

Step by Step through *Lectio Divina*

The Lectio Divina (or Divine Reading) has been used by individuals and groups to study and reflect upon the Bible for centuries. Many find the prayer process enriches their faith journey.

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the loving presence of Christ.

Make an offering to Jesus of this time and commend to Christ all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved.

Open your Bible to a passage.... Suggested Daily Lectionary Scriptures can be found online at: <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/daily.php?year=A>

LECTIO (Reading)

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Lectio is a listening kind of reading that patiently waits in trust for God to be revealed. Prayer means to open yourself. In this, recognise that the divine mystery cannot be contained or controlled by us. Depending on what happens, you might read the passage several times or linger on one particular phrase or even one word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it. Praying takes time, patience and perseverance. It takes effort and cooperation with the grace of God.

MEDITATIO (Meditation)

This stage is our human response to the Scripture words. Here ponder and ruminate what was read. Quietly savour the words and meditate upon it in expectation. You may find that one word or one phrase stands out for you. Think of Mary who pondered these things in her heart. Consciously open yourself to God, allowing the Divine to touch your heart. Seek the One whom you love. Meditation engages through, imagination, emotion and desire. In meditation, God can deepen your faith, prompt conversion of your heart and strengthen your will to follow Christ.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What does this passage mean for my life?
- What do I need to change?

Notice this isn't 'naval gazing,' but an honest accounting of our lives and always directed outward to God, Son and Holy Spirit.

ORATIO (Prayer)

This is the prayer of the heart. It's unique, personal, honest and spontaneous, specific to the experience of encountering God in Scripture. It can be abandonment to the will of God, like Mary: "Thy will be done." It's a response to the Word from the centre of our hearts. It may be in words or even just a sigh of love.

CONTEMPLATIO (Contemplation)

This stage is God's response to us so it's totally beyond our control. We cannot create contemplation by ourselves. It is a divine gift that God's goodness gives us. In contemplation, one is totally passive, held by the mystery of God. Essentially it's a gaze. God's gaze into us and our gaze of faith back to God. Your whole self becomes focused on the Lord. It is nothing more than a close sharing between friends. It is deep, intimate, intense, sometimes tearful and often too deep for words. It's childlike. It's a surrender to the loving will of God in an even deeper union with Jesus. The aim is to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us. Devotion to prayer leads anyone to personal union with God.

"I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of God."

— St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

adapted from http://qvdays.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/lectio_divina.pdf