

Lectio Divina, An Essential Spiritual Practice for Catechist Formation

Catechesis is explicitly linked with the mission of the Church to make disciples of all people. John Paul II states in the *Apostolic Exhortation On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae)*, written and promulgated in 1979, that catechesis is the “whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ” (CT 1). The document continues by stating that the “definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ” (CT 5). Catechists participate in this mission of educating and instructing for the purpose of bringing people into relationship with Jesus Christ and forming them as his disciples.

The *National Directory of Catechesis*, published and promulgated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2005, states: “Next to home and family, the witness of the catechist may be pivotal in every phase of the catechetical process. For catechesis to be effective, catechists must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. They must firmly believe in his Gospel and its power to transform lives” (NDC 29 E). The implication is that catechists must have a full understanding of the Catholic faith and a spiritual life that supports on-going integration of this understanding. Both education and the spiritual life, which appropriates and interiorizes this education of faith, are necessary to serve in the ministry of catechesis. To form disciples a catechist must have a relationship with Jesus Christ that includes a relationship with Him in Sacred Scripture. This relationship must be supported by a prayer life. Pope Benedict XVI asserts in the post-synodal exhortation *The Word of God in the Life of the Church (Verbum Domini)*, written in 2008, that Sacred Scripture is the basis of all authentic Christian spirituality. Sacred Scripture is to have pre-eminence in the formation of catechists (*Verbum Domini*, 86).

Catechist formation programs must include a component that assists catechists in developing a prayer life centered on Scripture. This paper aims to examine the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*, prayed reading of Scripture, as an essential tool that can be integrated into catechist formation as a help for catechists to pray with and integrate Scripture in their lives and in their lessons.

Throughout *Verbum Domini*, Benedict XVI encourages a return to this ancient practice. He states, “During the Synod on Scripture ... the greatest attention was paid to *lectio divina*, which is truly capable of opening up the faithful to the treasures of God’s word, but also of bringing about an encounter with Christ, the living word of God” (*Verbum Domini*, 87). Indeed *lectio divina* is actively promoted by the Church as the spiritual practice that best cultivates an interior life and leads to an integrated faith life thereby connecting one’s outer and inner lives. Encountering Christ in Scripture is integral to the Christian life and the recovery of Christian contemplation. It is through contemplation that the word of God is incarnated in a person’s life.

Josef Pieper’s classic philosophical work *Leisure: the Basis of Culture* provides an explanation of why the Church emphasizes *lectio divina*. Pieper’s work is rooted in both philosophical and theological premises. Pieper surmises the loss of contemplation is rooted in the Enlightenment, which began in France in the late eighteenth century. This philosophical movement exalted discursive reasoning over contemplation as the primary way of knowing. Pieper bases this understanding of the loss of contemplation in St. Thomas Aquinas who viewed contemplation, with its open receptivity to God, as primary. Aquinas noted that the human person understands when human discursive reasoning and contemplation work together. Pieper’s term “leisure” refers to contemplation, which he defines as an interior attitude and disposition necessary for the human person to be open and receptive to God. Pieper states: “For

leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude” (Pieper, 46). Pieper’s contribution to the understanding of the loss of Christian contemplation can aid in understanding why the Church is calling all the faithful back to *lectio divina* as a spiritual practice. This practice can help those in catechetical ministry integrate Scripture into their life so that they become living witnesses to the Word of God. For one to cultivate an authentic interior life, one must grasp contemplation and its vital connection to integrating Divine Revelation. Benedict XVI asserts that, “The Synod frequently insisted on the need for a prayerful approach to the sacred text as a fundamental element in the spiritual life of every believer, in the various ministries and states in life, with particular reference to *lectio divina*. The word of God is at the basis of all authentic Christian spirituality.” Furthermore, *Verbum Domini* states, “The [Second Vatican] Council thus sought to re-appropriate the great patristic tradition which had always recommended approaching the Scripture in dialogue with God” (*Verbum Domini*, 86).

In *The Mystery We Proclaim*, Francis Kelly explains that catechesis serves to help the learner to grow in faith as a response to Revelation. Essentially faith is a personal response to God. Revelation happens in human history as an interaction between God and people. Kelly states that “Education in faith... consists primarily not in imparting a body of religious knowledge for its own sake but in fostering knowing in the biblical sense—a dynamic interpersonal relationship of love between God and person. The faith-response catechists seek to elicit involves attentiveness and openness to God’s presence, Word, and work in people’s lives. It involves expectation and listening,” (Kelly, 109) i.e. open, interior, receptivity to God. The spiritual practice of *lectio divina*, it can be concluded, fosters the interior prayer life of the one who practices it, bringing the person into an ever-deeper awareness of God in dialogue with him or her. This nurtures interiority and an integrated life, which leads to the authenticity of witness

to which all Christians are called. Authenticity of witness is crucial to discipleship and forming others in discipleship.

