



Lectio Divina is an ancient method of praying, one which is a standard

prayer technique much used in the tradition of Carmelite spirituality (St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross along with many, many others). One of the most popular works on lectio divina was written by a Carthusian monk named Guigo, who prayed and worked in and around one of the scenic mountain valleys of the French Alps, at the famous Carthusian motherhouse, the Grande Chartreuse. Lectio divina means literally the divine reading. It is a monastic designation for the meditative reading of the Scriptures. Its elements are ingredients of a spiritual frame of mind, a holy discipline that intuitively and affectively dwells on a biblical text as a means of seeking communion with Christ. The practice could also be described as dwelling on a scriptural text in the divine presence for the sake of radical change in Christ

There are four components to Lectio Divina:

1) Lectio – Reading

Lectio is the careful repetitious recitation of a short passage of Scripture, either chosen by the individual or taken from the specific daily Mass readings.

2) Meditatio – Meditation

Meditatio is an effort to fathom the meaning of the text and make it personally relevant to oneself in Christ

3) Oratio – Prayer

Oratio is prayer in the context of a personal response to the relevant Scriptural passage, petitioning God for the divine grace of the text as it applies to the individual and their personal prayer intentions, in order to move toward a closer union with God.

4) Contemplatio – Contemplation

Contemplatio means to gaze at length on something. The idea behind this final element is that sometimes, by the infused grace of God, one is raised above meditation to a state of seeing or experiencing the text as mystery and reality; one comes into experiential contact with the One behind and beyond the text. It is an exposure to the divine presence, to God's truth and benevolence.

Within the context of Carmelite spirituality, particularly with regard to Lectio Divina, it is important to note that meditation and contemplation are two entirely distinct and separate activities. Meditation is something that the human person can initiate. Contemplation, on the other hand, is a supernatural state of awareness in which the soul is raised by God, perhaps only for a brief moment, to a state of being and reality that is higher and closer to God than the person is capable of achieving solely on one's own meager efforts. In practical terms, then, contemplation might rarely be experienced as one practices the other three steps of Lectio Divina.---EWTN