

LECTIO DIVINA

- PREPARATION
 - Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space
 - Begin with silence for a few minutes, humbly asking God to quieten your heart and make you aware that you are in His loving presence. Ask Jesus to accompany you on this journey.
 - Offer a prayer to the Holy Spirit for inspiration and guidance:
 - *Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my heart and mind to listen to your Word.*
 - When you are ready, begin reading and praying through the four movements, described below.
 - With time and practice, these movements will become simple and easy as they flow naturally from one to the other.
- LECTIO (READ)
 - On the first reading, simply open yourself to the presence of God.
 - Read the passage slowly and prayerfully, allowing short pauses between sentences.
 - Over time you will discover whether it is more helpful for you to read silently or out loud.
 - Try them both.
 - As you read, take in the words and the overall flow of the passage.
 - Allow a time of silence following the reading continuing to open yourself to God's Spirit.
- MEDITATIO (RECEIVE)
 - On the second prayerful reading of the passage, listen for a particular word or a phrase through which God wants to speak to you.
 - You will notice your attention being drawn to something.
 - Once you have "received" the word or phrase, begin to silently meditate on that.
 - Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, ask God any questions that come to mind, and note things that seem important as you meditate on what God has given you.
 - Remember that the focus is on listening to what God has to say to you.
- ORATIO (RESPOND)
 - On the third prayerful reading of the passage, listen now for God's invitation, and respond from your heart.
 - God is always inviting us in some way... to let go of something, or to take up something; to do something or be something. Let Jesus accompany on this invitation.
 - The invitation can take innumerable forms.
 - Following the reading, continue to listen for God's invitation and then respond silently or out loud from an honest heart.
- CONTEMPLATIO (REST)
 - The focus of the fourth prayerful reading of the passage is to simply rest now in the love that God has for you.
 - Let the words wash over you.
 - There is no further need to reflect or respond as you simply allow the Spirit to draw you close and fill you with God's love, grace and peace. Feel Jesus with you.
 - Linger in this place of deep connection.
 - You are being filled and refreshed for your continuing journey.
 - Take your word, phrase, or image with you.
 - It is something to which you can return throughout the day.
 - A reminder of the love of God has for you and the special word God had for you today.
 - You may want to spend time reflecting on your experience or write in your journal
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths and give thanks to God for being with you during this time

SCRIPTURAL MEDITATION

(Also known as Ignatian Contemplation or Imaginative Prayer)

Through scriptural meditation we step into a gospel story and imagine ourselves to be there in that scene. Rather than reading the Bible abstractly, we enter the story to more deeply experience and encounter Jesus in the scene and listen to what God is saying to us. We might be a disciple in the boat with Jesus, one of the crowd at the feeding of the five thousand, or the woman at the well asked by Jesus to draw up water for him. In these and many other gospel stories, we use our God-given imagination to listen to see, hear, taste and smell the scene around us. As we do we observe what we are thinking and feeling as the events unfold around us, inviting God to speak to us through that.

A scriptural meditation invites us to become a part of the gospel story being played out in our own lives and neighborhoods. Not everyone finds this easy or natural. But God is at work no matter whether we feel or experience anything. The most important thing is our desire to know God more deeply, something which will always be treasured by God.

Scriptural meditation is not complicated, and the few simple steps involved are outlined below:

- Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space
- Begin prayerfully, asking God to bless your imagination and the Holy Spirit to guide and protect you.
- *Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my heart and mind to listen to your Word.*
- Choose a gospel passage in which Jesus is active and present.
- Ask Jesus to accompany you on this journey.
- Read through the passage several times until it becomes familiar. It may help to read it aloud. Pause for 30 seconds or so between each reading to let the story soak in and begin to imagine the scene.
- Use all your senses to let the gospel passage unfold in your imagination...
 - What is the location like?
 - What time of day is it?
 - Who are the people there?
 - What can you hear... smell... touch... taste...
 - What emotions are evoked throughout?
- Try to let the story unfold naturally. You may be an observer or one of the main characters talking with Jesus. That's ok. Let the Holy Spirit guide you through without striving to make anything happen.
- Try to avoid analyzing actions or finding applications (e.g. "I should be more like Peter when he..."). The blessing comes through experiencing the story with our whole being, not just our mind.
- Stay in the story as long as feels natural, and then end with a period of silence in Jesus' presence.
- End by spending a few minutes reflecting on what took place, perhaps by journaling.
- Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and give thanks to God for being with you during this time.

