

## Lectio Divina -- Divine Reading

**Matthew 11:28-30** (TPT) *Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Then come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. 29 Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you'll discover that I'm gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. 30 For all that I require of you will be pleasant and easy to bear.*

1. Lectio Divina is a contemplative practice that calls us to slow down, to cultivate silence, and to foster a heart that listens for the voice of the Lord.
  - a. Our tendency is to go-go-go. But the Lord calls us to *be still, be refreshed, to rest* in him, and to *join our lives with his*.
  
2. This is an ancient practice long neglected, rejected, and accused by Western disciple-makers.
  - a. Lectio Divina calls on us to trust God to speak, to actually communicate with us individually, directly, and regularly.
  
3. There are many different descriptions and approaches to this contemplative exercise. Almost any approach will work if we are drawing near to God from a heart motivated by faith, hope, and love.
  - a. The following describes the four universal and basic steps in Lectio Divina.

### How to practice Lectio Divina

First, find a comfortable spot. You've been invited to spend time with a dear friend; you're not being sent to the principal's office. The One called Love longs to spend time with you, nurture you, and be in conversation with you. Silence the world as much as you can—turn off any music, turn off the TV, and silence your cell phone. Close your eyes for a moment and take a few slow, deep breaths. You might even want to open your hands as a physical sign of opening yourself to what God might want to say to you. Now we're going to walk through the four basic steps.

**1. LECTIO (READING)**

Choose a piece of Scripture and read it slowly. Try to not give yourself a goal of how much text to cover, but instead let God direct your time. Listen for the "still, small voice" of a word or phrase that somehow says, "I am with you. Listen." Perhaps you'll have to re-read the same thing a few times – that's OK! We don't have an end-game here; being present with God is the only goal of Lectio Divina.

**2. MEDITATIO (REFLECTING)**

Listen to the Scripture and read it again, slowly. Watch for a word or phrase from your passage that catches your attention. Ponder it. Repeat it to yourself. Let it into your world of worry, stress, anger, bitterness, pride, hurt. What distractions or memories are coming to mind? Don't worry that you aren't doing this right: the aspects of your life that continue to come to mind are parts of yourself asking to be given to God. Allow these distractions, these thoughts, these memories to become part of the conversation with God. Allow your eyes to become ears as you begin to "hear" God's voice communicating with you through the word or phrase that caught your attention.

**3. ORATIO (RESPONDING)**

Respond to God. Do this with words, ideas, or images. Interact with Him as someone who loves and accepts you. You can pray with words or record in a journal your thoughts and feelings. Make your requests known to God and listen for his response (Phil. 4:6-7). There's no need to cover up your true emotions or formalize the language you use. Offer to God what he is asking of you through your meditation. Ask him to establish this reality in your heart and life.

**4. CONTEMPLATIO (RESTING)**

Rest in God's presence. Learn to use words when words are helpful and to let go of words when they are no longer necessary. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both words and silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity. Continue to be still (Psalm 46:10) and know that God holds today in His hands. You might want to include a time of *contemplative meditation or contemplative prayer* to end your *contemplatio* encounter. Remember, the One Who Loves you is with you throughout all the moments of this day (Matt. 28:20).

**Concluding your time of fellowship with God**

After resting in God's presence, you may simply end your time of devotion or you might conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer, slowly and thoughtfully. Remember to leave from this sacred space with the commitment to walk through the rest of your day knowing that God is near. Though your day might become chaotic and rushed, your heart can continue to hold the truth that God's presence and voice are with you. You can walk through the remainder of your day fully bearing the image of God and being a fountainhead of his love and presence in this world.

# Turn Aside to See the Burning Bush ~ Exodus 3:1-4

(Bill Gaultiere ~ Lectio Divina Guides ~ SoulShepherding.org)

**Lectio Divina** (Repeat three times):

- (a) Read the Scripture passage ("Lectio")
- (b) Reflect on the focus question below ("Meditatio")
- (c) Respond in quiet prayer/journaling ("Oratio")
- (d) Rest in God's invitation for you then pray silently("Contemplatio")

**Introduction:** Moses had waited on God for many years with unanswered questions about his identity, the suffering of his people, and his calling from God and finally God appeared to him in a burning bush. Inspired by this story the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

*Earth's crammed with heaven,  
and every common bush afire with God;  
but only he who sees, takes off his shoes;  
the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

At times there are ordinary bushes in our lives that become extraordinary because they're on fire with divine activity. Do we "turn aside" to notice? Do we pause to listen to God? Curiosity is a powerful characteristic in the soul of one who seeks God. Holy curiosity will lead us to wonder and wonder leads us to worship.

**Opening Prayer:** "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9 and 10).  
Read Scripture: Exodus 3:1-4 (NKJV)

*1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."*

**1st Reading:** What is one word or phrase the Holy Spirit impresses on you? Meditate on that.

**2nd Reading:** Perhaps like Moses as you're going about your business you're waiting to hear from God on an issue in your life or ministry? Describe this situation and how you feel about it.

**3rd Reading:** What is an example of an ordinary bush in your life that's on fire with God's presence? What might God be saying to you from this bush? How might this relate to your situation of discernment?