

How can I pray with the Bible? *Lectio Divina*

1. Place yourself in God's presence, under God's eyes. Begin with an act of faith. Close your eyes. Imagine Christ in front of you. God is real, He is here. He listens. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray and enter into God's presence.

2. Read a short passage of the Bible (Gospel of the day) and then ask yourself:

A. What does the Bible say in this passage? (objective part)

- Read and re-read the text until you grasp the content and meaning. Do it slowly.
- Think about it. Pay special attention to:
 - Place, time, characters, actions, key words, repetitions, grammar, parallel texts (other texts it's connected to in the Bible), context of the passage (location of the passage within the whole of the book), connecting words.
- You can underline in the text if it's useful to you.
- You can also compare with other translations.
- You can read footnotes and search for bible commentaries.

B. What does the Bible say to me? (subjective part)

- Which words struck you the most? Focus on one or two lines or words of the Gospel passage and meditate upon them, trying to discover what the Lord wants to say to me through this passage.
- How do I connect this passage with my daily life? Imagine situations in your life that you can apply this passage to, express your feelings regarding those situations, make good resolutions, and express your desires and fears before God.
- In what sense is this passage Good News for me?
- What changes in my lifestyle is this passage prompting?
- Respond to God: Give thanks, ask for the graces you need, praise him, make petition.

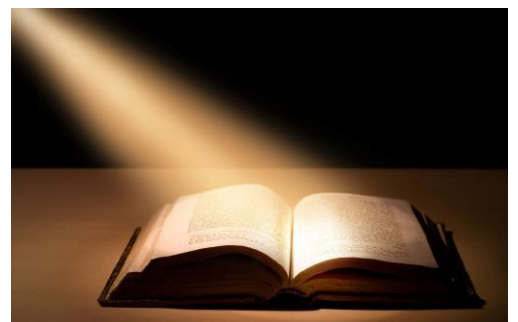
3. What do I say to the Lord? (moral part)

Determine to do something specific about what you have been pondering. Think of one concrete goal that can help you to put this passage into practice during this day. Express that goal in a short statement that you can repeat during the day.

4. Finish praying an Our Father + Hail Mary + Glory be + Prayer After Meditation

Tips for Meditation:

- 1) Find a quiet place (an image and a candle can help) and suitable time to do the meditation. It is recommendable to pray in the morning because your mind is more clear. Give Jesus good, quality time.
- 2) Inwardly gather yourself in mind and heart. If you are stressed out, let yourself calm down. Repeat the name of Jesus.
- 3) Read the text the night before.
- 4) Pray for a set amount of time: Start with 10 minutes. Stick with it for 2 or 3 weeks and then increase it by 10 minutes.
- 5) You can find the daily readings on the USCCB website or in the bulletin. Laudate App.



Extracts about meditation from *The Introduction to the Devout Life*, by Saint Francis de Sales, Part II.

I specially recommend mental prayer and the prayer of the heart, in particular, meditation on the life and passion of our Lord; by often looking upon him, your soul will be filled with him, **you will understand the disposition of his heart and model your actions on his...** By keeping close to him and observing what he says and does and the desires of his heart, we shall learn, with the help of his grace, to speak and act like him, just as children learn to speak by listening and chattering to their mother...

Spend an hour every day, some time before the midday meal, in meditation, and **the earlier the better, because your mind will be less distracted, and fresh after a night's sleep;** but do not spend more than an hour unless your spiritual director expressly tell you to do so. If possible, make your meditation in church, because neither your family nor anyone else is likely to prevent you from staying there for an hour, whereas if you are dependent on others you might not be able to promise yourself an uninterrupted hour at home.

Always begin your prayers, mental or vocal, by **placing yourself in the presence of God;** you will soon see how helpful this is...

If because you are very busy, or for any other reason you miss your morning prayer, try to make up for this loss after the midday meal, as long after it as possible...if you cannot find any time for mental prayer during the day, **make up for it by saying many ejaculatory prayers, by spiritual reading** or some act of penance to correct your failure, making a firm resolution not to miss your prayers tomorrow...

Once you have realized you are in the presence of God, cast yourself down with deep reverence before him and acknowledge your unworthiness to appear in his majestic presence, asking for all the graces you need to serve him well, knowing that in his goodness he longs to grant them to you... **Then it is useful to represent to the imagination the scene of the mystery you are considering** as if it were actually taking place before you... to imagine the scene is to keep your mind on the mystery we are considering so that it may not wander to and fro, just as we confine a bird in its cage or a hawk to our wrist...

After using your imagination you begin to use your understanding, and this is what we call meditation; in other words, making use of considerations to raise your heart to God and to the things of God... Having confined your spirit within the mystery you are considering, begin to consider in the way I said before. As long as you are gaining light and help from any consideration **stay there without passing on, as the bees do, who never leave a flower so long as they can still find some honey there;** but if you find a consideration unhelpful after having tried it for a while, pass on to another but proceed very gently and simply in this matter without any undue haste.

Meditation moves your will to make spiritual acts such as the love of God and our neighbor, desire for heaven and eternal glory, or zeal for the salvation of souls, it makes us long to be like the Lord, awakens a sense of compassion and joy, or fear of offending God or of judgment and hell, it leads us to hate sin and have confidence in the goodness and mercy of God.

We should make these spiritual acts as whole-heartedly as possible. However, Philotea, you must not dwell upon them to such extent that you forget to **make practical resolutions according to your own special needs...**

Meditation should be brought to a close by 3 spiritual acts. The first, an act of thanksgiving to God for the spiritual acts and resolutions which he has inspired in us and of his goodness and mercy which our meditation has revealed anew to us; the second, an oblation to God of our desires and resolutions; third, an act of petition to our Father for the graces and virtues of his Son, for a blessing on our resolutions that we may put them into practice faithfully...

I have suggested that after all this **one should gather a bouquet of devotion** and what I mean is this: those who walk in a lovely garden are loth to leave it without taking away a few flowers to keep with them during the day, whose fragrance will give them pleasure. In the same way, after meditating, we should **choose a few thoughts which we found helpful and useful for our spiritual progress, so that we may call them to mind during the day** and spiritually breathe their fragrance.