

# LECTIO DIVINA

***‘Seek in reading and you will find in meditating; knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation.’***

Guigo the Carthusian, Scala caustralium; PL 164, 476 C  
[*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2654*]

The Latin phrase ‘lectio divina’ essentially translates as ‘spiritual reading’. It is a well established prayer form in Christian tradition. This ancient practice involves a prayerful reading of the Word of God contained in Sacred Scripture. When a passage from Scripture is pondered and meditated it becomes prayer. By entering into this prayerful dialogue one meditates on the mysteries of Christ and is lead to knowledge of Him. This encounter invites a reflection on the implications for our own lives.

Lectio divina may be undertaken alone or in a group. Effective preparation requires that the mind and heart be open to the Holy Spirit and a person should approach the Scriptures with an attitude of ‘reverential hearing’. There is no set formula but four phases in the process may be identified:

- reading (lectio)
- pondering (meditatio)
- praying (oratio)
- contemplating (contemplatio)

## How to Begin

Select a short Scripture passage consisting of verses from the Old or New Testament. One approach might be to use the Mass readings of the day. You may also wish to avail of a commentary on the chosen passage but this is not essential. You can then proceed in a manner similar to that suggested below:

- 1) Begin with a prayer of dedication such as “Lord, grant the gift of your Holy Spirit so that your will may be revealed to me.”
- 2) Read the chosen passage slowly.
- 3) Re-read the text as often as desired all the time pondering the contents and the message.
- 4) Conclude with an ‘action’ or ‘mission’ phase by asking this or a similar question: “What does the Lord want concretely of me now?”

***‘Lectio divina...consists in pouring over a biblical text for some time, reading it and re-reading it, as it were, “ruminating” on it as the Fathers say and squeezing from it, so to speak, all its “juice”, so that it may nourish meditation and contemplation and, like water, succeed in irrigating life itself.’***

(Pope Benedict XVI – Angelus address 6<sup>th</sup> November 2005)