

Prayer Course: Week 1

Praying with the Bible: Lectio Divina

Introduction:

Lectio Divina translates as “divine reading” or “reading with God”. The idea is that if we read the Bible in prayer we will find that we are reading it alongside God and God will be with us in our reading and listening to the words of the sacred text.

Background:

This is a very ancient monastic practice that was developed by the Benedictine monks and is widely used throughout the Christian monastic traditions. At its heart is the understanding that scripture is divinely inspired and so we can open ourselves up to that divine spirit by prayerfully and attentively reading the words. In the monastic traditions time is set aside each day to practise Lectio Divina and it is also often practised collectively as a bible reading technique. It is a method that often throws up surprising and helpful insights and so is worth returning to regularly. It is best to not pick and chose the text to be meditated on, and so we are simply using the set Gospel for the days of the week:

We will be using the set readings for this week which are:

1. Mark 5.1-10
2. Mark 5.21-end
3. Mark 6.1-6a
4. Mark 6. 7-13
5. Mark6. 14-29
6. Mark 6.30-34
7. Mark 6. 53-end

Purpose:

To encounter God’s Word in scripture, and to hear what God is saying to us now through scripture.

Process:

- Get yourself comfortable.
- Mark up your bible with the Gospel passage.
- Read the passage out loud, listening for words, phrases, or images that jump out at you.
- Re read the passage 3 times.
- Notice which area of the scripture keeps jumping out at you.
- Reread that phrase or word a few times.
- Ask: what is God teaching you through this word, phrase, or image.
- Sit in silence and listen.
- Give thanks for what you have been shown.
- Say the Lord’s Prayer.

Further reading and resources:

'The Bible'

'Rb 1980: The Rule Of St. Benedict', Timothy Fry (Editor, Translator)

'Reading with God: Lectio Divina', David Foster

'Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today' Joan Chittister