

TASTING *the Word*

prayer subsidy for the christian Mothers of st. Monica

MARCH, 2025



Tasting the WORD the palate of the heart

We often share with others that we struggle to pray, that we don't know how, or even that God doesn't hear us. From this, we conclude that prayer is a grace that must be asked for with humility because we do not have control over it, given the vast difference between us and God. However, God wants to communicate and dialogue with each of us—this is a certainty—and He has done so by leaving us His Word.

These brief reflections, intended for those who are beginning the practice of prayer, are inspired by the teachings of Saint Augustine on the delight of the Word.

The Palate of the Heart

In his commentary on the First Letter of the Apostle John, the Bishop of Hippo writes “It is because in this letter—so sweet for those whose heart's palate is healthy, where the bread of God is savored, and so renowned in the Holy Church of God—love is above all else exalted. Many things are said in it, and almost all of them concern charity.” [Saint Augustine, Commentary on the First Letter of John, Prologue].

When a believer approaches the Word with an attitude of faith, a spiritual event takes place, aimed at the heart. The Word of God is made for the heart, and the heart is made for the Word. Only the heart can truly understand the Word—reason comes afterward. The Holy Spirit is present both in the Scriptures and in the heart of the one who reads them.

Prayerful Reading of the Holy Scriptures

In recent decades, much has been written about Lectio Divina. My intention is not to offer another reflection on it, but rather to draw your attention to the centrality of the heart, emotions, and interiority in the prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures. Many who practice the four traditional steps of Lectio have borne fruit in their relationship with God. Hopefully, this practice will also become a way for you to engage in dialogue with the Lord.

1. **Reading the passage (Lectio)** – When approaching the Word, one must do so with an attitude of faith, convinced that God speaks to us and communicates through it. Saint Augustine says we must read with the “eyes of the heart”—his definition of faith – to grasp its deeper message and what the Word is truly saying.

2. **Meditating on it in the heart (Meditatio)** – This second step involves allowing the Word to enter the heart and pondering it within; savoring it and being attentive to the emotions it stirs, calmly and without forcing anything. What is the Word saying to me in these affective resonances?

3. **Prayer (Oratio)** – Emotions naturally seek expression in words, gestures, or movement in prayer; it is the cry of the heart, much like in those who are in love. Words arise from your lips, usually brief—perhaps only the name of Jesus, or a simple “thank you,” “forgive me,” or other words filled with gratitude, petition, blessing, repentance, and more.

4. **Contemplation (Contemplatio)** – When the heart falls silent and words are no longer needed, contemplation follows: silence, a loving presence, a gaze of love, contemplation, and adoration.

5. **Fraternal sharing (Collatio)** – When Lectio Divina is practiced in a group, the prayer is shared aloud. As long as it consists of sharing what the Spirit has stirred in the heart—the light received in one's journey or in the present moment of life—it is meaningful. Whenever possible, one should avoid turning it into speeches or lectures about the text.

May you receive the grace of having a palate that delights in the taste of the Word.

Fray Fr. Sergio Sánchez Moreno, OAR
[OAR Team, Christian Mothers of St. Monica]

