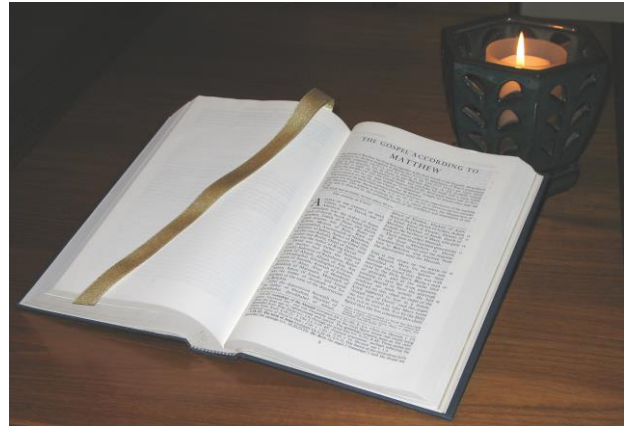


Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina, Latin for "divine reading" or "holy reading" is a monastic method of reading Scripture to find in it the meaning God has for us in our particular lives, in our familiar, everyday situations.

Lectio is most often a private practice because it is the immersion of the individual in the promptings of the Spirit as they come through the words of Sacred Scripture. But lectio can also be done in groups.



The summary below comes from an article by Fr. Thomas Keating OCSO. It is meant as an introduction to the monastic practice for individuals.

As practiced by the Desert Fathers and Mothers, the monastic method of Lectio Divina is oriented toward contemplative prayer and living a contemplative life. In the practice of Lectio we listen to how God is addressing us in a particular text of scripture. As we listen, there are four moments we encounter:

- reading the scripture,
- responding to the Scripture,
- reflecting or ruminating on the passage, and
- resting in the presence of God in that passage and ourselves.

In practical terms, what this means is that the reader/listener begins by reading a passage of scripture. Ancient monks would read aloud so that they entered more fully into hearing the word spoken. As the reader hears the words, aloud or in the mind, he or she finds a phrase that nudges him to pay attention to it. He then "savors" those words, and sits with them awhile, being open to what they have to say to him, at that time, in that life situation.

This kind of open listening means the reader gives up any preconceived notion of what scripture is supposed to mean to him, and lets go of concepts and analyses. Lectio is not Bible study, as such. It is letting Scripture form us. Such receptivity expands our minds and hearts and creates a fertile ground for the Spirit. "If today you hear his voice, harden not your heart." (Psalm 95).

As we "listen" in this attentive way, we may become more aware of the presence of God. We are more receptive, more open, more deeply in tune with the divine within us. As Fr. Keating says

Lectio divina is a special kind of process, and to benefit fully from its fruits, its integrity has to be respected. The ripe fruit of the regular practice of *lectio divina* is assimilating the word of God and being assimilated by it. It is a movement from conversation to communion.

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