PRAYING THE SCRIPTURES
The Practice of Lectio Divina

1. READING: LECTIO
Gently read the Scriptures aloud to yourself slowly savouring and repeating the parts of the text that speak to the depths of your heart. Listen to the Word 'with the ear of your heart', and be willing to linger on portions of the text that seem to speak to you in a special way.

Through repetition, gently allow the text to percolate into your memory. Be willing to set the printed text aside and to listen quietly to the Word that you have taken into your heart.

2. MEDITATION: MEDITATIO (RUMINATION)
Lovingly and slowly repeat the text you have internalised. Allow this interior 'mulling over' to help the text 'yield its savour'. Allow the text to interact with your memories, your hopes, your concerns. Don't be afraid of 'distractions'; simply acknowledge them and let go of them, always returning to the portion of the Scriptures you have taken into your heart.

3. PRAYER: ORATIO
Let the text summon you to place before the Lord all of yourself. Make the Word you have taken into yourself be a real word of consecration – a Word of blessing and a means of offering to the Lord your deepest hopes and concerns. Let the gentle repetition of the Word lead you into a dialogue with the God who originally inspired the text, and who has now used the Scriptures as a way of drawing you into his presence.

4. CONTEMPLATION: CONTEMPLATIO
As you feel called to do so, simply rest silently in the presence of the Lord. Be willing to let go of the text that has led you into God's presence. Enjoy the sweetness of silent communion with the God who stands behind the Scriptures.

CONCLUSION
Recognise that these steps are not stages in an orderly process: they are a way of allowing the inner rhythms of our spiritual lives to become more and more charged with the presence of God. We are not to judge the quality of our Lectio by how much or how little time we spend in any of the above activities. The rhythm of Lectio Divina reflects the rhythm of our lives: we may move from one step to another without realising it; and we may find several steps coexisting at the same time. Lectio Divina is simply a way of experiencing in our reading of the Scriptures what God intends our whole lives to become – a continuous experience of his presence, a continual and unending prayer.

'Reading you should seek; meditation you will find; praying you should call; and contemplating, the door will be opened to you.'

Abbot Guigo 11 (Carthusian in 12 Century)

'I reads myself full; I think myself clear; I prays myself hot; I lets myself cool.'

Southern US Pastor's Prayer