

## Praying: *Lectio Divina*

The ancient practice of Lectio Divina is a traditional practice of Benedictine personal prayer. A simple way of praying, it allows the person to encounter God in the Scriptures, involving one's spirit, emotions, intellect, and practical action. There are four parts to this way of prayer: Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, and Contemplatio.

### ***LECTIO:***

Reading the Word. This is not speed-reading for content! The text might be as brief as a single verse or two of scripture. It could be part of the day's Mass readings, or a portion of a book of the Bible, or some other Scriptural selection.

### ***MEDITATIO:***

Savoring the scripture. Does a word, a phrase, an idea or an insight appeal to you? Stay with it! You might repeat it over and over, or think about it, or just sit with it.

### ***ORATIO:***

Praying what has surfaced. You allow your feelings to surface, and you speak to God, or to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit, about it. This is all part of a personal encounter with God in the Word.

### ***CONTEMPLATIO:***

Resting in God. You let go of thoughts and feelings, and simply sit quietly in God's presence. The Holy Spirit does the work here while you enjoy the love of God.

The purpose of Lectio Divina is not simply to pray the words of the pages of Scripture, but to pray the events of our lives as well. Over time, we come to see our days as a continuation of God's revelation and action; we move from the written Word to the events of our lives and then back once again to the Word, knowing that both are part of our continuing love story with God.

*(adapted from the Benedictine Sisters of Elizabeth, NJ)*