



## Lectio Divina: A Way for Experiencing God

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**Abstract:** The focus of this study is on researching the experience of God through Lectio Divina. In reading the Scriptures, humans realize that within those texts, God has addressed and spoken, leading to an experience of God. However, this encounter with God must be pursued diligently and faithfully. In order to understand the experience of God, this study is approached from a theological perspective. The purpose of the theological examination is that the author directs the fundamental view of Catholic faith, namely the spirituality of an individual as a Christian and the meaning of Lectio Divina. However, this research does not stop at theoretical thinking. The author continues this study phenomenologically. This research aims to understand the life experience of someone who directly undergoes an event. In order to understand these impacts, this study employs qualitative research methodology. The research subjects interviewed are ten individuals who are part of the St. Joseph's Parish in the Diocese of Malang. From this research, the author finds that the Scriptures are a means for humans to know and experience God. God is present and transforms each person's life for the better.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human life cannot be separated from spirituality. Spirituality is inherent in every human being. Spirituality is an expression of faith in the Divine. This spirituality will guide humans towards a direction in life that ideally becomes better (Setio, 2020). When discussing spirituality, the conversation naturally focuses on specific yet broad and diverse goals or purposes. The diversity of spiritual patterns is an expression of the pursuit of good life from various ethnicities and cultures, which is an expression of their faith.

Spirituality is living based on the Spirit of God. With spirituality, humans strive to shape themselves according to the spirit and aspirations of God. Here, there is a transformation of the human self to align with the will of God. Meanwhile, Adolf Heuken explains that spirituality can be referred to as the way of practicing the entire life as a believer who strives to design and live this life solely as God desires it. Thus, based on these two opinions, it can be concluded that spirituality is a path believed by everyone to lead to the experience of God and to actualize that experience into real life. To achieve spirituality, people need to strengthen their relationship with God by contemplating the Scriptures.

The tradition of contemplating the Scriptures has been practiced by Christians for quite some time (Neal, 2023). This tradition began since the early Christianity and developed in the tradition of eremitism. The purpose of this practice is to find God's will in His Word for the

life of faith. This tradition continues to be practiced until now. This tradition is now known as *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading). *Lectio Divina* is the reading of Scripture that is meditated upon for prayer and living from the Word of God (Sexton, 2019). The book used is certainly the Scriptures. In the tradition of eremitism, this reading or *Lectio Divina* is supplemented with the works of the Church Fathers. The works of the Church Fathers are very helpful in understanding the Scriptures because they are imbued and inspired by the Word of God. The works of the Church Fathers serve as support for deepening the understanding of Scripture. The center and main focus of *Lectio Divina* are the Scriptures. Therefore, *Lectio Divina* differs from spiritual reading or reading of books considered weighty for spiritual life.

However, the world today is evolving with all its changes and consequences. The Church is beginning to realize its limitations in reaching out and touching the faithful. As a result, various issues in Church ministry related to the development of the times are emerging. This has been expressed in the decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. The document states that in today's age, the spirit of the laity is no less significant. Even the current situation clearly requires their more intensive and extensive apostolic work. Because as the number of humans increases, the advancement of science and technology, and closer human relationships not only expand the limitless arena of lay apostolate, mostly only open to them, but also pose new problems that require attention to the autonomy of human life, as the number of believers increases, sometimes posing dangers to Christian life. Moreover, in many areas where the number of priests is very few, or there are times when their rightful freedom to perform their duties is seized. Without the work of lay activities, the Church is almost unable to be present and effective (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 1). Such is the field faced by the laity of the Church today.

Furthermore, the Church does not overlook this matter although it is aware of its limitations. The Church encourages the laity to strengthen their relationship with Christ, the source, origin, and goal of life. Thus, it is clear that the fertility of the spirituality of the laity depends on their unity with Christ, which is necessary for their lives. In terms of the closeness of this relationship, the laity not only are able to endure life's struggles but are also empowered to radiate the saving light of Christ in their daily lives.

