



**Archdiocese of St. Louis**  
**Office of Sacred Worship**  
**Lectio Divina**  
*The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Cycle C*  
**Lectionary: 172**

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***Lectio Divina***

Read the following passage four times.

- The first reading, simply read the scripture and pause for a minute.  
Listen to the passage with the ear of the heart. Don't get distracted by intellectual types of questions about the passage. Just listen to what the passage is saying to you, right now.
- The second reading, look for a key word or phrase that draws your attention.  
Notice if any phrase, sentence or word stands out and gently begin to repeat it to yourself, allowing it to touch you deeply. No elaboration. In a group setting, you can share that word/phrase or simply pass.
- The third reading, pause for 2-3 minutes reflecting on "*Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?*"  
Notice what thoughts, feelings, and reflections arise within you. Let the words resound in your heart. What might God be asking of you through the scripture? In a group setting, you can share your reflection or simply pass.
- The fourth reading, pause for 2-3 minutes reflecting on "*I believe that God wants me to . . . . . today/this week.*"  
Notice any prayerful response that arises within you, for example a small prayer of gratitude or praise. In a group setting, you can share your reflection or simply pass.

**First Reading**

*Ez 34:11-16*

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I will lead them out from among the peoples and gather them from the foreign lands; I will bring them back to their own country and pasture them upon the mountains of Israel in the land's ravines and all its inhabited places. In good pastures will I pasture them, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing ground. There they shall lie down on good grazing ground, and in rich pastures shall they be pastured on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly.

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**Responsorial Psalm**

*Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6*

***R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

***R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage.

***R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

***R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

***R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

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**Second Reading**

*Rom 5:5b-11*

Brothers and sisters: The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

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**Alleluia**

*Mt 11:29ab*

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Take my yoke upon you, says the Lord, and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Or:**

*Jn 10:14*

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord, I know my sheep, and mine know me.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

*Lk 15:3-7*



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Jesus addressed this parable to the Pharisees and scribes: "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance."

*Sunday's Lectio Divina*  
**Solemnity of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**  
**Lectionary: 172 Year C – Reading Points**

**First Reading**  
*Discussion Questions:*

Ez 34:11-16

**Responsorial Psalm**

Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

**Second Reading**  
*Discussion Questions:*

Rom 5:5b-11

**Alleluia**  
Or:  
**Gospel**  
*Discussion Questions:*

Mt 11:29ab  
Jn 10:14  
Lk 15:3-7

*Sunday's Lectio Divina*  
**Solemnity of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**  
**Lectio Divina: 172 Year C – Lectio Divina**

Lectio Divina is a reflective reading of Scripture leading to meditation on specific passages. This is a centuries-old practice of prayer, which relies on the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the heart as the person praying reads a Scripture passage and pauses to seek out the deeper meaning that God wants to convey through his Word. “It is especially necessary that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter in the ancient and ever valid tradition of lectio divina, which draws from the biblical text the living word, which questions, directs, and shapes our lives” (NMI, no. 39).

Lectio Divina literally means “Divine Reading,” and it refers to the way that monks have been ruminating on Scripture for centuries. There are five basic steps, in which we answer four questions, and then resolve to act upon those answers.

**Lectio (Reading)**

In the first phase of lectio divina, we understand what the passage we are reading says in itself. This is the literal meaning of the Scripture passage and the lessons everyone should recognize in reading it. At this stage, we do not yet consider our own lives in connection with the Scriptures. We do not let our opinions influence our reading, but seek to understand the message of the passage as interpreted by the Church independently of anyone’s opinions. This phase is summarized with the question: What does the text say that everyone should understand?

**Meditatio (Meditation)**

In the meditation phase of lectio divina, we ask, what does this text say to me, today, and to my life? We allow God to pull up certain memories of people, places, and events in our lives that relate to the passage we are reading. Meditation is also an opportunity to see ourselves in the text. We can consider our own feelings as if we were a participant in the text or try to understand what it would be like to be one of the people represented in the text. In this way, we come to a deeper appreciation of how God is working in our lives through the sacred word. Having entered into the story ourselves, we can return to the present and consider the areas in our own lives that God is calling us to contemplate.

**Oratio (Prayer)**

Through a meditation on Scripture, we experience an intimate encounter with God that leads us to respond in prayer. Having met our Lord in his holy word, we courageously speak to him in our own words. In this way, we consider prayer to be a simple conversation with God. It is a conversation that comes in various forms: we ask petitions (or requests) of him, we give him thanks, and we give him praise. We might also ask for the intercession of Mary or the saints represented in the passage we read. At this phase, we can ask ourselves: What can I say to the Lord in response to his word?

**Contemplatio (Contemplation)**

A true encounter with the Lord always leads to transformation. Indeed, the Lord God proclaimed, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5). Through contemplation, we come to an understanding of the parts of our lives that need to be transformed by God’s grace. We humble ourselves and open our lives up to his transformative power. This step comes with the willingness to change, an openness and trust in God, and the decision to follow God’s will rather than our own. With this decision comes a fear of losing what we find comfortable and safe. At the same time, we feel the excitement of a call to heroic adventure and a hopeful future of living the life we are meant to live. At this step in the lectio divina process, we ask ourselves: What conversion of the mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

**Actio (Action)**

Finally, although this phase is often not considered to be a part of lectio divina proper, it is an essential result of the encounter with God in Sacred Scripture. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Verbum Domini*,

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“We do well also to remember that the process of lectio divina is not concluded until it arrives at action (actio), which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity” (no. 87). Having received God’s love and grace, we go forth to serve others out of the love we have been given. Our transformation calls us to witness to others; it calls us to selflessly serve our brothers and sisters in Christ. These acts are done not so much out of a sense of duty, but out of the inspiration, we receive from the acceptance in faith of God’s love.