

MOSAIC bible reflections ... listening to the still, small voice of God

Moving deeper into Scripture through the Art of Lectio Divina, gathering up the fragments so that no thought is lost

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Lectio & Labyrinth: A Gratitude Walk!

This week we weave together the ancient spiritual practices of [Lectio Divina](#) with walking the [Labyrinth](#) as we pray with Scriptural passages of Gratitude. Do you have easy access to a Labyrinth that you could walk? If not, you can take this [Link](#) to a finger Labyrinth that you can download and print: [PDF File/Labyrinth](#). If you prefer, I'll give you a link below to an online labyrinth within your experience of Lectio.

Thus says the LORD:
Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16ab

Both Lectio Divina and Walking the Labyrinth are ancient spiritual pathways to God. Lectio Divina is a Latin phrase that means "sacred reading." It is a way of praying and listening for the still, small voice of God speaking through gentle reading of scripture. Lectio Divina has also been known as "listening with the ear of the heart." Beginning in the middle ages, Christianity adopted the Labyrinth as a symbol, changing the design to permeate it with specifically Christian meaning. For almost a thousand years there has been an identifiable Christian labyrinth tradition.



Wesley Center Labyrinth, Woodworth, Louisiana

To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything ...

**Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted,
 is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to
 new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God.**

~Thomas Merton, *Seasons of Grace*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. ~Philippians 4:4-9

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect and be thankful for all that God has given us. Giving thanks is an important part of our spiritual life. Living daily with bible verses on Gratitude can help us experience the benefits that come from practicing gratefulness to God at all times, in all places and for all things. So, this week we look at a variety of passages on Gratitude rather than on one long passage. As the passage from the letter to the Philippians says, "if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these!"

As you begin your time of prayer, settle into a place of loving openness within yourself with a simple [Breath Prayer](#). Use this one or allow one to emerge as you breathe in and breathe out. *(I have found that six to eight syllables is best for breathing but a longer prayer often speaks what we need to hear for ourselves ... simply be authentic with your breath prayer)*

Breathe in ... **God of Grace** (Your Name for God)
 Breathe out ... **my gratitude overflows!** (Name Your Desire)

Pray: **God of Grace, my gratitude overflows! I am grateful for life, for love, for friends, for family, for relationships and for peace. I am grateful for creation, for nature, for humanity and for YOU! May I always give thanks and find my heart warm with your grace. Amen.**

About Me



CINDY SERIO

Hello and Welcome! I am an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church appointed to develop a ministry of spiritual formation which I call MOSAIC Spiritual Formation Ministry. I have an M.A. in Spiritual Formation from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and have been a spiritual director for 10 years. I focus on bringing contemplative practice and the creative process to retreats, workshops, worship experiences and my online adventures!

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The Lectionary

MOSAIC *bible reflections* follows the revised common lectionary readings.

Engage in [Lectio Divina](#), which means "sacred reading." Allow yourself to be drawn deeply into God's Presence as you read slowly and pray intently and listen carefully to these 10 verses as they express the gratitude of God's people. Read each verse and pause in silence between each one. Which verse is drawing your attention? Which verse can your heart sing with the one who originally spoke the words?

1. **Chanting antiphonally, they gave thanks to the Most High "who is good, whose love for Israel lasts forever." The people joined in with shouts of praise to God, as the foundation of the House of YHWH was being laid.** ~Ezra 3:11
2. **Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that can't be shaken, let's continue to express our gratitude. With this gratitude, let's serve in a way that is pleasing to God with respect and awe.** ~Hebrews 12:28
3. **They were to be present every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and to do the same every evening.** ~1 Chronicles 23:30
4. **Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him.** ~Colossians 3:17
5. **"Give thanks for YHWH's goodness; God's love endures forever!"** ~Psalms 107:1
6. **So live in Christ Jesus the Lord in the same way as you received him. Be rooted and built up in him, be established in faith, and overflow with thanksgiving just as you were taught.** ~Colossians 2:6-7
7. **Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** ~1 Thessalonians 5:18
8. **I will praise God's name with song; I will magnify God with thanks!** ~Psalm 69:30
9. **In every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude.** ~Acts 24:3
10. **While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."** ~Matthew 26:26

Read all 10 verses again slowly with the same silent pauses. Consider where God is calling your attention. Choose just one verse with which to **reflect**. Spend time with your verse and listen to the whispers of God through the words that have drawn you into the text ... Listen! Take your verse, or a modified version of it that speaks of your life, with you as you walk on a Labyrinth or spend some time outside in nature. Or find a place to sit quietly. You might take this link and choose an [online virtual labyrinth](#). Let the Spirit of God guide you in your time of reflection.

