

“Lectio Divina”

Praying with Sacred Scripture

Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading) is a way to pray with the Scriptures (i.e. the Holy Bible). Every word of the Scriptures is divinely inspired and without error of any kind. This means that when we open the Bible, we have a *perfect* “fuel” and inspiration for our mind and heart which helps us to pray.

Prayer is the lifting of the mind and heart to God, and God *Himself* helps us to do that through this ancient way of prayer using the Scriptures which He has inspired. *Lectio Divina* has **four basic stages**. The stages are not meant to be “rigid rules”, but rather guideposts that point us in the right direction, gently, step by step.

I. *Lectio* (Reading: “I read myself full”)

This first stage begins very simply. We begin by going to a quiet place (this could be a church, your living room, a parked car...anywhere that it is *quiet*) and *opening the Bible*. Of course, any part of the Bible is wonderful, but it may be helpful to focus on the New Testament, and specifically, the Gospels (what Jesus said, did, and taught). Read slowly, prayerfully, and find what illumines you *today*. Pause at those words or phrases that particularly strike you, and *stay with them*. Let there be space and silence in your reading.

II. *Meditatio* (Meditation: “I think myself clear”)

This second stage extends the pause you’ve arrived at in your reading, and deepens the silence. *Why* has this particular word or phrase touched you? *What* is God saying to you today through this text? *How* might you be called to respond, even to change, given what you have discovered?

III. *Oratio* (Prayer: “I pray myself hot”)

This third stage takes us deeper, moving from mind to heart. Prayer develops as a dialogue of the heart between me and Christ. What do I need? What do I want? What does Christ want *from* me and *with* me? I allow relationship with Him to be strengthened in trust, and in love.

IV. *Contemplatio* (Contemplation: “I let myself cool”)

This last stage allows silence to reign. I no longer need to read, to talk, or to even open my eyes. I only need to *listen* to Christ, Who speaks in a way beyond words. Here, silence *is* my prayer, and it is enough.