The busyness of modern life presents many challenges to silence. To regain a sense of Christian contemplation, an attitude of interior silence and openness to the concrete realities of life allows one to see God at work in one's life. To pray silently requires recollection, putting aside time to pray and be aware of the presence of God (Grialou,102). *Verbum Domini* asserts that silence is imperative for open receptivity to the word of God (*Verbum Domini*, 66). Silence and humble receptivity foster openness to the word of God. The Blessed Virgin Mary models this humble receptivity for all Christians. The document *Verbum Domini* encourages the Church's understanding of Mary as the model of *lectio divina*, for her humble acceptance of the Word of God Incarnate in her womb and her becoming a woman of the Word (*Verbum Domini*, 27). "The great patristic tradition teaches us that the mysteries of Christ all involve silence. Only in silence can the word of God find a home in us, as it did in Mary, woman of the Word and, inseparably, woman of silence" (*Verbum Domini*, 66).

Lectio divina is not strictly a method but a process. The document *Verbum Domini* describes the movements of the Holy Spirit within the heart of the person who is at prayer with Scripture. *Ressourcement*, by this is meant a return to the patristic sources, has aided in bringing to present day the long established history of this way of prayer. *Verbum Domini* 87 outlines the five movements of *lectio divina*: reading (*lectio*), meditation (*meditatio*), prayer (*oratio*), contemplation (*contemplatio*), and action (*actio*).

Step One: Reading (*Lectio*): *What does the biblical text say in itself?*

Reading is a simple act, especially in these times with its high literacy rate, unmatched in previous eras. However, spiritual reading takes intention and discipline. One must choose a time,

place, and spiritual material. Mariano Magrassi, writing in *Praying the Bible*, elaborates on the simplicity and challenge of the act of reading. One must be disciplined to open the Bible. *Lectio divina* requires preparation of the heart, a simple prayer, openness to the Holy Spirit, and trust in God. Sacred reading is itself a response to the invitation of God to enter into dialogue. Praying with Scripture is essential to the formation and transformation of each individual (Magrassi, 105).

The pace of modern society presents numerous challenges to the practice of *lectio divina*. People are literate, but quite often they do not possess or have the discipline to participate in *lectio divina*. One aspect of this challenge is that many Catholics approach the Bible with a preconceived notion that it cannot be understood. Benedict XVI attributes modern hermeneutics as one source for the lack of confidence in understanding the Bible. Benedict asserts that biblical hermeneutics, the theological discipline of interpretation of Scripture, must support an ecclesial understanding of sacred Scripture as well. He points out that the secularization of hermeneutics is one factor that has contributed to disconnecting the lay faithful from the discipline of prayed reading of Scripture. Essentially, it has contributed to a sense of the Bible as a text that cannot be grasped by the average person. This challenge is especially evident in that many Catholics do not have an understanding of the Old Testament and its connection with the New Testament and the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ (*Verbum Domini*, 29-49). Catechists are formed in the same milieu and have the same struggles.

The fast pace of modern life also challenges the first movement of reading of *lectio divina*. One cannot begin to integrate God's word in one's life if one does not first open the Bible and read. *Lectio divina* is slow and deliberate, Magrassi asserts. It requires listening and time. Openness to God is the essential disposition in this first step, he says, noting without openness to

God, there can be no dialogue. He quotes St. Ambrose who advised, “We should read them the words not in agitation, but in calm; not hurriedly but slowly a few at a time pausing in attentive reflection” (Magrassi, 105-108). Magrassi’s statement on openness to God echoes the *Guide for Catechists*, which explains that the spirituality of the lay catechist is marked by openness to God, God’s Word, and the Church (GC, 7). *Lectio divina* as a spiritual practice can cultivate this openness.

