

# *Biblical Prayer: Lectio Divina*

## **LECTIO DIVINA – Brief Introduction:**

- “A Vital Encounter with the Lord”
  - Not just “Bible Study,” nor a mere religious discussion based on the scriptures
  - Meant to be enlivening, existential, transformative, and uniting
- *Lectio Divina* is not just for monks and religious, but **for all believers**:
  - **Individuals:** use and adapt *Lectio Divina* flexibly to one’s own needs and style
  - **Groups:** provide a regular pattern to build openness and trust in a community
- “The Church in America should give high priority to prayerful reflection upon the Sacred Scripture by all the faithful. This Bible reading, accompanied by prayer, is known in the tradition of the Church by the name *Lectio Divina*, a practice that should be encouraged among all Christians.” (John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 1999, p. 31)

## **LECTIO DIVINA – Basic Process:**

1. **Reading** (*lectio*) – hearing God’s Word in the Sacred Scriptures as I/we read a short text aloud
    - *What does this biblical text itself really say?*
  2. **Meditation** (*meditatio*) – reflecting on the meaning and relevance of the text that I/we have read
    - *What is God saying to me/us through this text?*
  3. **Prayer** (*oratio*) – speaking with God in praise, thanksgiving, contrition, petition, intercession
    - *What do I/we say to God in response to this text?*
  4. **Contemplation** (*contemplatio*) – listening to God more quietly in the silence of our hearts
    - *How does this text make me/us feel in my/our relationship with God?*
  5. **Action** (*actio*) – letting the encounter concretely affect our daily life and work in the world
    - *How will I/we change what I/we do today in response to hearing this text?*
- Flexibly adapt the above steps, as needed, for individuals or groups, youths or adults, etc.

## **LECTIO DIVINA – Bibliography:**

- *Catholic Prayer Bible (NRSV): Lectio Divina Edition*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010.
- Mestre, Gabriel. *Pray with the Bible, Meditate with the Word*. American Bible Society, 2010.
- Binz, Stephen J. *Conversing with God in Scripture: A Contemporary Approach to Lectio Divina*. Word Among Us Press, 2008.
- Paintner, Christine, and Lucy Wynkoop. *Lectio Divina: Contemplative Awakening and Awareness*. Paulist Press, 2008.
- Magrassi, Mariano. *Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina*. Transl. by Edward Hagman. Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Pennington, M. Basil. *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*. Crossroad, 1998.
- Casey, Michael. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Liguori Publications, 1996.

## **Various Plans for Reading, Studying, and Praying with the Scriptures:**

- Reading the biblical passages selected for the next Sunday Mass and/or Daily Mass:
  - See the *Lectionary for Mass* website: <http://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/>
- Booklets containing the current liturgical readings along with commentaries, prayers, and study aides:
  - *Give Us This Day; Living with Christ; Magnificat; The Word Among Us*; etc.
- One-Year or Multi-Year Plans for reading the Bible:
  - *Daily Scripture and Catechism Devotional*: one-year plan, with four readings for each day
  - *How to Read the Bible Every Day: A Guide for Catholics*: 1-year, 2-year, and 3-year plans
- Reading the whole New Testament or the whole Bible:
  - Study one biblical book at a time, in any order (not necessarily from Genesis to Revelation)
  - “The New Testament in 40 Days” – a reading plan esp. good for Lent (*on Fr. Felix’s website*)
  - Many short commentaries available: New Collegeville, Threshold, Catholic Perspectives, etc.