

Notes on Lectio Divina

Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart. (Jer 15:16)

Through lectio divina we learn to know the heart of God, through the Words of God. (St Gregory the Great)

When we are open and receptive to the Word of God, conversion happens. It is not a matter of changing our opinions or acquiring a new spiritual home. It is a revolution in the deep structures of the personality that, if it is genuine, goes on for the rest of our lives. (Laurence Freeman)

In the centuries-old tradition of lectio divina, which is Latin for sacred reading, it is suggested that, before or after your morning or evening meditation, you read a passage of scripture. After reading the passage go back to it, either then or later, and spend 15 or 20 minutes reverently turning the passage over in your heart. Read slowly and lovingly, pausing whenever the words draw you into silence. Close your eyes and experience the meaning of the words for you now. But even more, experience the Presence found in them. Let the reality of the words become more and more a part of your being.

During the time of lectio, the historical setting of the passage is not as important as the place it has in your life now. In a real sense, you are not the same person you were ten, five or even a year ago. Since you are always a 'new person' your response to the Word will never be the same. You may find yourself making acts of the will to conform your life more to the message of the text. One day you may rest in a deep peace. Another day you may be aware of tension, anger or sorrow. These feelings should not cause any anxiety because they are all part of God's healing action at work in you. In time, you will learn to accept yourself as a work-in-progress, and your growing appreciation for the Living Word of God will lead you to a life of constant wonder, gratitude and love. (Gregory Ryan)

Four Stages of *Lectio Divina*

Lectio Divina is reading with the eye of your heart and listening with the ear of your heart. Prepare for lectio in a similar way to how you prepare for your practice of meditation.

Lectio

Reading, Opening to the Word

Read the passage slowly, two or three times and notice what word or phrase speaks to you.

Your Question

Deeply aware of the word or phrase, ask yourself:
What am I hearing?

Meditatio

Repeating, Reflecting

Repeat the word or phrase over and over, allowing it to sink into and act on your heart. Notice any feelings, thoughts, or questions arising and be open to these touching into your life.

Your Question

Mindful of what has surfaced, ask yourself:
How is this touching me?

Oratio

Listening, Going Deeper

Listen for what you sense the Lord is saying to you now. Take this to heart and ask for the grace to hear this at your deepest level.

Your Question

Immersed in what you have heard:
What new insight am I being invited to embrace?

Contemplatio

Being. Staying

Stay quietly with whatever is happening and simply trust this.

Allow yourself to be embraced by what has happened for you, knowing that the Lord loves you and wants what is best for you.