In her article, *The Art and Discipline of Formative Reading*, Susan Muto states that for people today the act of reading is complex (Muto, 100-116). Muto posits that in these days people are trained to approach reading as a form of information seeking, to obtain knowledge for the purpose of a goal. When the goal is met, the material that is studied is often discarded, or over time viewed as obsolete. This utilitarian approach to reading is pervasive in modern society. Many people, including catechists, have been influenced in some way by this approach. This has an impact on the overall approach and understanding of the importance of praying with Scripture. Muto compares what she calls “functional reading” to “formative reading,” concluding that the two differ in several ways (Muto, 101). Formational reading is the key and support to informational reading: it is an open and spiral approach to deeper meaning receptive to what God says through the text. Muto maintains that *lectio divina* incorporates knowledge and receptivity because a person’s intellect and heart are both at work in *lectio divina*. This contrasts distinctly with an information and consumer approach to reading. It is important to be aware of this distinction for the initial step of *lectio divina* to bear fruit in the other movements (Muto, 101-103).

In her classic work, *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*, Thelma Hall states that this first movement of *lectio divina*, “is not ordinary reading, but listening and

hearing”(Hall, 36) in which the one who prays Scripture is hearing in the heart God speaking through the medium of the text. Practicing this first step enables one to “learn what we do not know” (Magrassi, 20). Those who pray with Scripture habitually come to an ever-deeper understanding and integration of the word of God in their life. They come to a knowing that is an interpersonal relationship with Jesus Christ through Scripture.

Step Two: Meditation (*Meditatio*): *What does the biblical text say to us?*

It is vital to understand the Christian meaning of meditation. Often the word meditation is used interchangeably with contemplation. Since the terms have many nuances in various religious traditions, catechists must understand the critical difference between meditation in Christianity and other religious traditions as well as the distinct meanings of meditation and contemplation within the Christian tradition. Tim Gray asserts in *Praying Scripture for a Change*, that quite often, meditation is associated with techniques or the practices of Eastern religions in which the person meditating focuses on the techniques (Gray, 59-60). The goal of Christian meditation is to lead to prayer and conversion to a truth of Divine Revelation rather than a specific technique. Christian meditation includes the whole person, mind, will, intellect, and heart. It therefore reflects the goodness of the human person and the faculties that are part of human nature. “Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in *lectio divina*...and lead to seeking union with Jesus Christ” (CCC, 2708).

The Letter to the Bishops on Some aspects of Christian Meditation, promulgated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1989, was specifically written to give guidance and understanding on what distinguishes Christian meditation from meditation in other religious traditions. The document states “the meditation of the Christian in prayer seeks to grasp the depths of the divine in the salvific works of God in Christ, the incarnate Word, and in the gift of

his Spirit. These divine depths are always revealed to him through the human earthly dimension of meditation, including those which have their starting point in the words and deeds of Jesus...” i.e, the Scriptures (*Aspects of Christian Meditation*, 11).

The purpose of Christian meditation is taking God’s word into one’s heart, leading to the next movement of *lectio divina*, prayer. To allow one’s self to be moved and challenged is to enter into that dialogue with God through the word so that there is a movement of the heart to conversion to the word. The Holy Spirit is at work guiding each person to focus on a word or phrase. This becomes a time of prayer.

Step Three: Prayer (*Oratio*): *What do we say to the Lord in response to his word?*

Prayer is a response and dialogue with God. In prayer one takes up what is received in meditation and responds in humble receptivity. Magrassi states that prayer and reading are a single act because praying with Scripture is entering into a dialogue with God (Magrassi, 81). One listens and responds. Magrassi maintains that “Christian prayer that does not begin with the Bible is inconceivable and Bible reading should always lead to prayer” (Magrassi, 81). He continues that Bible is a “manual of prayer” because it contains the movements of listening and response that is *lectio divina* (Magrassi, 115). This movement of *lectio divina* is entering into the dialogue with God, praying with the Scriptures.

Step Four: Contemplation (*Contemplatio*): *What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of us?*

Hall states that the Second Vatican Council was a call to the whole Church to return to contemplation (Hall, 10). *Dei Verbum* asserts in the discussion on the handing on of Divine Revelation through Scripture and Tradition that one of the modes of understanding Divine Revelation is that “It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they

experience” (DV, 8). Here is the recognition that contemplation is critical to interiorizing Divine Revelation and witnessing to it in one’s life. It is notable that the Council attributes contemplation and study to the life of believers, that is, all the faithful.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church devotes 10 paragraphs to explain contemplative prayer and contemplation (CCC 2709-2719). Clearly, the Church expounds on this form of prayer as the greatest form of prayer and also distinguishes contemplation from other forms of prayer. In summary, the Catechism describes contemplation as a seeking of Jesus, the beloved. It is an inner prayer of the heart where one may still meditate. In this inner prayer of contemplation, all may participate. Contemplation is a gift from God, not dependent on a person’s physical or mental abilities. It is described in the Catechism as a gift for the purpose of communion with the Holy Trinity. This union and communion allow the one in prayer to enter into the mystery of Christ. It is silent and wordless. In contemplation, there is “hearing of the Word of God in silence” (CCC 2716) a gathering up and recollection.

