



Lectio DIVINA

Lectio Divina for Ash Wednesday

We begin our prayer:

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

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting
this campaign of Christian service,
so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils,
we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

(Collect for Ash Wednesday)

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture two or three times.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

If practicing lectio divina as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection:

How does this passage connect with the experience of your daily life?

Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them. What motivates me to perform righteous deeds? Why do I seek to do what is good and avoid what is evil? Am I honest with myself and God about my motivation?

When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. How do I make room in my day for personal prayer? What forms of prayer fit my life best? What forms of prayer do I want to try?

When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. In what ways does my faith bring me joy? What one thing can I do this week to share my joy in my faith with other people?

Prayer (*Oratio*)

Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

After all have had a chance to make their prayer, all recite the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Closing Prayer:

Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one with whom I am pleased.
Upon him I have put my spirit;
he shall bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry out, nor shout,
nor make his voice heard in the street.
A bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not
quench.
He will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow dim or be bruised
until he establishes justice on the earth;
the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

(Isaiah 42:1-4)

Copyright © 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved.

Excerpts from the *New American Bible, revised edition*, copyright © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. and are used by permission of the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition*, copyright © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal*, copyright © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.