

## Lectio Divina

A meditative studying of the Bible--*lectio divina*--is an ancient form of prayer for Christians.

- \* Pick a short passage from a story or chapter in the Bible that strikes a chord with you.
- \* Read the passage slowly, relishing each word. Let God's Spirit speak to you through the words of the Scriptures you are reading.
- \* Ponder the passage, letting your mind wander over what you have read. A main idea will probably emerge, some notion that stands out because it relates to your life experience. Spend time thinking about these words; sometimes just repeating them over and over helps.
- \* Respond to the passage by talking to Jesus. Let the Spirit lead you. Express all your feelings and thoughts. (Many people like to write their responses or dialogues with Jesus in their journals.)
- \* End the meditation with a concluding prayer.

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The words “*Do not be afraid*” appear 366 times throughout the whole of the Bible- as though it is a daily message for each day of a leap year. “*Do not be afraid*” is a very basic message of the Bible.

The angel tells Mary not to be afraid when she is asked to be the mother of Jesus. Joseph is told not to be afraid, but to take Mary as his wife, and the shepherds in the fields were told not to be afraid.

Jesus calls Simon Peter to follow him, telling him not to be afraid. When Jesus walks on the water towards his disciples in their boat, he sees what they are like and says: “*Have courage, don't be afraid; it's me!*”

Jesus says: “*Do not be afraid; you are worth more than any number of sparrows.*”

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### Today's reading: Matthew 28

4 The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. 5 Then the angel said to the women in reply, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7\* Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ Behold, I have told you.” 8 Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples. 9\*† And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

A suggestion: simply repeat these words in silence a few times - “ <i>Do not be afraid_____</i> ” substituting your name.
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