

Lectio Divina or Divine Reading

Lectio Divina or Divine Reading is a monastic practice of reading Holy Scripture. In this practice, one selection from the Bible is read and studied thoroughly to allow the participant to come immersed in the Scriptures very personally. In *Lectio* the focus is not on theological analysis but rather viewing the texts as living word.



There are 4 steps in Lectio Divina. Before starting, prepare yourself - select the passage for contemplation, turn off distractions, light a candle. Pray "God- let me hear from you" and begin.

1. *Lectio* - Reading - Read the passage through several times. Try and view the passage with different eyes each time you read. St. Benedict recommended reading a passage 4 times each time with a different focus.
2. *Meditatio* - Meditation - While *Lectio Divina* involves reading, it is less a practice of reading than listening to the inner message of Scripture through the Spirit. Try and not assigning meaning to a passage after you read, but wait and be patient. Allow the words, the story, the Spirit to fill you.
3. *Oratio* - Prayer - St. Ambrose said "Let [us] remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for 'we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying!'" Prayer is nothing more than a conversation with God. Perhaps take a sheet of paper and write your musing with God.
4. *Contemplatio* - Contemplation - One definition of contemplation is "hearing the Word of God in an attentive mode." Let the Holy Spirit continue to fill as you ponder the text. St. Bernard stated that while engaged in contemplative prayer the Holy Spirit comes like a "kiss from the Eternal Father" where we experience union with God.

End by gradually pulling yourself out of contemplation. Go back to your daily activities with a new sense of peace and perhaps a new outlook.