

# Divina Resources

Lectio Divina (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. It does not treat scripture as texts to be studied but as the living word. Other forms of Divina are Visio Divina, Musica Divina, Prayer Divina, and Walking Divina.

The roots of scriptural reflection and interpretation go back to Origen in the 3rd century, after whom Ambrose taught them to Augustine of Hippo. The monastic practice of Lectio Divina was first established in the 6th century by Benedict of Nursia and was then formalized as a four-step process by the Carthusian monk Guigo II during the 12th century. In the 20th century, the constitution *Dei verbum* of the Second Vatican Council recommended Lectio Divina to the general public and its importance was affirmed by Pope Benedict XVI at the start of the 21st century.

A key contribution to the foundation of Lectio Divina came from Origen in the 3rd century, with his view of "Scripture as a sacrament". In a letter to Gregory of Neocaesarea, Origen wrote: "When you devote yourself to the divine reading ... seek the meaning of divine words which is hidden from most people".

Origen believed that The Word (i.e. Logos) was incarnate in Scripture and could therefore touch and teach readers and hearers. Origen taught that the reading of Scripture could help move beyond elementary thoughts and discover the higher wisdom hidden in the "Word of God".

In Origen's approach, the major interpretive element of Scripture is Christ. In his view, all Scriptural texts are secondary to Christ and are only revelations in as much as they refer to Christ as The Word of God. In this view, using Christ as the "interpretive key" unlocks the message in Scriptural texts.

The "primordial role" of Origen in interpreting Scripture was acknowledged by Pope Benedict XVI. Origen's methods were then learned by Ambrose of Milan, who towards the end of the 4th century taught them to Saint Augustine, thereby introducing them into the monastic traditions of the Western Church thereafter.

Church Fathers such as St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Hilary of Poitiers used the terms Lectio Divina and Lectio Sacra to refer to the reading of Scripture.

In the 4th century, as the Desert Fathers began to seek God in the deserts of Palestine and Egypt, they produced early models of Christian monastic life that persisted in the Eastern Church. These early communities gave rise to the tradition of a Christian life of "constant prayer" in a monastic setting. Although the desert monks gathered to hear scripture recited in public, and would then recite those words privately in their cells, this was not the same practice as what later became Lectio Divina since it involved no meditative step.

The founders of the medieval tradition of Lectio Divina were Saint Benedict and Pope Gregory I. However, the methods that they employed had precedents in the biblical period both in Hebrew and Greek. A text that combines these traditions is Romans 10:8–10 where Apostle Paul refers to the presence of God's word in the believer's "mouth or heart". It was the recitation of the biblical text that provided the rationale for Lectio Divina.

While the Lectio Divina has been the key method of meditation and contemplation, other Catholic religious orders have used other methods.

## Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. It does not treat scripture as texts to be studied but as the living word.

The focus of Lectio Divina is not a theological analysis of biblical passages but viewing them with Christ as the key to their meaning. It is not the same as bible study. In Lectio Divina, we let go of more intellectual, studious, or effortful ways of reading the scripture and enter a state in which we are quiet and receptive to God's word. We let go of our own words, and let God speak to us.

Although Lectio Divina involves reading, it is less a practice of reading than one of listening to the inner message of the Scripture delivered through the Holy Spirit. Lectio Divina does not seek information or motivation, but communion with God. It does not treat Scripture as text to be studied, but as the "Living Word".

Theological analyses are generally avoided in Lectio Divina, where the focus is on Christ as the key that interprets the passage and relates it to the meditator. So rather than "dissecting peace" in an analytical manner, the practitioner of Lectio Divina "enters peace" and shares the peace of Christ. The focus will thus be on achieving peace via a closer communion with God rather than a biblical analysis of the passage. Similar other passages may be "Abide in my love", "I am the Good Shepherd", etc.

## Musica Divina

For many of us, music is often a transcendent experience, lifting us above the worries and distractions of daily life. Consider using music as a doorway into prayer and cultivating your ability to listen with the ear of your heart. We call this audio divina, or sacred listening.

## Prayer Divina

Prayer is the relating of the self or soul to God in trust, penitence, praise, petition, and purpose, either individually or corporately.

### **Sign of the Cross**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Our Father**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

### **Hail Mary**

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### **Glory Be (Doxology)**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was, in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

## Visio Divina

Visio Divina is a form of divine seeing in which we prayerfully invite God to speak to our hearts as we look at an image. As you gaze at an image, you will be offered some questions for silent reflection, some of which may speak to you, while others you may choose to ignore. At the end of the visio divina, you will be invited to share a word or phrase to express your experience of the image.

As you gaze at the image, notice your breath and your body.

Simply be present to the image and allow it to speak to your heart, without any particular agenda. It might speak to you in words or wordlessly.

How do you feel looking at the image?

If you had to describe the image in a sentence or two silently to yourself, what would you say?

[Divine Mercy](#)

[Immaculate Heart of Mary](#)

[Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary](#)

[Fatama](#)

[Our Lady of Gaudalupe](#)

[Sacred Heart of Jesus](#)

[Holy Trinity](#)

[Our Lady of Lourdes](#)

[St Louis Cathedral Baslica](#)

The Saint John's Bible Visio <http://www.seeingtheword.org/>

## Walking Divina

Walking Divina provides an opportunity to disconnect from our busy daily life and connect with God. The key is to disconnect from all electronic devices and distractions. Being alone with our thoughts and God.

Three examples; Walking the Corpus Christi procession, Rosary procession, Stations of the Cross, nature walks, or Camino Divina.

Camino Divina—Walking the Divine Way

### **1. Spiritual Reasons**

The Camino was historically a religious pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James and today many people still walk for a religious or spiritual reason. While not necessarily Catholic, many pilgrims walk to connect and discover a deeper meaning in life, to spiritually connect with nature or themselves, or walk to find answers to deep questions.

### **2. Exercise and well-being**

Another popular reason to walk the Camino is for the physical effort and challenge the Camino provides. Even though experienced hikers and backpackers walk the Camino every year, the majority of people have little to no experience in walking long distances over many days. One of the exciting parts of the Camino is getting ready to take on this challenge and instantly becoming part of a community.

### **3. Adventure**

Walking the Camino isn't your typical vacation. You aren't going to someplace to rest and relax. What the Camino lacks in amenities, it makes up for in adventure, authenticity, and a spirit of the unknown.

### **4. Disconnect to Reconnect**

In a world of busyness with too many obligations and long workdays, many of us have become disconnected and disillusioned. We all say we would love to disconnect for a bit, but typical vacations are anything but. Answering e-mails at the pool or watching the news after dinner, we seem never to have the opportunity to truly "get away from it all".