As you walk (or if you choose to simply sit in the quiet) turn your verse over in your mind. Is there a word that is calling you from within the text or are you staying with a complete thought that arises from the verse? Let God speak into your heart as you listen. As you walk, take time to "**Release**" anything that emerges that you need to let go of in order to move on in your prayers.

As you pause at the center of the Labyrinth or at the apex of your walk, take time to "**Receive**" and welcome God's word for you. Consider these questions or others that may arise in your time of pause: *Where is God speaking into my life through my word or my verse? How is my prayer life touched by my word or my verse?*

Before you begin your journey anew from the center, slowly read your verse again! Consider how you are being called to "**Respond**" to what you have heard from God the sense of gratitude that is growing larger within you.

As you walk or move out of the center along the same labyrinth path you took in, know that you are gaining strength for your continuing journey of life. *Who is God calling me to pray for or to reach out to through this verse and my growing sense of gratitude? How is God calling me to change or grow deeper in my faith?*

As you reach the end of the Labyrinth pathway, it is time to **Rest** in the silence of God's Presence. Allow God to draw you deeper into the shining light of the Holy Presence and into the prayerful sense of God's Spirit, ever holding you and loving you. Let all the words fade away and stay in this lovely place as long as you can.

Simply BE with the God who always hears your prayers.

Be aware that you may find a desire to express what you have received. This is a wonderful time to journal, to write about your experience, thoughts, feelings, and insights. Some persons find that God's voice is clarified through the writing process.

Prayer: **God of all Blessings, I am so grateful that you are YOU and that I am ME. I am so grateful that you love me, lead me and guide me on my spiritual path.**

If music is a spiritual pathway for you, listen to "[Give Thanks](#)" and let the images capture your attention as you continue to sit with your verse of gratitude. Carry your verse with you as you continue your heart's journey through this next week of Thanksgiving.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!

Posted by Cindy Serio at 11:29 PM 

Labels: [gratitude](#), [labyrinth](#)

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The Lectionary is a 3-year series of scripture passages that are read throughout the year in a worship service and/or personal devotion. The new lectionary year begins with the 1st Sunday in Advent. We are now in Year C of the cycle which means most of the gospel readings will come from the book of Luke. Readings from the gospel of John are interspersed throughout the 3 years. Often, the message proclaimed during worship is based on the passage which is read aloud right before it.

Lectionary Readings

Lectionary Readings

November 24, 2013

Read these NRSV texts online at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#)

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Luke 1:68-79

Colossians 1:11-20

Luke 23:33-43

Thanksgiving Day

November 28, 2013

Read these NRSV texts online at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#)

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalms 100

***Philippians 4:4-9**

John 6:25-35

Liturgical Color: GREEN

Lectio Divina

MOSAIC uses the ancient art of Lectio Divina, which is a receptive mode of seeking God's presence in the biblical text.

Lectio Divina is a Latin phrase that means "sacred reading." It is a way of praying and listening for the still, small voice of God speaking through gentle reading of scripture. St. Benedict called Lectio Divina "listening with the ear of the heart."

Although there are essentially 4 movements: lectio (read), meditatio (reflect), oratio (respond), and contemplatio (rest) there truly are as many ways to creatively engage the biblical text through lectio divina as there are creative people who read the bible with not just their mind but their entire being. I'll guide you gently but I encourage you to surrender to God and listen to what you are "hearing with the ear of your heart."

I have found that God can speak the words I need to hear through any scripture I am blessed to read ... or not to speak at all :) Each week I'll choose a portion of the lectionary consisting of about 10 verses, more or less. When we are seeking God by receiving the text contemplatively more than that will give us spiritual indigestion!

Over the course of time, I'll share reflections, my own "processing" art or photography, art and photos in the public domain or shared with permission, suggest youtube videos with music or other website material to help you explore the themes of the text. I encourage and invite you to engage your "right" brain through your own creative writing and art.

You may want to check out this GREAT online resource: [Audio Lectio at Alive Now](#)

Bible Study Tools

Bible Versions are the **NRSV**=New Revised Standard Version or the **NLT**=New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

Great NEW translation **CEB**=Common English Bible

Listen to the Bible Passage, look up the passage in a different translation, or use various other Bible Study tools at [BibleGateway.com](#).

Look up Bible Passages in the NRSV and use various

other Bible Study tools at Oremus.com.

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HC=Definitions come from the [Harper Collins Bible Dictionary](#).

TDNT=Additional Word Study Tool used [The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#).

Labels

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