

HEARING HAPPENING HOPING



The Word of God is not a series of abstract ideas, but rather a source of comfort and companionship for every family that experiences difficulties or suffering. (Pope Francis—*Amoris Laetitia* §22)

What is “homecoming” reading?

...and Jesus said to the lawyer, How do you read? (Luke 10:26)

Hearing the Scriptures is vital if we are to grow in the life of faith (see *Dei Verbum* §22). But HOW do we hear? HOW do we read? We are called to read so that light of Christ (see John 8:12) and Christ’s presence among us (see Matt 18:20, 28:20) are felt. *Homecoming reading* is way of reading so that the good news of the Scriptures—both Old Testament and New Testament—makes a home in us. Therefore we begin to appreciate how “God is the one who respects our freedom, mourns our alienation, waits patiently for our return, and accepts our love as pure gift.” (Sandra Schneiders)

As *Lectio Divina* is a way of prayer, we begin in prayer

God our Father, source of all light
you have sent your Son into the world,
to reveal yourself to all your children.

Send your Spirit upon us now
that we may meet Jesus in the Word that comes from you.
May we come to know him,
and so be drawn closer
may we come to love him more deeply
to the blessedness of your Kingdom. Amen.

(adapted from a prayer by Enzo Bianchi)


What is “Homecoming” Reading?

Homecoming reading is a way of reading that permits “the word of Christ in all its richness find a home in us” (Col 3:16), and permits us find a home in the word. *Homecoming reading* is a way of reading the biblical text and reading our lives that opens us to the healing and hope, to the life, consolation and peace that comes when the Lord calls us (see Mark 10:49, Luke 19:5). *Homecoming reading* is a way of reading that permits us to “choose life that we and our families may live” (Deut 30:19).

Homecoming Encounters in the Scriptures—Reading Our Lives in New Ways

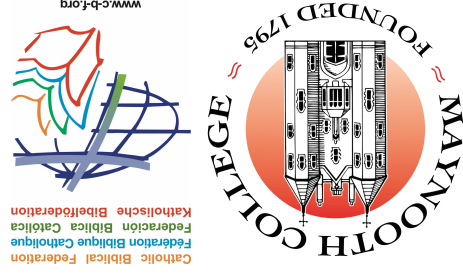
- Jesus with Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
- Jesus with the Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8)
- Jesus with Peter (Mark 14 and John 21)
- Nathan with King David (2 Sam 12)
- God with Jonah (Jonah 4)

Some Resources for Nourishing and Deepening our Journey in *Lectio Divina*

- The Resource Portal at the Pontifical University, *Maynooth*: www.maynoothcollege.ie/about/our-mission, you will find guides for the home and for parish, reading lists, links to other *lectio* resource sites from across the world.
- A very worthwhile guide to prayer with the Scriptures and to *lectio* by Carlos Mesters OCarM, may be found on www.carmelite.org/mesters/
- LectioYouth.net*—an online resource for young adults, particularly in Africa and Madagascar. 
- “*Lectio Divina*: Four Acts” — Pages 103–109 in Mariano Magrassi, *Praying the Bible. An Introduction to Lectio Divina* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998) — A wonderful 17 page overview.
- Give us this Day (www.givesusthisday.org)

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The Bible is full of families, births, love stories and family crises.
(Pope Francis—*Amoris Laetitia* §8)

The Parable of the Lost Sons—a Homecoming Story from the Lord Jesus

Jesus said,

“There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.’ And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in extravagant living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; but no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said,

‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him,

‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;
I am no longer worthy to be called your son;
treat me as one of your hired servants.’

And he arose and came to his father.

But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him,

‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;
I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

But the father said to his slaves,

‘Bring out quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand,
and shoes on his feet; and take the fatted calf and kill it,
and let us eat and celebrate; for this my son was dead, and is alive again;
he was lost, and is found.’

And they began to celebrate.

His elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the dwelling, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him,

‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf,
because he has received him safe and sound.’

But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and pleaded with him, but he answered his father and said,

‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command;
yet you never gave me a kid, that I might celebrate with my friends.
But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with prostitutes,
you killed for him the fatted calf!’

And he said to him,

‘Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.
It was fitting to celebrate and rejoice,
for this brother of yours was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

(Luke 15:11–32)

Lectio Divina—a dialogue between God’s word and our experience.

Lectio Divina—a way of hearing God’s word in our lives.

Lectio Divina—a way of prayer and a guide to living. It is a means of descending to the level of the heart and of finding God. (Michael Casey OCSO)

Lectio Divina—a way of loving God.

Lectio Divina—Three Movements

HEARING—we READ so that we may HEAR!

We attend to the WORDS so that we may hear the Word!

HAPPENING—we READ so that we may RECOGNISE ... so that we may SEE
We READ our lives in the light of the word; we LOOK AT our lives anew.

HOPING—We RESPOND to what God is doing in our lives, in the world, in creation. We PRAY spontaneously in thanksgiving, wonder, mercy, hope.

“Homecoming” Reading ...

... reads the biblical text and our lives in a new way!

... leaves SHOULD or OUGHT behind

... leaves BURDENING and OPPRESSIVE reading behind

... permits us to come away with RECOGNITION... a new quality in our lives

... enables us to ask a new type of question

Homecoming reading “somehow enlarges your world, makes you feel more yourself,
opens you up, affirms you.” (Rowan Williams)

“Homecoming” Questions versus Alienating Questions

Homecoming Questions

When have you refused to “go in”?

Who, like the father, has bothered to meet you in your anger?

When have you been totally caught up in what you wanted to do?

Homecoming questions bring us home to ourselves as we are! They permit us to see our lives in new light; they empower us to see things we have not seen before.

Alienating Questions

Why is the elder son so angry?

What moves the father to go out?

What type of father is this father?

Why does the younger son not care about his father?

Alienating questions burden us and lessen us; they focus on our failings; they cause us to withdraw from our lives as they are; they shrink our world

Jesus reads life in a homecoming way! “**Has no one condemned you?**” he says to the woman in John 8:10. He brings her to see herself as he sees her. Alienating reading subverts the good news because it hinders us embracing the truth of our lives. Alienating reading turns the good news into “dead stones to be hurled at others.” (Pope Francis—*Amoris Laetitia* §49)