

Oratio, or “prayer,” is the third rung of the ladder. After reading and meditation, we respond to God. We often think of this step—pouring out our hearts to God—as being the whole of prayer. But it is no accident that oratio comes only after hearing and reflecting on what God has said. First we listen and seek to understand; then we speak. *“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.”*—Psalm 62:8

The fourth and final rung is contemplatio, or “contemplation.” We cannot accomplish anything in prayer apart from God, and contemplation is a special gift. The first three steps prepare us for this gift in which we are able to rest in God’s presence and experience the joy and peace that come from him. *“That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.”*—Psalm 27:4

When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus replied: *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3). The psalmist sings, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”* (119:105).

COLLATIO & RESOLUTIO



1) Why must the ladder of prayer begin with Scripture? How might the practice of praying with Scripture help you to fulfill St. Paul’s exhortation to “pray constantly” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)?

2) The reading from Romans reminds us that faith is a matter of private conviction and public profession & action: “For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved” (Romans 10:10). Are you both believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth? Where can you grow?

3) What tactics does the devil use with me to tempt me to sin? How might I resist and overcome him, in the name of Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER



SEASON	SESSIONS	REFLECTION
Winter/Lent 2019	Feb. 18-Apr. 12 (8 wks)	Dinner, Apr. 18, 6pm



Torch



Winter/Lent 2019, Thur. #3

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Death your love embraced
 To extinguish the flame of darkness.
 Death in ashes, yet your love set alight, now alive and dancing
 As a beacon of hope in our hearts.
 Dear Lord, with this mark of your cross upon me
 I choose to walk its way.
 To let go of self, and entrust all things to you
 So that I may catch a glimpse of your eternal love for me.
 Grant me your presence and strength for this journey. AMEN.

GROUND RULES

1. Commitment; no more than 2 planned absences.
2. Confidentiality.
3. Respect each person’s time, allow all to speak.
4. Be mindful of different perspectives, don’t presume agreement.
5. Own your own comments. Use “I” statements rather than make generalizations.

CHECK-IN



Optional Connect Question:
Think of a time you felt incredibly thirsty. What quenched your thirst and refreshed you? Describe the experience.

Torch Note: We’ll be using the Sunday readings and videos from the *Opening the Word* study, plus excerpts from the *Into the Desert* study on prayer, through FORMED.ORG, which is free to all our parishioners: stdominics.formed.org for free registration.

LECTIO: *Romans 10: 8-13*



Brothers and sisters: What does Scripture say? The word is near you, / in your mouth and in your heart / —that is, the word of faith that we preach—for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the Scripture says No one who believes in him will be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Luke 4: 1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, One does not live on bread alone.” Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, “I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours if you worship me.” Jesus said to him in reply, “It is written: You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.” Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and: With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” Jesus said to him in reply, “It also says, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.” When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

SILENT PRAYER



meditatio: Focus your attention on a phrase, image, scene, or insight.

oratio: Speak to God directly from your heart; journal if you wish.

contemplatio: Rest in God’s presence, focus on a simple spiritual mantra.



PRAEDICARE



COLLATIO

All are invited to share their reflections one at a time.

TRADITIO

(*companion to Episode 2: Guigo’s Ladder, from the “Into the Desert” on formed.org*)

How do we listen to God? How do we respond? How do we progress and grow in prayer? What is the goal of the conversation?

The Church offers us an answer to this in the ancient tradition of *lectio divina* in which, as the Catechism says, “The Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer” (CCC 1177). For nearly a millennia *lectio divina* has been practiced according to the four simple steps of Guigo’s ladder. Guigo II was a Carthusian monk in the twelfth century. He was the ninth prior of the Grande Chartreuse monastery, the famous Carthusian motherhouse north of the city of Grenoble in the French Alps (it was the subject of the acclaimed 2005 documentary *Into Great Silence*). Guigo is best known for his classic work on prayer, *Ladder of Monks*, in which he lays out four simple steps for praying with Scripture.

The first rung of the ladder is *lectio*, or “reading.” God initiates the encounter with us, and so prayer begins with his Word. *Lectio* requires a careful reading of Scripture, paying close attention to patterns, repetition, key words, and other details of the chosen passage. This careful reading helps us to hear God’s initiating dialogue. This first step introduces the topic of our conversation with God. “*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*” —Psalm 119:103

The second rung is *meditatio*, or “meditation.” In this step we listen to what God is saying in the Scripture passage we read in *lectio*. We reflect on the words of the passage in order to understand what they mean. This provides the material for our conversation and guides us into our response. “*His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night*” —Psalm 1:2