

An Invitation to Visio Divina

LISTENING WITH THE EAR OF THE HEART

Related to the prayer of *Lectio Divina* in which one dwells with a passage from Scripture, the prayer of *Visio Divina*, or “divine seeing,” includes the contemplation of art in conversation with God. In a society that is ever more inundated with images, *Visio Divina* requires us to slow down and truly look. We open the eyes of our soul and see how Christ is illuminated for us in art. This practice does not require any special knowledge or appreciation of art, just a willingness to attend to and interact with the colors, textures, forms and overall impressions.

Visio Divina is an invitation to wonder. The image comes alive with personal meaning meant just for us at this point in our spiritual journey. This is the same movement of the Spirit we can experience when listening to Scripture in the manner of *Lectio Divina*.

“All that is good, all that is true, all that is beautiful brings us to God.”

— POPE FRANCIS

Once you have selected an image, sculpture or icon, settle yourself into presence and begin the four-fold movement:

GAZING

Consider the image or object before you. Look slowly and thoroughly, taking a first glance, noting the colors, movement, textures, people, places and things. If the piece is three dimensional, walk around it. How does it change when you sit or stand? Remain with the image for a time. When you are ready, allow those sights and thoughts to pass by, making space for the inner eye of the heart to open and interact with the image.

RESPONDING

Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Did it open a new awareness, or spark a conviction? Offer that prayer to God.

REFLECTING

Take a second, deeper look. Rest in the presence of the image; allow the image to reach beyond the intellect and into an unconscious level. What truth does it hold for you? Engage your imagination. Where are you in the artwork? What do you see from that perspective? You may also journal, and/or use these questions to inspire your reflections: How does this image inform or illuminate your relationship with God? How does it speak to your spiritual journey? How does this experience support your willingness to be opened, to be healed?

RESTING

Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Did it open a new awareness, or spark a conviction? Offer that prayer to God.