



# Lectio Divina

One of the most central and ancient practices of Christian prayer is *lectio divina* which means “divine reading”. The practice begins with a prayer to the Holy Spirit which asks for guidance in discerning the call and truth in matters that may be revealed to us in prayer, the *lectio* process, and/or through one another’s shared gifts. Next, a reading from a few verses of Holy Scripture or from the *Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross*, or from a passage from the writings of Father Moreau, or another appropriate source is shared. Throughout the process, we prayerfully assume an *open frame of mind* that the passage being shared may have a message for us as individuals and/or as a community. We prayerfully assume an attitude that the Holy Spirit could be revealing something that makes sense to us through the passage and/or through the insights others are sharing during the process. The selected passage is read repeatedly and unhurriedly four times so we can *listen* and stay alert to *connections* that begin to emerge from the reading and what is being shared by our colleagues. We prayerfully ask, “What are you saying to me Lord? What am I to hear through this selected reading?” Listening in this way requires patience and a willingness to let go of our own agendas.

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The *lectio divina* process **facilitator** selects a passage to be read: scriptures, *Constitutions*, the writings of Father Moreau – whatever seems inspired from an appropriate source. Or, the facilitator may choose the Gospel reading for the following Sunday, or another passage appropriate to the day. *It is strongly suggested that the passage be copied for, and distributed to each participant in the group.*

- ✓ The **facilitator** opens the meeting with a prayer or a reflection that invites the guidance, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to be present in the group and throughout the readings and sharing.

1. The **facilitator** first reads aloud the selected passage.

2. After a pause, a **second reader** reads aloud the same passage a second time. Those in the gathering are following along and listening for a **word** or **phrase** that strikes them in a meaningful way. Following a time for reflection, the **second reader shares** first what struck him/her from the passage, and invites others to follow with their sharing.

3. After a pause, a **third reader** reads aloud the same passage for the third time while those participating are listening for a something that resonates with them either through the reading, or through something that someone was inspired to share, or a combination of both. Following a time for reflection, the **third reader shares** first what struck him/her them as a result of the reading and/or what others may have previously shared, and invites others to follow with their sharing.

4. After a pause, the **facilitator reads the passage a fourth time**. During the reading, each person in the group *listens* for God's call or message that may be discerned from passage, and/or thoughts shared from members of the group. Following the reading, **the facilitator shares first** the call he/she heard; for example, “I feel God is calling me to...” Then the facilitator invites others to share. This continues until there has been an opportunity for everyone to share. Sometimes, a colleague may simply wish to affirm another’s sharing, or relate to it as an insight he/she has gained through the *lectio* process.

- ✓ The meeting closes with the **facilitator** leading a prayer that acknowledges the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and for any intentions from the associates present.

