

PRAYER METHODS - SCRIPTURES

LECTIO DIVINA

*With adaptations from a Supplement to the St. Peter's
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Introduction.

- ✓ *“If the practice of **Lctio Divina** is promoted with efficacy, I am convinced that it will produce a new spiritual springtime in the Church. (“Pope Benedict XVI”)*
- ✓ ***Lectio Divina** is a very ancient way of a slow, contemplative praying the Bible which enables the Word of God, to become again what God intended it to be – **a means of union with Him.***

What “Lectio Divina” Is Not:

- The goal of Lectio Divina is not that we complete the reading the entire Bible:
- The style or way of reading or listening to the Bible practiced in the Lectio Divina is very different from the speed reading which we apply to newspapers, books and even to the Bible.
- Lectio Divina is a reverential listening; a listening in a spirit of silence and awe to the Word of God...”**a listening with the Heart”**.
- Lectio Divina is not the same as Bible study: Bible study is very useful at another time and provides a solid conceptual background for the practice of Lectio Divina,
- In Lectio Divina what is important is not to understand the text critically but a growing relationship with God, who communicates His own life to us in and through the words of the sacred text.
- **In the Lectio Divina we do not want to go through the Bible, but rather we allow the Bible to go through us.**
- Lectio Divina is not, as a rule, immediately gratifying: One does not reap the day following the sowing! Only those who know how to wait, will reap, the reward.
- If you allow yourself to be possessed by the Word of God, you will hear Him even in your silence. There is nothing worse in the spiritual life, than the desire for immediate results.
- **The success of Lectio Divina does not depend on your doing, but on God’s free gift:**
In ancient times contemplation was not regarded as a goal to be achieved through some method of prayer, but was simply accepted with gratitude as a gift of God

What Lectio Divina Is:

- **A school of Prayer:** The foremost aim of the Lectio Divina is to simply lead you to communion with God at all times, in and out of fixed periods of prayer.
- **A shool of Christian Life:** For the Fathers of the Church, one knows the Bible only when after assimilating it, he translates it into life.
- **School of Action.** :Lectio Divina – being a true ‘school of prayer and a school of life’ helps us to put into action the attitudes taught us by God in Scripture.

Procedure

The Lectio Divina is a gradual process of **six steps** as indicated below:

Step One: Choosing the Text to pray on:

- To practice daily the Lectio Divina you may take one of the readings from the liturgy of the day or if you prefer it, you may systematically work through a particular book of the Bible.
- It makes no difference which text you choose as long as you do not intend “covering” a fixed amount of text. The amount of text “covered” is God’s choice, not yours.

Step Two: Reading: the Text.

- Read the text very slowly, savoring each portion of it, constantly listening for the “inner voice of God in any word or phrase that come across.” I am here for you today”.
- Do not expect ecstasies and revelations. In the Lectio Divina God is teaching us to seek Him in silence. He does not suddenly reach out and grab us; rather, He softly and gently invites us continually to move deeper and closer into His presence.

Step Three: Meditating, rather “Ruminating” the Text.

- Once you find a word or a passage in the Scriptures that speaks to you in a personal way, stop reading, and slowly repeat it to yourself again and again for as long as you feel drawn to it. *{The image of the ruminant animal quietly chewing its cud was used in antiquity as a symbol of the Christian pondering the Word of God.}*
Meditation allows God’s word to become His word for you and in you, a word that touches you and affects you at your deepest levels.
- Once you feel saturated with the text move on to the next step.

Step Four; Praying With the Text.

- Speak to God as you would with one you know he loves and accepts you.
- Communicate to Him what you have discovered and experienced while doing your Lectio Divina.

Step Five: Contemplation:

- Use words only when words are helpful and let go off words when they are no longer required.
- Now, simply rest in God’s presence.
- Remain in a restful silence before God who has used His Divine word to hold you in His transforming embrace.
- After going through the four steps above, carry on reading from where you stopped and follow the same procedure till the allotted time for prayer is over.

Step Six. Closure:

- End the Lectio Divina by reciting “The Our Father” and “The Glory Be”

