



Lectio Divina

BACKGROUND

Lectio Divina is Latin for *sacred reading* and is a method of prayer intended to promote communication with God. The purpose of Lectio Divina has no other goal than spending time with God through the medium of His Word and is practiced by reading aloud the Word of God, with pauses for silence, reflection, and prayer. Through the Lectio Divina, we leave space for God's Word to transform us and cultivate the ability to listen deeply and hear with our hearts.

It is not considered Bible study but a slow contemplative praying of the scriptures with the focus on the individual's personal encounter with God. For over 2000 years, the Lectio Divina has enriched the lives of Christians. In its most authentic form, Lectio Divina is a private and solitary practice. However in recent years Lectio Divina held in groups has become popular and widely practiced.

Pope Benedict XVI remarked about the tradition of Lectio Divina in September 2005:

"I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n.25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime."

There are four stages to the Lectio Divina prayer. The stages of Lectio Divina are not fixed rules but guidelines as the prayer normally develops.

Lectio.	Read the scripture passage slowly. This is very different from how we read a newspaper or book, as Lectio is respectful, slow, and attentive listening. We are listening for the voice of God to speak to us personally, not loudly but intimately.
Meditatio.	Reflect on the passage by submersing ourselves deeply on the Word and how it resonates in our life.
Oratio.	Respond to the passage by opening our hearts to begin a conversation with God. We allow the word that we have taken in touch and change our deepest selves.
Contemplatio.	Free yourself from your own thoughts and in His presence, feel His embrace and be open to hear God speak.