***Lectio Divina***

What begins as reading becomes reflection or meditation; this leads to prayer and ultimately to contemplative union with God.

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| **Stages** | **Activity** | **Function** | **Faculty** | **Sense** |
| ***Lectio*** | **Read** – Listen for a word or phrase. | Understanding the text | **Intellect****(Head)** | **Literal** |
| ***Meditatio*** | **Reflect (Ruminate)** – Ponder the text’s meaning for your life. | Contextualizing the meaning | **Memory****(Experience)** | **Christological** |
| ***Oratio*** | **Respond** **(Pray)** – What is God calling me to be or to do? | Living the meaning | **Conscience****(Heart)** | **Behavioral** |
| ***Contemplatio*** | **Rest** – Let go of any words and let the text wash over you anew. | Meeting God in the text | **Spirit** | **Mystical** |

*Lectio divina* is like reading poetry: we need to slow down, to savor what we read,

and to allow the test to trigger memories and associations that reside below the threshold of awareness.

To some extent the four senses are sequential. This can be a helpful way of approaching *lectio divina*,

so long as we remember that there is a lot of ‘backing and forthing’ as well as overlaps in the stages.

In each case we have to let the text lead us, without fully understanding what our final destination will be.

It is our willingness to let the Bible stimulate prayer in us that makes our reading a dynamic factor in our ongoing conversion.

Sacred reading is a way of spending time with God’s revealed word:

it involves reflection on the meaning of the text, application to our own situation and a willingness to be led into prayer.

It was the experience of the ancient monks that reading together was a good thing, whether this was a common reading or simply a matter of several reading privately in a common space. There is nothing to prevent husband and wife, family, group or community experimenting with different formats of reading together.

**Excerpts from Casey, Michael. 1995. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Liguori, Missouri: Triumph Books.**