

# The Tradition of *Visio Divina*

## Images as Prayer

### A Brief Introduction to *Visio Divina*<sup>1</sup>

#### *Overview*

*Visio Divina* is known as a form of “reading” the Word of God.

- It is not just appreciating the beauty of art and the sentimentality of images
- It opens us up to the Scriptures in vivid new ways

***Visio Divina Basic Process:*** (flexibly adapt the following process, as needed, for individuals and groups)

1. Reading (lectio) – listening to God’s Word in the sacred image; letting God’s Word or a particular Scripture passage to approach your heart.
  - What does this biblical image, in itself, really say?
2. Meditation (meditatio) – ruminating on the Word allow the Word to dwell within you.
  - What is God saying to me/us through this image?
3. Prayer (oratio) – ask God to open the eyes of your heart and then give this vision back to God.
  - What do I/we say to God in response to this image?
4. Contemplation (contemplatio) – notice the presence of God stirring within you.
  - How does this image make me/us feel in my/our relationship with God?
5. Action (actio) – letting the encounter concretely affect our daily life and work in the world
  - How will I/we change what I/we do today in response to listening to God’s Word?

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<sup>1</sup>Material adapted from Seeing the Word, <http://www.seeingtheword.org/>.

### Transformed by God's Word

by STEPHEN J BINZ

1. GAZE: ACCENTUATE FACULTIES
  - Be still in mind and body.
  - Trust that God will illuminate your mind
  - Light a candle, ring a bell or chime, kiss the Scripture, or perform some action that calls you to focus
  - Tame your sentiments and your emotions
  - “Read” the image with the light of the mind
  - Use your heart, imagination, will and desires
  - Notice the emotion present in the scene, the colors and the symbols
2. LISTEN: SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH
  - Find the artist’s intentions
  - Identify the expressions of Christ’s teachings
  - Identify traditional Catholic symbols and their meanings
3. RESPOND: MIRRORING THE INCARNATION
  - Allow God’s presence to transform your life
  - Identify what ways you desire to live more freely and fully
  - Identify how you will accomplish this desire today