

## BIBLE CLASS 6<sup>TH</sup> WEEK 9/18/25

### FEASTING ON THE WORD OF GOD [Lectio Divina]



“Seek in *reading* and you will find in *meditation*; knock in *prayer* and it will be opened to you in *contemplation* — The four stages of *Lectio Divina* as taught by [John of the Cross](#)

#### Purpose of the Class

The subject of Lectio Divina makes reading the Bible purposeful and fruitful every time. Four significant steps lead to this fruitfulness in the gracefulness and deliciousness of the Word of God. Besides knowing Christ, it leads to transformation as discussed below.

#### Transformation

The reason why we study the Bible is to deepen our relationship with Christ. Christ is the lens to read and interpret Sacred Scripture. Ordinarily, if we want to understand a person, we study his or her biography; if we want to understand any subject, we read the books explaining that subject. Christ is the SUBJECT revealed and explained in the Bible. This emphasis is necessary because the intentionality in reading the Scripture is a necessary step into the revelation contained in the Scripture. *Origen believed that [The Word](#) (i.e. Logos) was incarnate in Scripture and could therefore touch and teach readers and hearers<sup>17</sup>.*

#### Knowledge of Christ Leads to Self-Transformation

In the revelation of Christ through the Scripture, one's being is revealed.. The attack on the Word of God is an attack on personal and societal security. Persons are more at peace and fulfilled when they have true understanding of themselves, and insecurity in

self-identification can lead to inner turmoil that births violence (as we see in mass shootings.) Many in our generation lack conviction of the great value in them by the revelation of God, and thus seeking fulfillment in substances, suicidal desires, etc. can be possible. The Light of the Word of God dispels darkness. As one reads the Bible some basic points become enshrined in consciousness: "You are from God, meant to live freely and to return gloriously to God after earthly life. You are wonderfully made, "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well". (Psalm 139:14.) Your unrepeatability No one else can be you, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart" (Jeremiah 1:5.). Your spirit is greater than all that the body looks like. You carry within you a seed of immortality. You are made in the image of God (Gen.1:26). God has made each person valuable, dignified and a masterpiece. Each person is an embodiment of Love, the dwelling place of the Most Holy God (Father, Son, and Spirit) . Each has a great future more than what they can conceive, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (Eph.2:10.) The reason identity crisis has increased, gender bullying or low self-esteem is because persons have been cut off from the perimeter of understanding themselves. Some live by what persons call them or the armchair societal class structure categorizations and thus become susceptible to complexities and stereotypes

Only in feasting on the Word of God does our growth, confidence, and dimensions increase. We enlarge our capacities, self-esteem, potentialities, and increase in weight of glory to the extent we digest the Word of God. Life, knowledge, and God's indwelling are measured in cubits, "whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (Jn.7:38.) In the analogy of Ezekiel's River of Life., some are deep in God in 1000 cubits, and others are deeper in the magnanimity of God and the encounter of rivers of peace, love, and freedom in the proportion of the Light, the Word of God in them, "He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist." (Ezekiel 47.) Some choose knee-deep relationship with God and have knee-deeper encounter of God's indwelling peace, others choose waist-deep, etc., all are measured in the level of our intimacy with God which comes principally by knowing Him in His Word and Sacraments. See it this way: "Our growth and intimacy with God is knowledge-dependent."

The decision to read the Word of God is choice to be transformed and become the man or woman God created us to be. Decision not to read the Word of God is a choice to live in destructive darkness. The decision to stay away from the Word of God is a choice to be alienated or separated from God. The Word of God is Light, and we want fullness of Light. Partial darkness is as risky as darkness. The level of your knowledge of the Word

of God is the level of light operating in oneself. Some levels of light are significant in some levels of darkness. Your torchlight may be helpless when you drive a car in the night you need a headlight. Your phone light is insufficient when you want to cook in the darkness of the night, you need the florescent or bulb light capacity. When you walk into a room where there is poisonous object like snake turning on the light makes you see it and you will not be harmed. Persons make choices or give in to worldviews that could eventually be a hazard when there is no light turned in the heart to decipher decisions. Certain problems can hardly be tackled in one's life if the light in oneself is partial or dark. As such, the Holy Spirit reveals how the deceiver of human race defeats the children of God by engineering feelings that keep them away from the Word of God, thus darkening their minds as to keep them in darkness. And the reason is that he is called the prince of darkness and comes to still, kill, and destroyed in the atmosphere of darkness orchestrated by lack of knowledge of the Word of God. The Scripture testifies to this,

