

# Lectio Divina

## Lent Series 2021:

*Practices of the Spirit: Peace in the midst of Pandemic*

Thursday February 25th | 7:30pm



**Lectio Divina** (divine or sacred reading) is a spiritual practice of engaging a passage of scripture through contemplation, reflection, and prayer. It is a purposefully slow, quiet, and thoughtful process, one that has been embraced by monastic communities for centuries. Instead of a Bible Study, which often draws on our intellectual capacities for understanding the scriptures, Lectio Divina is more of a personal, prayerful experience in which we listen for how the Holy Spirit is speaking to us through words, phrases, stories, and moments. We invite you to embrace the slow, contemplative, and intentional nature of Lectio Divina while trusting that God is present in the words of scripture, in the extended moments of silence, and even in our very selves.

### Preparation

As Lectio Divina is often a personal experience, how you choose to move through the following steps may change depending on how comfortable you become with this spiritual practice and/or how much time you have on any given day. For our purposes during the Lent Series, we will spend about 20 to 30 minutes on Lectio Divina, with some debriefing time afterwards. To prepare for our time together, it will be helpful to arrange your physical space to be as comfortable as possible -- for example, sitting in your favorite comfy chair and lighting some candles to prepare for prayer would be appropriate. If you choose to continue Lectio Divina in an individual setting, a quiet place to be alone is useful. You may begin your time with a brief prayer, either a prayer you have come to know and appreciate from Christian tradition, or simply a quick word of thanksgiving or petition: "Come Lord Jesus and be present with me as I pray with the holy scriptures."

### Step One: Lectio (Read)

Read your passage of scripture slowly and intentionally, taking time to pause or pace yourself more than you might normally. Try reading aloud, and listen for the words and phrases that particularly intrigue you. As you identify these words or phrases, let them linger -- say them aloud if you prefer, though resist the urge to immediately analyze and make meaning as to why those words spoke to you. Allow them to abide in your heart and mind.

### Step Two: Meditatio (Reflect)

Read the passage of scripture a second time, again taking time to proceed slowly. Now is the next step, a time for reflection, giving voice to your thoughts as to how God is speaking to you specifically through these words. You might consider questions like "how might the Holy Spirit use these words in my life?" or "To what is God inviting me with this passage?"

**Step Three: Oratio (Respond)**

Read the passage a third time. This time, it is your turn to respond to God's movement through the passage and within you. You may choose to write down your thoughts in a journal, or write a specific prayer for this moment in your life. This is your time to enter into a sacred dialogue with God in whatever way you feel called. Take care to notice how you are feeling -- as always throughout Lectio Divina, our goal is to respond from the depths of our hearts, allowing for God to draw near that we might offer all that we are feeling back to God in prayer.

**Step Four: Contemplatio (Rest)**

You may read the passage a fourth time if you so choose. You have offered quite a bit of yourself and your emotions in the previous steps; now is the time for dedicated stillness. Take time to rest, to contemplate, to wait silently in the assurance of God's presence and love. In this time, we embrace a faithful vulnerability, yielding our thoughts and even our control to God. As your fourth step is winding down, close with the Lord's Prayer.

**Optional: Debriefing**

If you would prefer more time of contemplative prayer and silence, feel free to log off the Zoom call. If you'd like to stay in the call and talk about this experience with the group, we will have time to debrief together.