



Praying Before the Eucharist

45 minutes + Exposition and Benediction

1. ACKNOWLEDGE (5 minutes) Acknowledge that you are in the presence of the Lord.

- Take the first 5 minutes to slow down. Take several deep breaths and relax. Give your body and your mind a few moments to slow down and attune to Jesus' Divine Presence.

2. RELATE (25 minutes) Relate with the Lord through your own life.

- For the next 10 minutes look inside your heart. Look at your life. What do you need? What are your desires? What do you want Jesus to do for you? As if you were speaking to a friend, tell Jesus right now what you need from Him during this time of prayer.
- Then, for the next 15 minutes pray Lectio Divina using the Scripture passage provided below or another Scripture passage. (Note: the steps of Lectio Divina are on the next page.)

3. RECEIVE (5 minutes) Receive the blessings He is offering to you.

- For the next few minutes, open your heart very intentionally and receive what Jesus wants to give you: His love, His grace, His healing, His light, whatever it is that Jesus wants to give you.
- For the next couple of minutes, sit in silence and simply look at Jesus in the Sacred Host and be aware that He is looking at you too.

4. RESPOND (10 minutes) Respond by making some resolution.

- For the next few minutes, come up with a resolution based on your time in prayer and Scripture reading. Make your resolution specific and practical.
- Spend a few more minutes thanking the Lord for the graces and blessings you have received during this time of prayer. Blessings are specific and so should be our gratitude.

*This Holy Hour format is timed for 45 minutes to account for Exposition and Benediction (+15 minutes). To extend the format to a full hour, you can increase the amount of time spent on the four steps above, or you can **add a Fifth Step**: spend 15 minutes bringing before the Lord the specific prayer intentions that have been entrusted to you and praying for the specific people in your life who need prayer.*

Lectio Divina Passage

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples." (John 15:5-8)

THE STEPS OF LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina, or "Divine Reading," refers specifically to an approach to prayer and scripture reading practiced by monastics since the early Church. The idea of praying with sacred scripture comes to the Church through ancient Jewish tradition. Christians in the early Church continued this tradition and further developed the practice of prayer and meditation using mostly the psalms as a rich source of heartfelt engagement with God. This development is evident in early Church History in the 48th chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict (A.D. 480-453).

Open your time of prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit. You can do this using your own words or you can pray the traditional prayer, *Come, Holy Spirit*:

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who, by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

1. LECTIO (READING)

An attentive, slow, repetitious recitation of a short passage of Scripture

In this first step, slowly read the selected Scripture passage. Allow the words to wash over you. In the silence that follows, take note of a word or phrase that particularly stood out to you. You may want to write it down or underline it. *(Pause for a period of silence.)*

2. MEDITATIO (MEDITATION)

An effort to understand God's Word and apply it to my own life

Read the passage slowly again. Focus your attention on the word or phrase that stood out to you. In the silence that follows, ask God what he wants to say to you through this word or phrase. Reflect on any insights that come. You may want to write down your thoughts. *(Pause for a period of silence.)*

3. ORATIO (PRAYER)

Engaging or talking with God about the passage

Read the passage slowly once again. In the silence that follows, write your own prayer to the Father in response to what He has been saying to you during your prayer time. *(Pause for a period of silence.)*

4. CONTEMPLATIO (CONTEMPLATION)

Resting in God

Read the passage slowly one final time. In the silence that follows, simply rest quietly in the love God has for you and any insights or graces received during your prayer time. *(Pause for a period of silence.)*

You may want to end your Lectio Divina with your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving or a Glory Be.

PRAYERS AT THE CONCLUSION OF YOUR HOLY HOUR

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O Good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me. Permit me not to be separated from you. From the wicked foe, defend me. At the hour of my death, call me and bid me come to you, that with your saints I may praise you for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To you, O Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, for this is sufficient for me.

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

O merciful God, grant that I may ever perfectly do Your Will in all things. Let it be my ambition to work only for Your honor and glory. Let me rejoice in nothing but what leads to You, nor grieve for anything that leads away from You. May all passing things be as nothing in my eyes, and may all that is Yours be dear to me, and You, my God, dear above them all. May all joy be meaningless without You and may I desire nothing apart from You. May all labor and toil delight me when it is for You. Make me, O Lord, obedient without complaint, poor without regret, patient without murmur, humble without pretense, joyous without frivolity, and truthful without disguise. Give me, O God, an ever watchful heart which nothing can ever lure away from You; a noble heart, which no unworthy affection can draw downwards to the earth; an upright heart, which no evil can warp; an unconquerable heart, which no tribulation can crush; a free heart, which no perverted affection can claim for its own. Bestow on me, O God, understanding to know You, diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You; a life which may please You, and a hope which may embrace You at the last. Amen.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR LECTIO DIVINA

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

- **John 15:4-8** – I am the Vine
- **John 4:10-15** – I will give you living water
- **John 1:35-39** – Come and see
- **Philippians 3:8** – I consider everything as a loss
- **John 10:9-15** – I know mine and mine know me
- **Isaiah 43:1-4** – You are precious in my eyes and glorious
- **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** – My grace is sufficient for you

MISSION

- **Matthew 28:16-20** – Go, make disciples
 - **Luke 15:1-7** – Parable of the Lost Sheep
 - **1 John 1:1-4** – What we have received, we proclaim now to you
 - **1 Corinthians 9:16** – Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel
 - **Romans 10:14-15** – How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news
 - **2 Cor 5:16-20** – Ambassadors for Christ
 - **1 Corinthians 9:19-13** – I have become all things to all men
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