

Closing Prayer Together

Dear Jesus, thank you for this time of prayer and for speaking to each of us in the depths of our hearts. With grateful hearts as we end this period of prayer and reflection, may we continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus. Help us to witness to the saving love of Jesus Christ. Give each of us a deep love for all those who have left the practice of the faith including our family members, and for those who have never encountered God's unconditional love. Help us to become more confident in sharing this love in the wider community. May our Diocese grow as we together look outwards with hearts full of love. Amen.



Quotes on Lectio Divina from Pope Francis

"There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call lectio divina.



It consists of reading God's word in a moment of prayer and allowing it to enlighten and renew us ... The spiritual reading of a text must start with its literal sense. Otherwise we can easily make the text say what we think is convenient, useful for confirming us in our previous decisions, suited to our own patterns of thought. Ultimately this would be tantamount to using something sacred for our own benefit and then passing on this confusion to God's people ...

In the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to ask, for example: "Lord, what does this text say to me? What is it about my life that you want to change by this text? What troubles me about this text? Why am I not interested in this? Or perhaps: What do I find pleasant in this text? What is it about this word that moves me? What attracts me? Why does it attract me?"

When we make an effort to listen to the Lord, temptations usually arise. One of them is simply to feel troubled or burdened, and to turn away. Another common temptation is to think about what the text means for other people, and so avoid applying it to our own life. It can also happen that we look for excuses to water down the clear meaning of the text. Or we can wonder if God is demanding too much of us, asking for a decision which we are not yet prepared to make. This leads many people to stop taking pleasure in the encounter with God's word; but this would mean forgetting that no one is more patient than God our Father, that no one is more understanding and willing to wait. He always invites us to take a step forward, but does not demand a full response if we are not yet ready. He simply asks that we sincerely look at our life and present ourselves honestly before him, and that we be willing to continue to grow, asking from him what we ourselves cannot as yet achieve".

Pope Francis. (2014). *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Diocesan Spiritual Renewal Programme



Participant Reflection Sheet

Session Two

"As we build new buildings and strengthen old ones, may we also experience the deeper renewal of ourselves as the Body of Christ.

Strengthen us in faith; renew us in your love; give us an unbreakable hope in your promise of eternal life."

Diocesan Prayer for Renewal

Opening Prayer

God of Love

Through our baptism you have called each one of us into the Church in the
Diocese of Christchurch.

You have endowed us with new life.

You have enriched us with the joy of life in your Son Jesus Christ.

You have poured out the Holy Spirit upon us.

As we build new buildings and strengthen old ones, may we also experience the deeper renewal
of ourselves as the Body of Christ.

Strengthen us in faith; renew us in your love; give us an unbreakable hope in your promise of
eternal life.

Help us to reach out to those in every kind of need and treat them with compassion,
dignity and justice.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Diocesan Theme

The Catholic Diocese of Christchurch is a community of missionary disciples who love God, love
each other, and go out to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the World.

Scriptures (choose one of the three below)

“Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And
know that I am with you always; yes, to the end time.”

Matthew 28: 19 - 20

“Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table And he said to
them, ‘Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and
is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned’ ... As so the Lord Jesus,
after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took
his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and con-
firming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

Mark 16: 15-16, 19-20

“Now having met together, they asked him, ‘Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore
the kingdom to Israel?’” He replied, “It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has
decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria,
and indeed to the ends of the earth. As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a
cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in
white were standing near them and they said, ‘ why are you men from Galilee standing here
looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will
come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.”

Acts 1: 6 - 11

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The Steps of Lectio Divina

First reading of scripture / silent time

“Jesus is sharing these thoughts with his friends in a real lived moment. Be conscious
of a real moment in my life as I listen/read/reflect and allow a single word or
phrase speak to me. Humbly allow the Holy Spirit to do his work within me.”

First sharing time

Share your word or phrase with the group with no further discussion. *What touched
my heart?*

Second reading of scripture / silent time

As you listen / read / reflect a second time ask yourself the following; why has this
word touched my heart? “*Let the word or phrase penetrate my heart, feelings, con-
science or life experience*”. What is the Lord saying to you? What is the Lord saying to
your group? What is he asking of you? What is he asking of your group?

Second sharing time

Share your word or phrase again in the group. You may wish to share why that particu-
lar word touched your heart within the group in a time of general faith sharing.

Reflection questions

1. In what ways is our group already living the Diocesan Theme?
2. How are we proclaiming the Gospel in word and action?
3. Are there things we could change to do this better?
4. How are we reaching out to the poor and needy, “the privileged recipients of
the Gospel” and what is the Spirit saying through them to the world?
5. In light of our theme statement, what might we like to share with the Bishop
that came out of our group reflection?

Closing Prayer

During this time, form your word and reflections into a direct prayer to our Lord. Thank
the Lord for the personal word spoken to you and the group. You might like to read
silently the reflection below.

*“During this time of Lectio – we make a personal heartfelt response to God speaking
the Word to us.*

If we experience our weakness and need, respond by asking his help.

If we experience the word as a promise, respond with joyful trust.

If we experience our sinfulness, respond with repentance.

If we experience being called to action, respond with willing generosity.

If we experience the word as a challenge, ask for courage to accept it.

*“The process of lectio divina is not concluded until it arrives at action (actio)”, which
should move us to make our lives a gift for others in charity.*

Turn over the page for the final prayer together.