

Lectio Divina

WE SPEAK TO GOD WHEN WE PRAY;
WE LISTEN TO HIM WHEN WE READ THE SCRIPTURES.

ST. AMBROSE

WHAT IS LECTIO DIVINA?

Simply put, it's a way to read Scripture where we talk to God, giving time for the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide our conversation. In this type of prayer, we read, reflect, respond to, and rest in the Word of God. Through it we learn more about who God is and who we are to Him. We have the opportunity to be renewed and transformed by encountering Him in His Word.

"I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina (divine reading): the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart. This practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime."

Benedict XVI, on the 40th Anniversary of Dei Verbum

"It is especially necessary that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter, in the ancient and ever valid tradition of lectio divina, which draws from the biblical text the living word which questions, directs and shapes our lives."

St. John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte, 39

STEPS OF LECTIO DIVINA

1. *Lectio = Read* What does this text say in itself?
2. *Meditatio = Reflect* What does this text say to me?
3. *Oratio = Respond* What do I say to the Lord in response to this text?
4. *Contemplatio = Rest* What conversion of heart and mind is God working in me through this text?
5. *Actio = Do* How will I respond concretely to this encounter with God's word?

Take your Bible and journal. Find a quiet place. Get comfortable. Pick a passage (i.e. Gospel of the Day, Sunday's Readings, Psalms, etc.)

Lectio = Read

Before beginning, quiet your mind and body. Remember that God is with you, and looking upon you with great love. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading and speak to you through it. Listen with the "ear of your heart" as St. Benedict would say. Read the text slowly once, noting any words or phrases that stand out. Pause, and then read the text again. This time, stop and circle or write down whatever is striking you.

Meditatio = Reflect

Meditating on a passage is not the same thing as analyzing it academically. Meditation uses your powers of thought and imagination in a personal way. Reflect on the text you circled and insert yourself into it. What do you notice? If the text is a story, do you identify with one of the characters? What do you see, hear, smell, taste, touch? Where is the Father, the Son, and/or the Holy Spirit? Is God saying something in particular to you through this word? How does the message or story apply to your life? You may want to write down your thoughts.

Oratio = Respond

Now enter into a conversation with God about what you experienced through the reading of Scripture. Respond to God by speaking directly to him, from your heart. Question, praise, complain, wonder, argue, grieve, rejoice: be authentic. God wants a relationship with the REAL you. He knows you and loves you as you are; He brings His Word in contact with the reality of your life situation.

Contemplatio = Rest

Let God speak back! Let your thoughts settle and allow the Spirit to draw your heart into the process of receiving the Word. If you do not hear anything in particular, simply be present to God. If you struggle with this step, just give yourself a certain amount of time in which you will do your best to turn away from distractions and make space for God to act. Don't be afraid to pull out your journal and write what comes to your heart. God wants to talk to you!

Actio = Do

God speaks to us so we can be in relationship with Him. This relationship is on-going and not just for our prayer time. Now that you've had this time of prayer, is God inviting you to make changes in your life? Is there something you learned today about God or yourself which you should respond to in a real way in your life? Be freed from some area of sin? Find healing? Receive His love? Take more time to be with Him?

AFTER THIS TIME OF PRAYER, MAKE SOME CONCRETE PLANS FOR HOW YOU CAN LIVE MORE FULLY IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. HE LOVES YOU AND WANTS YOU TO KNOW THE FULLNESS OF HIS JOY IN YOU!