

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina: Reconciliation Session 3

We begin our prayer:

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

O God, author of true freedom,
whose will it is to shape all men and women
into a single people released from slavery,
grant to your Church, we pray,
that, as she receives new growth in freedom,
she may appear more clearly to the world
as the universal sacrament of salvation,
manifesting and making present
the mystery of your love for all.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

(Collect for Reconciliation)

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture and just focus on what the passage is saying. Take notice of any word, phrase, thought or image that catches your attention.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

(John 20:19-23)

What word or phrase caught your attention or what thought came to mind as you heard God's Word proclaimed?

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

Read the passage again, and this time focus on what speaks to you in this text and how it relates to your life.

You may use the following questions to guide your meditation if needed:

What might God be trying to say to you through that word, phrase or image that caught your attention initially?

When have I experienced the peace of Christ amid fear or spiritual struggle? How did it make me feel when I realized how near Christ was in those moments?

What fears or wounds keep me from fully embracing the Sacrament of Penance and how can I lean into the Lord to help me overcome these obstacles?

How do I rely on the Holy Spirit to guide me in recognizing my need for forgiveness from others and from God?

How might the Sacrament of Penance help me to grow in holiness?

How can I help others see the Sacrament of Penance not as a burden, but as a gift of healing?

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. What do you want to say to the Lord? Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture a final time, then rest in God's presence. Simply be with Him and listen for His voice. Allow His love and grace to fill you.

After a period of silent reflection conclude your time of prayer with the closing prayer below:

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
rich in forgiveness,
you willed to take on the lowliness of the flesh,
so that you might leave us an example of humility
and make us steadfast in all suffering.
Grant that we may always hold fast
to the good things we have received from you
and, whenever we fall into sin,
be raised up through penance.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

(Concluding Prayer, The Order of Penance, #209)

Living the Word (*Actio*)

Sins cripple us more than any physical ailment ever could. Physical suffering is temporal and temporary, but the suffering endured by the soul through sin can become eternal if not remedied through the grace of Christ Jesus in the Sacrament of Penance.

The Lord is ever ready to forgive those who seek his mercy with contrite hearts, and the grace that accompanies his mercy brings healing and restoration to not only the soul, but the body and mind as well. Seek the Lord's mercy in the Sacrament of Penance sometime this month and then make a commitment to receive the sacrament on a regular basis.



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