

# Lectio Divina

Background information: A very ancient art, practiced at one time by all Christians, is the technique known as lectio divina (leck-tee-oh-dih-veenah) - a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures, which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to unite us with God. This ancient practice has been kept alive in the Christian monastic tradition; together with the Liturgy and daily manual labor, time set aside in a special way for lectio divina enables us **to discover in our daily life an underlying spiritual rhythm**. Within this rhythm we discover an increasing ability to offer more of ourselves and our relationships to the Father, and to accept the embrace that God is continuously extending to us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. In churches of the Third World or developing countries where books are rare, a form of group lectio divina is becoming common in which a text from the Scriptures is pondered by Christians praying together in a group. The method of group lectio divina which we will practice here follows that similar pattern. A leader coordinates the process and facilitates sharing. The **same text from the Scriptures is read out 3-4 times**, followed each time by a period of silence and an opportunity for each member of the group to share the fruit of her or his **lectio (Latin for "listening" or "reading")**.

## Instructions:

- Slowly read the scripture passage through TWICE. Before reading, instruct everyone to listen for a word or phrase that touches their heart. Hold onto that word/phrase in your mind and silently reflect/ponder it. After the readings, allow about 1-2 minutes (it will feel long!) of silence for this. After the silence, share the next set of instructions.
- For the second reading, think about how the word/phrase speaks to your personal life TODAY; how do you hear or see the Word of God (Christ) affecting your experience or reaching out to you right now? After a minute or two of silence, share the next set of instructions.
- For the third (and last) reading, have people ask themselves what they believe Jesus is calling them to "do" or "become" today/this week. After another minute or two of silence, each person shares for the last time. Encourage students to share what word/phrase stuck out to them, how it speaks to them today, and what they believe Jesus is calling them to "do" or "become" today/this week.

You can use any scripture for lectio divina, but here are some common ones:

### **Psalm 62:5-8**

For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
for my hope is from him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honor;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us.

### **1 John 4:7-11 (God Is Love)**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

### **Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus Stills a Storm)**

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

### **Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

### **Matthew 5:13-16 (Salt and Light)**

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

### **Luke 2:41-52 (The Boy Jesus in the Temple)**

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you

not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

### **Romans 12:9-12**

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil; for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.

### **Psalm 46**

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.  
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.  
The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge

Come, behold the works of the LORD;  
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
"Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,

I am exalted in the earth."  
The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge