**September Prayer Practice**

In Christianity, Lectio Divina (Latin for divine reading) is a traditional Catholic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the understanding of God's Word. It is a process of bringing life to scripture and scripture to life.

Lectio Divina is not intellectual, it is experiential and insightful. The focus of Lectio Divina is not an analysis of biblical passages, but holding them in mind and allowing Christ-love to reveal their meaning.

The foundation of Lectio divina came from Origen in the 3rd century, with his view of "Scripture as a sacrament.” Origen believed that The Word (i.e. Logos) was incarnate in Scripture and could therefore touch and teach readers and hearers. Christ as the "interpretive key" unlocks the message in Scriptural texts.

The monastic practice of Lectio Divina was first established in the 5th-6th century by Saint Benedict of Nursia, and later, in the 11th century, a Carthusian prior, Guigo formalized the practice of Lectio Divina, into 4 steps of deepening thoughtfulness:

**Lectio (reading):** An attentive, slow, repetitious recitation of a short passage of scripture.

**Meditatio (meditation):** An effort to understand the passage and apply it to my own life.

**Oratio (prayer):** Engaging or talking with God about the passage.

**Contemplatio (contemplation):** Allowing oneself to be absorbed in the words of God as the Holy Spirit draws us into God’s presence through scripture.

***Where can I go from your Spirit?***

***Where can I flee from your presence?***

***If I go up to the heavens, you are there;***

***if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.***

***If I rise on the wings of the dawn,***

***if I settle on the far side of the sea,***

***even there your hand will guide me,***

***your right hand will hold me fast.***

***If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me***

***and the light become night around me,”***

***even the darkness will not be dark to you;***

***the night will shine like the day,***

***for darkness is as light to you.***

***Psalm 139:7-12***

**Instructions:**

Select a passage of scripture to read. You may use the Psalm printed in the bulletin or find something in a book at this station.

**Lectio –** In *lectio* we read slowly, attentively, gently listening to hear a word or phrase that is God's word for us this day.

**Meditatio –** Indentify a word or a passage in the Scriptures that speaks to you in a personal way, take it in and ponder it.

Read the scripture again….

**Oratio –** Lift up to God in prayer the thoughts and feelings that God’s word has touched within you.

Read the scripture again….

**Contemplatio -** Rest in the presence of the One who has used His word as

a means of inviting you to accept His transforming embrace.

History adapted from:

1. Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer by David G. Benner, 2010.
2. Christian Spirituality: Themes From the Tradition by Lawrence S. Cunningham, Keith J. Egan, 1996.
3. Meditative Prayer by Richard J. Foster, 1983, Intervarsity Press.
4. Teaching World Civilization with Joy and Enthusiasm by Benjamin Lee Wren, 2004.
5. The Way of Perfection by Teresa of Avila, 2007.
6. Reading to Live: the Evolving Practice of Lectio Divina by Raymond Studzinski, 2010.