A Psalm in the Stillness

(Psalms from the Heart by Marion van der Loo)

In the early morning hours, Lord,
I sit and wait.
The quiet of the house,
The silence in the street,
cannot assuage my anxious thoughts
nor settle restless fears.

In these fretful, restless hours, Lord
I sit and wait.
The clamor of the day to come,
The weight of work undone,
are vying for that place
in which I lose my sight of you.

In the stillness of this house, Lord,
I sit and wait.
The hush of daybreak,
The rosy hue of sunrise,
bring me peace
and bring what I await.

The soothing sound of waking life,
The settling tone of hope in you,
are all I need to start the day,
and all I need to hear your voice,
and all I need to sing.

Examen

Examination of Consciousness
(adapted by Fr. Brendan McGuire)

Spend 20 minutes at the end of each day thinking, praying and recording the Examen. Use the below as a model of steps:

1. Ask Jesus to open your eyes to see as God sees your day.
2. Ask Jesus to guide you to the moments of blessing of the day; ask him to lead you to the graces God showered upon you in that day. Think of two or three blessings or moments of grace that you witnessed that day. It can be an action, thought, event, or encountering a person.
3. Look for the *movement of the Good Spirits (pattern of virtue)*. Here you are seeking to identify the pattern of behavior or mindset that led you to experience the blessings or moments of grace. Ask Jesus to direct your mind to the pattern that he sees. Go where he leads you. There is no judgment here; just observe what led up to the moment of grace.
4. Look for the *movement of the Evil Spirits (pattern of vice)*. Here you are seeking to identify the pattern of behavior or mindset that led you to experience the negative moments of the day or times when you were not your best self. Maybe there was a temptation or thought that recurs or maybe there was an action that led you astray. Again, there is no judgment here; just observe what led up to the moment of temptation or weakness or sin. It is very important that one be gentle with oneself and ask Jesus to direct your mind to the pattern that he sees. Go only where he leads you.
5. Give thanks to God for the grace of your prayer

Daily: Write in your journal the thoughts you just prayed.

Weekly: Read over the journal entries of the last week and examine the pattern of the week for the movement of goodness and movement of weakness. Then ask the Lord how you can address any potential ways to modify actions or thoughts to make changes in your life. Be gentle with yourself and do not make any large steps; only baby steps of adjustments. Listen to Jesus. Verify it is Jesus you are listening by asking Mary to verify it is Jesus' voice.

AUDIO DIVINA

- **PREPARATION**
 - Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space
 - Find a comfortable position where you can listen to the music.
 - Choose the piece of music you wish to use
 - Know that God can be known through many different forms and sounds.
 - Be present. Be open.
- **EARS TO HEAR: READ**
 - Listen to the selection.
 - If the piece has a text, pay close attention to the words or follow along with a lyric sheet or piece of music.
 - Let the music fill your heart without judgment
 - If you chose instrumental music, think of a favorite Bible verse or on a message of gratitude.
 - Breathe in the music and let it flow through you.
 - Are you called back again and again to a certain phrase in the lyrics?
 - Simply notice where your energy is drawn.
 - Notice where your ear is avoiding or passing over.
 - Slowly become aware of feelings as you listen
 - Be open and present to this.
- **OPEN HEART: RECEIVE**
 - Take a second listen.
 - Focusing on the feel of the music and the imagery that it brings, perhaps imagery associated with the phrase you chose.
 - Open your imagination.
 - As you reflect on music and sound, what feelings or longings are evoked?
 - What memories or hopes are stirred?
 - Make room within your heart for whatever wants to emerge.
 - Be here. Be present.
 - Let go of judging or critiquing.
 - Simply be, lingering here, opening your heart to whatever wants to rise.
- **OPEN MIND: RESPOND**
 - Listen a third time but connecting especially with the phrases you chose.
 - Let the thoughts and feelings that the music has inspired wash through you.
 - How is God speaking to you through the music you chose to pray with today?
 - Slowly notice what being revealed in your listening and through what you are feeling.
 - What is the invitation in this moment of your life?
 - What insights have you gained?
 - What invitation is growing in you?
- **ENJOY: REST**
 - Let go. Rest.
 - Linger in this place of deep connection.
 - You are being filled and refreshed for your continuing journey.
 - Take your word/phrase or melody with you.
 - Enjoy a few moments of stillness in this space.
 - You may want to spend time reflecting on your experience or write in your journal
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths and give thanks to God for being with you during this time