

Explanation of Lectio Divina (Means Divine or Holy Reading)

The idea of praying with sacred scripture comes to the church through ancient Jewish tradition. Christians in the early church continued this tradition and further developed it. We read of St. Benedict (a monk) who taught/used it as a key practice. In the 11th century, a monk named Guigo formalized it and it became known as "The Ladder of Monks," a four-runged ladder to heaven.

Engaging this way is reading the scriptures formationally rather than informationally, letting them be alive today and hearing how it is being impressed on our present lives.

The Rhythms and Steps in Lectio Divina

The underlying process of Lectio Divina engages the whole person before Christ as it flows through four R's as we slowly read, silently reflect, prayerfully respond, and simply rest in God's presence.

Lectio (Listen / Read)

Benedict's way of reading the Scripture emphasizes listening deeply, "with the ear of our hearts" (Benedict's Rule, Prologue). There is no hurry in Lectio Divina. Nor is there any intellectual strain to figure out the Scripture's meaning. We simply wait quietly on the Holy Spirit as we read, listening for the still, small voice of the Lord to speak personally to us through his Word.

Meditatio (Meditate / Reflect)

As God speaks to us we reflect on his Word by "ruminating" on it in our minds. We may focus on one phrase or one word that stands out to us/is impressed to us by the Spirit. We ponder, like the virgin Mary who pondered in her heart the message of Christ's incarnation (Luke 1:26-38)

Oratio (Pray / Respond)

Because God has come to us we can go to him and so we respond to his Word by offering our hearts to him in conversation. We express to our Loving Lord whatever feelings or longings are stirred up in us by the Scripture. We confess to him a sin, struggle, or hurt.

As we let the Scripture open our heart to God in this way we find that his arms of grace are open wide to embrace us. In his care our deepest selves find the acceptance, comfort, and healing that we long for.

Contemplatio (Contemplate / Rest)

The Lectio Divina process ends with resting quietly in God's arms. No words are necessary at this point. God's Word has focused us on Christ's indwelling presence. So we simply stay there with Christ in love, joy, and peace. We're tasting the Lord's goodness (Psalm 34:8).