



“Lectio Divina” means divine reading in Latin. It’s an ancient practice that teaches us how to read, meditate on and *live* the Word of God. History tells us that it was the Blessed Guigo the Carthusian, who wrote the “most important stages” of this way of meditating the word. It’s not a prayer with fixed rules, but it does have important phases which will guide us towards an encounter with a personal message from God to us, through the Sacred Scriptures.

These phases are four: the *lectio* or reading of God’s word; the *meditatio*, or meditation on that which we have read; the *oratio*, or prayer which is when we enter in dialogue with God; and finally the *contemplatio*, or contemplation stage in which we abandon ourselves to holy thoughts. This is when we leave behind our own thoughts and get ready to listen to God’s voice, who speaks within us.

*Lectio Divina* can be done individually or in a group. It’s the latter which makes the structure necessary. Today, we present a way to develop this meditation. It will, for sure, help you grow in your relationship with God.

*“Reading seeks, meditation finds, prayer asks, contemplation feels. Reading puts as it were whole food into your mouth; meditation chews it and breaks it down; prayer finds its savour; contemplation is the sweetness that so delights and strengthens. Reading is like the bark, the shell; meditation like the pith, the nut; prayer is in the desiring asking; and contemplation is in the delight of the great sweetness”* (Blessed Guigo The Carthusian – Fragment about contemplative life).

## 1. Preparation ahead of time. Finding the Scripture reading.

Before starting the *Lectio* it’s important to prepare yourself by looking for the Gospel for the corresponding day’s Mass (or another one which you want to meditate on), as well as quotes and comments that could help you to deepen your understanding and to prepare some questions for personal reflection. Carefully read different commentaries and try to find the most important points that catch your attention. Afterwards, you can begin the actual prayer.

## 2. Sign of the Cross

We start by finding the right spot and position for prayer – a quiet, comfortable place free of distraction but suitable for concentration. The next step (which can seem obvious, but it's important to remember) is that a Catholic always starts his prayers with the Sign of the Cross.

## 3. Initial Prayer

There are many prayers with which we can open *Lectio Divina*. One suggestion is to invoke the Holy Spirit so He enlightens us and allows us to listen to the message God wants to give us through his Word. Here we give you an example, but you can just build the initial prayer with your own words.

*“My Lord, in your presence I want to prepare my heart for this moment of prayer. Send your Holy Spirit to enlighten me and open my mind and heart to everything You want to tell me today. Thank you Lord, for nourishing me with your Word.”*

## 4. Scripture Reading

It's at this point where the scripture reading of the previously selected Gospel is done. It can be that day's Gospel or any other you choose to meditate on. It's nice to do the reading directly from the Bible and slowly, that way you can understand what is written.

## 5. Brief Reading

This is the point where we re-read the commentary or reflection of the Gospel we found or chose in our preparation. This brief reading's aim is to help you go deeper into the scripture's sense and to predispose yourself to listen to God's voice.

## 6. Brief personal meditation

This is when interior silence is made and the meditation properly starts. The idea is to reflect on what the Gospel has to do with your life, and to welcome it into your heart. Here we propose some questions which could help you during this phase, but they are merely suggestions:

1. What does the Gospel I just read tell me?
2. How does it enlighten my life?
3. What traits of Jesus do I find in it?
4. What particular message does God want to deliver to me?

## 7. Thanksgiving and personal petitions

To wrap it up, and after having meditated on the scripture reading, we give thanks to God for the lived moment and we pray to Him for our intentions. It's a moment of "free time," in which you raise a prayer to God from the experience of the encounter you just had with Him, you contemplate Him and let your heart be transformed with His Word.

## 8. Final prayer and consecration to Mary

We've reached the end of our *Lectio*. As we said at the beginning of this post, it's not a rigid structure. We can finish the *Lectio* with the thanksgiving prayer. But a beautiful way to close it is by consecrating ourselves to Mary and asking for her intercession. We suggest you pray an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be.

## 9. Sign of the Cross

Having finished our meditation and after doing a consecration to Mary, we end the same way we started, with the Sign of the Cross.