

3. Until Hearts are Touched - Respond – *Oratio*

- Respond as you read slowly for a third time.
- Say a prayer in response to your reflection upon the word. Let it be a natural transition.
- Be open.

We are put on this earth to learn to bear the beams of love (William Blake).
.... And To Rest in God's Grace

4. Resting in God Until Hearts Leap to Flame - *Contemplatio*

- A gradual stillness comes after vocal prayer.
- Use the wordless, intimate moment to remain quiet and restful in the love of God.
- Enjoy God and be at peace.
- Feel free to journal your thoughts and feelings.

To build your life on Christ, to accept his word with joy and put its teaching into practice.

Normally, there are four steps but a fifth step has been encouraged in recent years.

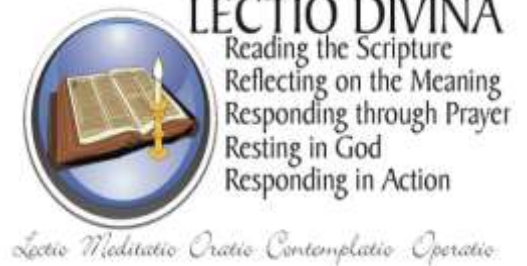
5. A Return to the World - *Incarnatio*

- Enter the world as an embodiment of the Word of God.

Benefits of *Lectio Divina*

- Persons become an expression of God's Word.
- Resting in God's presence predominates.
- Listening to God becomes a way of life.
- One lives in union with God.
- Our activity and energy is in response to the Divine Presence.

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Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading - Listening to God)

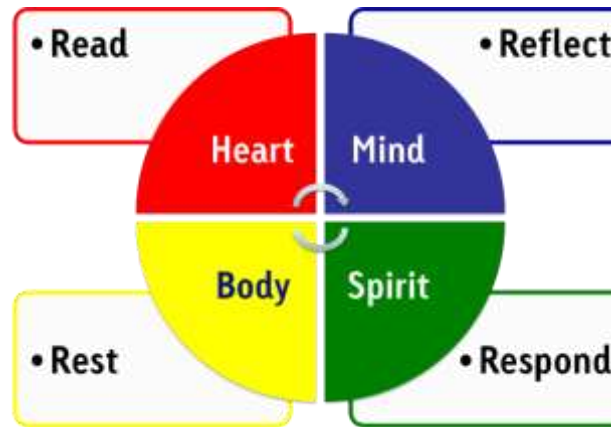
Lectio Divina is an ancient practice of praying the scriptures. It is a slower, more reflective reading emphasizing listening for God through Scripture. In listening and waiting for the Word of God through the method of reading, reflecting, responding, and resting, our relationship with Christ is deepened. Meeting Christ in daily encounters through Lectio allows the Holy Spirit to work at deeper levels of our inner being. Spend some time exploring this ancient prayer practice to experience the goodness of God as you fall in love with the Word. Lectio Divina involves five basic steps: lectio, meditatio, oratio, comtemplatio, and incarnatio.

Do not be intimidated by the Latin words or be too rigid in following the steps! Simply embrace & enjoy some quiet time in God's presence, reading, hearing, & responding to what God has for you today!

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

- ✚ Literal meaning - Divine Reading
- ✚ Way of 'Praying the Scriptures' that flows from a Hebrew method of studying the Scriptures called Haggadah
- ✚ Regular practice in monasteries by 6th century
- ✚ Purpose: In Wesleyan thought, "a way of preserving the life of God in the soul." It leads to a greater conversion of the heart in love and obedience to Christ.
- ✚ A practice to nurture our relationship with Christ.
- ✚ To experience God more intimately in order to create an awareness of God's presence in all of life, an opening to the gift of contemplation
- ✚ It is a Means of Grace.

Lectio Divina is the most traditional way of cultivating friendship with Christ. It is a way of listening to the text of scripture that encourages surrender to God's presence and rest. In daily listening with "the ear of the heart," lectio leads persons beyond mere acquaintance with God to an attitude of friendship, trust and love. "Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed in the reading. Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence" (Macrina Wiederkehr).



The Process of *Lectio Divina*

You may want to begin with a time of silence. Take some deep cleansing breaths, letting go of all your concerns and distractions. Be still. Come, ready to hear a word from God. Choose a short passage of scripture, a biblical story or a psalm. The passage needs to be no more than 10 to 15 verses.

1. **Read to be Receptive to God's Word – *Lectio***
 - Read the Word slowly pausing often between words. It slows the mind down.
 - Sit silently for a minute or two after the reading.
 - Feel free to journal your feelings.

This is a moment of interior reflection in which the soul turns to God and tries to understand what God is saying to you.

2. **Ponder the Word of God – *Meditatio***

- Slowly reread the passage.
- Be attentive to a word, phrase or image that catches your attention.
- Stop and reflect on the word. What is God trying to say to me through this word or phrase?
- Memorize the word, gently repeat it to yourself.
- Play with the word or phrase; ask your questions; "chew on it" to discover whether it speaks to your present condition; allow the word to penetrate.
- If you desire, journal your insights.
- Allow your insights to become your response in the next reading.

Only the experience of silence and prayer offers the proper setting for the development of a true, faithful, and consistent knowledge of God's mystery.