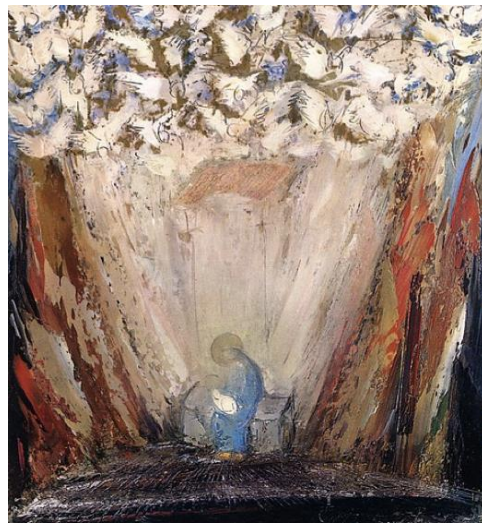


# Visio Divina-Divine or Sacred Seeing



*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 divina* directs us to experience the divine through a work of art. The focus may be a painting, photograph, sculpture or an element of nature. Visio divina can be practiced individually or in a small group or worship setting.

## How to Approach the Practice of Visio Divina



- **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?

# Visio Divina-Divine or Sacred Seeing



- ***REFLECTING***

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. Can you picture yourself in the image and if so, 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?

- ***RESPONDING***

What feelings does the image or scene evoke? Memories? Thoughts? How do those feelings or experiences connect with your life? How do you feel called to respond? Does a prayer come to mind? If so, let it take form in you; write the prayer down if you desire.

- ***RESTING***

In this final encounter with the image, object or scene-express your prayer and simply engage in that encounter with a sense of awe, wonder...and silence.



*"All that is good, all that is true, all that is beautiful brings us to God"*

*Pope Francis*