Christian contemplation seeks union with God. This is not achieved through techniques or methodologies, but requires openness and receptivity to God as revealed through his Son Jesus Christ. Hall states that the Second Vatican Council, as part of renewal, reiterated that contemplation is for all Christians as it points to the destiny of all to contemplate God in beatitude (Hall, 10-11).

Magrassi states that contemplation must remain intricately connected with Scripture or it is in danger of becoming subjective. He explains that authentic Christian contemplation leads to conversion and transformation in Christ. Contemplation is authentically Christian when a person’s spirituality remains within the Church and rooted in Scripture (Magrassi, 117). This is what the early Christians and the Church Fathers understood as contemplation.

Step Five: Action (*Actio*): *The believer makes his or her life a gift for others in charity.*

The fruit of *lectio divina* is how it is concretely applied in one's life. Action is simply one's response to the fruit of prayer. Through action the integration of the interior and exterior take place. Therefore, "contemplative Christian prayer always leads to love of neighbor, to action, and to the acceptance of trials, and precisely because of this it draws one close to God" (*Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*, 13).

Action is incarnating the word of God in one's life. Jean LeClercq, in his article, *Lectio Divina*, published in *Worship* in 1984, asserts that *lectio divina* is the practice that leads the Christian to what "St. Paul refers to in Phil 2:2 'have in yourselves the mind of Christ'" (LeClercq, 240). LeClercq's significant contribution is the understanding that the practice of *lectio divina* is incarnational. Christ is the Word and the Book, LeClercq explains. As both the Book and Word, written in the humanity of Jesus Christ incarnate, the biblical text itself becomes the medium to encounter the Holy Trinity. This encounter through the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*, leads to ongoing conversion, and incarnating of the word of God in one's life (LeClercq, 242). In this final movement the fruit of prayer becomes action. This is critical for all who are involved in the ministry of catechesis. To be a disciple is to incarnate the Word of God in one's life, just as Mary did. In this way, the catechist's witness becomes authentic. The catechist can then lead the learners to become disciples who incarnate the Word of God.

There is a need for more research as to how spiritual practices integrate theological, doctrinal, and human formation. This is especially important for the Christian understanding of meditation and contemplation. The call for the return to the spiritual practice of *lectio divina* is a call to all Catholics to be open to the gift of contemplation. Finally, research is needed on how new technology impacts spiritual practices, especially the prayed reading of Scripture.

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This post-synodal document places Scripture at the center of catechesis. Paragraphs 72-87 address Biblical catechesis, Biblical formation of Christians, and the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*.

***Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Edition. Vatican: St Paul Publications/Libreria Edtrice Vaticana, 1997.**

CCC paragraphs 2705-2730 address Christian meditation and contemplation.

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This letter brings clarity to what is meant by Christian meditation and contemplation.

Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples. *Guide for Catechists*. Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000.

Paragraphs 6-10 address the spirituality of the catechist. Paragraphs 19-30 address formation of catechists.

de Cointet, Pierre, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008.

Fr. Pierre de Cointet, Dean of Graduate Studies at the Notre Dame De Vie Carmelite Institute, Mrs. Barbara Morgan, foundress of the catechetics program at The Franciscan University of Steubenville, and Dr. Petroc Willey, Director of the online Theology and Catechetics program at The Franciscan University of Steubenville, provide a concise explanation of the pedagogy for catechesis as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The book presents the 12 keys for the practice of the craft of catechesis. Chapter 8: A Prayerful Pedagogy addresses prayer, the spiritual life, and integration in the catechetical process.

Farey, Caroline, Waltraud Linnig, and Johannah M.Paruch. Eds. *The Pedagogy of God: Its Centrality in Catechesis and Catechist Formation*. Steubenville: Emmaus Road, 2011.

