

From the December 3, 2007 Issue

Lectio Divina: The Ancient Art

Lectio Divina is an art form practiced by nearly the whole of the early Christian Church. It involves reading a passage of scripture and then allowing that written word to be a means by which the Living Word (Jesus) may communicate to us. Lectio Divina is a very useful, if not essential, technique in Bible study and especially in the preparation of exegetical sermons.

There are four major activities that subdivide the greater practice of Lectio Divina. These activities have specific purposes and allow for the artist to linger at each for as long as is necessary to achieve the desired outcome. There is no inherent time limit for any of the activities of Lectio Divina.

The Four Activities of Lectio Divina are:

1. **LECTIO:** Reading a specific passage of scripture (periscope*). Read the passage as if you are one of the people in the story.
2. **MEDITATIO:** Meditation and Reflection on what has been read .
3. **ORATIO:** Prayerful response to what has been read.
4. **CONTEMPLATIO:** Rest and contemplate what God the Trinity has spoken to you in what you have read, thought, and prayed about.

LECTIO: Pick a passage of scripture to read. For example you may start with the passage in Matt 5:22-43 to become familiar with the art of Lectio Divina. Read the passage as if you are Jairus.

MEDITATIO: Think about what you have just read. What are you feeling? How do you react to Jesus not acting quickly to heal your daughter, etc...

ORATIO: Pray and ask Triune God to show you what He wants you to know about Jesus through this passage. (this prayer is almost always the same- as the Bible exists to point us to a deeper experience of Who is Jesus.)

CONTEMPLATIO: Rest in what you have just experienced and in silence allow yourself the luxury of hearing the Still Small Voice.

REPETITIO: Repeat the entire process until you are satisfied that you have gleaned all that you can at this moment.

Just a note: Never “cross off” a passage from your list just because you have engaged it with Lectio Divina. Go back to it later, perhaps in a few months, and see what fresh insights Holy Spirit may grant to you.

~ *Bill Winn*

*PERICOPE: [Latin Peri: around, Cope: cut] A pericope is one complete thought or section of scripture. Often our Bibles correctly designate pericopes. Many times the pericope heading may be in error and a few times we may find that the pericope is too encompassing or limited.

The Adopted Life ©2007

www.theadoptedlife.org