



VISIO DIVINA—Divine or Sacred Seeing

Visio divina invites us to engage ‘the eye of the heart’ to encounter the divine. It shares roots with the ancient practice of *lectio divina*. But where *lectio* calls for a slow, careful interaction with scripture through reading, meditation and prayer, *visio* directs us to experience the divine through what we see. *Visio divina* can be practiced individually or in a small group or worship setting. Here are the four movements:

- **GAZING**

Select an image: a photograph, painting, sculpture or a setting in nature. Begin with an intent to be open to God.

Look at the image and let your eyes settle on the first element that draws your attention. Breathe deeply. Observe the various aspects of that element whether it’s a person, creature, place or thing—its colors, shape, shadows. If the object of your focus is three-dimensional, walk around it if possible.

Now broaden your vision, allowing your eyes to gaze at the whole image. Take your time and look at every part of the image or scene, particularly those that engage you. Again, if it’s three-dimensional, walk around it. Does your impression change when you sit or stand, or when you move closer or farther away?

Simply be present to the image and allow it to speak to your heart, without any particular agenda. It might speak to you in words or wordlessly.

- **REFLECTING**

Notice your breath and your body. How do you feel looking at the image?

View the image again. Soften your gaze and rest in its presence. Allow it to reach deeply within you, beyond your intellect to your unconscious. Breathe it in! Engage your imagination, your intuition.

If you had to describe the image in a sentence or two silently to yourself, what would you say?

If you were in the image, where would you place yourself? What are you experiencing there? How does that experience, or your reaction to the image, speak to your faith journey? How might it enhance or redirect that journey?

Do you get a glimpse of the sacred from this image? Is God speaking to you in this image? Does a name for God arise for you as you regard it?

- RESPONDING

When you consider the feelings, memories, or thoughts the image or scene evokes, how do those feelings or experiences connect with your life? How do you feel called to respond?

If you choose, speak or write a word or phrase to express your experience of the image.

Does a prayer come to mind? If so, let it take form in you.

Find a way to express what has come to you, in prayer, or in your journal, through a drawing or other medium, or through the posture or movement of your body.

- RESTING

In silence, continue to sit with the image and with what you have received. Rest in God's presence in silence with awe, wonder, and any other emotions that arise for you.

Adapted from <https://www.lindsayboyer.com/visio-divina> and <https://co-psn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Visio-Divina-Handout.pdf>.
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