

Lectio Divina

***Lectio* ("read")**

The first step is the reading of Scripture. A slow and gradual reading of the scriptural passage, perhaps several times. In the traditional Benedictine approach the passage is slowly read four times, each time with a slightly different focus.

***Meditatio* ("meditate")**

Although *Lectio Divina* involves reading, it is less a practice of reading than one of listening to the inner message of the Scripture delivered through the Holy Spirit. *Lectio Divina* does not seek information or motivation, but communion with God. It does not treat Scripture as text to be studied, but as the "Living Word".

The second movement in *Lectio Divina* thus involves meditating upon and pondering on the scriptural passage. When the passage is read, it is generally advised not to try to assign a meaning to it at first, but to wait for the action of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the mind, as the passage is pondered upon.

The English word ponder comes from the Latin *pondus* which relates to the mental activity of weighing or considering. To ponder on the passage that has been read, it is held lightly and gently considered from various angles. Again, the emphasis is not on analysis of the passage but to keep the mind open and allow the Holy Spirit to inspire a meaning for it.

***Oratio* ("pray")**

In the Christian tradition, prayer is understood as dialogue with God, that is, as loving conversation with God who has invited us into an embrace. And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying.

***Contemplatio* ("contemplate")**

Contemplation takes place in terms of silent prayer that expresses love for God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines contemplative prayer as "the hearing the Word of God" in an attentive mode.