

be still retreat prep

Steps to Solitude Part 3

1. Be on the alert to any longings for solitude that you experience this week. Write down the circumstances surrounding those longings and consider what prompted them. What do they indicate about your need to practice the discipline of solitude?
2. Put a Silence & Solitude Time on Your Calendar: In the next weeks, block out two or more hours to spend alone with God. This can be in or out of your house, sitting, walking, journaling, practicing lectio divina, etc...

Question for class: What difficulties do you have entering into a solitude time with God?

3. Lectio Divina Before the Retreat:
 - a. If you didn't get to the pre-retreat class and watch the video: Sacred Rhythms Session 3 - Lectio Divina: Encountering God in Scripture go to: The link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHRbGcewlQc> You can pay \$2.99 and download it to watch
 - b. Another option to learn about Lectio Divina is to come to one of the Fully Alive Sessions in April, where Laura Longville will be sharing the process. The meeting times are April 6 at 6:30 pm in the Rimrock Café or April 13 at 9:00 am at the Rimrock Exchange.
 - c. If you want to be self taught, practice incorporating *lectio divina* (directions below) into the time you have been setting aside for solitude and silence.

Scriptures for Spiritual Transformation *by* Ruth Haley Barton

Lectio Divina (translated “divine [or sacred] reading”) is an approach to the Scriptures that sets us up to listen for the word of God spoken to us in this present moment. Lectio divina refers to the ancient practice of divine reading that dates back to the early mothers and fathers of the Christian faith. Referring to the material being read and also the method itself, the practice of lectio divina is rooted in the belief that through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures are indeed alive and active as we engage them for spiritual transformation. (Heb. 4:12)

Lectio involves a slower, more reflective reading of Scripture that helps us to be open to God's initiative rather than being subject to human agendas—our own or someone else's. Through a delicate balance of silence and word, we enter into the rhythm of speaking and listening which is at the heart of intimate communication. A time of silence before the reading help us to quiet our inner chaos so that we are prepared to listen. Moments of silence throughout the process helps us be attentive to God when he does speak and creates space for noticing our own inner dynamics and exploring them in God's presence.

The Process of *Lectio Divina*

Lectio Divina is experienced in four movements. We might think of them as moves rather than steps because it reminds of dancing. When we are learning a new dance, we are very awkward and very concerned about getting it right. We watch our feet, trying to get them to do what they are supposed to do. We wonder what to do with our hands. If we are dancing with a partner, we might be clumsy at first as we try to figure out how to move together gracefully. But in the end, the point is to be able to enter into the dance, flow with it, improvise, and enjoy the person we are dancing with.

It is the same with *lectio divina*. When we are just starting out, we concentrate on following the steps and getting everything in the right order. But eventually as we become more comfortable, they become moves in a dance that flows with beauty and pleasure, heart and soul. The moves become very fluid and flow into one another quite naturally. But first we do have to familiarize ourselves with the basic moves.

Choose a short passage (6-8 verses at most) that is either a part of your normal reading plan, a passage you have chosen for today or a passage from the lectionary reading for this week and enter prayerfully into the *lectio* process. (Note: some suggested scripture follows) Following are very detailed instructions to help you learn the moves. (This approach to Scripture is so old that it was originally presented in Latin. Although I have chosen English words to describe the process, I have included the Latin words in parenthesis so that the beauty and the nuance of the original language are not lost.)

I. Preparation (*Silencio*) Take a moment to come fully into the present moment. With your eyes closed, let your body relax and allow yourself to become consciously aware of God's presence with you. Express your willingness (or your willingness to be made willing) to hear from God in these moments by using a brief prayer such as "Come Lord Jesus," or "Here I am" or "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Then read the chosen passage four consecutive times, each time asking a slightly different question that invites you into the dynamic of that move. Each reading is then followed by a brief period of silence:

II. Read (*Lectio*): *Listen for the word or the phrase that is addressed to you.*

Turn to the passage and begin to read slowly, pausing between phrases and sentences. You may read silently or you might find it helpful to read the passage aloud allowing the words to echo and resonate, sink in and settle into heart. As you read, listen for the word or phrase that strikes you or catches your attention. Allow for a moment of silence, repeating that word or phrase softly to yourself, pondering it and savoring it as though pondering the words of loved one. This is the word that is meant for you. Be content to listen simply and openly without judging or analyzing.

