

Resources

Jamison, Christopher, *Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 2006)

Internet Resources

Anglican Communion Guide to *Lectio Divina*:

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/253799/1-What-is-Lectio-Divina.pdf>

Bible Society: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lectio-divina/> This page includes a slightly dated *lectio divina* on the Gospel reading for each Sunday in the lectionary.

Carmelite: <https://ocarm.org/en/content/lectio/what-lectio-divina>

Soul Shepherding: <https://www.soulshepherding.org/lectio-divina-guides/> has a couple of free *lectio divinas* you can sample and a book of 70+ that you can purchase.

Acknowledgements

The examples in this leaflet have been taken from the SoulShepherding website:

<https://www.soulshepherding.org/lectio-divina-guides/>

and the Bible Society website : <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lectio-divina/>

Pictures:

Lectio Divina diagram by E. Hanson OFS from Wikimedia Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lectio_Divina.svg

Burning Bush: by F D Richards on Flickr

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/50697352@N00/8090962425>

Exploring Worship



LECTIO DIVINA

January 2019

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina (meaning divine reading) is an ancient form of praying scripture that goes back to the early church. It consists of 4 steps:

1. Read (*lectio*) – a short passage is read slowly
2. Meditation (*meditatio*) – the passage is read again slowly stopping to dwell on the words
3. Prayer (*oratio*) – responding to what has been read
4. Contemplation (*contemplatio*) – silently and in stillness being with God who has spoken through his word.



For Personal Prayer

You may find *Lectio Divina* a helpful way to hear God speak to you through scripture in your personal prayer. Here is one way to do this:

1. Choose a short passage (e.g. from the lectionary).
2. Spend a short time becoming still in God's presence. As you breathe out, give God the things on your mind. As you breathe in remember that God is with you.
3. Pray: "Lord speak to me through your Word"
4. Read the passage slowly to get the feel of it
5. Read it again. If any word, phrase or image attracts your attention, stay with it as long as you can, relishing it, turning it over, connecting with it. Let it speak to your heart and your head.
6. If 'distractions' come into your mind, gently come back to the passage. Let the passage speak to your concerns and then entrust them to God, let go and return to the text.
7. At the end respond to God. You might thank him, ask him questions or make a request. You might like to make a written prayer, or write down the key words, or even draw a picture.
8. Finally be still with God again and give him your prayer.

So they suggest Jesus sends them off to the nearest villages. Jesus' reply must have stunned them, 'You yourselves give them something to eat!' What is Jesus thinking? They don't even have enough food for themselves. How can they possibly feed all these people? It's impossible.

Jesus takes the loaves and fishes, gives thanks to God, breaks the bread and then the miracle takes place – the food just keeps on coming. Enough to feed 5,000 men plus women and children, and with twelve baskets left over! Matthew certainly intends us to see the parallel with God providing his people with manna in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses – but now one greater than Moses is here.

Meditatio

As you hear the story again. Imagine that you were an eyewitness to this miracle, either as one of the crowd, or as one of the disciples. Is there a particular part of the story that speaks to you? Reflect on it
The Passage is read again slowly

Oratio

Today's Psalm says: The LORD is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.

Is there something that needs God's compassion in your life? Is there something you hunger for? Take time to offer this hunger to God. And let the words of the psalm bring you comfort as you pray.

Contemplatio

'You yourselves give them something to eat!'
Open your heart to God and spend some time meditating on what this phrase might mean for you. God may reveal something very specific over the coming days or weeks.



You give them something ~ Matthew 14:13-21

based on a *lectio divina* by the Bible Society
for Year A 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (end of July)
Isaiah 55:1-3; Psalm 145:8-9, 15-18; Romans 8:35, 37-39

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Lectio (read by Leader)

Our passage today comes immediately after the martyrdom of John the Baptist. The death of his cousin John saddened Jesus deeply. Quite understandably, he wants to be alone so he takes a boat to a remote place across the lake. But the crowds can't leave him alone. They follow him to receive more healing miracles and hear his powerful teaching.

Matthew highlights Jesus' grief and his compassion for the people who search so hard for him. He looks into the hearts of the crowds and he doesn't ignore them

Later in the evening the disciples realise that people will be getting hungry, but in this remote place there is nowhere for them to buy food.

For Corporate Prayer

Lectio Divina can also be done with others. For instance you might like to start a Bible Study Group with prayer around a part of the passage you will study. It can also be used in a Sunday Service as a means of reflecting together on what the passage may be saying to each person in the congregation.

1. Before the service choose a part of the readings that will be suitable for prayer. 6-8 verses is often enough, but choose what is appropriate. You may like to have the passage printed out or put on a screen.
2. Start by having the passages read as normal.
3. Introduce *lectio divina* and explain what will happen and how long the silences will be.
4. Read the chosen verses slowly
5. Allow a minute for people to take it in.
6. Suggest people choose one word or phrase that strikes them as they hear the passage a second time. Read the passage slowly again (you might like to have a different voice for this reading).
7. Allow a minute or two's silence to reflect on the chosen word or phrase.
8. Suggest people reflect on what God may be saying to them about the next week. Is there something in the passage that might relate to their jobs, home life, activities, decisions they are facing currently. Read the passage slowly again.
9. Allow a minute or two's silence for reflection.
10. Suggest that people consider what they would like to say to God in response to this passage.
11. Allow a minute or two's silence.
12. Optional: If the group is willing, get them to share in twos or threes the words that spoke to them. They do not need to explain why the word was important if they do not want to. It can be helpful to then share with the bigger group and those words may form part of the corporate prayers

Sample *Lectio Divina* for Sunday Worship

Turn Aside to See the Burning Bush ~ Exodus 3:1-4

based on a *lectio divina* by Bill Gaultiere ~ Lectio Divina Guides ~

More like this can be found at SoulShepherding.org

Lectio Divina Rhythms/Process (Repeat three times):

- Read the Scripture passage (“Lectio”)
- Reflect on the focus question below (“Meditatio”)
- Respond in quiet prayer/activity (Written prayer/ drawing) (“Oratio”)
- Rest in God’s invitation for you then pray/share out loud if you want (“Contemplatio”)

Introduction: (read by Leader)

Moses had waited on God for many years with unanswered questions about his identity, the suffering of his people, and his calling from God and finally God appeared to him in a burning bush. Inspired by this story the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

Earth’s crammed with heaven,
and every common bush afire with God;
but only he who sees, takes off his shoes --
the rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.

At times there are ordinary bushes in our lives that become extraordinary because they’re on fire with divine activity. Do we “turn aside” to notice? Do we pause to listen to God?

Opening Prayer:

“Speak Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:9 and 10).

Read slowly Exodus 3:1-5 (NRSV)

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” ⁴When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” ⁵Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

1st Reading:

What is one word or phrase the Holy Spirit impresses on you? Meditate on that.

2nd Reading:

Perhaps like Moses as you’re going about your business you’re waiting to hear from God on an issue in your life? Speak to God on what you would like God’s help on.

3rd Reading:

God hears what we ask but often has something else to say to us. We can become so occupied with our requests we don’t see the burning bush. Is there an ordinary bush in your life that might be on fire with God’s presence? What might God be saying to you from this bush?

There will be an opportunity to share your word or phrase and as much else as you feel comfortable.

