

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a traditional Catholic form of prayer which began in the monasteries but is now widespread in its practice. *Lectio divina* is a Latin phrase which roughly means 'divine reading'. In *lectio divina* one slowly reads and meditates over a piece of scripture to open oneself to God's Word. All scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit and God communes with us when we read it prayerfully.

We will begin each discernment session with *lectio divina*. Pope Francis insisted that reflective prayer, including on God's Word, was essential for synodality to be effective. Therefore, we will start by prayerfully reading God's Word which will help us, personally and communally, to leave behind our daily cares and our own preferences and focus instead on discerning God's will. In this way we have moved from a 'business meeting' to a spiritual encounter.

We begin *lectio divina* by making the Sign of the Cross. This symbolises that I am moving from normal activity to communing with God.

I then silently, and using my own words, ask the Holy Spirit to make me open to the Spirit's guidance, that I will hear what God wants to me to discover.

The scripture passage will appear on your screen and someone will be asked to read the passage aloud twice. This allows us to become familiar with the passage. Perhaps between these readings I may simply note anything that strikes me but without dwelling on them in any detail.

You then begin to slowly and silently read the passage. Each time you are touched or stirred by a word, phrase, sentence or concept just stop and reflect on it. Perhaps some questions could arise such as: "What did I feel when I read that phrase? Does it relate in some way to my life? Is God asking something of me here?" Perhaps you might feel moved to utter a few words of prayer of gratitude, praise, sorrow or supplication. Perhaps you feel drawn to be simply silent.

When you consider that this phrase or word has been exhausted just begin again from the point you stopped until you feel drawn to pause once more and reflect as suggested above. Once this phrase seems to be exhausted just move on again.

There is no need to finish reading the passage. It is better to go deeper than rush.

Once the allotted time is complete Bishop Brian will invite everyone to pray the Our Father together before we recite a prayer to the Holy Spirit.