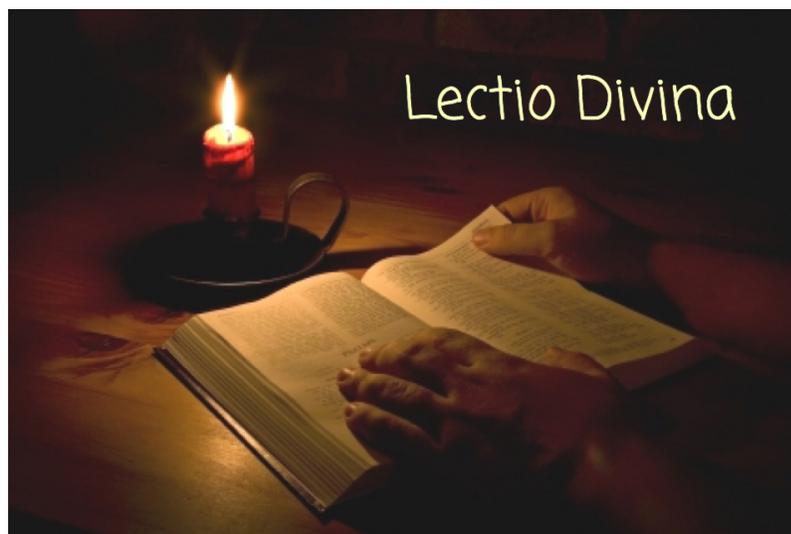


Lectio divina is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures.

Often our concerns, relationships, and hopes intertwine with our meditation on Scripture. We can attend "with the ear of our hearts" to our memories, listening for God's presence in the events of our lives. We experience Christ reaching out to us through our memories. Our own story becomes salvation history.

How to Practice Lectio Divina



Choose a text of Scripture that you wish to pray. It makes no difference which text is chosen -- whether you choose to work slowly through a book of scripture, or choose a reading from a worship service, or from a devotional -- as long as one has no set goal of "covering" a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God's hands, not yours.

Place yourself in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Some people focus for a few moments on their breathing; others have a prayer word or phrase they gently recite. For some, the practice known as "centering prayer" makes a good, brief introduction to lectio divina. Use whatever method is best for you to enjoy silence for a few moments.

Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of a word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today." In lectio divina, God is teaching us to listen, to seek God in silence. God does not reach out and grab us; rather, gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

Take the word or phrase and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are parts of yourself that are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering to invite you into dialogue with God.

Speak to God. Whether you use words, ideas, or images is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. And give to God what you have discovered during your experience of meditation. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

Rest in God's embrace. When you are led to return to contemplation of scripture or to your inner dialogue with God, do so. Use words when words are helpful, and let go of words when they are not necessary. God is with you in both words & silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity.

Sometimes in lectio divina, you will return several times to the printed text, to savor the context of the word or phrase that God has given or to seek a new word or phrase to ponder. At other times, a single word or phrase will fill the whole time of prayer. Do not assess the "quality" of your lectio Divina. There is no goal other than being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Gleaned from <http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/catholic/2000/08/how-to-practice-lectio-divina.aspx#9RTmmBDvrJtqqo4T.99>