

Lectio Divina

An Introduction

By Gloria Doino

Lectio Divina (divine reading) is an ancient method of pondering Sacred Scripture. Passed from generation to generation it was a favorite with the monks of old and today has spread “from the desert to the city, from the silence of the cloister to the heart of countless Christians” (*At the Crossroads of the Scriptures*, G. Salvail). It leaves participants murmuring that their “hearts are burning within”. This method of prayer is more than just reading the Scriptures, it is about listening to God. Likewise it is more than acquiring knowledge... it is a path to experiencing God. In Lectio Divina, the God who yearns for us, meets us in our yearning and the meeting ground is His Word.

It is hoped that it will become a way of life that draws us daily. If it does, it has the power to change hearts and transform us, through the action of the Holy Spirit.

Preparation of the heart is of the essence. The more pure the heart, the more clear the vision of the Christ we seek. Where does one start? For the liturgical churchgoer, the table is set with the daily readings. Otherwise any and all passages of Scripture can be used. Let the Spirit guide your selections. Perhaps a continuous reading of a particular book could be followed on a day-to-day basis. The Word becomes our daily nourishment. Ask the Spirit to read with you, for you and through you. Pray the likes of “Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in Holy Scripture and to discover your face therein”, (Guigo, the Carthusian).

Then begin the elements of Lectio Divina. They are four: “1) Reading, to be understood as the careful repetitious recitation of a short text of Scripture, 2) Meditation, is an effort to fathom the meaning of the text and make it personally relevant to oneself in Christ, 3) Prayer taken as a personal response to the text, asking for the grace of the text or moving

over it toward union with God and 4) Contemplation, gazing at length on something. One comes into experiential contact with the One behind and beyond the text. It is an exposure to the Divine Presence” (Lectio Divina, Morello).

Make room in yourself for the experience of Lectio Divina. Let the Word pervade your life and being. It is a precious legacy where the Word is better read, meditated, prayed, contemplated and ultimately lived. “The teacher is here and is calling for you” (John 11:28).