Choosing a place for Lectio Divina

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...the desert where Jesus prayed and was tempted...

When you want to immerse yourself in this *prayerful reading*, your first job is to select *a place where you can be quiet and alone*, where you can pray to your Father in secret (Mt 6:5-6) and maybe even reach contemplation.

Your own private room can be a place where you taste the presence of God and maintain your awareness of God. This place is also, in fact, the arena for your heart's struggle. It is the desert where Jesus prayed and was tempted (Mk 1:1, 35; Mt 4:1-11). It is the place where God draws you close ta speak to your heart and to fill you with divine gifts, transforming the arid chasms of your heart into lush valleys and doorways of hope (Hos 2:15). Then, in this solitary place you will find your spiritual youth renewed, you will find your own song to sing to your Lord, your Bridegroom. You will sense how much you belong to him alone and how you can live in peace with all persons and all creation (cf. Hos 2:18-25).

Your own room can be a sanctuary where God puts you to the test by the Word and humbles you. But as he does so, he educates, consoles, and nourishes you.

You will surely feel the presence of the adversary, who will tempt you to turn awayfrom being alone, who will make you feel the loneliness, who will distract you with nagging thoughts, who will try to lead you astray with myriad practical concerns. Don't lose heart. Don't give up. Instead, take on this demon in hand-to-hand combat, for the Lord is never far away and God will not just stand there to see how well you're fighting but will actually struggle for you and in you. If it is helpful, make use of an icon, a cross, a lighted candle, or a prayer stool. Never hesitate to use these things, but don't fall for fads and passing trends. Use them to remind you that you are not just studying the Bible or just reading words. You are praying: you are standing before God, ready to listen to God, ready to converse with God.

If the temptation to quit comes over you, resist it, even if it means sitting in silence and feeling nothing. Resist the temptation to give up if you want to meet God in personal prayer, because it takes time to become used to solitude and silence, and to detach from the whirlwind of things on your mind and the company of your friends.

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