

## Step by step through *lectio divina*

( Divine Reading )”

*Jesus said: ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’* ”

(*John 14:6*)

- Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Praying with Scripture before the Blessed Sacrament is powerful. Outside of a church, it would be helpful to have a holy image, an icon or a crucifix before us to help focus ourselves.
- Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the loving presence of Jesus. One way of doing this is slowly repeat the name of Jesus in your heart or quietly out loud, or use the Jesus prayer ( ‘ Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. )”Take on a *passive* stance, and allow yourself to be *taken by* Him. After all He loves you more than you could ever imagine, and He desires to reveal Himself to you.  
Remember that we always pray to Jesus *in the Holy Spirit*. He dwells within us through Baptism and is at work in us especially through Confirmation. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us helps us to see Jesus (1Cor 12:3), and the Holy Spirit also prays within us (Rom 8:26). So we can also take part in the very ancient tradition of invoking the Holy Spirit:  
Come, Holy Spirit. ”  
Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. ”  
Through Jesus in the Holy Spirit we cry out *to the Father*. Because we share the sonship of Jesus through baptism we have been adopted into His relationship with the Father so that He is our Father too.
- Make an offering to Jesus of this time, and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved.
- The Bible, or Holy Scripture, is *God’s words about Himself*. These divine words testify, point us to the Divine Word: Jesus Christ, the Savior. Remember the Bible was a gift from the Lord to His Bride, the Church. Sacred Scripture was written for YOU. To pray with the Bible is a true encounter with the Lord.
- Open your Bible to a passage ...

### **LECTIO** ( rëading )”

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. *Lectio* is a listening kind of reading that patiently waits in trust for the Word (Jesus) to reveal Himself. Prayer means to open yourself. In this, recognize that the divine mystery cannot be contained or controlled by us. Allow yourself to be taken in by the words and be drawn towards the Word, Jesus Christ. 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 the Lord.

- It’s true that the voice of God, having once fully penetrated the heart, becomes strong as the tempest and loud as the thunder, but before reaching the heart it is as weak as a light breath which scarcely agitates the air. It shrinks from noise, and is silent amid agitation. (St. Ignatius of Loyola)

### **MEDITATIO** ( rëditation )”

This stage is *our human response* to God’s words. Here **ponder** and **ruminare** what was read. Quietly savor the Word, and meditate upon it in expectation. Think of Mary who pñdered these things in her heart. Remember Jesus wants to reveal Himself, and pull you closer to Him. Consciously open yourself to the Lord, allowing Him to touch your heart. Seek Him whom you love. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire. In meditation, God can deepen your faith, prompt conversion of your heart, and strengthen your will to follow Christ. A question to ask yourself is ‘What does this Word mean for **my** life? What do I need to change?’ ” Notice this isn’t ‘nåvel gazing’, but an honest accounting of our lives and always directed **outward** to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### **ORATIO** ( p'ayer ):'

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

- You are a fire that takes away the coldness, illuminates the mind with its light, and causes me to know your truth. (St. Catherine of Siena)
- O God, give me stillness of soul in you. Rule me O King of gentleness, King of peace. (St. John of the Cross)
- Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me; to you, O Lord, now I return it; all is yours, dispose of me wholly according to your Will. Give me only your love and your grace, for this is enough for me. (St. Ignatius of Loyola)

### **CONTEMPLATIO** ( c'ontemplation ):'

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 the Lord in His 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 at Him. 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 the Father in an even deeper **union** with His beloved Son. His gaze purifies our hearts, illumines our eyes to see with the eyes of Jesus, and teaches us compassion for our neighbor. The aim is to allow the Holy Spirit shape us into the form of the Son. It is not weird, unusual or exceptional, but rather the normal fruit of devoted and faithful practice of *lectio divina*. Devotion to prayer leads anyone to personal union with God.

- Learn to abide with attention in loving waiting upon God in the state of quiet. Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful and loving infusion of God, which, if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the Spirit of love. (St. John of the Cross)
- Contemplative prayer is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us. (St. Teresa of Avila)
- Prayer is sowing, contemplation the reaping of the harvest, when the reaper is filled with wonder at the ineffable sight of the beautiful ears of corn, which have sprung up before him from the little naked seeds that he sowed. (St. Isaak of Syria)
- The grace of contemplation is granted only in response to a longing and insistent desire. (St. Bernard of Clairvaux)

*'I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of God. '*  
(St. Margaret Mary Alacoque)

For a more on prayer ...  
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