

## LECTIO DIVINA – “SACRED READING”

### 1. *Lectio* (reading).

– Slow, deliberate, repeatedly, to allow the meaning to emerge. Approach the text with the desire to discern the meaning the Spirit has placed within it. Indeed, to discover the presence of the Spirit within it, speaking uniquely to the heart with a message from the Beloved.

### 2. *Meditatio* (meditation).

– To ‘ruminate’ over the meaning of the words, to try to draw forth the mystery that has begun to unveil itself through reading. This is like ‘tilling the soil of the soul’ so that the seed of the word may take root and germinate within me.

### 3. *Oratio* (prayer).

– To dialogue with God about whatever has begun to unveil itself in reading and meditation. To seek, to ask, to welcome, to cling. In a word, to carry everything before him and to surrender it into his hands, opening myself, in turn, to welcome all that comes from him.

### 4. *Contemplatio* (contemplation).

– To ‘rest’ in the insight, in the beauty of the mystery. Above all, simply to rest in the ineffable and silent mystery of the Beloved, who transcends all words, all feelings, all concepts and images. This kind of repose is a gift of God—as St. John of the Cross says: “an inflow of God into the soul” and on our part a simple “loving attentiveness to God in silence and simplicity.”

### 5. *Actio* (action).

– Prayer and life are to be ‘of one piece.’ I live as I pray and I pray as I live. And prayer, this intimate encounter with God, seeks to penetrate my life—yes, it is the wellspring and the summit of all authentic transformation.

### **Sirach 6:18-37**

18 My son, from your youth up choose instruction,  
and until you are old you will keep finding wisdom.  
19 Come to her like one who plows and sows,  
and wait for her good harvest.  
For in her service you will toil a little while,  
and soon you will eat of her produce.  
20 She seems very harsh to the uninstructed;  
a weakling will not remain with her.  
21 She will weigh him down like a heavy testing stone,  
and he will not be slow to cast her off.  
22 For wisdom is like her name,  
and is not manifest to many.  
23 Listen, my son, and accept my judgment;  
do not reject my counsel.  
24 Put your feet into her fetters,  
and your neck into her collar.  
25 Put your shoulder under her and carry her,  
and do not fret under her bonds.  
26 Come to her with all your soul,  
and keep her ways with all your might.  
27 Search out and seek, and she will become known to you;  
and when you get hold of her, do not let her go.  
28 For at last you will find the rest she gives,  
and she will be changed into joy for you.  
29 Then her fetters will become for you a strong protection,  
and her collar a glorious robe.  
30 Her yoke is a golden ornament,  
and her bonds are a cord of blue.  
31 You will wear her like a glorious robe,

and put her on like a crown of gladness.  
32 If you are willing, my son, you will be taught,  
and if you apply yourself you will become clever.  
33 If you love to listen you will gain knowledge,  
and if you incline your ear you will become wise.  
34 Stand in the assembly of the elders.  
Who is wise? Cling to him.  
35 Be ready to listen to every narrative,  
and do not let wise proverbs escape you.  
36 If you see an intelligent man, visit him early;  
let your foot wear out his doorstep.  
37 Reflect on the statutes of the Lord,  
and meditate at all times on his commandments.  
It is he who will give insight to your mind,  
and your desire for wisdom will be granted.

### **Homily attributed to Saint Macarius**

When a farmer prepares to till the soil he must put on clothing and use tools that are suitable. So Christ, our heavenly king, came to till the soil of mankind devastated by sin. He assumed a body and, using the cross as his plowshare, cultivated the barren soul of man. He removed the thorns and thistles which are the evil spirits and pulled up the weeds of sin. Into the fire he cast the straw of wickedness. And when he had plowed the soul with the wood of the cross, he planted in it a most lovely garden of the spirit, that could produce for its Lord and God the sweetest and most pleasant fruit of every kind.