

for REFLECTION

Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *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.

Prompt our actions with your inspiration,
we pray, O Lord,
and further them with your constant help,
that all we do may always begin from you
and by you be brought to completion.
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, Thursday after Ash Wednesday)

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture two or three times.

Mt 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?

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing. How do I share my time, talent, and treasure with others, especially with those who are most vulnerable? How can share more generously? Do I share with a giving heart?

But when you pray, go to your inner room. Is time for prayer and reflection a priority part of your daily schedule or do you fit it in when you can? How often do you attend Mass, read Scripture, pray the rosary, attend Eucharistic adoration? What makes your prayer most fruitful?

But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face. What clutter (spiritual, mental, or physical) keeps you from loving God and your neighbor more fully? What steps can you take this Lent to eliminate the things that keep you from experiencing and sharing God's mercy?

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:

Closing Prayer:

Do not reprove me in your anger, LORD,
nor punish me in your wrath.
Have pity on me, LORD, for I am weak;
heal me, LORD, for my bones are
shuddering.

My soul too is shuddering greatly—
and you, LORD, how long...?
Turn back, LORD, rescue my soul;
save me because of your mercy.
For in death there is no remembrance of
you.

Who praises you in Sheol?

I am wearied with sighing;
all night long I drench my bed with tears;
I soak my couch with weeping.
My eyes are dimmed with sorrow,
worn out because of all my foes.

Away from me, all who do evil!
The LORD has heard the sound of my
weeping.
The LORD has heard my plea;
the LORD will receive my prayer.
My foes will all be disgraced and will shud-
der greatly;
they will turn back in sudden disgrace.

(Psalm 6)

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