### ***Ephesians 4***

#### ***The New Man***

*<sup>17</sup> This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as <sup>17</sup>the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; <sup>19</sup> who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

*<sup>20</sup> But you have not so learned Christ, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: <sup>22</sup> that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, <sup>23</sup> and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.]*

#### **What is *Lectio Divina* (sacra lectio)?**

The practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of [God's word](#). In the view of one commentator, it does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the living word... *Lectio Divina* has four separate steps: read; meditate; pray; contemplate...

**The focus of *Lectio Divina* is not a theological analysis of biblical passages but viewing them with [Christ](#) as the key to their meaning. For example, given Jesus' statement in [John 14:27](#): "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you", an analytical approach would focus on the reason for the statement during the [Last Supper](#), the biblical context, etc. In *Lectio Divina*,**

however, the practitioner "enters" and shares the peace of Christ rather than "dissecting" it. ... An analytical approach would focus on why Jesus said that, the fact that it was said at the Last Supper, and the context within the biblical episode. Other theological analysis may follow, e.g. the cost at which Jesus the [Lamb of God](#) provided peace through his obedience to the will of the Father, etc.<sup>[4]</sup>

However, these 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

In some Christian teachings, this form of meditative prayer is understood as leading to an increased [knowledge of Christ](#)

### ***The Ladder of Monks***

*In Guigo's four stages one first reads, which leads to think about (i.e. [meditate](#) on) the significance of the text; that process in turn leads the person to respond in prayer as the third stage. The fourth stage is when the prayer, in turn, points to the gift of quiet stillness in the presence of God, called [contemplation](#). [Guigo II](#)*

### ***Feasting on the Word***

*Lectio Divina has been likened to "feasting on the Word": first, the taking of a bite (lectio); then chewing on it (meditatio); savoring its essence (oratio) and, finally, "digesting" it and making it a part of the body (contemplatio).*

### **Preparing for Lectio Divina**

#### **Stillness and Quietness**

The biblical reference for preparation via stillness is [Psalm 46:10](#): "Be still, and know that I am God. "An example would be sitting quietly and in silence and reciting a prayer inviting the [Holy Spirit](#) to guide the reading of the Scripture that is to follow.<sup>1</sup>

The quietness help us discover Christ Who is concealed in the Bible and [John the Baptist](#) in [John 1:26](#) teaches about the One "in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not," the preparatory step should open the mind to finding Christ in the passage being read.

#### **Holy Spirit and Lectio Divine**

## Begin Reading by Inviting the Holy Spirit

"One condition for *Lectio Divina* is that the mind and heart be illumined by the Holy Spirit, that is, by the same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, and that they be approached with an attitude of 'reverential hearing'." [Pope John Paul II](#); Benedict XVI

"These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God — [1 Corinthians 2:9–10](#)."

## FOUR STEPS

### Lectio

*"Lectio," or "reading," is the first step in the prayer process. The early monks understood that the fruitfulness of a monk's prayer depends upon the simplicity, reverence, and openness to the Spirit with which the "reader" approaches the Word of God. The goal of this reading is not to rush through several chapters of Scripture. The reader, rather than trying to take in large sections of Scripture, adopts a reflective stance towards a short Scripture passage, pausing on a single word or phrase that resonates with the mind and heart (USSCB)*

**[Commentary: The biblical basis for the reading goes back to [Romans 10:8–10](#) and the presence of God's word in the believer's "mouth or heart". The attentive reading begins the process through which a higher level of understanding can be achieved.<sup>[16]</sup> In the traditional [Benedictine](#) approach the passage is slowly read four times, each time with a slightly different focus.]**

