

## **Lectio Divina, Christian meditation (contemplation) and Levels of Relationship**

Compiled by Mary Ann C. Holtz, LMHC

<http://www.stpaulstpete.com/index.php/ministries/counseling>

### **Lectio Divina**

*“Lectio Divina, literally meaning “divine reading,” is an ancient practice of praying the Scriptures. During Lectio Divina, the practitioner listens to the text of the Bible with the “ear of the heart,” as if he or she is in conversation with God, and God is suggesting the topics for discussion. The method of Lectio Divina includes moments of reading (lectio), reflecting on (meditatio), responding to (oratio) and resting in (contemplatio) the Word of God with the aim of nourishing and deepening one’s relationship with the Divine.”*

(from <http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/category/category/lectio-divina> ; see pdf link on that page for lectio divina brochure for more guidance.)

To find the daily Scripture readings from Catholic Eucharistic liturgy to use in lectio:

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/>

Another resource to guide you through reading, reflecting, and responding to one of the daily readings is 'Sacred Space' <http://www.sacredspace.ie/#chooseday> “We invite you to make a 'Sacred Space' in your day, praying here and now, as you visit our website, with the help of scripture chosen every day and on-screen guidance.”

### **Christian meditation (contemplation)**

For a short introduction to Christian meditation (also known as contemplative prayer) watch this 9 minute video from PBS, with Fr. Martin Laird: <http://www.pbs.org/video/religion-ethics-newsweekly-father-martin-laird-on-contemplation/> To explore further, read his book *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation*. I especially appreciate his sections which address fear, pain, and addictions.

Another rich resource is Contemplative Outreach which offers guidance in a form of Christian contemplative prayer called Centering Prayer. “Centering Prayer is a receptive method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God’s presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.” <http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/>

### **Four Stages in Relationships and Lectio Divina**

The four moments or steps in Lectio Divina are Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, and Contemplatio. Fr. Thomas Keating of Contemplative Outreach has compared these steps to the stages of developing human relationships. I have used his basic outline and added some of my descriptions in the chart on the back of this page.

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