



LECTIO DIVINA SIMPLY MEANS DIVINE READING. Lectio Divina (translated “Divine [or sacred] reading”) is an approach to the Scriptures that sets us up to listen for the word of God spoken to us in this present moment. Lectio Divina refers to the ancient practice of divine reading that dates back to the early mothers and fathers of the cruciform Jesus faith. The practice of Lectio Divina is rooted in the belief that through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures are indeed alive and active as we engage them for spiritual transformation (Hebrews 4:12).

Lectio involves a slower, more reflective reading of Scripture that helps us to be open to God’s initiative rather than being subject to human agendas—our own or someone else’s. This contemplative reading of Scripture allows the individual or group to come into union with God. Through a delicate balance of quietness and word, we enter into the rhythm of speaking and listening, which is at the heart of intimate communication. A time of safely being silent before the reading helps us to quiet our inner chaos so that we are prepared to listen. Moments of silence throughout the process help us be attentive to God when he does speak and create space for noticing our own inner dynamics and exploring them in God’s presence.

LECTIO DIVINA IS EXPERIENCED IN FIVE MOVEMENTS. *It moves rather than steps because it is reminiscent of dancing.* When we are learning a new dance, we are very awkward and very concerned about getting it right. We watch our feet, trying to get them to do what they are supposed to do. We wonder what to do with our hands. If we are dancing with a partner, we might be clumsy at first as we try to figure out how to move together gracefully. But in the end, the point is to be able to enter into the dance, flow with it, improvise, and enjoy the person we are dancing with. It is the same with Lectio Divina. When we are just starting out, we concentrate on following the steps and getting everything in the right order. But eventually, as we become more comfortable, they become moves in a dance that flows with beauty and pleasure, heart, and soul. The moves become very fluid and flow into one another quite naturally.

Lectio Divina Practice

NOTE: Choose a passage. You will be reading the passage 3 or 4 consecutive times, each time asking a slightly different question that invites you into the dynamic of each move (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest, and Resolve). Each reading is then followed by a brief period of silence.

TO BEGIN, move into the Preparation (Silencio). Take a moment to let your body relax. With your eyes closed or open with a softened gaze, allow yourself to become consciously aware of God's presence with you. A way to do that is to express your willingness (or your willingness to be made willing) to hear from God in these moments by using a **brief prayer** such as **"Come, Lord Jesus," "Here I am" or "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."**

1. **Read** (Lectio): The first move is reading or listening (Lectio) to the Scripture, slowly and purposefully. The intent in this stage is to listen for the voice of God to speak personally, pressing to hear the phrase or word God is offering for the day. **Listen for the word or phrase that is addressed to you, that strikes you, or catches your attention.** Be content to listen simply and openly without judging or analyzing.
2. **Reflect** (Meditatio): The second move is reflect (meditation). Read the passage again and listen for the way in which the word or phrase connects with your life right now. Sit with this question, **"What is it in my life right now that needs to hear this word?"** Enter a time of meditation. Meaning, repeat the word or phrase OR maybe even sing the word or phrase a few times and ponder like what Mary did when she received news of Jesus' birth from the shepherds (Luke 2:19). You can also allow several moments of silence following this reading, and explore thoughts, perceptions, and sensory impressions (sight, smell, taste, touch, hear). **If the passage is a story, perhaps ask yourself the question, where am I in this scene? What do I hear as I imagine myself in the story or hear these words addressed specifically to me? How do the dynamics of this story connect with my own life experience?**
3. **Respond** (Prayer-Oratio): The third movement is respond. Read the passage again and this time ask the question, **"What is my response to God based on what I have read and encountered?"** Enter into a personal dialogue with God sharing with Him the feelings that stirred within you, feelings such as love, sorrow, anger, joy, shame, longings, comforts, fears, or convictions. Pour out your heart in complete honesty, especially as the text has probed aspects of our being and doing in the midst of various issues and relationships." Let the given word or phrase interact with you. As you read the passage listen for your own deepest and truest response.
4. **Rest** (Contemplatio): The fourth step is to rest in the presence of God, who invites us to be transformed by His grace. **Embrace a moment of stillness, allowing yourself to return to God and His Word.** Having responded to His call, now enter a time of quiet waiting and resting with the One who upholds our identity as His beloved children (Psalm 131). This is a posture of complete surrender to the Great Shepherd of our souls. Find solace in God's unwavering love, allowing it to renew and sustain you.
5. **Resolve** (Incarnatio): Lastly, the resolve move. **Incarnate (live out) the Word of God.** As you emerge from this place of personal encounter with God to life in the company of others, resolve to carry this word with you and live it out in the context of daily life and activity. **As you continue to listen to the Word throughout the day, you will be led deeper and deeper into its meaning until it begins to live in you and you "enflesh" this Word in the world in which you live.** As a way of supporting your intent to live out the word you have been given, you may want to choose an image, a picture, or a symbol that you can carry to remind you of it.