

Hearing God's Word

OF HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT



In the following pages, you will find Scripture passages through which God reveals his promise of grace, healing and restoration. We recommend using the Church's ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*, outlined on the next page, to pray with these passages and allow God to speak personally to your heart.



HOW TO PRAY LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina, or "Divine Reading," refers specifically to an approach to prayer and scripture reading practiced by monastics since the early Church. The idea of praying with sacred scripture comes to the Church through ancient Jewish tradition. Christians in the early Church continued this tradition and further developed the practice of prayer and meditation using mostly the psalms as a rich source of heartfelt engagement with God. This development is evident in early Church History in the 48th chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict (A.D. 480-453).



Open your time of prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit. You can do this using your own words or you can pray the traditional prayer, *Come, Holy Spirit*:

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who, by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.”

STEP 1: LECTIO

An attentive, slow, repetitious recitation of a short passage of scripture

In this first step, read the selected Scripture passage slowly and intentionally. Use your imagination to place yourself into the story. What do you see and feel? What are you experiencing? Take some time to pause and silently reflect on the experience. You may want to write down your reflections.

STEP 2: MEDITATIO

An effort to understand the passage and apply it to my own life

Read the passage slowly again. Pay attention to the word or phrase that stands out to you as you read. You may want to underline or circle it. How is God speaking to you in this word or phrase? Take some time again in silence to reflect and write down your thoughts.

STEP 3: ORATIO

Engaging or talking with God about the passage

Read the passage slowly once again and let the words be your prayer back to God. Then, write your own prayer to the Father in response to what He has been saying to you through this passage.

STEP 4: CONTEMPLATIO

Resting in God

Read the passage slowly one final time. Listen to the words and simply rest in the love of God in silence. You may want to end your *Lectio Divina* with your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving followed by an Our Father, Hail Mary and a Glory Be.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,
we were like men dreaming,
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with rejoicing.

Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the torrents in the southern desert.
Those that sow in tears
shall reap rejoicing.

Although they go forth weeping,
carrying the seed to be sown,
They shall come back rejoicing,
carrying their sheaves.
-Psalm 126

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The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
In green pastures he makes me lie down;
to still waters he leads me;
he restores my soul.

He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.

You set a table before me
in front of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me
all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for endless days.
-Psalm 23

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?
The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?
When evildoers come at me
to devour my flesh,
These my enemies and foes
themselves stumble and fall.
Though an army encamp against me,
my heart does not fear;
Though war be waged against me,
even then do I trust.

One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek: To dwell in the LORD's house
all the days of my life,
To gaze on the LORD's beauty,
to visit his temple.
For God will hide me in his shelter
in time of trouble,
He will conceal me in the cover of his tent;
and set me high upon a rock.
Even now my head is held high
above my enemies on every side!
I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and chant praise to the LORD.

Hear my voice, LORD, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.
"Come," says my heart, "seek his face";
your face, LORD, do I seek!
Do not hide your face from me;
do not repel your servant in anger.
You are my salvation; do not cast me off;
do not forsake me, God my savior!
Even if my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will take me in.

LORD, show me your way;
lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
Do not abandon me to the desire of my foes;
malicious and lying witnesses have risen against me.
I believe I shall see the LORD's goodness
in the land of the living.
Wait for the LORD, take courage;
be stouthearted, wait for the LORD!

-Psalm 27

I raise my eyes toward the mountains.
From whence shall come my help?
My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to slip;
or your guardian to sleep.
Behold, the guardian of Israel
never slumbers nor sleeps.

The LORD is your guardian;
the LORD is your shade
at your right hand.
By day the sun will not strike you,
nor the moon by night.
The LORD will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your soul.
The LORD will guard your coming and going
both now and forever.
-Psalm 121

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For Zion's sake I will not be silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep still,
Until her vindication shines forth like the dawn
and her salvation like a burning torch.
Nations shall behold your vindication,
and all kings your glory;
You shall be called by a new name
bestowed by the mouth of the LORD.
You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
No more shall you be called "Forsaken,"
nor your land called "Desolate,"
But you shall be called "My Delight is in her,"
and your land "Espoused."
For the LORD delights in you,
and your land shall be espoused.
For as a young man marries a virgin,
your Builder shall marry you;
And as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride
so shall your God rejoice in you.
-Isaiah 62:1-5

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...be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God,
is with you wherever you go.
-Joshua 1:9

Though the mountains fall away
and the hills be shaken,
My love shall never fall away from you
nor my covenant of peace be shaken,
says the LORD, who has mercy on you.
O afflicted one, storm-battered and unconsoled,
I lay your pavements in carnelians,
your foundations in sapphires;
I will make your battlements of rubies,
your gates of jewels,
and all your walls of precious stones.
All your children shall be taught by the LORD;
great shall be the peace of your children.
In justice shall you be established,
far from oppression, you shall not fear,
from destruction, it cannot come near.
-Isaiah 54:10-14

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But now, thus says the LORD,
who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name: you are mine.
When you pass through waters, I will be with you;
through rivers, you shall not be swept away.
When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned,
nor will flames consume you.
For I, the LORD, am your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your savior.
I give Egypt as ransom for you,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my eyes
and honored, and I love you,
-Isaiah 43:1-4

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Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget, I will never forget you.
-Isaiah 49:15

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For I know well the plans I have in mind for you...plans
for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.
-Jeremiah 29:11

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

-Matthew 11:28-30

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There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, “If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.” Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?” But his disciples said to him, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”

-Mark 5:25-34

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“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.

-Matthew 6:25-34

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I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

-John 10:10-11

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For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, “Abba, Father!” The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

-Romans 8:14-17

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? ...No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-Romans 8:35-39

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We know that all things work for good for those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose.

-Romans 8:28

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Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ's sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.

-2 Cor 1:3-7

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Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

-2 Cor 12:7-10

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I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you
will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

-Philippians 1:6

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Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

-Philippians 4:6-7

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