

LECTIO MARK - Introduction

Tim Gray wants us to unveil Scripture and Tradition.

The Latin term *lectio* means “reading’/ The tradition of reading Sacred Scripture for prayer and reflection was practiced by many of the early Church Fathers – St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, Sr. Augustine, St. Cyprian, and Sr. John Chrysostom, just to name a few. Benedictine monks later developed this practice into the tradition known as *lectio divina*, or “divine reading.”

LECTIO uses the practice of prayerful reading and study to help us dive more deeply into the truths of the Faith and discover the profound meaning and purpose of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and Church History.

By prayerfully reading and understanding the texts of Sacred Scripture and Tradition, we can come to discover the story of salvation into which our Baptism has united us, the history of God’s people through the centuries, and the depths of God’s love for each of us.

AN OVERVIEW OF LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient practice of enhancing one’s prayer life through the power of God’s Word. It is our hope that by using these simple steps each day as you study Sacred Scripture in *LECTIO*, you will develop an effective way to study and pray with God’s Word and hear God’s voice in your daily life.

- **Sacred Reading of the Scripture (*lectio*):** The reading and rereading of the Scripture passage, paying close attention to words, details, themes, and patterns that speak to you.
- **Meditation (*meditatio*):** Meditating or reflecting on what you’ve read to gain understanding. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you spend time pondering what you have read and striving to understand it in meditation.
- **Prayer (*oratio*):** A time to bring your meditative thoughts to God in prayer. Talking with God about how the connections and implications of your meditation on the Scripture affect your live and the lives of those around you.
- **Contemplation (*contemplation*):** A time of quiet and rest, we listen and await God’s voice. Contemplation allows one to enter decisively and more deeply into the mystery of God – this is no small endeavor, so be patient as you engage this step and strive to be receptive to God’s voice speaking into your life.
- **Resolution (*resolution*):** A call for resolution and action, inviting you to respond to the things you have read in Scripture and have prayed about and to put them into practice.

SESSION 1 – MARK THE EVANGELIST - COMMIT

DAY 1: Who is Saint Mark?

In his Letter to the Colossians, Saint Paul notes that Saint Mark is a cousin of Saint Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). And in the Acts of the Apostles we learn that Barnabas is a Levite; that is he is a descendent from the tribe of Levi (see Acts 4:36. As a result, we can deduce that Mark is also a Levite.

Look up the following Scriptures. Who are the Levites? Where and how do the Levites serve?

Numbers 1:48- 53 _____

1 Chronicles 16:1-7 _____

Nehemiah 8:1-8 _____

DAY 2: Casting Out an Unclean Spirit.

The Gospel of Mark is one of action, emphasized by his oft-repeated word: immediately. It appears thirty-five times in the sixteen chapters of Mark's Gospel. Look up the following verses in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel. How many times does "immediately" appear in each of these sections? What is happening immediately in each?

Mark 1:10-12 _____

Mark 1:17-21 _____

Mark 1:23-28 _____

Mark 1:29-31 _____

DAY 3: LECTIO: A Share in Christ's Suffering

LECTIO: The practice of praying with Scripture begins with an active and close reading of the Scripture passage. Read **1 Peter 4:12-19** and then answer the questions to take a closer look at some of the details of the passage.

How does Saint Peter refer to those he is addressing?

What is happening to the readers?

How does he want them to respond? (Hint: look at the verbs.)

MEDITATIO: *Lectio*, a close reading and rereading is followed by *meditation*, a time to reflect on the Scripture passage and to ponder the reasons for particular events, descriptions, details, phrases, and even echoes from other Scripture passages that were noticed during *lectio*. Take some time now to meditate on the above verse.

It is very hard to think of a kind of mystical Christ just beside us or in front of us, suffering with inline patience and joy, being obedient, humble, persevering, fulfilling His Father's will. It isn't really difficult to realize that if He is formed in our life we are not beside Him but in Him; and what He asks of us is to realize that it is actually in what we do that He wants to act and to suffer... It really needs to be practiced to be understood. We need to say to ourselves a thousand times a day "Christ wants to do this; Christ want so suffer this."

