



Focusing on God, our community and ourselves

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WHAT IS VISIO DIVINA ?



Visio Divina (sacred seeing) is adapted from the practice of lectio divina (sacred reading).

Lectio divina is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer. A passage is read word by word, line by line, thoughtfully while praying. With the practice of Visio Divina, a picture, instead of words, is used to meditate contemplatively. This style of prayer is intended to promote communion with God and to guide the worshiper into viewing the world as Christ views the world.

As photographers, we participate in Visio Divina twice. Once while on a quiet contemplative photo walk. Use your camera's lens to see as Christ sees. Pay attention to the tug at your heart to stop and notice something in particular. Resist the urge to only photograph what your mind deems as "worthy". If you are noticing it, it is important and has some sort of lesson for you.

Next, choose one image that "sparkles" to you. Which ones draws your eye and your heart in when you look at it? Use this image to pray over. You can choose to print a copy or use a digital version. Display it in a place you will see it frequently. If you are choosing a digital version, try using it as your computer wallpaper. When your eyes rest on the image, use the steps below to guide your thoughts and prayers. No need to be legalistic about how much time you should take. Take what time you have and give it to God. Return as often as you are able.

How to Practice Visio Divina

- Explore an image. You can use photos either from a book, computer or ones you have taken. You can also use paintings in the same way.
- Look at everything within the frame – objects, patterns, shapes, textures, lines, light, and colors.
- Look deeper. Where are your eyes drawn? What feelings or judgments arise? Engaging your imagination, enter the image and walk around. Where are you? What are you doing? Do you see something differently from this vantage point? What relationships do you notice?
- Allow the image to lead you into a time of prayer. Silently, offer prayers to God of gratitude, anguish, confession, or praise – whatever you find stirring inside you.
- Adjust your sitting position so that you are comfortable. You can continue looking at the image with a soft gaze, or close your eyes. Release tension in your neck, shoulders, arms, hands, legs and feet. Breathe deeply and slowly. Find your quiet center. Rest in this quiet, being open to God's presence within you. If your mind wanders, do not worry, look at the image again, or bring an awareness of the image into your mind.
- When you feel it is time, slowly open your eyes. Breathe deeply. Be gentle with yourself and have no expectations of grand revelations. The point is to practice and to offer quiet time to be attentive to God's presence.