

“One does not live by bread alone but by every word  
that comes forth from the mouth of God.”

Mt. 4:4

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Ps. 46:10



“The word is allowed simply to be there, letting  
its weight, its own gravity, press upon us till it  
gives form to the attitude of our heart.

If each day a word of the Lord can truly come  
alive for us and can form our mind and heart,  
we will come indeed to live by faith as just  
persons; we will have that mind of Christ.”

Fr. Basil Pennington

“True holiness does not mean a flight from the  
world; rather; it lies in the effort to incarnate  
the Gospel in life, in the family, at school and at  
work, and in social and political involvement.”

Bl. Pope John Paul II

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# Lectio Divina

An Introduction

To Sacred Reading



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## WHAT IS LECTIO DIVINA?

In a world of multi-tasking and constant availability, Lectio Divina, an ancient form of Christian prayer, offers a way to consciously deepen our relationship with God. By briefly disconnecting from other activities, we are able to have a conversation between God and ourselves. As in any human conversation, both persons share their thoughts and feelings. In the Lectio process, first God speaks and we listen with our heart. Then we speak and God listens. Through this sharing, a deeper relationship with the living God is developed and nurtured as we sit in the presence of the One who loves us and wants us to know that love. Through Lectio, God transforms us to see as God sees and love as God loves so that we put on the "mind of Christ."

Lectio Divina is rooted in Scripture, the living Word of God. By reading the Word and reflecting upon it within one's heart, God is able to begin the conversation. The process is simple and easy to learn. In addition to a Bible, you only need to bring your openness and desire to be challenged and transformed by God's Word.

The main condition for a place for Lectio is somewhere that is quiet. God speaks gently, frequently in a whisper. Noisy places can distract and drown out the conversation. Any quiet place can become a "prayer room". The place may be a church or a garden bench or your own bedroom.

The best time is whenever you are fresh and attentive, when you are most able to be present to God for a conversation.

## WHAT LECTIO DIVINA IS NOT

- A Bible Study
- Reading to get a general meaning
- Reading for information
- Analyzing the text

## THE PROCESS FOR LECTIO DIVINA

### **Preparation:**

Be open to be transformed by God's Word.

Choose a passage from Scripture which is not too long.

Quiet your body and mind.

Pray to the Holy Spirit, asking for openness, receptivity and awareness of God speaking to you.

**Phases:** Lectio Divina consists of four phases that takes you from reading scripture, to meditation on its personal meaning, to spontaneous prayer, and then to a silent resting with God in love. The direction of this prayer is toward simplicity and depth.

**Read (*Lectio*)** Read the passage slowly and prayerfully several times with attentiveness and receptivity. Place yourself in the scene and listen with your heart. A word, phrase or image may stand out or may seem significant. Gently repeat it - savor, relish, absorb it. Let it speak to your heart.

**Reflect (*Meditatio*)** When a word or phrase touches you, take time to reflect and ponder it. Be aware of its personal meaning for you in the here and now. Notice how it may be giving you insight or challenging you. Perhaps it is calling you to some action or giving a sense of peace, comfort, hope, etc. You may even find that this word or phrase is carried within you, beyond the time of prayer into the rest of the day.

**Respond (*Oratio*)** As you reflect, a prayer may arise within you. This speaking with God may express your feelings such as longing, gratitude, praise, repentance, intercession, awe, or regret. Let your heart speak to God as the Spirit moves you.

**Rest (*Contemplatio*)** Let go of your ideas, reflections, and dialogue. Allow the word to move from head to heart. Silently rest in God's presence, experiencing God's acceptance and love. As you rest in God, God gradually transforms you from within. This transformation will have an effect on the way you are, the way you live, the way you act.

**Concluding prayer:** This may be the Lord's Prayer, or your prayer.