

Thánh Kinh Vào Đời – A Knight of Eucharist Leader’s Devotional Life The Bible

THE POINT

God’s Word gives us the truth we need to be an effective leader.

THE POINT, UNWRAPPED

Explore

- How to be a FAITH FIT Leader by living the words of God; – for God’s Word is living, active, and sharper than any two edged sword|| (Hebrews 4:12)

WHERE IN THE WORLD

Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

DICUSSION

God was obviously not going to tell Joshua all the details directly by revelation. Instead, Joshua had to learn how to lead the nation by studying his will and his promises in the books of the law. God was going to guide Joshua by his meditation on what God had told his people. And I am sure this went hand in hand with prayer every day.

In this sense we are more like Joshua than Moses: we are to find what God’s will is by careful studying of the Bible, bathed in prayer. There are no direct voices. God wants us to fill our minds with what he has told us already. The usual way is that matters become clearer after meditation of, informed by praying over what we read in Scripture.

1. What is the Bible to you?
1. How do you see it as the Words of God?

What is LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina (Latin for divine reading) is an ancient form of meditation on scripture where one reads slowly through a text until a word or phrase attracts the reader and moves the heart to prayer.

The Word of God is different from other forms of literature. Other books may inform the mind while scripture opens the *"eyes of the heart"* (Eph 3:16-17). Lectio Divina allows God's word to penetrate us with God's healing, forgiveness, and love. As you read the scriptures, something may strike you– a word, a verse, a paragraph or a scene. The Monastic tradition says it is better to pray one verse from scripture well than to read whole volumes poorly. At the table of the Word, the Lord forms our hearts and minds so that we can approach the table of the Eucharist properly.

Thus, a profound relationship exists between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist since both *"form one single act of worship"* (SC #56).

Pope John Paul II advises: *"It is especially necessary that the listening to the Word becomes an essential meeting, following the ancient and present-day tradition of Lectio Divina, enabling us to discover in the biblical text the living word that challenges us, directs us, that gives shape to our existence"* (Novo Millennio # 39).

1. **LECTIO** – (Read) What does the text say? We read to understand the passage. Sometimes it may be good to read the text several times.
2. **MEDITATIO** – (Meditate) What does the text say to me? Which word, phrase or verse has a particular meaning or message for me?
3. **ORATIO** – (Pray) How can I respond to God to what the text has said to me? This prayer may be an expression of joy, sorrow, petition, praise, etc.
4. **CONTEMPLATIO** – (Contemplate) This is the time to savor the special moment of connection between you and God's Word. This is a time for silence. Treasure God's word in your heart, and like Mary to respond, *"I am your servant. Be it done unto me according to your word"* (Luke 1:38).
5. **OPERATIO** – (Application) Our faithful witness to God's Word in our daily lives to make a difference in the world.

TEAM BUILDING

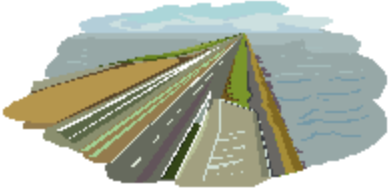
In a team of 3, see how many books of the bible you can find hidden in the paragraph below. The names are hidden within and among the words; for example: You could find the word AMP within the word EXAMPLE. There are 16 names; can you find them all?

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu, kept people looking so hard for facts...and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. The truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others will require judges to help them. I will quickly admit, it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now for there really are sixteen names of books of the Bible in this paragraph. If I chose another sentence or two, maybe you could post them at the water cooler.

TEAM STUDY

In a team of 3, turn the Bible to John 3:16-17 and apply the steps outlined below and prepare to share with the class your findings.

BIBLE ALIVE!



THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Luke's story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus provides an excellent example for us of meeting the Risen Lord in Word and Sacrament. Scripture tells us we are on a journey throughout our lives, and that Jesus is walking side by side us whether or not we are aware of his presence.

OPEN YOUR BIBLE TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND READ LUKE 24:13-16

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.



Their eyes were prevented from recognizing him (Lk 24:16).

Let us picture ourselves like the disciples of Emmaus walking along the road. Only one of them is named in the story, "Cleopas." Perhaps the unnamed disciple is each one of us on our own journey as the risen Jesus walks beside us. He said, "*Where two or three are gathered, there am I in your midst*" (Matthew 18:20). All of life is a series of Emmaus moments – meeting the broken stranger in the broken word, the broken bread, and the broken world. But sometimes, our eyes are blinded to that encounter.

We are all pilgrims trying to reach the same destination as we walk in the footsteps of Christ. But even when we walk along together, we may not be on the same pathway because no one's spiritual journey is exactly like any other. A Christian should be a person who walks toward the light, to a dawn that breaks forth, not to a night that falls. But sometimes we may be walking in the wrong direction, away from Christ and the path that leads from Jerusalem -- away from the cross, away from the sunrise of Easter toward the nightfall of Emmaus. The disciples were discouraged and disheartened. Though Jesus walked alongside them, they failed to recognize him because their eyes, ears, minds and hearts were closed. Are there situations in your life where it seem as if Jesus is totally

absent and silent? Does it seem that he has deserted you in your hour of need, and that you are alone in your pain? At such moments, it may be Easter week for some, but for you it is still Good Friday.

READ LUKE 24: 17-21

He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel



What are you discussing as you go along your way?

