

LISTENING ALONGSIDE



ECHOING CHRIST

Lenten Devotions 2017

**Friday,
April 7, 2017**

Throughout this Lenten devotion series, in addition to sharing reflections from members of the congregation and other poems, quotes, and thoughts about listening for God, we will also offer suggestions for spiritual exercises or disciplines that may be useful as we seek to listen alongside one another and learn better how to echo the life and teachings of Christ.

Lectio Divina, Latin for "holy reading," is a practice of reading Scripture that allows us into closer communion with God and a deeper understanding of God's Word. It is a guided reading of Scripture that invites us to study, ponder, listen, and pray God's Word within our minds, hearts and souls. Lectio Divina is made up of four readings of the same passage called movements: reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation.

1. Reading (Lectio): The passage is read slowly and we listen attentively, open to hearing a word or phrase that is God's word for us in that moment.
2. Meditation (Meditatio): Read the passage again, reflecting deeply on its meaning, focusing on a word or phrase that speaks to us in a personal way and pondering it, allowing it to interact with our thoughts, hopes and memories.
3. Prayer (Oratio): As we read the passage again, we enter into dialogue with God, offering ourselves to God and opening ourselves to be touched and filled by God's Word. We may continue to focus on the word or phrase that we are pondering in order to be changed by it. This is not primarily an intellectual exercise but the beginning of a conversation with God.
4. Contemplation (Contemplatio): As we read the passage a final time, we rest in the presence of God's Word. Here we practice silence, letting go of our own words, listening for God, and enjoying the experience of being in the presence of God.

We use this ancient method for reading Scripture as an opportunity to reflect and pray in the hope that it may become an important part of our Lenten prayer journey and our ongoing life of faith and ministry.

Prayer

My loving Lord,
it's so hard to love the world sometimes,
and to love it the way Jesus did seems impossible.
Help me to be inspired by his love and
guided by his example.
Most of all, I want to accept that I can't do it alone,
and that trying is an arrogance of self-centeredness.
I need you, dear God, to give me support in this journey.
Show me how to unlock my heart
so that I am less selfish.
Let me be less fearful of the pain and darkness
that will be transformed by you into Easter joy.

From Praying Lent: An Online Ministry of Creighton University

Some Scriptures appropriate for lectio divina:

Psalm 143:1

Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;
answer me in your righteousness.

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

1 John 4:7-11

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.