### Meditatio

*This "reading" leads to the second step, known as "meditatio"—Latin for "meditation"—which invites one to reflect upon what was read. Ancient monks explained this process as a deep, unhurried thinking about the Word one has read—a rumination, somewhat like the way a cow covered insights to daily life experiences, with the inspiration that comes from the Word of God and that has the gracious capacity to refresh the heart and mind. cow chews the cud. As the Word is read in this step, the process of ruminating gradually draws the meditator's focus from concerns of the mind to concerns of the heart.*

**[Commentary: 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](#)"... When the passage is read, it is generally advised not to try to assign a meaning to it at first, but to wait for the action of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the mind, as the passage is pondered upon]**

## Oratio

The third step, “oratio,” meaning “oration” or “prayer,” invites one’s personal response to God. This response is dialogical and can be understood as “a conversation between friends,” as St. Teresa of Avila defined prayer. One takes the time to talk to God about what was read, heard, or experienced, or about the questions that have arisen in the depth of one’s being. This response can become transformative when one accepts the promptings of the Word toward an embrace of all that life now holds.

[Commentary: [Saint Ambrose](#) on the importance of prayer in conjunction with Scripture reading and stated:

***And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying."***

***Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the importance of using Lectio Divina and prayers on Scripture as [a guiding light](#) and a source of direction and stated "It should never be forgotten that the Word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path."***]

## Contemplatio

The fourth and last step: Contemplatio makes one to continue the dialogue in transformed conduct and consciousness even after completing Lectio Divina. In Contemplatio one begins to translate what he or she has read and prayed into practical choices and conduct, applying it to daily life circumstances. The Word of God becomes a living Word guiding convictions to faith, becomes a light in making choices, and enhances devotedness to Christ

[Commentary: The [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) defines contemplative prayer as "the hearing the Word of God" in an attentive mode. It states "Contemplative prayer is *silence*, the 'symbol of the world to come' or 'silent love.' Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love. <https://www.usccb.org/resources/lectio-divina.pdf>

## Emphasis on Praying (Oratio) with the Word of God

On the 40th anniversary of Dei verbum in 2005, [Pope Benedict XVI](#) reaffirmed its importance and stated:

*I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart [cf. [Dei verbum](#), n. 25]. **If it is***

***effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime***

### **Praying with the Sacred Scripture: Instructions**

“My children should start using My Word. It is not enough to read My Word. When you read, which passage strikes your heart? Which of the verses strikes your heart? What is it in this verse or passage that strikes you? Hold onto that Word. How does it relate to your life? Make intercessions with My Word. Pray, use this passage or verse that strikes you to unleash My power. Move obstacles; call down My mercies, forgiveness, and healing. I do not take My Word back. It is the same always. Did you not see how My Son used My Word to conquer and expel satan? Do you not know that you are in warfare on earth? When surrounded by evil, for instance, use My Word, and pray like this, “Your Word says, a thousand shall fall by my side and ten thousand by my right.” Why are My children afraid of the one (satan) who has no power? They should rise and walk, use My Word, and no longer desire someone babysitting them. Many are hungry and thirsty for Me; but they have My fire already underneath their hearts; that fire can only explode by using My Word.

There is fire in My Word.”

These words were given a few years after the Chaplet of the Sacred Scripture was in use (see [cmdorg.org](http://cmdorg.org) for other promises of the Chaplet). (The words above help us to use the spiritual weapon in our hands, the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. Attend to the passages, verses, meditation, prayers, and litany of this Chaplet, with your heart. For more efficacy, heartily invoke the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Chaplet; the Holy Spirit and the Word of God are inseparable.

***[see more on Christ the King Millennium Prayer Book]***

**(Commentary: When you come to this point, please pray for this intention “Holy Spirit please give me Grace, increase my PASSION TO STUDY THE WORD OF GOD...” Pray as long as your heart directs you. Something is happening...keep praying until your spirit receives this...**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectio>