Praying with Art: Visio Divina
Sacred Gazing*

In the coming month you are invited to engage in two variations on the
Lectio Divina pattern, Visio Divina and Audio Divina.
You are encouraged to practice each variation at least twice.

Preparation

Choose a photograph, painting, icon, or sculpture. Find a quiet place and take some time to settle
into stillness. Breathe in an awareness of God's presence, breathe out distractions and worries.

First Gaze - Narrow Focus

Look at the image/object and let your eyes stay with the very first thing that you see. Keep your
attention on that one part of the piece that first catches your eye. If your eyes wander to other
parts of the piece, gently draw them back to focus. Breathe deeply and gaze at that part of the
piece for a minute or so.

Second Gaze - Wide Focus

Now, let your eyes gaze at the whole piece. Take your time and look at every part of the
photograph. See it all. Welcome it all. Reflect on the piece for a minute or so.

Third Gaze - Respond

Consider the following questions:
What emotions does this piece evoke in you?
What does it stir up in you, bring forth in you?
How is God speaking to your life in this moment through this piece?
If you feel comfortable, take a moment to express with your voice what you are experiencing in
your body. What does your "yes" to God sound like this day?
Does it lead you into an attitude of prayer? If so, let the prayer take form in you.

Resting with God

Spend some time resting in silence and releasing the feelings, and images that are stirring in you.
Close your eyes for a few minutes and rest in the stillness in simple awareness of God's presence.
Allow yourself some time to simply be. Open yourself to gratitude for whatever has been
revealed and offered in this time of prayer.

Closing

If you keep a journal, reflect in writing on your experience, making note of what stirred in you.
Now, offer your prayers to God in a final time of silence.

* Adapted from Christine Valters Paintner, January 01, 2000 patheos.com and UpperRoom.org