

VISIO DIVINA

AN EXERCISE TO HELP US ENCOUNTER GOD THROUGH WHAT WE SEE

Ephesians 1:18 "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people."

With our culture becoming more and more visually oriented, an intentional way of praying with images is needed now more than ever. Visio Divina invites us to see at a more contemplative pace. It invites us to see all there is to see, exploring the entirety of an image. It invites us to see deeply, beyond first and second impressions, below initial ideas, judgments, or understandings. It invites us to be seen, addressed, surprised, and transformed by God who is never limited or tied to any image, but speaks through them.

Slowly move through the following stages.

- 1) **Prepare:** Close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind, and ask God to enter into this time of prayer with you. Ask God to speak to you through this image.
- 2) **Lectio (read):** Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image. Close and rest your eyes a minute.
- 3) **Mediatio (meditate):** Open your eyes and let your eyes be led. Focus on just the part of the image that caught your eyes and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that piece of the image in your mind.
- 4) **Oratio (pray):** Open your eyes and look again at the piece of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.
- 5) **Contemplatio (contemplation):** Open your eyes and gaze at the whole image. What is God speaking to you today through this image? How will you respond to Him? Spend time processing that with God. Pray or journal about it.