III. Reflect (*Meditatio*): *How is my life touched by this word?* Once you have heard the “word” that is meant for you, read the passage again and listen for the way in which this passage connects with your life. Ask, “What is it in my life right now needs to hear this word?” Allow several moments of silence following this reading and explore thoughts, perceptions, and sensory impressions. If the passage is a story, perhaps ask yourself the question, Where am I in this scene? What do I hear as I imagine myself in the story or hear these words addressed specifically to me? How do the dynamics of this story connect with my own life experience?

IV. Respond (*Oratio*): *What is my response to God based on what I have read and encountered?* Read the passage one more time listening for your own deepest and truest response. In the moments of silence that follow this reading, allow your prayer to flow spontaneously from your heart as fully and as truly as you can. At this point you are entering into a personal dialogue with God “sharing with God the feelings the text has aroused in us, feelings such as love, joy, sorrow, anger, repentance, desire, need, conviction, consecration. We pour out our hearts in complete honesty, especially as the text has probed aspects of our being and doing in the midst of various issues and relationships.” (Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, p. 114) Pay attention to any sense that God is inviting you to act or respond in some way to the word you have heard. You might find it helpful to write your prayers or to journal at this point.

V. Rest (*Contemplatio*): *Rest in the Word of God.* In the final reading you are invited to release and return to a place of rest in God. You have given our response its full expression, so now you can move into a time of waiting and resting in God’s presence like the weaned child who leans against its mother. (Psalm 131). This is posture of total yieldedness and abandon to the Great Shepherd of our souls.

VI. Resolve (*Incarnatio*): *Incarnate (live out) the Word of God* As you emerge from this place of personal encounter with God to life in the company of others, resolve to carry this word with us and to live it out in the context of daily life and activity. As you continue to listen to the word throughout the day, you will be led deeper and deeper into its meaning until it begins to live in you and you “enflesh” this Word in the world in which you live. As a way of supporting your intent to live out the word you have been given, you may want to choose an image or a picture or a symbol that you can carry to remind you of it.

Suggested Scriptures:

Psalm 23

Psalm 27:1-5

Psalm 63:1-4

Matthew 14:22-32

Colossians 3:1-4, 5-11, 12-17

Luke 10:38-41

John 12:1-8

John 10:1-6, 7-10, 11-18

Isaiah 43:1-4

Isaiah 55:6-9

Ephesians 3:14-19

Retreat Day Information

Directions: Go to Terra Sancta Retreat Center. Address: 2101 City Springs Road, Rapid City

Link to Directions: <http://terrasancta.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Driving-Directions.pdf>

Schedule for the Day

8:45 am	Check in
9:00 am	Orientation & Focus with Marci Maddox <i>In the Cloister</i>
9:30 am	Time with God
12:00 pm	Lunch (provided)
12:45 pm	<i>Lectio Divina</i> with Sister Margaret <i>In the Cloister</i>
1:15 pm	Time with God
3:45 pm	Optional Prayer Covering with Laura Longville
4:00 pm	Head Home

Things to Bring:

- Journal
- Pens
- Bible
- Christian Resources:
 - Books
 - Current Bible study
 - Precepts
 - Devotional
- Music source with Headphones (If you don't think it will interfere with your solitude experience)
- Snack (if needed)
- Clothing for being indoors and outdoors
- \$15 check to Rimrock Church if you haven't paid ahead
- Cell phone put on airplane mode (no sounds or vibrating)

Provided:

- Lunch
- Coffee, Tea & Water in the Meeting Room
- Trail maps for the facility
- Prayer for you
- Support People:
 - Laura Longville
 - Michelle Westvig
 - Lornell Haggerty