

How Can I Practice Lectio Divina?

By Christina Semmensz

Often, people ask me about Lectio Divina--what is it, or where did it come from, but especially *how* can I do it? I tell them simply that Lectio Divina has been used since ancient times to reflect upon the Living Word of God. This was particularly true when Bibles were not available, and when not everyone knew how to read.

Although there are many effective methods for how to practice the five parts of Lectio Divina—lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio, and actio—I really like the method that I learned from the Apostles of Interior Life Sisters and Brothers that they call the *Four “R”s—Read, Reflect, Relate, and Resolution.*

Read--What to read? Books written for spiritual meditation. Best is the Bible, particularly the Gospels and the Psalms. Spiritual meditation materials are anything written for the purpose of bringing the soul into communion with God; to sit still with our being enjoying His Being. Other meditation materials: *The Better Part* by Fr John Bartunek, *In Conversation with God* by Fr Francis Fernandez, *The Way* by St Josemaria Escriva, *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales, or *Story of a Soul* by St Therese of Lisieux.

Reflect--Read until something strikes you. Then, stop, put what you are reading aside and reflect on what you just read. Why did this passage or word strike you? What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? Don't be in a hurry. Let yourself be still and peaceful, soaking in this point for as long as possible.

Relate--Relate this passage or point to Jesus. Allow any internal and spontaneous conversation from the depths of your soul to bubble up and share that, and anything else with Him.

Resolution--Resolve to apply the grace from this meditation. This means to put into practice something concrete revealed to you by the Holy Spirit that He wants you to address, or take something from your prayer—i.e. the phrase or word that struck you—and repeat it throughout the day. This practice helps to focus your thoughts and heart on God-like actions.

So what happens if nothing strikes you? Then read just a paragraph, stop, and then re-read the paragraph slowly. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive His insights. It may be helpful to have a pencil near you to circle any word or phrase that offers you any divine information or insight. After circling a point or two, now you have something on which to reflect.

Finally, simply conclude your time with a brief prayer of thanksgiving and a “Glory Be...”

And that’s Lectio Divina! Enjoy the experience of practicing one of the most ancient forms of prayer and meditation, and know that I will be offering prayers that you each may spend much fruitful time with Him in the future.