

# Lectio Divina

**“I pray that it may be pleasing in the sight of Your mercy that I may find grace before You so that the inner secrets of Your words may be laid open to me when I knock”** Saint Augustine

**“Prayer is the most wonderful act in the spiritual realm as well as the most mysterious affair”** Watchman Nee

**Lectio Divina** – Latin translated as “sacred reading”, “divine reading” or “Holy reading” This is a method of prayer that has its’ roots in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century and was at one time practiced by all Christians. Used extensively by Saint Benedict with the first Christian monks in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

It is a slow, contemplative praying that transforms God’s Words into a living and breathing Spirit. It is a pray claiming and believing Hebrews 4:12. It can be used as a ladder of escalation or intensification of prayer and time with God built on four steps:

Lectio:

*Reading*

Meditatio:

*Meditation*

Oratio:

*Prayer*

Contemplatio:

*Contemplation*

**“Seek in reading and you will find in meditation; knock in prayer and it will be opened to you in contemplation”** Saint John of The Cross

**\*\*\* Find a quiet place you won’t be interrupted or disturbed. Make sure your cell phone is off and the television, computer, and radio are ALL off. Perhaps light a candle as a reminder of the closeness of Christ. Once you have found a place and you are comfortable, take a moment to merely rest and relax into God’s presence.**

**Think about your breathing, close your eyes and feel your breath going in and going out. Inhale peace & quiet and exhale worry & stress. With each breath become more aware of God’s incredible love for YOU. Say a simple prayer offering yourself to God and inviting the Holy Spirit to come and fill you and guide your time in God’s presence. { I John 2:27 }**

## Lectio:

**Pick a passage in scripture that is not too long. Read it once through to get oriented to the text. Then read it slowly a 2<sup>nd</sup> time. Think about what the passage is saying. Who is talking, who are they talking to, what is being said. Then place yourself within the text. Feel the air, the breeze blowing, the sand or dirt under your feet. Hear the sound of the trees moving in the wind, become part of the scene.**

**Read it a 3<sup>rd</sup> time and think about what the passage is saying to you. How is it speaking to you today, right now. How is God speaking to your life through this passage. Listen for a word or a phrase that appears to be standing out in your mind. Hear God speaking to your spirit, calling out to YOU.**

**During your time of reading focus on prayerful reading rather than reading to study. It is a time of spiritual reading and listening. Seeking God’s Word and Divine Truth. This is given primarily through Sacred Scripture, but God is also alive and brought forth through other books and reading. God continues to reveal Himself to us today and that revelation can be shared with us through other writings.**

In your divine reading sharpen your minds with words and thoughts of and from God. Read every word with holy reverence for your Heavenly Father and His message to YOU. St. Benedict encourages hearing *“with the ear of our hearts”*.

❖ **I Kings 19:11-13** / **Joshua 1:8-9** / **III Timothy 3:16**

Learn to listen for that still, small voice of God when you read and you must listen with a spirit of silence and awe. God is speaking to YOU today, not loudly always, but intimately.

## Meditatio:

Once you begin to focus on a word or a phrase from the scripture let the rest of the passage fall away. Concentrate on what God is saying to YOU. As you continue to discern God’s voice different thoughts, feelings, and images may arise. Allow Christ’s voice to touch all that arises in you, your thoughts, hopes, memories, images, & feelings. What do you hear, what do you notice, and what is God offering?

After reading welcome the Word of God into your heart and sit with them and allow them to marinate in your thoughts. Bring the words to life and dwell with them through the Spirit of God, personalizing God’s message to you & your life. We must chew on God’s word and allow it to nourish us and grow us into living, active Disciples of Christ.

❖ **Luke 2:19** / **Jeremiah 15:16** / **Revelation 10:9-10**

## Oratio:

As prayers and thoughts of petition and gratitude come speak them out to God. Honestly and openly express yourself to Christ, who is waiting to hold you in His out stretched arms. Pray yourself empty. This is your response to God after your time of reading and meditating. Prayer is your dialogue when you both listen to and talk to your Heavenly Father. Prayer is always first, listening to God and second, responding to God’s living word to YOU.

Prayer is a loving conversation with your Creator who has first called to YOU; and through prayer we accept God’s embrace. With prayer we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Word of God into a Spirit of ones with God through Christ.

❖ **James 4:8** / **II Chronicles 15:2** / **I Corinthians 6:17**

## Contemplatio:

Finally, allow yourself simply to rest in God. . Lay down all words, insights, thoughts, and images you’ve encountered and simply dwell in the presence of Christ. Sink into God beneath all your thoughts and feelings. Be still and once again listen and immerse yourselves in passive meditation. Bath yourselves in God’s peace, grace & love and allow them to swell within you till you can no longer hold them in. Rest in Christ’s presence and draw new strength and joy from your personal encounter with your Living Lord & Savior.

This is the moment in your love relationship with God that words are not necessary. Just allow God to hold YOU tight in His arms of love. Let go of words and thoughts and rejoice that YOU are at the foot of the throne of the Almighty and just **“BE”**.

❖ **Jeremiah 20:9** / **Habakkuk 2:20** / **Revelation 8:1**

**“Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer move God”**

E.M. Bounds

**“Prayer, the simplest of all arts and mightiest of all forces”**

E.M. Bounds

**“God does nothing but in answer to prayer”**

John Wesley