-Caryll Houselander, *The Reed of God*

Do you realize that you are God's beloved? Explain.

How does Saint Peter's exhortation to "not be surprised" by trials help us when we encounter suffering?

What would you need to do to be aware of the "spirit of glory and of God" resting on you the next time you are suffering?

ORATIO, CONTEMPLATIO, RESOLUTIO: Having read and meditates on today's Scripture passage, take some time to pray – bringing your thoughts to God (*oratio*) – and to be receptive to God's grace in silence (*contemplation*). Then end your prayer by making a simple concrete resolution (*resolution*) to respond to God's prompting of you heart in today's prayer.

DAY 4: Written From Rome

Since the clear light of the word of God rose on the city of Rome, the story of truth and light, which was preached by Peter, instructed the minds of all by its pleasing sound. Thus ever day those who heart it never heard enough. It was not enough just to hear it, but they begged the disciple Mark to put into writing what Peter preached orally to have a perpetual record of it, which they could always meditate both at home and outside. They did not give up pressing him, until they got what they asked for. This was what led to the writing of the Gospel according to Mark. Peter, who by the Holy Spirit found himself subjected to a religious theft, was delighted, considering their faith and devotion. He ratified what was done, and bequeathed this to the churches as Scripture to be read forever.

Eusebius, *Ecclesial History*, quoted by Saint Thomas Aquinas in *Catena Aurea*

Eusebius not only describes Saints Mark and Peter together in Rome, but also Mark's writing of his Gospel of Peter's testimony. What evidence can we find in the Gospel itself for these claims? Let's look for some clues.

Particular language, special terms, and historical figures provide indications of time and location in the Gospel. Look at the following verses. What Roman terms are used?

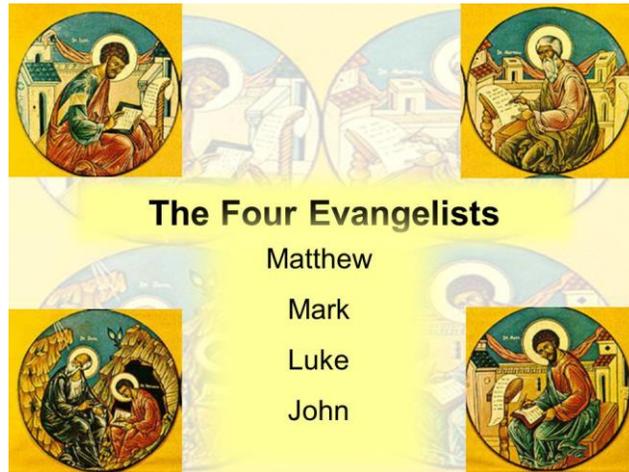
Mark 5:9, 15 _____

Mark 13:35 _____

Mark 14:5 _____

Mark 15:39, 44, 45 _____

DAY 5: Truth and Beauty



Look up the following verse: How are the “four living creatures” described?

Ezekiel: 1:1-14 _____

Revelation 4:1-11 _____

The prophet Ezekiel and later, Saint John, the beloved disciple, are each granted a vision of God’s throne in Heaven. Each vision, around the throne appear four living creatures. Several of the early Church Fathers associate the four living creatures with the four gospel writers and their texts.

St. Jerome’s correlation between the images of the living creatures and the Gospels is summarized in the following chart:

Gospel Writer	Living Creature	Opening Text
Matthew	Man	Matthew begins his Gospel with Jesus’s human genealogy (1:1-17) and with Jesus’s Incarnation and Birth, in which he takes on our human nature (1:18-25).
Mark	Lion	Mark begins his Gospel with the roar (like that of a lion) of John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness (1:1-8)
Luke	Ox	Luke begins with Zechariah the priest serving at the Temple, where the ox was a common sacrificial animal (1:1-23)
John	Eagle	Like an eagle, John begins his Gospel soaring to the heights of the Heaven where Jesus is God: “In the beginning was the Word” (1:1-14)

