



Ways Of Prayer - Session 3

Prayer Practice of the Week Suggestions for Practice Additional Resources

Prayer Practice of the Week: Lectio Divina – Praying with Scripture

Making Sacred Space in our Days

It can be hard to find time to speak to God when your day is full of work, family and the pressures of daily life. Lectio divina offers us one way to pause, take a breath, and savor a moment immersed in God's Word. In so doing we give ourselves the gift of sacred space and the opportunity for an encounter with God. However brief these moments may be, they have the power to refresh us and attune our hearts to God's presence and guidance right here - right now. Today we will pause a bit to practice praying with God's Word using the process of lectio divina.

Praying with Sacred Scripture *(From the US Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Website (link listed under Additional Resources section below))*

Spiritual reading of Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, is an important form of meditation. This spiritual reading is traditionally called *lectio divina* or divine reading. *Lectio divina* is prayer over the Scriptures.

1. The first element of this type of prayer is reading (*lectio*): you take a short passage from the Bible, preferably a Gospel passage and read it carefully, perhaps three or more times. Let it really soak in.
2. The second element is meditation (*meditatio*). By using your imagination enter into the Biblical scene in order to "see" the setting, the people, and the unfolding action. It is through this meditation that you encounter the text and discover its meaning for your life.
3. The next element is prayer (*oratio*) or your personal response to the text: asking for graces, offering praise or thanksgiving, seeking healing or forgiveness. In this prayerful engagement with the text, you open yourself up to the possibility of contemplation.
4. Contemplation (*contemplatio*) is a gaze turned toward Christ and the things of God. By God's action of grace, you may be raised above meditation to a state of seeing or experiencing the text as mystery and reality. In contemplation, you come into an experiential contact with the One behind and beyond the text.

Our Practice

This week we will pray with the Gospel reading for this weekend's Mass.

Our user-friendly lectio divina guide (recommended by the Roman Catholic Bishops of Scotland and prepared by the United Bible Societies of the UK) is written to coincide with the whole 3-year

lectionary cycle. These guides were originally written for the years 2009-2011. Today we are using the guide prepared for Year C Lent-Pentecost. The readings are correct by the liturgical calendar but calendar dates will be off.

If you enjoy this format, you can find guides for the whole 3-year cycle, Years A, B, and C. All Guides are free to download from this site. *(Link provided under the Additional Resources section.)*

Suggestions for Prayer Practice

As always...the only rule with prayer practice is that you commit to show up and trust God to show you the way.

Practice lectio divina with one of the day's scripture readings. You can find the daily scripture readings in the parish app, the Sunday bulletin, or a daily devotional.

Take your bible off the bookshelf. Practice lectio divina with a bible passage of your choice or one randomly chosen.

If you don't have time to practice the full Lectio divina process...simply spend time in quiet reflection with a word or phrase of the day's scripture passage. How does it connect with your day or your life today. How is God speaking in your heart? What will you take with you as you going forward this day?

Look for ways to find solitude in your life this week:

Get up a bit earlier in the morning watch the sunrise and read a scripture passage

Leave your work for a few minutes during the day to take a walk or just sit quietly.

Watch your thoughts as they come and go. Can you make room for the voice of God to enter?

Find ways to nurture silence several times this week?

Dedicate a space as your sacred prayer space. It may be as simple as naming a chair as your sacred space.

Take a walk around your neighborhood. As you walk pray for your neighbors and their needs.

Additional Resources

Online Resources

There are many great online resources about lectio divina. Here's what we used today.

USCCB - This is the link to the USCCB website page for the information presented above:

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/index.cfm>

Lectio Divina Guides - Link to the home page of the guide used during our session

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lectio-divina/>

Contemplative Outreach - Excellent resources on lectio divina and centering prayer. They also publish much of Fr. Thomas Keatings work.

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org>