Pray!...

us of the face of God which shines forth from the text as Christ, the Lord...

Now speak to God. Respond to God's invitations: to the calls, the inspirations, the messages God has given you by the Holy Spirit's power in the Word. Do you see that you have been welcomed into the very heart of the Trinity, into the eternal conversation among Father, Son, and Spirit? Why stop at being an onlooker? Enter the conversation and speak as a friend speaks to a friend (Dt 34:10). You need not attempt any longer to conform your thoughts to God's. Instead, simply seek God's presence. *Meditation* was only for the sake of this *moment of prayer*. Now you've arrived! Don't engage in spiritual gossip with God, but instead speak with openness and confidence and without fear. Don't be self-conscious. Rather, be wholly conscious of the face of God which shines forth from the text as Christ, the Lord. Free up your creative impulses: your sensitivities, feelings and emotions, and direct them into this relationship with the Lord. I cannot give you directions here, because each person is unique and knows best how to meet his or her God. Besides, one can't even speak satisfactorily about this experience for oneself, much less for another. What con one say about the fire when one is immersed in it? What con one say about the prayer of contemplation which comes at the end of *lectio divina* except to say that it is a glowing log which never burns out and that it inflames the believer's heart with love for the Lord?

The art of experiencing the Indescribable, the divine Presence! *Lectio divina* wants to lead you there, where you con contemplate God as God's own beloved, where you can repeat the words of God's own beloved in joy, in wonder and in self - forgetfulness. This path is not always easy and straight. Don't think that you can just run along its way. Passionate love alternates with fear, gratitude with a complete absence of feeling, enthusiasm with bodily weariness, words which speak with words which are mute, God's silence with your silence: all these experiences are present and serve as the stock in trade of your *lectio divina*, day after day.

What is important is staying faithful to our daily encounter with the Lord. Sooner or later the Word will open a passageway into our hearts and clear away all the obstacles we set up, obstacles which are always present in any journey of faith and prayer. Only the persan who is faithful to the Word knows God's faithfulness: that God will never fail to be available and to speak to our hearts. The faithful person knows that there are times when the Word of God seems absent (1 S 3:1), but that these times are followed by an epiphany. The Word will shine forth. The faithful person knows that these difficult, uncomfortable, dry times are a grace insofar as they remind us of the distance between our experience of God and God as God is.

Thank God for the gift of the Word and for the people who proclaim and explain it to you. Intercede for all your sisters and brothers as the text calls them to your mind, with all their virtues and failings. Try to unite being fed with the Word with your Eucharistic food.

Store up what you have seen, heard and tasted in *lectio*. Go over it in your heart and in your memory as you go along *in the company of others*, and seek humbly to share with them the peace and blessing you've received. You will also find a way to bring God's Word into social, political and professional situations; the daily reality of life.

God needs you as an instrument in the world to help create new heavens and a new earth - a future day which awaits you when, in dying, you will see God face to face. Then you will see how you have been and still are a *living letter* written by Christ, a *lectio divina* for your sisters and brothers, and how you really are the very Son of God.

Yours, Enzo

From: ENZO BIANCHI, *Praying the Word, An Introduction to «Lectio Divina»*
Cistercian Publication, Kalamazoo 1998, pp. 98-99.