org/lectio/lecteng.htm>

*The Lectio Divina Process for **via media***

- 1) Read the passage aloud in a group, slowly, reverently, allowing each word, however ‘insignificant’ to resonate in its own moment.
- 2) Pause for a short period of reflection, around 60 seconds, praying for clarity and guidance about the passage.
- 3) Read the passage aloud again, in the same manner, asking another person to read.
- 4) Select a word or phrase that stands out at that moment. Observe an eight-minute period of silence, meditating on that phrase. As you feel your mind begin to wander, pull it back into focus by silently reciting the phrase you have selected.
- 5) Invite participants to share the word or phrase that resonated with them, spending about two minutes for each person, about what that word or words means to them, and how their prayer or meditation on that word has led them to a deeper spiritual understanding.
- 6) Conclude by reciting the Lord’s Prayer.