

Mother of God Community  
Sunday Night Prayer Meeting  
Set Apart for the Gospel of God  
Lynn Cothorn  
September 23, 2009

**As you reflect on these questions, pray for this grace: *to be set apart for the Word of God so that I can receive it interior silence and let it transform me.***

1. Guigo II, a Carthusian, who wrote *Ladder of Monks* (around 1100), said that there are four stages of prayer: reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Reflect on this passage and consider how you might expand the “spiritual exercise” of your prayer.

One day, when I was busy working with my hands, I began to think about our spiritual work, and all at once four stages in spiritual exercise came into my mind: reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. These make a ladder for monks by which they are lifted up from earth to heaven... *Reading* is the careful study of the Scriptures, concentrating all one's powers on it. *Meditation* is the busy application of the mind to seek with the help of one's own reason for knowledge of hidden truth. *Prayer* is the heart's devoted turning to God to drive away evil and obtain what is good. *Contemplation* is when the mind is in some sort lifted up to God and held above itself, so that it tastes the joys of everlasting sweetness... Reading seeks for the sweetness of a blessed life, meditation perceives it, prayer asks for it, contemplation tastes it. Reading, as it were, puts food whole into the mouth, meditation chews it and breaks it up, prayer extracts its flavor, contemplation is the sweetness itself which gladdens and refreshes.... Reading without meditation is sterile, meditation without reading is liable to error, prayer without meditation is lukewarm, meditation without prayer is unfruitful; prayer when it is fervent wins contemplation, but to obtain it without prayer would be rare, even miraculous. (Cantalamesa, *The Mystery of God's Word*, 70)

2. St. Gregory the Great said that Scripture is a letter from God Almighty to his creature; in it we come to know God's heart through God's own words. Choose a scripture passage and experimenting with Guigo II's four stages of prayer, reflect on it as God's letter to you. What does the passage say about God's heart?
3. Prayerfully consider how you are meant to be set apart for the gospel of God (Rom 1: 1). What would it mean to “fast from words”—your own and others?
4. Take the following passage from *Dei Verbum* (5) and the associated scriptures into prayer. What does God reveal to you about the obedience of faith?

“The obedience of faith” (Rom 16: 26; see 1:5; 2 Cor 10; 5-6) “is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals,” and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him. To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving “joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it.”

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5. Prayerfully reflect on Paul's word to the Church of Thessalonians (1 Thes 1:2-10), observing how the word came to them, how they received it, and how they were transformed. Ask the Holy Spirit for light on how this applies to you personally, to the MOG or other faith community, and to the Church.

6. Prayer: Lord, have pity on this poor earthen vessel which has to hold the treasure of your Word; preserve us from useless words; let us once experience the taste of your Word so that in the future we can distinguish it from any other, and so that any other may seem insipid to us. Pour into the midst of your people, as you have promised, hunger and thirst for your Word; "fill Zion—the Church—with your majesty, and your people with your glory...and let your prophets be proved true (cf. Sir 36: 13, 15). *Amen.* (Cantalamessa, *The Mystery of God's Word*, 52)