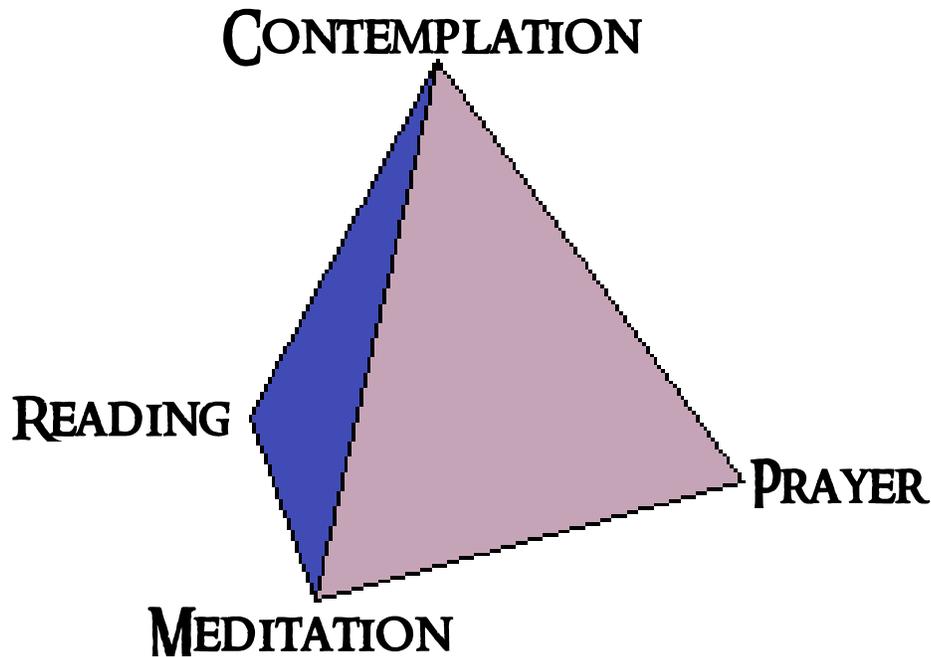


LECTIO DIVINA

A WAY OF LIVING



We often read scripture or other texts like the newspaper—scan for the important points, skim the parts that may not make immediate sense, and then move on. Rather than reading for quick facts and information, *lectio divina*, or “divine reading,” is a spacious, prayerful process inviting us to savor the text. The reader enters into a prayerful dialogue with text, chews on it, ponders it in her or his heart, and looks beyond the obvious to make connections with life and prayer. *Lectio divina* is not a method with steps that must be done in order. Rather it is a way of living the text.

- **Reading.** Choose a passage and read it slowly many times. Read it silently, read it aloud. Without focusing too much on perfection, try memorizing the passage.
- **Meditating.** As words or phrases stand out, focus on them. Dialogue with them—why do they “stand out” or “shimmer” to you. What do they remind you of? Other verses? Memories? Do they inspire you to prayer?
- **Praying.** As you read and meditate, do you find yourself asking God questions? Do people come to mind or life situations which could be brought to God? Allow the connections you make become a natural conversation with God.
- **Contemplating.** This is a gift from God. It may not happen and it is not the “reward” for a well-done *lectio divina*! It is the delightful “aha-moment,” a sense of timelessness, an inner awe at the beauty or love or wisdom or (fill in the blank) of God, revealed through the text.

At any point, praying may lead back into reading, contemplating back into meditating. Reading could lead directly into contemplation. Over time, this way of reading scripture can become second nature and spill over into other areas of life. One can “read” a situation, a world event, a personal crisis, or a relationship in this manner.