

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a process for hearing, praying and experiencing God's word. Choose a short passage. Then read through the passage four times, as described below.

I. LECTIO – Listen

The art of Lectio Divina begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply. We are learning to hear “with the ear of our hearts.”

When we read the Scriptures we should try to imitate the prophet Elijah who God learned to listen for the still, small voice of God. The cry of the prophets to ancient Israel was the joy-filled command to “Listen!” “Sh'ma Israel: Hear, O Israel!”

In lectio divina we heed that command and turn to the Scriptures, knowing that we must “hear,” that is, listen, to the voice of God, which often speaks very softly.

Begin with a short moment of silence. Then, ask one person to read the passage. Listen for specific words or phrases that grab your attention.

After the reading, take another moment to quietly meditate on it.

II. MEDITATIO – Meditate

Once we have found a word or a passage in the Scriptures that speaks to us in a personal way, we must take it in and “ruminate” on 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.

Christians have always seen a scriptural invitation to lectio divina in the example of the Virgin Mary “pondering in her heart” what she saw and heard of Christ (Luke 2:19).

Have a second reader read the passage.

Meditate on the passage and the words or phrases that stood out upon first reading. Try to ‘pray the passage.’ Ask God to reveal what the passage means.

III. ORATIO – Share Aloud

Prayer is dialogue with God. It is a loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace. It is also consecration. We act as priests, offering to God our whole selves, even parts we did not think he would want.

After a third reading, share and discuss the words or phrases that stood out to you.

It may help to ask two questions:

***What is God telling us? (conversation)
What am I going to do about it?
(consecration)***

IV. CONTEMPLATIO – Contemplate.

Finally, we simply rest. Experience the presence of the One who has used His word to invite us to accept His transforming embrace.

In loving relationships, there are moments when words are unnecessary. It is the same in our relationship with God.

Wordless, quiet rest in the presence of the One who loves us has a name in the Christian tradition - contemplatio, contemplation.

Practice silence. Let go of our own words. Then, simply enjoy the experience of being in the presence of God.

Read the passage a final time, savoring the words and thoughts shared earlier.

