



# Week 1-What is Prayer and Praying with Lectio Divina

## What is Prayer

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part.” (CCC #2725)
- More than any other relationship in your life, your relationship with the Lord through prayer is vital. This is how He shows His love for us and we show ours in return.
- Prayer requires effort and communication.
- Like any relationship, if we stop working on it and do not give it the time and attention it needs, the relationship suffers.
- When we admit to ourselves that we need help in prayer and are willing to be taught, we are already exposed to an attitude of prayer

## 4 Steps to Prayer:

- **Step One —Establish the Relationship** St. Therese of Lisieux describes prayer as a "surge of the heart; it is a simple look toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy." In simple terms, prayer is acknowledging God—it is saying "Hi."
- **Step Two —Make Yourself Presentable** After you've established your relationship with God, it is time to make yourself presentable. Find a good time to pray. When are you at your best? Morning? Evening? By giving God your best time, you are communicating that this relationship is important and deserves your full attention.
- **Step Three —A New Routine** You have established the relationship and you've made yourself presentable. You're continuing to speak to God for a few minutes at a time so you are feeling comfortable around Him. Recognizing that prayer is vital to your day helps set your priorities. When your priorities are centered around prayer, you will notice that prayer becomes a part of every decision you make about how you spend your time.
- **Step Four —Make the Commitment** Simply, act. You've established your relationship with God. You've been spending time with Him in prayer, hopefully every day. You've made a new daily schedule that has prayer at the center. You've done the prep work. Now is the time to make the commitment.

# Prayer of the Week: Lectio Divina

This method of prayer goes back to the early monastic tradition. There were not bibles for everyone and not everyone knew how to read. So the monks gathered in chapel to hear a member of the community reading from the scripture. In this exercise they were taught and encouraged to listen with their hearts because it was the Word of God that they were hearing.

When a person wants to use *Lectio Divina* as a prayer form today, the method is very simple. When one is a beginner, it is better to choose a passage from one of the Gospels or epistles, usually ten or fifteen verses. Some people who regularly engage in this method of prayer choose the epistle (usually the Second Reading) or the Gospel for the Mass of the day as suggested by the Catholic Church. To see the readings for the day go to [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

## Steps of Lectio Divina

### 1. LECTIO-Read

Lectio simply means 'read'. Start somewhere familiar, like the upcoming Sunday Gospel, and read a small section. Before you start, ask the Holy Spirit, the author of Sacred Scripture, to come open your heart and to guide your mind. When you begin reading, read through the passage **slowly** and **attentively** and **out loud**. When you finish, read through the passage again slowly and silently; take notice of any words that stand out to you as you read.

### 2. MEDITATIO-Reflect

In the meditatio (meditation) step, allow yourself to enter into the passage you just read. Perhaps you are one of the disciples or simply someone in the crowd. Use your imagination and bring the scene to life. What do you hear? Smell? Feel? Is the sun hot? Is the crowd pushing you around? What does Jesus' voice sound like? Also think about the words that stuck out as you read and wrestle with why they were highlighted as you read.

### 3. ORATIO-Respond

At this point, you move from the head and go to the heart. In the oratio phase, you turn over everything that was in meditation to God in **prayer**. Ask him why the words stuck out, why the passage unfolded like it did in your meditation. Be sure to also **listen** to what the Lord has to say to you because He wants to speak to you. Ask what God wants you to do with this now.

### 4. CONTEMPLATIO-Rest

The last thing to do is contemplation. Essentially, it's time to take it all in. Rest in what God has spoken to you in His Word. Simply just sit and be with the God who loves you.

**\*Allow yourself 10-15 minutes to do all of the steps! You can always spend more time, too!**