

LENT

2021

Listening to God
with the Gospel of Matthew

Week 1

Introduction

Welcome to our Lent material for 2021.

During the 40 days before Easter we often give something up or take something on as a sign of our devotion to God. This year we would like to encourage you to spend time with the gospel of Matthew. Through “Lectio Divina”, an ancient spiritual practice that comes from the Christian monastic tradition, we have the opportunity to experience the presence of God. These simple and easy to learn spiritual practices are designed to slow life down and allow God to speak to us through his word.

For Lectio Divina we use a short reading each day from the gospel of Matthew. We have prepared a reading each day for you to use. As an option, there is the reference for a longer reading each day as well. You could read this reading at a different time from the Lectio Divina time and it would guide you to read through Matthew in Lent.

You might like to use your own bible for the readings and you might like to write down your thoughts or feelings in this booklet or somewhere else like your notebook or journal.

Opening

Sit comfortably and quietly and take a few deep breaths to quieten yourself. Repeat the name of Jesus in your heart to allow yourself to focus on him.

Through a prayer ask God to fill you and be with you.

Lectio Divina Rhythm explained

Read (“Lectio”) the Scripture passage for the first time.

Listen with the “ear of your heart.” What word or phrase or sentence stands out to you? Underline it, circle around it, colour it in. Focus on that word, phrase or sentence over and over, allowing it to settle deeply in you heart.

Reflect (“Meditatio”), relish the words. Let them resound in your heart. Let an attitude of quiet reflection penetrate the prayer time. Listen to what speaks to your heart.

Respond (“Oratio”) spontaneously as you continue to listen to the word, phrase or sentence. Speak out a prayer of praise, thanksgiving or petition and return to repeating the words in your heart.

Rest (“Contemplatio”) in God. Simply “be with” God’s presence as you open yourself to a deeper hearing of the Word of God.

Repeat if desired. Different words, phrases or sentences might stand out to you each time, or the same words keep drawing you in. Let the Holy Spirit lead you through this exercise.

Closing prayer

Take a moment to pray. Talk to God and offer what you have heard and felt back to Him.

Ash Wednesday 17th February

Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people with the fire of your love. Amen.

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." (Matthew 1:21-23)

Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest

Reading through Matthew in Lent: Matthew 1:1-25

Thursday 18th February

Prayer: Loving God, we long to know more of your love and goodness, speak to us we pray. Amen

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:10-11)

Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest

Reading through Matthew in Lent: Matthew 2:1-23

Friday 19th February

Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus come, speak to us all and fill us with your love and grace. Amen

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."
(Matthew 3:16-17)

Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest

Reading through Matthew in Lent: Matthew 3:1-17

Saturday 20th February

Prayer: Holy Spirit, we invite you into our hearts and minds again, guide us into your love. Amen

He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
(Matthew 4:2-4)

Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest

Reading through Matthew in Lent: Matthew 4:1-25

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