



# LECTIO DIVINA



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## WHAT IS LECTIO DIVINA?

Pope Benedict XVI gave an address, in 2005, on the 40th anniversary of Dei Verbum, the Second Vatican Council document on Scripture where he spoke of *lectio divina* in this way:

"I would like to recommend the ancient tradition of *lectio divina*: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer which brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart. If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church a new spiritual springtime. It should never be forgotten that the Word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (see Psalm 119:105)."

## HOW SHOULD I APPROACH IT?

Scripture itself provides us with a guide to the thoughtful and prayerful reading of the Word of God:

**"Be still and know that I am God"** – Psalm 46:10  
**"For God alone my soul waits in silence"** – Psalm 62:1  
**"Speak Lord; your servant is listening"** – 1 Samuel 3:10

Wherever you are when you practice *lectio divina* try to ensure that you are comfortable, try to banish any distractions you may have and, above all, relax.

## HOW MIGHT I PRACTICE IT?

*Lectio divina* is a four-stage process; repeat this cycle as you feel necessary. Occasionally a fifth stage, action, is added. We believe that our lives can be fed by our prayerful reading of Scripture and seeking God's will. We might then consider *lectio divina* with this image:

Reading Scripture (*lectio*) is like biting into it, meditation (*meditatio*) is chewing it over, prayer (*oratio*) is savouring its goodness, contemplation (*contemplatio*) is a digestion of the Word and action (*actio*) is where we make use of the nourishment and we have received from the Lord.



### READ

What does the biblical text say in itself? Here we desire to understand its true content, moving beyond our own ideas.

1

### MEDITATE

What does the biblical text say to us? Here, individually and as a member of a community, we let ourselves be challenged by Scripture.

2

### PRAY

What do we say to the Lord in response to his Word? Prayer, as petition, thanksgiving, intercession and praise, is the primary way that the Word transforms us.

3

### CONTEMPLATE

Accepting, as a gift from God, His way of seeing reality, we ask what conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of us?

4

### ACT

The process of *lectio divina* is not concluded until it arrives at *actio*, which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity.

5