

Lectio Divina: The Book of Nature

Intention

Adapt the traditional, familiar contemplative practice of *Lectio Divina* to observe nature as a sacred text. Examine this “text” closely and intimately, being open to the presence and movement of God within and through it.

Instruction

Begin by sitting quietly or walking slowly in a natural place. This can be a park or trail, your backyard or the parish grounds, or you can settle in at a window with a view of a wilder space.

In keeping with the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*, where a sacred text is read slowly until a word or phrase resonates, slowly scan the natural area. Be attentive and open until an element of nature attracts you.

Move closer to that aspect of nature and study it carefully:

- Be curious about it. If possible, feel it. Perhaps gently turn it around. Look at it from all sides.
- Be *with* it as if it were a friend.



Demonstration of the resilient gardening techniques in the Central Province of Sri Lanka.

- Use all your senses to explore it.
 - * What does it look like? What colors and patterns do you observe?
 - * What does it sound like?
 - * How does it smell?
 - * What is its texture?

In quiet reflection, you might ask this element of nature, “What can you teach me?” You might begin to pray, asking God, “What are you revealing to me in this element of nature?” And, “How might I embody your love for it and demonstrate faithful care?”

Allow space and time for contemplation.

Consider the gifts this element of nature contributes as part of an ecological system. Reflect on all it needs to support its life. How does your own behavior impact its ability to thrive?

How does this element of creation draw your heart and mind to God? How does the Holy Spirit move in and through it?

Don't force or overthink. This is an exercise of the heart, not the head.

Let the experience move you as it will.

If you are with a group, after a period of silent reflection, share inspiration, insights, joys and revelation that may have come from this contemplative time in creation.

Close with a prayer of gratitude for the element of nature you spent time with, a commitment to honor and care for it and an expression of thanks for the presence of God and the innumerable ways we can experience that presence.