



“Taste it and digest it as you read . . . ‘Praying the Scripture’ is not judged by how much you read but by the way you read. If you read quickly, it will benefit you little. You will be like a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower. Instead, in this new way of reading with prayer, you become as the bee who penetrates into the depths of the flower. You plunge deeply within to remove its deepest nectar.” —Madam Guyon, (1648-1717), France)

This week you are invited to pray the Scripture using the ancient prayer practice of Lectio Divina. View the online video to receive instruction on how to participate in this ancient prayer practice.

Lectio Divina is an ancient and holistic way of prayer that opens and ‘in-forms’ us for the gift of contemplation God waits to give us. There are four phases to this way of praying.

1. *Lectio*—Read the scripture.

In the 4th century the first step was usually a hearing of the text. Read the text slowly, read it out loud so that you can hear it. Read it as if it were a love letter written to you. Soak up every word; seeking a life-giving word for you in your particular situation.

2. *Meditatio*—Reflect prayerfully on what you have read.

Meditate on the passage. See yourself in the passage using your imagination to smell, taste, and feel the text. Journaling on the passage can help. Where do you find yourself in this passage?

Meditating on the text leads you to a meeting place with God in your deepest center, which is God’s life-giving, dwelling place in you. Meditating on the text introduces you to the power of God to speak to the intimate depths of your heart through Scripture. God’s speaking initiates changes in your spiritual life, promoting genuine spiritual growth and maturity. As you receive your life-giving word, continue to meditate on its meaning for your life.

3. *Oratio*—Allow a prayer to bubble up from your heart as a result of hearing God’s word for you.

The meditation cuts to the heart and leads to a spontaneous heartfelt response to the scripture called “affective prayer.” Express your feelings to God. Speak truthfully and honestly to God who already knows your every need.

4. *Contemplatio*—Rest in God’s loving arms.

The more you do this kind of prayer, the more simplified it becomes, until little time is spent on reflections and responding and more time was spent resting in God. This resting in God is *contemplation*. Contemplation is the Holy Spirit praying in you. Allow yourself to rest in God. Contemplation was considered the normal development of listening to God during the first 16 centuries of the Church’s history.

If you find you flow from one step to another, this is natural. Do not worry. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you.

Lectionary Sources

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

<http://www.textweek.com/>

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/2017-revised-common-lectionarysundays-special-days-only>

Lectons for Use with Lectio Divina from the week of October 22.

- Exodus 33:12-23
- Psalm 9
- Isaiah 45:1-7
- Psalm 96:1-9 (10-13)
- I Thessalonians 1:1-10
- Matthew 22:15-22