

LECTIO DIVINA (A GUIDE TO)

Taken from [Verbum Domini](#), Pope Benedict XVI, 2010

The documents produced before and during the Synod [ie. the 2008 Synod of Bishops on “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church”] mentioned a number of methods for a faith-filled and fruitful approach to sacred Scripture. Yet the greatest attention was paid to *lectio divina*, which is truly “capable of opening up to the faithful the treasures of God’s word, but also of bringing about an encounter with Christ, the living word of God”.

1. I would like here to review the basic steps of this procedure. It opens with the reading (*lectio*) of a text, which leads to a desire to understand its true content: ***what does the biblical text say in itself?*** Without this, there is always a risk that the text will become a pretext for never moving beyond our own ideas.
2. Next comes meditation (*meditatio*), which asks: ***what does the biblical text say to us?*** Here, each person, individually but also as a member of the community, must let himself or herself be moved and challenged.
3. Following this comes prayer (*oratio*), which asks the question: ***what do we say to the Lord in response to his word?*** Prayer, as petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise, is the primary way by which the word transforms us.
4. Finally, *lectio divina* concludes with contemplation (*contemplatio*), during which we take up, as a gift from God, his own way of seeing and judging reality, and ask ourselves ***what conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of us?***

In the *Letter to the Romans*, Saint Paul tells us: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (12:2).

Contemplation aims at creating within us a truly wise and discerning vision of reality, as God sees it, and at forming within us “the mind of Christ” (1 *Cor* 2:16).

The word of God appears here as a criterion for discernment: it is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (*Heb* 4:12).

5. We do well also to remember that the process of *lectio divina* is **not concluded until it arrives at action (*actio*)**, which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity.