



Benedictine Bits

Lectio Divina



Lectio Divina, or divine reading, is a slow, contemplative way of reading spiritual text that was established by Saint Benedict in the 6th century for monastics. This divine reading is often practiced in private as a central element of a Benedictine way of life. However, it can also be done in small groups with periods of quiet meditation followed by optional times for sharing. The process begins by reading a selected passage multiple times. This enables you to listen attentively to the Word, how it speaks to you, your experiences, and how you are being called to be. While typically based on readings from the Bible, it is not “Bible study,” but a way of connecting with the text. In short, it is much more a matter of the heart than of the head.

The practice of Lectio Divina is a way of cultivating a relationship with God by exercising how to listen “with the ear of our hearts.” It is the practice of being attentive to what God is trying to say to you, personally, through the text and then responding to, or simply dwelling in, God’s message. God’s Word begins to speak to us in a new light. This experience is not just about reading scripture, but it is a key part of Benedictine formation, training us to be more attentive to and reflective about the world around us. In fact, this contemplative exercise can also be done with mediums other than scripture; you can use art, music, or nature, as the source that helps bring one into conversation with God through this immersive, reflective process. How is God speaking to you?