

LECTIO DIVINA
“DIVINE READING”
(Adapted)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
Col. 3:16

Lectio Divina, meaning simply ‘divine reading,’ is one way of reading that allows the word of Christ to “dwell in you richly.” Find a place where you can be left alone for 20 or 30 minutes, or even an hour. Select a passage--maybe a section or paragraph (4-12 verses or so). It might be one you have been drawn to lately, something you have heard preached in church or taught in class, or simply the passage of the day from a devotional or lectionary. (You should do some study of the passage in advance or just some reading in a reliable commentary--although the *lectio* time itself is not meant to be ‘bible study’.) You might just begin by centering yourself with a short prayer—“Lord, I present myself to you,” or “Jesus, be my center.” Then begin:

1. *Lectio* (Reading). Read the passage aloud several times. In doing so, you are allowing it to begin to dwell in you richly, opening to the possibility that the Holy Spirit may have something in it for you today. You may find yourself beginning to notice a sentence, phrase or even a word. Open to that as you continue to reread.
2. *Meditatio* (Meditation). Take the word, phrase, or sentence that has caught your attention and begin to chew it, to ruminate on it with the Holy Spirit. Talk to God about it. How is it is touching your life? How is God’s Spirit touching your Spirit? Why is it significant to you, in particular, on this day? How is it interacting with your hopes or desires? What might you be resisting? Is it life-giving or heavy? What is it bringing to the surface in you? What does it speak to you about God, yourself, or reality? To what is God inviting you? Talk to Him about it. Listen for His responses, too.
3. *Oratio* (Prayer). As you have begun, perhaps, to understand something about this sentence, word or phrase and its significance for you, allow the Holy Spirit to begin to form a prayer in you based upon that. This might develop out of your colloquy (dialogue) with God. In the end, your prayer might just be a single sentence, using the very word or phrase itself. It could be a prayer of thanksgiving, lament, desire, frustration, praise, or whatever. When you have received it, feel free to pray it repeatedly to God. This could be something portable for you, something you will carry throughout the day.
4. *Contemplatio* (Contemplation). Now just sit and open to the presence of God, receiving whatever he offers about Himself or yourself (don’t try to generate some feeling). Remember, if ‘nothing’ is happening, He is still there. He is in the room. He is in you. Sit in His presence. You might finish your time offering again the prayer you were given in (3) above or simply by reciting the Lord’s Prayer.