

Visio Divina

A Spiritual Practice



The scriptures give us a variety of images of God. God as father, mother, judge, comforter, shepherd, fire, woman who has lost a coin, father who has lost a son. These images are beautiful and rich. But the challenge with images of God is that they both reveal and limit at the same time. In fact, over the centuries prohibitions were put in place because of the human tendency to worship the image instead of God. The *Visio Divina*, like *Lectio Divina*, involves repeating an action to evoke gradual deepening of our relationship with God. But instead of the scripture text, this practice uses the visual arts such as an object, piece of art, icon, sculpture, etc.

Visio Divina Process

1. Choose an object or image. You might want to use an icon, a picture from a book, or an object from nature. Hold the object or place it before you.
2. Presence. Establish a comfortable position for prayer, relax your body, and take three deep breaths.
3. First viewing: *Visio*. View the image and notice what aspect stands out for you and attracts your attention. Stay with that one thing and focus on it. Close your eyes and be silent for a minute. Record the thing that stood out for you in your journal.
4. Second Viewing: *Meditatio*. View the image again and reflect on it deeply. Analyze the structure, the color and contrast, the texture, its composition, its beauty. Note your feelings and reflect on how the image makes you feel.



What desires and meaning are being conveyed from the image? How is the Holy Spirit speaking to you through what you are seeing? Close your eyes and be silent for a minute. Now record your thoughts, impressions, and insights.

5. Third Viewing: *Oratio*. View the image again and this time speak and pray directly to God, asking for insight. Listen for God's word to you. What does God want you to do or be in response to this image? Close your eyes and be silent for a minute. Write a prayer to God that has been forming in your heart.
6. Fourth Viewing: *Contemplatio*. View the image and this time abandon speech, thought and feeling. Instead, rest in the silent presence of God and listen. Record your reflections.
7. May you see God's glory.

