

**LECTIO DIVINA
RCIA SESSION 8
NOVEMBER 11, 2021**

Prayer: Lectio Divina

Homework: CCC 198-354

LECTIO DIVINA

The prayer of *Lectio Divina*, divine reading, is one of the foundational means of prayer in the Catholic Tradition. As one may suspect, it is a way of praying that is focused on encountering and spending time with the Word of God. Similar to how one may sit in front of a sacred image and meditate, or allow oneself to be drawn into the image, we seek to do the same with the Holy Scriptures. In *Lectio*, one sits with the Word and allows it to encounter the soul directly. One image that comes to mind is like being wrapped in a warm blanket on a cold night, to be surrounded by and embraced by the words of Sacred Scripture without any other distractions or goals in mind, but to listen for and to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Lectio is not Bible Study. We do not focus on learning the content, memorizing stories, or deciphering the hidden mysteries. This is not to say that Bible Study is not prayerful in itself, only that it is not *Lectio*. Another image that comes to mind is a common Icon of the Prophet Elias (Elijah). He is often shown sitting next to a broom tree, head turned toward a raven that holds a eucharistic host in its beak. The Prophet is simply looking and pondering, often times reminding me of similar thoughts as the famous “Thinker” statue.

There are many different forms of *Lectio*. One can even do *Lectio* without having a specific form or structure, by simply opening the book of Scripture, reading until something captures the attention, and then sitting in quiet prayer and contemplation with that particular word, verse or image. There are other forms where someone prepares a meditation to read, helping others to enter more deeply into the selected verses. The underlying idea is that one creates a space of invitation to listen and allow the Word of God to seep into one’s soul more deeply, and intimately, free of any other motives but to encounter the Word.

STRUCTURE FOR THIS *LECTIO*

This celebration of *lectio* will include 4 readings of the text. We will be using the 1st Reading from the Mass for the day, the 32nd Thursday in Ordinary Time. Following each reading, there will be time in silence and an invitation to share in a particular way. Not everyone is required to share in these moments, but you are strongly encouraged to push away any nervousness, anxiety or doubts about sharing. By sharing, you not only formulate the words vocally, which brings them into a new life, but you also open the movements of the Spirit that you have encountered for others to also experience. Again, this is not a time that is focused on learning and discovering ideas, but that does not mean that you won’t gain in knowledge and understanding through this time in prayer.

While the scripture verses are being read, listen attentively if there is a word, image, verse or part of what is read that captures your attention. Do not feel an obligation to listen to the entire reading. If there is something that captures your attention, let it stay with you. Again, this is not about learning scripture, but creating space and then accepting an invitation by the Holy Spirit. You also may be tempted to judge the word or phrase that catches your attention. Thoughts that it is too simple, everyone else will pick that one, etc. may come into your head. Try to ignore those voices, those are not a voice of the Holy Spirit.

1st Reading

While the scripture is being read, be attentive to a word or short phrase (a few words) that captures your attention.

After the reading there will be a few minutes of silence

You may want to look at the printed copy and visually focus on the word or phrase that is striking you, perhaps there is part that seems intriguing and puzzling. Often times, our sense of puzzling over something is an invitation that God wants us to look at it more deeply.

Share one, and only one, word or phrase that struck you

2nd Reading

Are there any thoughts that have come to mind as you have meditated on the scripture passage?

This may or may not come from what you shared after the first reading.

It may remain in the form of a question, such as: What does it mean that . . . or it could simply be an observation: I had not noticed before that the woman never actually asked Jesus to bring her son back to life . . . it may be a prayer: I wish I had more patience.

After a short time in silence, feel free to share a brief thought, question, etc. This should just be a few sentences, at most.

Not everyone has to share.

3rd Reading

After the 3rd reading there is time for vocal prayer. That is, taking what you have experienced and prayed thus far in the Word, to a personal prayer of expression. This may be a prayer of Thanksgiving for insight; a petition for a particular virtue or something you have been stirred to request from our God; it could be seemingly unrelated; a statement of simple praise; or anything else that you desire to express to God

After a time in silence, you will be invited to offer your prayer out loud.

Again, you are not required, but are encouraged to give voice to your prayer

4th Reading

The selection is read a final time, which serves as a bookend, saturating the time with the Word of God, while also reminding us that the proclamation of God's Word is itself an act of profound prayer.

OUTLINE FOR LECTIO

Opening Prayer: Prayer of St. John Crysostom

1st Reading of Scripture

3-4 minutes of silence

Sharing of a word or phrase

2nd Reading of Scripture

5 minutes of silence

Sharing of a brief thought or question

3rd Reading of Scripture

5 minutes of silence

Offering of prayers

4th Reading of Scripture

Concluding Prayer: Glory Be . . .

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM

(7:22-8:1)

In Wisdom is a spirit
intelligent, holy, unique,
Manifold, subtle, agile,
clear, unstained, certain,
Not baneful, loving the good, keen,
unhampered, beneficent, kindly,
Firm, secure, tranquil,
all-powerful, all-seeing,
And pervading all spirits,
though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle.
For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion,
and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity.
For she is an aura of the might of God
and a pure effusion of the glory of the Almighty;
therefore nought that is sullied enters into her.
For she is the refulgence of eternal light,
the spotless mirror of the power of God,
the image of his goodness.
And she, who is one, can do all things,
and renews everything while herself perduring;
And passing into holy souls from age to age,
she produces friends of God and prophets.
For there is nought God loves, be it not one who dwells with Wisdom.
For she is fairer than the sun
and surpasses every constellation of the stars.
Compared to light, she takes precedence;
for that, indeed, night supplants,
but wickedness prevails not over Wisdom.
Indeed, she reaches from end to end mightily
and governs all things well.