

"LECTIO DIVINA": Sacred Reading

Although its practice goes back to the fourth century, a 12th century Carthusian monk named **Guigo II** is best known for instructing on "**Lectio Divina**." He called the four steps below "four rungs on a ladder to heaven" for "lovers of God."

TO BEGIN:

- Posture is important for *attentive listening*. Sit straight, with feet on the floor, hands in your lap or at your sides. While this process can be restful, it is a time to *be attentive* to God's voice.
- This time is your gift to God. It's not about whether you get something out of it or not. Don't be discouraged if you don't "get it."
- Your mind will wander. Recognize that this happens, even to those who practice *Lectio* often. When you catch yourself drifting, gently refocus (perhaps using a word or phrase that jumped out at you) and continue.

1) "LECTIO": *read* (5-8 minutes)

Scripture passage: _____

- *REVERENTLY READ* through a short passage several times.
- *If in a group, have various group members read, in order to hear the passage differently.*
- *LISTEN* for a word or phrase that catches your attention.

Word or Phrase: _____

2) "MEDITATIO": *think* (5-10 minutes)

- "*To meditate*" literally means "*to gnaw,*" as a dog gnaws on a bone.
- *Actively think about your word or phrase.*
- *Ask yourself: What is important? How does this make me feel?*
- *Shine a spotlight on it – look at the word or phrase from different angles.*
- *DON'T MOVE ON... YET! This is still about you and your thoughts.*
- *You may wish to make notes below:*

3) "ORATIO": *pray* (10-15 minutes)

- Ask, "God, why did you give me this word? Why do I feel this way about this phrase?"
- Listen for a response. Follow your active thoughts (not your distractions). It may be difficult, in the beginning, to discern the difference. After a while, you will begin to recognize, through sensations, insights or feelings, the presence of God in you.
- This takes practice that takes time. Be patient.

4) "CONTEMPLATIO": *live* (5-10 minutes)

- There is no more "work" to do, but rest in the love and presence of God. It is your time to simply "be" with God.
- Thank God for this Word.

Reading seeks, meditation finds, prayer asks, contemplation feels...

That means also, seek through reading, and you will find holy meditation in your thinking;
knock through praying, and the doors shall be opened to you
to enter through heavenly contemplation, to feel what you desire.

– Guigo II