

# An Invitation to Lectio Divina

## LISTENING WITH THE EAR OF THE HEART

Rooted in the Christian monastic tradition, *Lectio Divina* is a way of awakening our hearts and coming to an experiential awareness of God. Latin for “divine reading,” it is the process of discerning a word of revelation from God through Scripture directly to the individual. Less interested in a historical or linguistic study of the text, *Lectio Divina* is focused on coming in contact and relationship with Christ in and through the Scriptures.

The prayer of *Lectio Divina* begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply and to hear “with the ear of our hearts,” as St. Benedict taught. In order to hear someone speaking softly, we must learn to be silent. *Lectio Divina* requires that we quiet down in order to hear God’s word to us. This gentle listening is an awareness and openness to the presence of God through the revelation of the Scriptures.

“Seek in reading and you will find in meditation;  
knock in prayer and it will be opened to you in contemplation.”

— JOHN OF THE CROSS

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Once you have selected a passage from Sacred Scripture, settle yourself into presence and begin the four-fold movement:

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### LECTIO

The first step is to read the text slowly and attentively, listening for a word or phrase that is God’s word for us this day. Releasing preconceived notions and expectations of the text, we read with an open imagination. As we rid ourselves of our own bias, we become able to hear the still, small voice of God that will speak to us personally.

### ORATIO

The third step in *Lectio Divina* is *oratio*, verbal prayer, in which we dialogue with God. *Oratio* is a loving conversation with the One who has called us into being by love. The discussion may be silent, aloud or written.

*\*Although the four movements are spoken of as steps, Lectio Divina isn’t always a linear process, and may fold in and over itself. Be open to the work of the Spirit and patient with your prayer.*

### MEDITATIO

After one, two or more readings, a word, phrase or passage presents itself to us. As this word captures our spirit and imagination, we hold it gently in meditation. Through *meditatio* we allow this word to become God’s word for us, which touches and affects us at our deepest levels.

### CONTEMPLATIO

*Contemplatio* is the last movement of *Lectio Divina*. As our dialogue with God comes to an end, we simply rest in the sacred stillness. As in all loving relationships, there comes a moment when words are unnecessary and being in the presence of the other is enough. In this moment of still quiet, we let go of our own words and enjoy the experience of being in the presence of the God who loves us.