

## Visio Divina Praying with Art

Visio Divina is Latin for "divine seeing" and is a way for praying with holy images. We are a very visually oriented culture, so this allows us an intentional way to use that gift to grow closer to God. It invites us to see deeply beyond initial ideas, judgments, or understandings and to be loved and transformed by God who is the perfect Divine Artist.

### Steps:

1. Find an image that draws you closer.
2. Schedule a quiet 15-30 minutes and remove all distractions (phone).
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to be present. Say out loud, "Come, Holy Spirit, come. Open my mind and heart to God" or "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." (1 Sam 3:10)
4. Take a few moments and close your eyes. Slow your breathing. Calm your mind.
5. Slowly open your eyes and examine the image making sure to take your time. Allow your feelings and thoughts to come to you as you take in forms, figures, colors, lines, textures, and shapes.
6. What does it look like, or remind you of? What do you find yourself most drawn to? What are your initial thoughts? What feelings are evoked? This is the initial response.
7. Close your eyes and rest with those thoughts and feelings. Stay open as your prayer unfolds.
8. Open your eyes and examine the image again. What new meanings arise? Your initial impressions may expand. Explore the new meanings and feelings that come to you.
9. Recognize any assumptions or expectations that your personal experiences brings to the image. Regardless of your response -- joy, disgust, indifference, chaos -- contemplate prayerfully the reason the feelings were evoked within you.
10. Continue your meditation and open yourself to what the image may reveal to you. What does the Holy Spirit desire to say, make known, or express to you?
11. How are these feelings, thoughts, desires, and meanings directly connected to your life? Does it remind you of an important event or part of your spiritual journey? Does it evoke a desire or longing within you?
12. How do you find yourself wanting to respond to what you are experiencing? Respond to your Heavenly Father in ways allow your prayer to go deeper: gratitude, petition, wonder, crying, confession, singing, praise, etc.
13. In these last few minutes of your prayer with this image, bring to mind or jot down in a journal (whatever way is most helpful for you) the insights you want to remember, actions you are invited to take, wisdom you hope to embody, or any feelings or thoughts you wish to express. Bring your prayer to a close by resting in God's grace and love.