

## Preparation for *lectio divina*

- ◆ Choose a quiet prayerful place in your home, office, outdoors, or local church.
- ◆ Select a passage of the Word of God, for example the Sunday or daily Gospel, or a continuous reading of one book of Scripture.
- ◆ Select an appropriate time and duration (20 to 40 minutes for those beginning).
- ◆ Assume a prayerful and serene posture, comfortable yet not too relaxed.

### Introductory prayer

\* Humbly recognize the loving Presence of the indwelling Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

\* Praise and thank Him for His Word and this moment of prayer.

\* Ask the Holy Spirit for the gift to receive the Word of God as He wills.

\* Say prayer: *Heavenly King, Advocate, Spirit of Truth, Who are everywhere present and fill all things, Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life, come, and dwell with us; cleanse us of all that defiles us, and O Good One, save our souls.*

### **Lectio (Reading)**

*What does the Word of God say?*

\* Slowly read the passage a few times with great attentive reverence, aloud if possible.

\* Notice the words that strike you in a particular way, positively or negatively.

### **Meditatio (Meditation)**

*What does the Word of God say to me?*

\* Dialog with God about why those particular words and phrases struck you; how do they apply to you?

\* Reflect on your own reactions to the Word; what is God showing you about yourself?

### **Oratio (Praying)**

*What do I say to God in response to His Word?*

\* Respond sincerely in a conversation with God as with a friend; talk about what is really in your heart.

\* Praise, thank, trust Him; ask for forgiveness; intercede, petition for graces.

### **Contemplatio (Contemplation)**

*What conversion of heart is God asking of me?*

\* Be with the Word and rest in God.

\* Thank Jesus for living this gift in me

### **Actio (Action)**

*What am I resolved to do now that I have received the Word of God?*

\* Make concrete resolutions about how you will make your life a gift for others in charity because of what God has given to you.

\* Close with: *Our Father* and *Glory Be*

*“In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and  
the Word was God.” John 1:1*

## EPARCHY OF STAMFORD

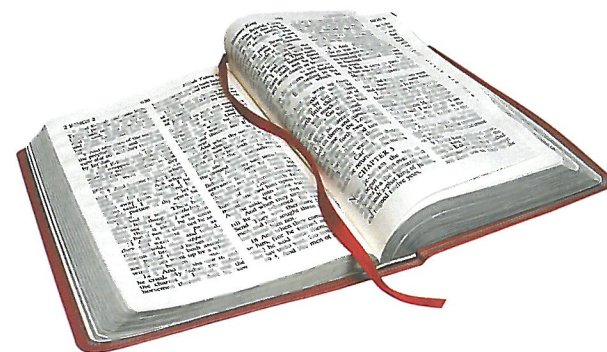
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## HOW TO READ AND PRAY HOLY SCRIPTURE



*“Rather blessed are those who  
hear the word of God  
and keep it!”*

*Luke 11:28*

## What is the Holy Bible?

The Holy Bible is a collection of books written over multiple centuries by those inspired by God to do so. It is the primary witness to our faith. It was written by the prophets and apostles in human language, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and collected and edited by the Church. Above all, the Bible is a faith document.

Holy Scripture is divided into two main parts: the books of the Old Testament, before the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the books of the New Testament, after the Incarnation. The New Testament consists of four Gospels, which detail Christ's earthly life (Mathew, Mark, Luke, John), Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation

## Catholic versions of the Bible

- ◆ *New American Bible*, Revised Edition (NABRE)
- ◆ *New Revised Standard Version*, Catholic Edition, National Council of Churches
- ◆ *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB)
- ◆ *St. Joseph's Bible*

## Use of the Holy Scripture in the Liturgical life of the Church

The Bible is central in the life of the Church and gives both form and content to the Church's liturgical and sacramental worship, just as to its theology and spiritual life. In the worship and calendar of feasts, the Church uses passages from the Old and New Testaments as readings. The readings for Vespers, which interpret the feasts of the Lord

and the saints, come from the Old Testament, and the readings for the Divine Liturgy come from the New Testament.

The Four Gospels are the center of the Bible, just as Christ is the center of the Church. For this reason the Four Gospels are always enthroned on the altar of the Church.

Holy Bible is also used for prayer/meditation by individuals or in groups. Some people read it from the beginning some start at different books, some use the method of *lectio divina*.

## What is *lectio divina*?

*Lectio divina* (Latin for "divine reading") is a method of prayer particularly suited to meeting the spiritual need of modern busy Christians. It is a way for us to receive words and images that do speak of God and bring us His life, light and love, to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.

## Attitudes for *lectio divina*

In order to derive the greatest fruit from *lectio divina*, it is important to cultivate the right attitudes.

First, only in a silence that is both exterior and interior are we able to hear what God is saying to us. By withdrawing from the external noises of daily life (radio, TV, conversation, etc.) and by seeking to listen deeply to the voice of God in the depths of our hearts, we open ourselves to His grace and transforming love. Cultivating this type of silence becomes the daily challenge of a faithful disciple in the midst of a noisy world.

Secondly, we should recall that Mary, the Mother of God, is the perfect example of being a disciple of Christ, her Son. At the Annunciation (Lk 26f), Mary reveals a posture of deeply humble active receptivity, a radical openness to all that God willed to say to her and to accomplish in her life. Mary trusted that all things were possible with God and surrendered totally to His Word so that it would be fulfilled in her. Therefore, we should strive to actively receive as Mary did, relying on her intercession to obtain this grace.

Lastly, because God is trustworthy, we should trust Him without hesitation at every moment as did Mary.

## Method of *lectio divina*

There are five basic movements of the prayer: *lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplation and actio*. They follow five fundamental steps: reading (*lectio*) to remember the words, pondering (*meditatio*) to understand, responding (*oratio*) to choose what God wills, resting (*contemplatio*) to be in the relationship of love and action (*actio*). These five should be preceded by an introductory prayer and ended with a brief prayer as well.

