



## So What?

### *Lectio Divina*

from *Lectio Divina: A Method of Bible Reflection* by Michel de Verteuil  
<http://www.clubi.ie/shalom/lectio/method.html>

*Lectio divina* (a Latin expression which means sacred reading) is done in four stages:

- *lectio* (reading): in which you read the passage slowly and reverently, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness
- *meditatio* (meditation): in which you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life
- *oratio* (prayer): in which you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer – thanksgiving, humility and petition
- *contemplatio* (contemplation): in which you rest in the presence of God, having used God's word as a means to invitation to accept God's transforming embrace.

The basic principle of *lectio divina* is that Bible reading is a personal encounter with God, a communion. In *lectio divina*, we love the text, linger over it, read it over and over, let it remain with us.

Once we approach the text in this way, we come face-to-face with the fact that it speaks to the imagination. A Bible text is not like a textbook or a newspaper, providing us with objective information. It was not written like that. Instead, it stirs up feelings; we find ourselves identifying with the characters, we feel for them, admire them or dislike them. We are caught up in the movement of the text, its suspense, its dramatic reversals of fortune, its unanswered questions.

Gradually, we *recognize* the text; we find that we have lived the sequence of events ourselves, or have seen them lived in others who have touched our lives, for good or for ill. Reading the text becomes a homecoming – and a lifting up.

*Lectio divina*, like all imaginative communication – especially story-telling – teaches not directly but by changing the consciousness of those who practice it. By identifying ourselves with God's people – Jesus, the prophets and the great men and women of the Old and New Testaments – we find ourselves adopting their attitudes. We also recognize

ourselves in the bad characters of the text – the Pharisees, Pharaoh, the apostles when they were jealous of each other – and find that we want to give up these attitudes.

The Bible, recognized as coinciding with our experience, reveals to us the truth about life – not abstract truth, but an ideal we hunger and thirst for and, from another perspective, an evil we recoil from. In the Bible text, therefore, we discover the double reality of every human person – a story of sin and a story of grace.

In *lectio divina* we experience the true meaning of theology – entering through Bible reading into the wisdom of God or, more accurately, allowing God to lead us into wisdom, humbly, gratefully and with awe. The wisdom of God gives us God's perspective on every aspect of life: interpersonal relationships, economics, politics, agriculture, etc.

### *Additional Lectio Divina Resources*

- <http://www.osb.org/lectio/>
- <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>
- <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~salomon/ld/lectio.html>
- <http://www.ocarm.org/lectio/lecteng.htm>

### *The Lectio Divina Process for **via media***

- 1) Read the passage aloud in a group, slowly, reverently, allowing each word, however 'insignificant' to resonate in its own moment.
- 2) Pause for a short period of reflection, around 60 seconds, praying for clarity and guidance about the passage.
- 3) Read the passage aloud again, in the same manner, asking another person to read.
- 4) Select a word or phrase that stands out at that moment. Observe a 15-minute period of silence, meditating on that phrase. As you feel your mind begin to wander, pull it back into focus by silently reciting the phrase you have selected.
- 5) Invite participants to share the word or phrase that resonated with them, spending about five minutes for each person, about what that word or words means to them, and how their prayer or meditation on that word has led them to a deeper spiritual understanding.
- 6) Conclude by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

*Optional Passages for Lectio Divina*

## Matthew 28:16-20 NRSV

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

## Exodus 3:1-6 NRSV

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

## Micah 6:6-8 NRSV

"With what shall I come before the Lord,  
and bow myself before God on high?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?  
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"  
He has told you, O mortal, what is good:  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?