

Lectio Divina
Part 8 – *Lectio* and Patience

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Then, as a companion to faithfulness, we will need patience. Being finite, we are subject to time. It takes us time to do anything. It takes time to go anywhere, even to enter sacred space. It takes time for spiritual things to arise for us to see them. Sometimes it can even take time, even a long time, for us to see the connection of the word with our lives, to see the challenge/the call to reform. Then, for us to change in a way that will be lasting, this also takes time. At first we may rush into a massive programme of self-improvement, but we will probably not succeed because the sheer effort to maintain it is too great. When we don't have the energy for it, our old ways reassert themselves and so we slip again.

Thus do we come to know our major failings, those things which constantly bring us undone. It is these 'demons' we need to expose to God, and not keep hidden, for only God can drive them out; this is what reform/repentance is all about. We need first to see the truth of our being: our fragmentedness/lack of integration/lack of wholeness, our dissatisfaction with the shabbier side of our lives (all those things which we do not like to admit about ourselves, which we push aside because to confront/look at them is painful/embarrassing/messy/uncomfortable and so they remained unchallenged).

Lectio will bring us face to face with this truth of our being, but it will take time for us to let our barriers be broken down (without our quickly rebuilding them) that we might see our truth. Then we need to live with this truth and bring it with us in prayer, that God's word may wash over it. The revelation of God in Jesus is love — what we need to hear in the centre of our being (where our truth resides) is that 'God loves me'; this

is God's healing touch reaching out to us, driving out our demons. If we leave ourselves open and exposed to God's Word, in time, *Lectio* will eventually produce in us the harmony and consistency we seek and desire — not through repression and denial (such only masks the symptoms; it doesn't heal the wound), but through a long-term, sustained and courageous effort to eliminate whatever is incompatible with following Christ.

Our *Lectio* is successful if it causes us to drop our defences and allow God to touch our heart and change our life. But it all takes time — through a solid commitment to walk in Christ's way, crying out to him when we find we cannot, and then, more importantly, getting up again and having another go. Our faithfulness, shown in a long-term patience (with ourselves, as much as with God), is our expression of belief that 'nothing is impossible to God', our expression of hope in God redeeming power. This belief in God will guard us against despair; our faithfulness is the way to cultivate this hope. Growth in this hope will keep us committed.