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**OUR PASSIONIST CHARISM BLOG**  
<https://passionistcharism.wordpress.com>

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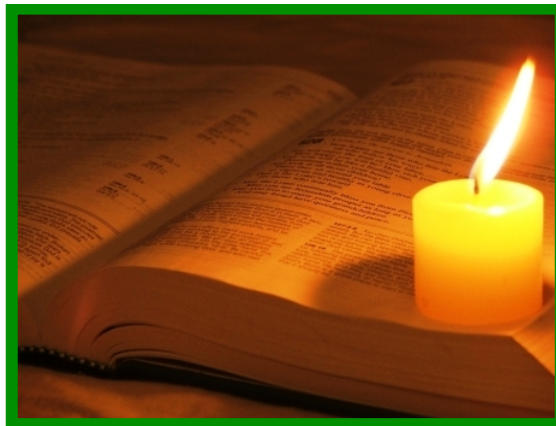


**LECTIO DIVINA**  
**ACCEPTING THE LOVING EMBRACE OF GOD**

**FROM THE PASSIONIST CONSTITUTIONS (47)**

Our contact with the Word of God is not confined to liturgical celebrations. The practice of spiritual reading (Lectio Divina) focuses the prayerful attention of the community and the individual alike on the Sacred Scriptures.

This reading deepens our awareness of the Person of Christ, and helps us grow in knowledge of Him; it supplies the well-springs of personal prayer and sheds new light on the meaning of life.



**LECTIO DIVINA (Spiritual Reading)**  
deepens our awareness of the Person of Christ  
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## ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS AND LECTIO DIVINA

### The Passionist Regulations of 1775



#### **Number 65**

Spiritual Reading is a wonderful help for making prayer well and for interior recollection. Therefore never omit it, neither in the morning nor during the day.

#### **Number 70**

Let them not read out of curiosity or of personal satisfaction, nor hastily but read calmly and slowly like a bee which alights on the flower and gently extracts the honey and flavour from it.

#### **Number 71**

Let them keep one eye on the book and the other on the crucifix. If they feel their heart moved to some sentiment of compunction or love, let them remain with this as long as it lasts; when it ceases, they will continue the reading.

**St. Paul of the Cross, The Passionist Regulations of 1775**

## THE ANCIENT ART OF LECTIO DIVINA SPIRITUAL READING

### THE RIVER THE WORD

Some people think of the Bible as written in stone like the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments that Moses carried down the mountain. There is a comfort of thinking of things that don't change. When you pick up your Bible and read it you are reading ancient words. In the Old Testament you have the words that God's people, Israel, read. In the entirety of the Scriptures you have the same words your parents read, the saints have read, and countless men and women throughout the ages have read. When you turn to the Psalms you have the words that Jesus read in his prayer time. In many ways the thought of the Bible as words written in stone in an accurate one, but not completely accurate.

The words of the Bible are also like a river. A river flows through the land and changes everything around it. If you have ever flown over inland Australia you know what water does to a desert. You are flying over brown land ... brown ... brown ... and the suddenly green. The water has changed the desert making it livable and beautiful.



The word of God flows through our lives and its ancient truths are meant to change us, and things around us.

Lectio Divina or “holy reading” is a way of praying the scriptures that allows the words you read to flow into every part of you: thoughts, words, actions, body, mind and spirit.

For many of us reading is a quick process. We usually try to read fast so that we can read as much as possible in a short time. But Lectio Divina is slow; it is a relaxed, deliberate reading that is more about depth than breath.

Lectio Divina begins with developing the ability to listen deeply and to hear with the ear of your heart.



Lectio Divina requires patience with yourself as you learn to slow down. You learn to quiet down. You learn the rhythm of this form of prayer.

Lectio Divina requires courage because silence can feel uncomfortable. We live in a noisy world. We get into the car and turn on our radio. We walk into our homes and turn on the television.

The silence of Lectio Divina invites us to push past the discomfort of psychological silence and find the refreshment of spiritual silence.

The question in your heart during Lectio Divina is not “Is God speaking to me?” but rather “What is God saying to me?” In Lectio Divina you move into the recesses of your heart where God dwells.

## THE FOUR R'S OF LECTIO DIVINA

### INTRODUCTION

As you begin Lectio Divina you may find it helpful to use to Psalms for your reading.

Perhaps you start at the beginning and read a new section each day. Perhaps you use the Psalms for the Mass readings of the day. Remember, Lectio Divina is about depth, not breadth. The passage you choose ought not be too long. Although the form of Lectio Divina is not rigid and set in stone, it does have a four part process, the four R's: reading (lectio), reflecting (meditation), responding (oratio), and resting (contemptio).

