

Visio Divina – Sacred Seeing

Visio Divina is an adaptation of the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*.

In *Lectio Divina*, Scriptures are slowly *read, reflected* upon, *responded* to and finally *rested* with. It is a way of reading the Holy Scripture and listening to God with the ear of your heart.

Visio Divina is the practice of divine seeing. Instead of Scripture, nature is used as the “text.” It is a new way of being visually attentive to God. It is the practice of seeing the world with the eye of one’s heart.

Visio Divina can be worked anywhere. A remote, natural location is preferred, but your own backyard will suffice as well. The most important part is to select a location where you will not be disturbed.

A Word before You Begin

The exercise is on the next 2 pages. This is done intentionally so that you will not read ahead and anticipate your response.

It is natural for our minds to move into the exercise as we read through it. Wait until you’re ready to begin before you begin.

Once you have found a quiet location and are ready to enter the exercises, take a few minutes to quiet all distractions. Ask God for guidance and begin.

For the invisible things of God since the creation of the world are made visible through images.

- St. John of Damascus, *On Holy Images*

All images and sensations say, in the last resort,

"It is not I. I am only a reminder. Look! Look! What do I remind you of?"

C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*

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Visio Divina is the practice of “divine seeing.” Instead of Scripture, nature is used as the Sacred “text.” It is a new way of being visually attentive and “seeing” God with the eye of your heart.

As you work this “Visio Divina,” give yourself time to settle into the silence, relish the solitude. Notice your breathing. Be still. Acknowledge that you have made time for yourself to be attentive to God in this moment, and that you are seeking Him. Take in a few deep breaths, and pray, asking God for direction.

There are 4 stages to Visio Divina:

Seeing | Reflecting | Responding | Resting

Seeing –

Be still and notice the environment around you. Take your time. Look and “see” making note of forms, figures, colors, lines, symmetry, textures, shapes, or movement. What are you drawn to? Let your “seeing” rest on something that draws your attention. Release any thoughts or expectations, just “see.”

Reflecting –

Stay with the thing that has attracted you. What is it about this thing that has captured you? What does it remind you of? Does it convey any of God’s attributes? Echo something you’ve been thinking about? How does it touch your life? Your journey? Stay with this “seeing” and take it into your world. What is God saying to you?

Responding –

Open yourself up to what the “seeing” might reveal to you. What is God saying? What emotions do you feeling in response to what you have “seen”? Does the “seeing” remind you of something you already know? Does it call you to some action? How does the item that attracted you, change you or your thoughts? Does it? Maybe it brings you peace? Maybe it makes you uncomfortable? Take time to respond to God in the vision He has shared with you through this item.

Resting –

Finally, be still and let the message of what you have seen with the eye of your heart, sink into you. Journal or create an image of the insights you want to remember, actions you have been invited to take, wisdom you wish to embody, or any feelings or thought you wish to express.

Bring your time to a close with a prayer, thanking God for what He has shown you. You may take your time of contemplation further, by considering the “Questions for Further Reflection” on the next page.

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Questions for Further Reflection

1. What was the thing that attracted your focus?
2. Why do you think it attracted you?
3. What emotions were brought up?
4. What do you think God is showing you?
5. Is there a specific action you feel led to take in response? Perhaps an inaction?
What will be your next step?

Spend the remainder of your time thinking about these things. Journal or create something visual that will help you remember what has been shown to you.