

Practicing the Awareness of God's Constant Presence

Visio Divina

A Word before You Begin

The exercise is on the next page. Please do not read ahead.

Visio Divina is an adaptation of the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*. In *Lectio Divina* (Holy Reading), Scriptures are slowly *read*, *reflected* upon, *responded* to, and *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 or your environment is used as the “text.” It is a new way of being visually attentive to “seeing” God. It is a practice of seeing the world with the “eye of your heart.”

Materials You Will Need:

- A printout of this exercise
- Journal or paper
- Writing utensils of your choice
- Art or crafting materials (optional)
- Kitchen Timer, something other than your cell phone

Location

Visio Divina can be worked anywhere; inside or outside. A remote, natural location is preferred, but your own backyard will do. Once you begin the practice of being aware of God's presence you will find that almost any location will do. 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 page. 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, but our minds will naturally begin working on the exercise also. Print the exercise out and place it someplace safe. Wait until you've set the time aside to enter into the exercise.

Once you are at your location and ready to enter the exercises, take a few minutes to quiet all distractions, and start your timer for a full hour.

You've made time to be attentive to God's presence. Be still and know He will speak to you during this time. Quiet your heart, set aside all distractions, be still, pray, 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*

Visio Divina – Divine Seeing

As you begin this exercise, give yourself time to settle into the silence, relish the solitude. Notice your breathing. Be still. Acknowledge that you have made time to be attentive to God’s presence and that you are seeking Him. Take in a few deep breaths and pray. Ask God for direction.

These are the 4 stages to Visio Divina:

Seeing | Reflecting | Responding | Resting

Seeing –

Be still and notice your surroundings. 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, simply be present to what you “see.”

Reflecting –

Stay with the thing that has attracted you. What is it about this thing that has engaged you? What does it remind you of? Does it convey any of God’s attributes? Does it 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? Or inaction? 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. Rest.

Continue resting in the insights you’ve gleaned by answering the “Questions for Further Reflection” on the following page.

Visio Divina 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?

Using your art materials journal or create something that captures 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. Close your time in prayer, thanking God for His presence.