### READING (Lectio)

Begin reading with your heart and mind focused on the God who dwells in the very word you read. Draw near to the word with the same reverence with which you approach the Blessed Sacrament at church. With this reverence, read.

And read again ... and read again ... and again. You are listening for words or phrases that resonate within your heart. Read your words and phrases aloud. Read what attracts your heart.

### REFLECTING (Meditatio)

In reflecting, ponder the words you have read. Imitate Mary, who "treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). God's word is alive with power and meaning. In this step of Lectio Divina ask yourself, "What does this mean?" or "What does this mean for me?" Let the life of the word give you life as you consider how the ancient words you read speak to you today.

The temptation of the reflecting step of Lectio Divina is to make it an intellectual exercise. Remember, the primary activity of reflecting is listening. In reflecting, look for God's light shining on the words before you. In this holy light see in new ways, hear with new ears. In reflecting "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16).

### RESPONDING (Oratio)

You might think of prayer as conversation with God. In the first step, reading, God has spoken to you. In the second step, reflecting, you spend time understanding God's message. In responding, it is your turn. Let your heart speak to God. As you understand the passage, what does it make you want to pray for? Do you want to thank God, praise him, ask for forgiveness, complain to him, ask for his help, or pray for others?

Prayer is the cry of the heart. Prayer is tears. Prayer is joy. Prayer is asking. Prayer is offering. Prayer is the gift you give to God.

## RESTING (Contemplatio)

Too many times, we are tempted to end our prayer after we have talked, but there is yet another step: resting in the presence of God.

Have you ever been on a long drive with a friend in which the two of you said little? Consider such silence between two friends: the comfort, the solace, the joy of knowing that you are understood, that you are loved. In resting, you realize you have connected with the Spirit of God, and you wait there, you let your heart dwell there, you stay and let God love you.

Perhaps you are concerned: “Will I be able to hear God?” Yes. Remember your heart was made to find its way to God.

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness: for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). The Spirit prays for us when we have no words of our own and listens for us when we find it hard to hear the words of God. Yes, your heart will find its way to God.

In Lectio Divina, our souls absorb the word of God. Then it flows from us into the world, giving life and changing everything around us.



## THE FOUR R'S OF LECTIO DIVINA

### 1. **READING (Lectio)**

Take your time and read the passage. Get the sense of what it is saying. Read the passage a second time. Pause on any words or phrases that strike you, and listen in your heart.

### 2. **REFLECTING (Meditatio)**

As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, ask yourself the following questions – What does this passage mean? What does this passage mean to me or for my situation?

### 3. **RESPONDING (Oratio)**

As you get the sense of the passage's meaning, ask yourself the following questions: What does this passage want me to pray for? What does this passage want me to say to God?

### 4. **RESTING (Contemplatio)**

Take time to be attentive to your heart, where God moves, lives and speaks within you. Ask yourself the following question – What do I feel God is saying back to me now that I have responded to him.

Adapted from -  
**The Catholic Youth Prayer Book**  
St. Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications  
Winona, USA, 2006  
p. 83 – 90



## SOURCES FOR LECTIO DIVINA

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### **THE DAILY MASS READINGS**

The Daily Mass Readings provide a wonderful source for Lectio Divina – The First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel.

The Liturgical Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane (Australia) provide ORDO 2008 Online. This booklet provides reference to the daily Mass Readings for Australia and New Zealand for each day of the year.

It is available online at [www.litcom.net.au/about/ordo/ordo.php](http://www.litcom.net.au/about/ordo/ordo.php)

### **SACRED SPACE**

SACRED SPACE is a book from the website of the Irish Jesuits. It provides daily reading and reflection on Sacred Scripture. It can be purchased in hard copy from the Pauline Books and Media in Australia and New Zealand.

It is available online at [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)



## INTERNET RESOURCES - LECTIO DIVINA

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### **Lectio Divina**

<http://www.ocarm.org/lectio/lecteng.htm>

### **Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina**

<http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>

### **The Process of Lectio Divina**

<http://www.rc.net/saginaw/srsclare/lectio.html>

### **Reading with God: Lectio Divina**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=xyyY0Sf4Hz8C&dq=lectio+divina&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=HnWKhf01B3&sig=1MOB4fsyCUU3a2f0-w-hpf60yfY#PPP1,M1>

### **About Lectio Divina**

<http://www.osb.org/lectio/about.html>

### **Introducing the Contemplative Practice of Lectio Divina**

[http://www.thecentering.org/pennington\\_on\\_lectio.html](http://www.thecentering.org/pennington_on_lectio.html)

### **The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina**

<http://www.holyspiritinteractive.net/features/lectiodivina/>

### **Lectio Divina (New Mellary Abbey)**

<http://www.newmelleray.org/index.asp?menu=primer06>

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