

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage.
God what are you saying to me through this?

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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[1] Luke 2:29-32
[2] CCC-1427

Quick Connect

What is the Gospel saying? Luke 19:1-10 — Pg. 1

What is the Church saying Past and Present? Pages 1-3

What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Luke 19:1-10 – Daily Roman Missal

At that time, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.” And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”

Spiritual Reading – Pope Francis

Pope Francis in an interview with Antonio Spadaro, S.J. titled A Big Open Heart to God

“A beautiful homily, a genuine sermon must begin with the first proclamation, with the proclamation of salvation. There is nothing more solid, deep and sure than this proclamation. Then you have to do catechesis. Then you can draw even a moral consequence. But the proclamation of the saving love of God comes before moral and religious imperatives. Today sometimes it seems that the opposite order is prevailing. The homily is the touchstone to measure the pastor’s proximity and ability to meet his people, because those who preach must recognize the heart of their community and must be able to see where the desire for God is lively and ardent. The message of the Gospel, therefore, is not to be reduced to some aspects that, although relevant, on their own do not show the heart of the message of Jesus Christ.”

Lectio Divina (The Monk’s Ladder) – Lesson and Discussion

“was seeking to see who Jesus was” and “received him with joy”

In today’s Gospel Zacchaeus was “seeking to see” and “received with joy”. He sought Jesus and received Jesus.

What occurred in his seeking and receiving the person of Christ?

First, Jesus comes to stay with him. This means as Jesus says in the Gospel “salvation has come”. When Jesus comes to stay with us, salvation has come to stay with us. The prophet Simon expresses this when

he says, “Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.”[1] This Gospel Canticle is prayed each night by the Church at Compline (Night Prayer) so that we too may remind our self of the fact that if we see and receive Christ each day, we have seen and received salvation! Second, Zacchaeus has a conversion. He is willing to give half of his possessions on the spot to Jesus and then four times the amount of anything he has extorted. “Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” In the Church’s preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.[2] The primary proclamation of the Church is Jesus Christ. Holy Father, Pope Francis spoke of the purpose and necessity of this primary proclamation and what flows out of it.

The Holy Father lays out three steps:

Step 1 – Proclamation of Jesus Christ

The Church does not proclaim an idea or philosophy, the Church proclaims a person. What the Church proclaims is solid, deep, and sure. What is this proclamation that is solid, deep, and sure? Jesus Christ, who is God is solid, deep, and sure so therefore the proclamation is solid, deep, and sure as well.

Step 2 – You have to do Catechesis

If the person (Jesus Christ) whom is proclaimed is solid, deep, and sure, so too are the teachings of this person. The teachings come from the teacher. If we know the teacher, we will desire to know the teachings. If we love the teacher, we will love the teachings.

Step 3 – You can draw moral consequence

A consequence is by definition something that happens as a result of a particular action or set of conditions. **What happens, what is the result, when we fall in love with the person of Jesus and truly know His teachings?** There is a moral consequence, a change, and a conversion. The moral consequence of the proclamation of the Gospel and catechesis is that life changes. Hopefully the consequence is a life that rejects evil, and pursues good. The Holy Father uses the words, “you can draw”. In the area of catechesis, the Holy Father says, “you have to do” and in this step he says, “you can draw”. The moral consequence or conversion of life should naturally flow,

Today’s Gospel and the steps proposed by Holy Father Francis mirror what we find in *Lectio Divina*.

What is *Lectio Divina*? *Lectio Divina* simply means divine reading. It is an approach to reading Sacred Scripture. There are four stages: lectio (read), meditatio (meditate), oratio (pray), contemplatio (contemplate). There are many other words that can be used to help us to understand the root of these four steps. We read, reflect, respond, and rest. These

for “r’s” are helpful to remember the steps. *Lectio Divina* has been nicknamed the Monk’s Ladder for it is by these four rungs that the soul aspires toward heaven. It is good to think of *Lectio Divina* the way a child would think of exploring. When a child explores in a forest, desert, or creek bed what do they do? They “seek” with the intention of “finding”. When we “go into” scripture, especially the Gospel, we “seek” with the intention of “finding” something or in the case of Jesus, someone.

The first step of lectio, should be done in the spirit of adventure, we expect to find something and will not settle until we do. **The second step of meditatio**, is to “find” and what happens when we find something or someone. When we are exploring and find something, we do not simply put it in our pocket without looking and investigating it. We look at every angle with excitement and we even show it with others. We desire to discover to “find out” about what it is we “sought out”. We use our natural reason and find out all we can know. In the case of *Lectio Divina* we can write down any phrase or word that we find and then ask our self what we can know using our reason about these phrases or words. **The third step of oratio**, is to “ask”. When our human reason is exhausted and we have found out all we can find out on our own, we simply ask God to reveal to us what it is that He wishes us to find. This asking can be done in the form of a prayer written down or simply a quite conversation. Using the analogy of the child explorer, we might ask others what they think of our discovering and in asking others we find out something we did not notice. When we ask God in faith, we always find more than we can on our own through reason. In *Lectio Divina* we use both Faith and Reason. **The fourth step of contemplatio**, is to “taste”. We simple want to rest and savor our discovery and what we have learned about that discovery from both reason and faith. To contemplate is to look at, or gaze. In this stage we look at Jesus, we gaze at Him. If *Lectio Divina* is done in the present of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament we can literally gaze at Him. In this stage the hope is that we can become, what we look at. If we gaze at Christ, we imitate Him and become holy. If we gaze at Heaven, we keep our goal in mind and have the desire to run the race.

How does *Lectio Divina* fit into the story of Zacchaeus? Zacchaeus seeks, the Gospel says, he “was seeking to see who Jesus was”. When he finds what he was seeking Zacchaeus, “received him with joy”. Zacchaeus opens his doors to having Jesus stay with Him and we can only imagine the conversation the two have in which we can be sure Zacchaeus asked many questions and was giving many answers. Zacchaeus contemplates the conversation and his conversion flows form this contemplation of the conversation with our Lord. Zacchaeus rests in the Lord and responds to his meditations by his willing to have a conversion and give half of his belongs to the poor.

How does *Lectio Divina* fit into the steps Holy Father Pope Francis proposes? The primary proclamation is the seeking. Catechesis is the finding and asking. The moral consequence is the tasting. We contemplate what are conversion might mean to our life and the life of others. We mentally taste the sweetness of victory over sin, but also the sourness of persecution and the cost of being a disciple. We can even have a taste of heaven, a glimpse of what is to come for those who deny self, pick up their Cross, and follow Jesus.