This book is a series of conference papers presented at the Catechetical Conference on the Pedagogy of God, which took place in Rome in 2009. The papers address the concept of an original pedagogy for Catechesis, based on the General Directory of Catechesis, specifically paragraphs 139-147. The conference papers *Divine Pedagogy in Prayer* by Fr. Louis Menvielle of the Notre Dame De Vie Institute and *The Pedagogy of God: Source and Model for the Pedagogy of the Faith* by Waltraud Linnig of the Notre Dame De Vie Institute are of particular interest for catechetical ministers seeking to incorporate a stronger spiritual component to catechist formation. The articles specifically address the correlations between interiority, prayer, faith, and action.

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Evangelii Gaudium specifically addresses the role of Scripture in catechesis and the importance of daily reflection on Scripture for the new evangelization. Paragraphs 160-175 detail kerygmatic catechesis and the role of Scripture.

Garvin, Mary Pat. "Narrative, Lectio Divina and the Formative Process." *Human*

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Sr. Mary Pat Garvin, R.S.M., Ph.D., is a professor of psychology for Seton Hall University. In this article, Sr. Garvin presents *lectio divina* with journaling as a tool for formation in the spiritual life. Sr. Garvin expounds on the fruit of prayer journals as a source for *lectio divina*. The article concludes with recommended readings on the use of *lectio divina* and journaling for pastoral care.

Gray, Tim. *Praying Scripture for a Change: An Introduction to Lectio Divina*. West Chester: Ascension Press, 2009.

Dr. Tim Gray is president of the Augustine Institute in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Gray presents the classic approach to *lectio divina* from the monastic middle-ages. This book is accessible to adults of all ages and backgrounds. Of particular interest for those in catechetical ministry are the explanations of Christian contemplation and meditation and the practical application of *lectio divina* for individuals and small groups..

Grialou, Marie-Eugene. *Where the Spirit Breathes: Prayer and Action*. New York: Alba House, 2005.

Fr. Marie-Eugene Grialou founded the Notre Dame de Vie Carmelite Institute. He presented numerous retreats and conferences on the spirituality of St. Teresa of Avila and St. Therese of Lisieux. *Where the Spirit Breathes* roots the vocation of the Christian to discipleship in baptismal grace. Fr. Grialou presents the Second Vatican Council's universal call to holiness by way of linking the spiritual life (contemplative) with lived faith (action). He does so by drawing on the spiritual writings of St. Teresa of Avila and St. Therese of Lisieux.

Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988

Thelma Hall, RC provides an introduction and rationale for *lectio divina* as an essential spiritual practice that will nurture a relationship with Jesus Christ through his word. Part 1 of this book clearly links *lectio divina*, contemplation, and the universal call to holiness. Part 2 provides a list of Scriptures in 50 categories to help beginners get started.

John Paul II, Pope. *Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time*. Vatican Translation. AAS 71 (1979): 1277-1340.

Post-synodal catechetical document on catechesis.

Kelly, Francis D. *The Mystery We Proclaim 2nd Edition: Catechesis for the Third Millennium*. Huntington Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1999.

Msgr. Francis Kelly is rector of the Pope John XXIII Seminary in Weston, M.A. He was formerly the Executive Director of the Department of Religious Education for the National Catholic Education Association. In this book, Msgr. Kelly presents the context for catechesis in light of the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the General Directory for Catechesis. Msgr. Kelly proposes a catechetical process, which he terms as the Ecclesial Method. The Ecclesial Method has five steps: Preparation, Proclamation, Explanation, Application, and Celebration. The catechist's role is to proclaim the Word to the catechized. The concepts Msgr. Kelly presents in this book with regards to the catechetical process support the need for integrated spiritual practices in catechist formation, such as *lectio divina*.

Leclercq, Jean. "Lectio Divina." *Worship* 58 (May 1984): 239-248.

Fr. Jean Leclercq was a monk of the Abbey of St. Maurice in Clervaux, Luxemborg. This article is published from a series of conferences he presented at St. John's School of Theology in Collegeville, MN. Fr. Leclercq's significant contribution to the study of the spiritual practice of *lectio divina* is the understanding from patristics that the prayed reading of Scripture is incarnational. This article offers a concise explanation of this concept.

Linnig, Waltraud. "Using the Bible in Catechesis." *The Sower* 28.4 (October-December 2007): 5-8.

Dr. Waltraud Linnig presents an overview of biblical catechesis. This article addresses holistic formation. Of specific interest is Dr. Linnig's explanation of the difference between "experience" and "life" noting that the catechetical documents of the Church use the term "life," which implies an holistic approach to formation. An holistic approach to formation includes awareness of interiority, which is each person's conscious awareness of their own unique dialogue with God.