When the disciples failed to recognize Jesus, he did not say to them, *"Open your eyes and see! I am Jesus risen from the dead!"* Rather, he entered into their experience, asking *"What are you talking about as you walk along?"* Jesus listens to our stories. What is your story, your concerns, your disappoints, your hopes that you can share with him? Perhaps it is a marriage failure, the loss of a job, a disappointment from a friend, or the diagnosis of a doctor. As we read the scriptures, our minds and hearts run back and forth between the page and our human experience. We make connections between the sacred word and our story: *"This is my situation. It really is like that!"*

Jesus told his disciples: *"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free"* (Jn.8:31-32). Were the disciples of Emmaus looking for a political liberator to set them free? They utter some of the saddest words in Scripture, *"We had hoped that he would have been the one to set Israel free"* (v.21).

On another road, the road that led toward Jerusalem, Jesus told his disciples: *"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me"* (Mark 8:34). The disciples of Emmaus did not want a suffering Messiah, but if we follow God's plan, Jesus' way, it is the path of suffering that leads to glory. Paul had to come to terms with the cross. He realized that for many it was a scandal, a stumbling block, a disgrace or a curse. But for those who believe *"it is the power of God"* (1 Cor.1:18-23). Unless we enter into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, God's Word, will remain a closed and locked book, and we will read with closed minds and hearts. We will

be like those who "look at the words but do not perceive, who hear the words but do not understand" (Is 6:9).

READ LUKE 24:25-27

And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.



Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into glory?

Jesus says that is "necessary" that he suffer these things so as to enter glory. We might ask, "Why should it be God's will for anyone to suffer in order to be glorified? Is this the way God shows love for us?" In moments of tragedy and loss we are not satisfied with simple answers. At such times we are up against the mystery of God who says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8).

Jesus' dying and rising challenges the notion that a broken body is a sign of God's punishment and rejection. Jesus transforms it into a symbol of salvation. God was not absent on the cross, nor at Auschwitz or at the World Trade Center. We only know and believe that God, with his mysterious thoughts and ways, is good, loving and caring and wills the best for us. If it is necessary that Jesus should suffer so as to enter glory, might it not be necessary that we should walk a similar path?

It is the risen Christ who opens the scriptures and unlocks our hearts. Slowly, the disciples began to understand, but something more was needed to fan that spark of hope into a burning flame. It was late afternoon, and soon it would be dark. If Jesus left the disciples now they would remain in the dark.

READ LUKE 24:28-29

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

The disciples plead, "Stay with us!" "Abide with us!" Jesus said that he is the vine and we are the branches that we can not live apart from him, "If you abide in me and I in you, you may ask what you will and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). Jesus wants to abide in us. He wants us to meet him in word, prayer and

sacrament. He waits for our invitation. *"Here I am, standing at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me"* (Revelation 3:20).

READ LUKE 24:30-32

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"



Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?

Recognition of Jesus happens within the context of a sacred meal. In the *"Breaking of the Bread,"* their eyes were opened. The disciples had come to know Jesus in the word, and now they recognize him at the table. With that Jesus disappeared from their sight. The disciples no longer need Jesus' physical presence. When our eyes of faith are opened we no longer have to depend on our physical senses, like Thomas, wanting to see and touch. Jesus says, *"Blessed are you who have not seen, yet believe"* (John 20:29). Jesus eternally abides in the church in his Sacred Word and Eucharistic presence.

The Lord has risen indeed! Has the Lord risen in your heart?

What is your response to this story? Ask the Lord to set your heart on fire with love for Jesus in Word and Sacrament. Pray in thanksgiving for his presence in your life.

SUMMARY

God's message in Joshua 1:8 reminds us that we must be led by the Word of God, which we must absorb into head and heart as a lifetime project. (as J.I. Packer summarizes in his book *Praying. Finding our way through duty to delight*, p. 77).

The Bible is a mirror by which we can judge our actions. St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions* that he spent his youth in dissolute living. Usually his prayer was: "Change my heart Lord . . . but not yet!" One day he prayed in his garden. As he probed the inner recesses of his soul, he said "a great storm broke within me." Augustine broke down and wept. "How long shall I go on saying, 'Tomorrow, tomorrow.' Why not today?" Then he heard a young child chanting, "Take and read!" Augustine reached for his bible lying nearby and was converted by a single verse from Paul's letter to the Romans: "The night is far spent; the day draws near. Let us cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Ro 13:12). God's revelation continues in each of us made in the divine image. We are called to look like God's Son and act like him. Look in the Biblical mirror. See whether you can recognize Jesus in yourself.

Every Leader with responsibilities, then, should follow God's instructions: meditate on the scriptures and study God's will for life. If you want to develop your faith as a Knight of Eucharist Leader, then you must set aside time for prayer, reading and meditating the Bible. Yet, so few of us do so! You must ask the question, what gets in the way of my time with God? How much does TV, internet, over working, or hanging with friends take of you and your time?

http://www.daily-word-of-life.com/lectio_divina.htm

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

1 Week Bible Challenge –

Each day this week, choose one passage below, read and mediate daily. Select one passage that impacts you personally and prepare to share to the class next week.

Day	Theme	Passage
1.	Life Through Christ:	Romans 5:12–21
2.	Life by the Spirit:	Romans 8:1–17; Galatians 5:16–26
3.	Living Sacrifices:	Romans 12
4.	Walking in the Light:	1 John 1–2
5.	Living for God:	1 Peter 1–11
6.	Love for one Another:	1 John 3:11–24
7.	Promise of Eternity:	2 Corinthians 5:1–10; Revelation 21:1–4

VIETNAMESE WORDS

Meditate – ngắm nghĩ

Challenge – thử thách, thách đố

Devotion – hiến dâng, hiến thân, tận tụy

Effective – có hiệu lực, có hiệu quả