

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina, or holy reading, is a method of prayer that has been in the Church for fifteen hundred years, since the time of St. Benedict. Its most important characteristic is immense reverence for the Word.

It is learnt more by practice and experience than by talking about it.

HOW DO I COME TO LECTIO DIVINA?

I come with an attitude of ATTENTION AND EXPECTANCY. The word has something to say to me and my life.

I come with an immense REVERENCE for the word. The atmosphere I create should speak of reverence for the word.

I try to come with an UNCLUTTERED mind and WITHOUT AN AGENDA as to what I might experience or how much I may cover during the time of prayer.

This approach to prayer has more to do with my HEART than my mind.

I come NOT EXPECTING QUICK RESULTS.

I expose myself to the WHOLE OF GOD'S WORD in a particular book.

I come REGULARLY.

I PREPARE myself for prayer.

THE STAGES OF LECTIO DIVINA

There are three phases or stages of Lectio Divina: Lectio (Reading), Meditatio (Meditating) and Oratio (Praying).

Lectio

I take up my chosen passage. I begin reading the passage very slowly. Some people find that it helps to read aloud while others prefer to read silently. Vocalising the text slows me down; it stops me from inadvertently using my speed-reading techniques. Rather I go steadily, dwelling on each phrase. I read very slowly until I come upon a word, a phrase, a sentence that "speaks" to me, that "touches my heart".

Meditatio

I repeat this word or phrase again and again. I don't analyse it. I just allow it through repetition to sink into my heart. This process has been described as a gentle "rocking of the Word" as one would gently rock a baby. Or for the more agriculturally minded, it has been likened to a "chewing of the Word" as cattle chew their cud. I just say the Word, over and over. I cherish the Word, saying it to myself in a quiet, non-analytic way and letting it act on my heart.

Oratio

When I have done this for a while I either speak spontaneously to God in whose presence I am, or I just wait in silence with God. I let this time of prayer continue until I feel it is time to "move on". Then I continue to read the Scriptural passage, slowly, meditatively, until I am "moved" by another phrase of word. Then I start the process again.

Lectio Divina is:

reading the word... murmuring the word... remaining in the word...

turning the word over in your mind... attending to the word...

being mindful of the word... being free for the word...

listening to the word... learning from the word... knowing the truth from the word...

giving oneself to the word... praying the word... building on the word...

growing to love the word... contemplating the word... being transformed by the word.