

Lectio Divina

BY CARRIE MEYER MCGRATH, MDiv, MAS
DIRECTOR, MISSION SERVICES, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ST. LOUIS

LECTIO DIVINA

Translated as “divine reading,” *lectio divina* is a method of prayer that draws the reader into an experience of the Word of God. Through stages of reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation and action, participants center themselves on a single Scripture passage and listen deeply for God’s message to them. A simplified *lectio divina* process is outlined below so that it can be used by an individual or modified for a group setting.

Place yourself in a comfortable position and settle into the present moment. Take a few deep breaths to allow yourself to fully arrive, and let go of daily anxieties and frustrations. You may wish to ask for God’s presence and blessing on your practice with the following words:

God, be with me here and now. May the meditations of my heart on your living Word be pleasing to you, and may the inspiration of the Spirit bring me into deeper union with you and those I encounter each day. I make this prayer in the name of Jesus, who is your Wisdom and Word. Amen.

Lectio — Read

ATTEND to the chosen passage, for example, the reading from Luke in the next column; read it slowly, with deliberate attention and imagination. Read the passage a second time.

Meditatio — Meditation

NOTICE a word or phrase that stands out to you. Turn it over in your mind and heart as you reflect on its meaning for you in this moment.

Oratio — Prayer

RESPOND to God as you would a friend in prayer, either silently, aloud or in writing.

Contemplatio — Contemplation

Quiet your mind and LISTEN for what God is speaking to you in the passage. What message does God have for you in this moment?

Actio — Action

Moving to the end of your prayer, consider how you are called to GO FORTH in a new and different way in light of your experience with God. What has the prayer called forth from you?

READING

Jesus Visits Mary and Martha
Luke 10:38-42

As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.” The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”