

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." -- St. Jerome, A.D. 340-420

"The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New" -- St. Augustine, A.D. 354-430

## Lectio Divina

"Divine Reading"

Praying with Scripture is powerful.

The Holy Spirit dwelling within us helps us to see Jesus (1 Cor 12:3), and the Holy Spirit also prays within us (Rom 8:26).

### The Method

#### **LECTIO** ("reading") **Read:**

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Lectio is a listening kind of reading that patiently waits in trust for the Word (Jesus) to reveal Himself. Prayer means to open yourself. In this, recognize that the divine mystery cannot be contained or controlled by us. Allow yourself to be taken in by the words and be drawn towards the Word, Jesus Christ. Depending on what happens you might read the passage several times or linger on one particular phrase or even one word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it. Praying takes time, patience and perseverance. It takes effort and cooperation with the grace of the Lord. You may find yourself reading a scripture passage several times. You may want to jot down words or phrases that seem to stand out to you.

#### **MEDITATIO** ("meditation") **Reflect:**

This stage is our human response to God's words. Here ponder and consider what was read. Quietly savor the Word, and meditate upon it.

This "meditation" is not like that of Eastern traditions in which we seek to bring the mind to rest or emptiness. Rather instead, the intent of meditatio is to engage with the text with an active mind. You may ponder a phrase or word that arrested your attention in your first readings of the text and sit with it wondering how it speaks to your life right now. You may imaginatively place yourself in the story. All the while listening for the Holy Spirit to speak within you about the meaning of this text.

#### **ORATIO** ("prayer") **Respond:**

This is the prayer of the heart. It's unique, personal and honest.

In oratio, we speak to God from the heart about what we have found in the text. The Word may have convicted our hearts about something, if so you may find yourself seeking God's forgiveness in mercy. If the Word touches on a hurt, cry out in pain. If the Word reveals a calling then from our hearts we may pledge ourselves to God or ask for guidance. Oratio is a time for us to voice a response to God from our understanding of the text.

#### **CONTEMPLATIO** ("contemplation") **Rest:**

This stage is God's response to us.

We cannot create contemplation by ourselves. Essentially it's a gaze, God's gaze into us, and our gaze of faith back at Him. Your whole self becomes focused on the Lord. It is deep, intimate, intense, sometimes tearful, and often too deep for words. It's childlike. It's a surrender to the loving will of the Father. The aim is to allow the Holy Spirit to shape us into the form of the Son.

The essence of Lectio Divina is slowing down in your reading enough to prayerfully consider what God may be saying to you right now. Chat with God about what you are hearing and then just tarry a few quiet moments in God's presence. The Holy Spirit will do the rest.

Consider just reading a few scriptures in context (4-6 verses) rather than whole sections (15+). Remember, it is not about how much you read, rather what you read, retain & reflect.

Suggestions: Jeremiah 29; 10-14; Isaiah 55:6-13; Psalm 86:11-13; Psalm 121; Psalm 130; Matthew 13:18-23; John 16:5-11; John 17: 13-19; 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10; Ephesians 2: 4-10; Philippians 2: 14-18