

Lectio Divina

Pope Francis invites all the faithful to continue to encounter God’s abundant mercy through the prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture, since frequent engagement with the Bible nourishes one’s relationship with Christ (*Misericordia et misera* 7). In particular, Pope Francis encourages a method of reading Sacred Scripture known as *Lectio divina* (“divine reading”), which offers a simple four-step process for prayerfully engaging biblical texts. A brief explanation of *Lectio divina* is offered here.

The process of *Lectio divina* finds its roots in monastic tradition and the aim is to bring oneself into closer unity with Christ who is the living word of God (*Verbum Domini*, 87). Begin by selecting a passage from Scripture. The passage chosen for *Lectio divina* can be from the Old Testament or New Testament; it can be short (even a single verse!) or long (an entire book of the Bible); the process can unfold in a matter of minutes, or even years; and it can be undertaken communally or individually. The point is to immerse yourself in Scripture, allowing it to speak to you and bring you to new spiritual insights. Once you have selected a passage, the steps for *Lectio divina* are as follows: *Lectio*, *Meditatio*, *Oratio*, and *Contemplatio* and *Actio*.

Lectio: Reading

Begin by attentively reading the chosen passage. What does the passage say in and of itself? Try to notice details like repeated words, powerful images, or speech. Observe the setting of the passage, and the people (if any) who are described within it.

Meditatio: Meditation

This stage incorporates what the text says with the present situation of the reader, asking, “What does the biblical passage say to me, where I am right now in my own life? How does this passage move me? Challenge me?” Perhaps there is a character in the biblical passage with whom you identify: dwell on this and explore why this person resonates with you so deeply.

Oratio: Prayer

Prayer is conversation with God. Having received God’s word in *Lectio* and *Meditatio*, what would you like to say back to God? Prayer can take the form of praise, thanksgiving, petition, or intercession; together with the biblical text, prayer transforms us.

Contemplatio and Actio: Contemplation and Action

In Contemplation we reflect on the whole experience of *Lectio divina* and with God’s grace, honestly seek to understand the conversion and transformation the Lord seeks for us. Culminating in Action, the fruits of our transformation through *Lectio divina* are to be shared with others, truly manifesting that the word of God “is living and active” (Heb 4:12).

Lectio Divina

Select a passage from Scripture to begin.

Lectio: Reading

Read the passage 1-2 times, attentively. What does the text say?

Meditatio: Meditation

What does the passage say to me in my own situation?

Oratio: Prayer

What do I want to say to God in response?

Contemplatio & Actio:

Contemplation and Action

How have I been transformed? How can I bring the fruits of my experience to others?

Repeat this process as often as needed and share with others!

Holy Reading

Looking to get to know Jesus more closely? Pope Francis invites you to read the Bible! But how? Find yourself a quiet spot, give yourself at least 15 minutes, grab your nearest copy of the Bible, and let's begin something known as "Holy Reading" (*Lectio divina* in Latin).

Pick a passage, any passage!

Long or short; Old Testament or New Testament – it's up to you! You can choose a passage randomly...or you can begin at the start of a book and read it in small bits until you're done. Or you can simply read the Gospel for Sunday (hint: this is a really good way to get started with Holy Reading).

Read it!

Yup. Read it. Read it again! Try to notice things like people speaking, words that are repeated, or powerful images. You can read it quietly, or you can read it out loud, it's up to you!

Meditate on it!

Now think about yourself. How are things for you right now? Are you happy, peaceful, calm? Are you tired, anxious, or sad? Are you a big mix of all these things? What does the reading say to you right now in the zone that you're in?

Pray about it!

Talk to Jesus. He's the friend who always listens. What does the reading bring you to say to Jesus?

Consider and Act on it!

Hang in there, we're almost done. How do you feel? Are there any new feelings that have shown up or others that have changed? Pray about this experience too. Now ... bring your changed self into the world and share your experience with others 😊

High five! Holy Reading is awesome, isn't it?

Passages to Start with

Matt 7:7-11 "Ask, and it will be given you..."
Mark 4:30-32 "It is like a mustard seed..."
Luke 15:11-32 "There was a man who had two sons..."
John 10:11-18 "I am the good shepherd..."

Things to Explore

Pray As You Go: The Irish Jesuits offer guided Holy Reading on their website and app – and it's free! <https://www.pray-as-you-go.org/home/>

Holy Reading

Select a passage from Scripture to begin.

Read it!

Read the passage 1-2 times, attentively.

What does the text say?

Meditate on it!

What does the passage say to me in my own situation?

Pray about it!

What do I want to say to God in response?

Consider & Act on it!

How have I been transformed? How can I share my experience with others?

Repeat this process as often as needed and tell your friends!