

Lectio Divina

Reading the Bible

Lectio Divina literally means “Divine Reading.” It is a way of reading the Bible that helps us develop a relationship with our Creator, our Higher Power, our God.

It is an ancient method that was practiced by the women and men who went to the desert in order to live a life of prayer.

It is a way of listening to the texts of the Bible as if we were in conversation with God. It is a listening with the ear of our hearts. We don’t need to worry about what to say. As we listen to the words of the Bible we will find ourselves responding to their meaning and a conversation with God will begin to unfold.

By reading, reflecting, responding and resting with the words of the Bible, we enter into a relationship with our Creator.

Slowly our dialogue with our Higher Power deepens and we grow in an attitude of friendship, trust and love.

God wants to be our friend. “I no longer call you servants but friends.” (Jn 15:15). Now it is our turn to respond.

Starting Over

It is never too late to *start over*. No matter where we find ourselves, we can deepen our relationship with our Creator.

Whether we call our Creator, God or our Higher Power, it is this relationship that can make the difference between life and death. “I have set before you life and death... choose life.” (Deut. 30: 19)

The choice for life is a choice to believe in God’s love. One is loved by God, not because of anything done or not done, but because our Creator is loving and can only create in love. “God looked at everything that was made and found it very good.” (Gen 1:31)

One chooses life when priority is given to having a more intimate relationship with the Creator.

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Choosing Life

A New Relationship



Choosing Life

Choosing life is a challenge because it means being in a right relationship with ourselves, others and our Creator. This pamphlet provides a simple way to move in this direction.

Read it through carefully and give it a try. If it doesn't seem to speak to you, pick it up another time. Our Creator wants to be in a relationship with us and will wait patiently until we are ready.

Why put it off? The sooner one begins to pay attention to all the ways the Creator is calling us, the sooner we will find what we are looking for.

God wants us to know inner peace and freedom. The gift is ours if we but give ourselves permission to receive it!

A New Relationship

Relationships are meant to bring meaning to life. We have probably struggled to maintain meaningful *relationships* in our lives. Maybe we can't believe that we are loveable.

We may even think that the One who created us has given up on us. But our Creator is with us: "Fear not, I am with you; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand..." (Is: 41:13)

Becoming Friends

A natural way to become *friends* with our Creator is to read the Bible and discover who God is and who we are. Slowly we will discover that we are loved unconditionally and that our Creator wants what is best for us.

Learning to Converse

To be in relationship with God we need only to begin by entering into *conversation* with God.

We may wonder how this can be. As we listen to the Scriptures with an open mind, live with them, relate to them as food and drink, as a companion on the journey, they will speak to us and we will find ourselves responding.

As the *conversation* gets underway, we may try speaking to God in the words of the leper in the gospel story: "If you will to do so, you can cure me." (Mk. 1:40) We can experience God saying to us: "Of course, I want to cure you. Be healed." (Mk. 1:41)

Developing a relationship with God is possible for anyone who is willing to make a *commitment* each day to read, reflect, respond, and rest with the inspired Words of the Bible.

Moments of a Relationship

A *relationship* is made up of different moments. There are the moments of listening to the other and reflecting on the meaning of their words. There are the moments of responding and conversing as well as being with the other when no words need be said.

A *relationship* with our Creator also is made up of many moments. These moments may come in any order.

Begin by walking through each moment, taking as much time as needed. There are no “shoulds, oughts or musts.” Listen with the ear of the heart. Let the dialogue with God unfold in its own time and move in the direction that it takes.

We need to trust that God is eager to be with us and to share with us the inner peace and freedom we desire.

The 4 “R’s”

A Guide to Reading the Bible

Moment One: Reading the Bible slowly and deliberately is the place to begin. First of all, we need to gear down from the way we usually process information. We are not *reading* to get the facts straight or to complete an assignment. We *read* by listening to the words as we would listen to a good friend. We listen with the ear of our heart. What is being said? Which word or phrase catches our attention? Write down or say out loud or share in a group the word or phrase that we notice.

Moment Two: Reflecting on the passage from the Bible is pondering its meaning. It is turning over the Word in our minds and hearts. It is lingering with a scene, a parable as with a friend. Read the passage over and over and *reflect* on what the words say. What has meaning? Write down or say out loud or share in a group what speaks to you.

Moment Three: Responding on the Word means being attentive to what stirs within us. What are we feeling? Is there confusion, disbelief, peace or surprise? We read the Word again and let ourselves be gently moved to *respond* spontaneously! Speak out or write down a *response* whether it is a prayer, a poem, a dialogue with the Creator.

Moment Four: Resting on the Word is simply letting what one has heard settle within. Take time to *rest* in the silence. If distracted, repeat the word or phrase that speaks to you. After *resting*, return to the scripture passage and listen again.

Growing in Relationship

Gently yet powerfully the Words of the Bible will begin to speak to us and we may find that our image of God and our image of ourselves is upside down.

Rather than a harsh judge, a demanding dictator, or an angry parent, God is more like a mother who is tender, compassionate, and understanding. "Even if your mother forgets you...I will never forget you." (Is 49:15)

Rather than being a person who doesn't feel loved, we begin to hear the Words of God in a new way: "God created man and woman in God's own image and likeness." (Gen 1:27)

Growing in relationship with God is a process that changes our perspective of life. We begin to see the world right-side up.

Transformation

Being *transformed* is sometimes scary. It is only for those who really want to change.

It is much like a silversmith who holds the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames are the hottest so as to burn away all that is not silver. Letting go of our anger, fears, a need to control, to be esteemed, to be secure is a burning away of our impurities.

The silversmith watches the silver very carefully lest it be destroyed by the heat of the flames. He knows that the silver is refined when he can see his image in it.

The Words of the Bible will purify as we take them in and rest with them. We will hear in the silence the whispering of our inner Spirit that longs to be free. We will be *transformed* and will reflect God's image.

Becoming a Word of God

Transformation is a process of *becoming a "Word of God."* We come to know we are inherently loved by God.

An attitude of resting in God's presence becomes a part of our daily lives. We become a channel of God's presence to others.

Living in union with God we are able to transcend ourselves as the "center" and experience that all is in God and God is in all.

Our energy becomes one with divine energy. We become merciful, compassionate and loving.

For information and resources

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