

LECTIO DIVINA – RENEWING OUR PRACTICE BY HANS BOERSMA

GUIGO II (D. 1188), LADDER OF MONKS (*SCALA CLAUSTRALIUM*)

RUNGS	BASIC DESCRIPTION	FUNCTION	CHARACTERISTICS (MATT. 5:8)	LEVEL	DIVINE ASSISTANCE
LECTIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careful study of Scripture Literal meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks (<i>inquirat</i>) Puts food in the mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing the outward (<i>superficies</i>) words read Outward sense (<i>exterium exercitium</i>) Rind (<i>cortex</i>) Outward practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginners (<i>incipientes</i>) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Natural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">«The good and the wicked alike can read and meditate.»</p>
MEDITATIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rational search for hidden truth Allegorical meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceives (<i>invenit</i>) Chews (<i>masticat</i>) and breaks food Smell (<i>odor</i>) Digs (for treasure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goes to the heart (<i>interiora</i>) Inward Understanding (<i>interior intellectus</i>) Purity of heart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficients (<i>proficientes</i>) 	
ORATIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devoted turning to God to drive away evil and obtain the good Tropological meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks (<i>postulat</i>) Extracts food's flavor Longing to see hidden meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longing for experiential meaning (<i>in sensu experientiae</i>) Desire (<i>desiderium</i>) Sighs and tears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devotees (<i>devoti</i>) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Supernatural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">«We can do nothing without Him. It is He who achieves our works in us, and yet not entirely without us.»</p>
CONTEMPLATIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mind lifted up beyond itself to God tasting everlasting sweetness Anagogical meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tastes (<i>degustat</i>) Sweetness itself Consolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstrips every sense (<i>super omnem sensum</i>) Experience Transfiguration Merely temporary Vision of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blessed (<i>beati</i>) 	

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- ♦ «All at once four stages in spiritual exercise came into my mind: reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation. These make a ladder for monks (*Scala Claustralium*) by which they are lifted up from earth to heaven. It has few rungs (*gradibus*), yet its length is immense and wonderful, for its lower end rests upon the earth, but its top pierces the clouds and touches heavenly secrets» (1.1).
- ♦ Learning from the book of experience (*in libro experientiae*): «There is little sweetness in the study of the literal sense (*lectio exterioris litterae*), unless there be a commentary, which is found in the heart, to reveal the inward sense (*interiorem sensum*)» (6.7).

COMMUNAL LECTIO DIVINA

PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lectio – I will read the Psalm twice. Then I will ask you to focus on one word or phrase that especially captures your attention. After I've read the Psalm twice, we'll have a time of silence. Then I'll ask you to mention out loud the word or phrase that captured your attention.

READING THE PSALM TWICE

SILENCE

SHARING THE WORD OF PHRASE OUT LOUD

Meditatio – I'm going to read the Psalm once more. I'm going to ask you to meditate on the word or phrase that captured your attention. Afterwards, I'll give you an opportunity to share in one or two sentences the result of your meditation. You can ask yourself: «How does this word or phrase connect to the Scriptures as a whole, or to Jesus Christ? What is the Spirit saying to me here? How does my life link up with this word or phrase?»

READING THE PSALM

SILENCE

SHARING:

You may now say in one or two sentences what came to the fore from your meditation.

Oratio – I'm going to read the Psalm once more. After that, you'll have opportunity to share in prayer something about how the word or phrase links up with your personal meditation on it.

READING THE PSALM

SILENCE

SHARING:

If anyone wants to pray and share how his word or phrase links up with his meditation, you can do that now.

Contemplatio – I will read the Psalm one last time. Then we'll again have a time of silence, where we'll take the opportunity to let the Psalm and word or phrase permeate our hearts and minds more deeply so that we can take it along with us throughout the day. I'll end this time of silence with a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

READING THE PSALM

SILENCE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING