

The Practice of *Lectio Divina*

In our modern world, we talk fast, travel fast, and even pray fast. Our impatience to get to the end, our focus on completion rather than process is a real danger in reading Scripture when every word is from God and has a power all its own. A lot can happen if we simply slow down and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us about the words on the page and connect them to our journey at this particular place and time.

***Lectio Divina* is reading for *formation*, not *information*.** We engage the text with the intention to be formed by it, to deepen our relationship with God. In this process we are making ourselves available to God, positioning ourselves before him that he might have access to our lives.

The Progression of *Lectio Divina*

1. Prayer of Preparation

Yield all your cares and concerns to the Lord. Quiet your heart. Invite the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Word, to illumine its message to your heart.

2. Reading / Observation

- a) Choose your text.
- b) Read through the text slowly and thoughtfully.
- c) Read through the text again, but this time read it out loud.
- d) As you are reading, do so with the intent of hearing God's personal communication to you in and through the text.
- e) Perhaps God will highlight a single word, phrase, or concept for you from the passage.
- f) *Do not stress out about this!* It is not up to you to get God to speak to you. He is more than able to do so. All we are doing is putting ourselves in the position for him to speak to us and engaging in the process.

3. Reflection / Pondering / Attraction

- a) Take the word, phrase, or concept that God has spoken to you. Slowly turn it over in your mind. Allow it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas.
- b) As you reflect, perhaps there are memories or images that surface.
- c) Be aware of any emotions that surface in you, such as anxiety, peace, hope, frustration
- d) Listen to, ponder, and savor these words from God until they settle in your soul
- e) Remember, you are not alone in this process. God is with you. Allow him to guide and direct you.

4. Response / Prayer / Dialogue with God

- a) God is the one who has invited us into his loving embrace and this encounter with him.
- b) Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you.
- c) Talk to God about what you have noticed. Tell him about what has emerged for you so far in the process.
- d) Ask God about things you do not understand.
- e) Then, in silence, listen for what God seems to be communicating to you.

5. Contemplation / Rest

- a) Allow yourself to let go of whatever is happening in your prayer in order to rest quietly in the presence and embrace of the God who loves you.
- b) Simply rest in the word of God and God's presence.
- c) Simply be with God, resting in the unique one of a kind, unconditional love that God has for you.