

"Give me a word"

Words of advice and encouragement for those beginning to pray lectio divina from the monks of St. Procopius Abbey



Words about the time and place for lectio divina. Most importantly, find the time to do it. Find a time of day that works for you. It can help to use the same time each day. Keep the amount of time short at first -- you can build up to longer times eventually. Have a quiet place, away from normal affairs, to pray lectio divina. Don't allow distractions. Find a sacred place.

Words about picking a passage for lectio divina. At first, take just a few verses of Scripture. The First Letter of John can be a good biblical book to start with. Use an easier biblical text to start with. Use the readings for Mass, since you'll hear them again when you go to Mass. Use a short passage from daily Scriptural readings, allowing God to speak in your heart.

Words about the "method" of praying lectio divina. Don't get caught up with following a "method" or "technique," but rather the important thing is to spend time with God through Scripture. Don't over-think or over-analyze -- eventually the Scripture takes the lead in the dance. Do lectio divina regularly, in a way that works best for you. Work on being quiet and do not focus on what you are doing. Don't get discouraged and give up, if you don't seem

to be getting something out of it -- keep to it! Lectio divina is a prayerful, patient pondering of a biblical text. Steps for lectio divina give your prayer purpose and direction.

Words about how to read the biblical passage. Read over the passage repeatedly and slowly. Remember that through Scripture God is speaking to you. Be mindful of God's presence. It can help to use a printed text, rather than a digital one on your phone or computer.

Words about how to meditate on the biblical passage. Meditate on the text in order to understand it. Think about how the words apply to you and to others. Ponder yourself in the biblical story or in the original audience of the text.

Words about how to offer prayer in lectio divina. See your prayer as a relationship. Transitioning from meditation to prayer is important, for it helps to apply the text and opens you to what God wants to give you in this prayertime. The reading of Scripture must be applied to my life.

SHORT SUMMARY OF 4 STEPS OF LECTIO DIVINA

1. **READING:** attentively read a passage of the Bible with the faith that it is God's word spoken to us.
2. **MEDITATION:** think about the meaning of the text. If something about the text struck you, why? If the text is a story, perhaps it would help to imagine yourself as a character in it. Ask questions of the text and its context, in order to ponder its meaning.
3. **PRAYER:** based on an insight or good thought gained from your meditation, ask something from God in a prayer.
4. **CONTEMPLATION:** since your will aligns with God's when you ask something good in this prayer, you become close to God and rest in His presence.

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