

Lectia Divina



Dear Friends,

The fourth Sunday of Lent is rather unique. Like the third Sunday of Advent (“Gaudete Sunday”), the fourth Sunday of Lent is a break in an otherwise penitential season. The vestment for this day is rose, as for Gaudete Sunday in Advent, and flowers may adorn the Altar. This day is called “Laetare Sunday” (also “Rose Sunday”), and takes its name from the opening words of the antiphon for the Mass – “Laetare, Jerusalem” – “Rejoice Jerusalem”.

Have you notice that Lent is not commercialized like Advent? Mass media and the business world remind us early and with great anticipation about important holidays such as Independence Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. For the most part, these holidays are considered important by the secular culture because they give us a reason to eat, drink and spend money. For us as followers of Christ, there are others days and seasons which are also important, even if they are not mentioned in the media.

Why is Lent not present in the media like other holidays are? The answer is simple: during this season instead of consumerism and the spending of money, Lent proposes moderation. Instead of hurry and distraction, it proposes prayer and recollection. Instead of acquiring goods for oneself, it proposes generosity

toward those most in need. Prayer, moderation and charity should be a way of life for Catholics, not only during the Lenten season, but throughout the entire year. However, in our daily life characterized by busyness, difficulties and a sometimes hectic rhythm, it is easy to forget who we are as Catholics. The season of Lent offers this special time to us to stop and evaluate our relationship to God and to others.

Let us make the most of the second part of Lent, a time of change and self-improvement. One of the ways to help us with relationship with God is “**Lectio Divina**” - **from words to silence; from the head to the heart**. Lectio Divina is a classical method of Christian Scriptural prayer. There are basically four steps in this method. You are free to move from step to step at your own pace.

Step 1. Lectio: Choose a passage from the Bible. Read the passage slowly and attentively several times until you get a grasp of the text.

Step 2. Meditatio: If you have a commentary on the passage, you could use it at this stage. This should not be confused with study of the Scripture but is a very personal reading of the Scripture and application to one’s own life. Reflect on the passage, particularly thinking about its implication to your life at this moment. Gravitate to any phrase or word that seems to be of particular importance to you. Repeat those words within yourself for sometimes, and then move on to another part of the passage.

Step 3. Oratio: Respond to the passage by opening your heart to God. This is not primarily an intellectual exercise, but more of the beginning of a conversation with God. Pray spontaneously using the text. Just speak to God about the significance that you think the text has for you.

Step 4. Contemplatio: Listen to God in the depths of our heart. Now slowly move from words to silence. Move from the mind to the heart. Listen to God. You might want to close the Bible and your eyes, and open your hearts to God by becoming aware of your feelings. Just be available to God.

May God bless us during this time of Grace.

Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis