

PILGRIM CENTER of HOPE
Lectio Divina: A Guide to Praying with Scripture
by Mary Jane Fox

Lectio Divina, Latin for divine reading, is a simple method of praying with Scripture. Many saints through the centuries have recommended it. Saint Benedict taught his monks to pray in this way 1500 years ago, and since then, monasteries have kept the practice alive. Lectio Divina has been part of the prayer of Christians throughout the history of the Church, and it is still a wonderful way to pray today!

What is Lectio Divina? Simply put: The purpose is to feed our mind and soul with the Word of God! The Word of God is alive! It is healing and inspiring! In reading the Word of God, we can encounter Jesus, who is the Word made Flesh. Christianity is about a person: Jesus Christ. You and I were created to live in a relationship with God. Until we find that relationship, there will always be something missing in our lives.

Stages of Lectio Divina

I. Lectio – Reading: Read a chosen Scripture passage

II. Meditatio – Meditation: Meditate on the reading.

III. Oratio – Prayer: Converse with the Lord.

IV. Contemplatio – Contemplation: Simply ponder what you have read. I like to call it “resting with the Lord in silence.”

How-To

We recommend the Gospel from daily Mass Reading. You can usually find them listed in your parish bulletin. Quiet your mind for a few minutes. Now, you’re reading to get started. Let’s review the steps of Lectio Divina in a bit more detail.

I. Lectio – Reading

- Read the passage once.
- Then, read it again slowly, pausing from time to time.
- Notice if any word or phrase appeals to you, or attracts your attention.

II. Meditatio – Meditation

- Meditate on the passage you’ve just read.
- Incorporate the word or phrase that may have noticed.

Remember: This is God speaking to you! The word or phrase that caught your attention may contain a special message for you.

III. Oratio – Prayer

Now, it’s your turn to speak. Respond to God’s Word in silent prayer. What do you want to say back to God?

The passage you just read may inspire you to:

- Thank God or praise Him.
- Tell God you are sorry about something.
- Ask Him for something you need. Has the passage brought to mind any concern you might have, or the needs of others?

IV. Contemplatio – Contemplation

When you have finished reading, listening, and talking to God, it’s time to just “be.”

- Simply rest in God’s loving presence for a few moments.
- No words are needed. Be at peace. Finish with a prayer of thanksgiving for the inspiration you received.

You may also want to write down any thoughts or inspiration you received. I personally choose to do this; it helps me to remember and later revisit what I received from reading the Word of God.