Magrassi, Mariano. *Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

Archbishop Mariano Magrassi presents a survey of prayed reading of Scripture in the patristic era through the extant writings of the early Church Fathers. The book traces the roots of the term *lectio divina*, explains the key patristic principles of *lectio divina*, and discusses the spiritual and concrete dispositions formed by this way of prayer. Archbishop Magrassi focuses on the dialogical process of *lectio divina*, ie. that prayed Scripture is a dialogue with God through the medium of the text.

Muto, Susan. "The Art and Discipline of Formative Reading: Revisiting Holy Scripture with Humble Receptivity." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5.1 (2012): 100-116.

Dr. Susan Muto is co-founder of Epiphany Academy of Formative Spirituality in Pittsburgh, PA. Dr. Muto presents the importance of formative reading and the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*. Her article presents the challenges for modern people who are trained to read for information for the purpose of obtaining a goal. Dr. Muto delineates the difference between formative reading and informational reading. She maintains that formative reading is the basis for informational reading. For *lectio divina* to bear fruit in one's life, praying with Scripture must be approached as formative reading.

Pieper, Josef. *Leisure the Basis of Culture*. Translated by Alexander Dru. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009.

Twentieth century philosopher, Josef Pieper presents the consequences of the loss of contemplation, which he terms leisure. This work is significant to the argument for a return to Christian contemplation, open receptivity to God.

Polan, Gregory J. "Lectio Divina: Reading and Praying the Word of God." *Liturgical Ministry* 12 (Fall 2003): 198-206.

Fr. Gregory J. Polan is a Benedictine monk and abbot of Conception Abbey. In this article, Fr. Polan focuses on the transformative aspect of lectio divina. Fr. Polan maintains that *lectio divina* is a spiritual practice that opens the pray-er to their unique dialogue with God through the sacred text. Praying with Scripture is a key spiritual practice for on-going conversion in the Christian life.

Russell, Kenneth, C. "Why Lectio Divina is Difficult." *Spiritual Life* 49.2 (Summer 2003): 65-75.

Dr. Kenneth Russell explores the challenges modern people encounter with the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*. He traces the disconnect to the separation of prayer and study, which took place in the middle ages. *Lectio divina* had been the way of reading, but during the rise of scholasticism, *lectio divina* became a special way of reading as opposed to reading for information and learning. Dr. Russell maintains that modern people continue to struggle with these two modes of reading, which prior to scholasticism, did not exist.

Second Vatican Council. "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*" (November 18, 1965). In *Vatican Council II, Volume 1: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*. Edited by Austin O.P. Flannery, 750-765. New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996.

This document called for a return to the prayed reading of Scripture for those who serve in the ministry of the word. This includes those who serve in catechetical ministry.

Studzinski, Raymond. *Reading to Live: The Evolving Practice of Lectio Divina*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009.

Fr. Raymond Studzinski is a Benedictine monk and associate professor of spirituality and religious formation at The Catholic University of America. Fr. Studzinski presents *lectio divina* as a spiritual practice that can help restore biblical and spiritual literacy for modern people. The book is a carefully documented history of *lectio divina*, from earliest practice to present day. Fr. Studzinski roots *lectio divina* in the Judeo-Christian tradition, beginning with the liturgical reading of the Torah and the contributions of early Christian theologian, Origen. This book includes women among the early Christians that prayed with Scripture and promoted this practice. In addition, Fr. Studzinski proposes research and study as to how new technology impacts this spiritual practice.

---.“Bible Reading Revisited: The Librarian’s Guide to Lectio Divina and Formative Styles of Reading.” *Theological Librarianship* 7.1 (January 2014): 56-64.

Fr. Studzinski provides a survey of the key Church documents, books, and articles on *lectio divina*. This is an excellent resource for further reading on the this topic.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *National Directory of Catechesis*.

Washington DC: USCCB, 2005.

Chapter Four: Human and Divine Methodology includes a discussion on catechesis for discipleship and the necessity of the catechist as a witness to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Chapter 8, no. 55 addresses Preparation and On-Going Formation of Catechists.

Veling, Terry A. “‘Listening to the Voices of the Pages’ and ‘Combining the Letters:’ Spiritual Practices of Reading and Writing.” *Religious Education* 102.2 (Winter 2007): 206-222.

Terry Veling, a high school theology teacher, presents a practical way to use *lectio divina* and journaling in high school theology courses.