The recommendation to unite with Christ is reiterated by John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*. Regarding the relationship of the laity with Christ, it is said that the laity must delve into the Word of God conveyed by the Magisterium of the Church, and must be intimate with Christ and the Father, how they have a spirit of prayer, and self-denial (CT, 9). In his apostolic exhortation, the Pope expects the faithful to become more familiar with the Word of God, to begin to make a habit of reading and meditating on the Scriptures.

The two recommendations above show how important it is for the laity to delve into and develop their spirituality, which is based on intimacy and closeness with Jesus Christ through His Word. Intimacy and closeness with Jesus can only happen if one knows Him personally. Knowledge of Jesus will only happen if one is willing to build intimacy and

closeness with the Scriptures, the Word of God itself. In order to become familiar with the Scriptures, the laity need to practice delving into the Scriptures both individually and in groups until they truly absorb the Word and make it their own. One way that can support efforts to build intimacy and closeness with the Word is by practicing *Lectio Divina*. With its basic method of reading, processing, and meditating on Scripture, *Lectio Divina* can guide every believer not only to know the Scriptures but to make the Scriptures a means of the simplest and deepest experience of God.

In this study, the author examines the experiences of the laity in *Lectio Divina*. The author explores what participants feel and experience in reading and meditating on the Scriptures so that the Scriptures become a means for human experience of God. As spiritual beings, participants engage in reading and meditating on the Scriptures to deepen their faith so that their entire lives align with God's will. With *Lectio Divina*, the laity are expected to get to know God better and have an experience of God. Thus, the author examines how participants internalize *Lectio Divina* so that they can interpret that activity as an experience of God? The author focuses specifically on the experiences of participants in experiencing *Lectio Divina* as a means of knowing God (Tawa et al. 2021).

The author examines the experience of *Lectio Divina* from the perspective of the laity in the St. Joseph's Parish in the Diocese of Malang. In this parish, there is a group of laypeople ranging from adults to the elderly. However, this group mostly consists of women. The experience of God is personal and a grace from God to the individual. The experience of God truly occurs and can only be understood by those who have experienced that grace. Thus, this research aims to provide a glimpse of the experience of God by participants in *Lectio Divina*..

## METHOD

The author explores the features of phenomenological qualitative research, such as the role of Scripture in human life, the interpretation of Scripture for individuals, and the experience of God during *Lectio Divina*. The role of Scripture attempts to delve into how participants can feel the experience of God. The context of this research contributes to understanding that the experience of God can be achieved through reading and meditating on Scripture. Considering that there is currently no research on *Lectio Divina* in the lives of laypeople, the author attempts to conduct this study. This research is holistic in the sense that the author examines participants' understanding when reading and meditating on Scripture so that they can feel the event of experiencing God and not merely see it as an example of a problem or theme experienced by many people when reading and meditating on Scripture.

The questions provided are divided into three parts. The first part discusses the understanding of the Scriptures, the second part relates to the activities of reading and meditating on the Scriptures, and the third part about the significance of the Scriptures in everyday life. Participants are given a total of 10 questions. So, each participant receives the same set of questions, totaling 10 questions. The number of participants is 15 people, the majority of whom are women. They are members of the *DeMen* (Dewasa Mendalami/Mature

into the Scriptures) group. They are parishioners in St. Joseph's Parish, Jember, in the Diocese of Malang. The author interviews them via video call lasting approximately 15-25 minutes.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Result*

Firstly, the question posed to the participants is about their understanding of the Scriptures. From the gathered answers, all participants provide diverse responses. Some participants say, "The Scriptures are the word of God given to me." Some also say, "The Scriptures are a guide for Catholics in their daily lives." Meanwhile, other participants answer, "The Scriptures are a book containing the good news about God's teachings." There are also participants who respond like this, "The Scriptures open up insights into the teachings of Christianity and the correct Christian guidance." With enthusiasm and conviction, some participants express, "The Scriptures are God speaking through His Word, and we are invited to listen," while others say, "The Scriptures are about knowing Jesus' teachings." From the participants' answers, there is a unique response: "The Scriptures are a love letter from God."

The second question related to the activity of reading the Scriptures, the author asked, "How often do you read the Scriptures?" Participants responded in various ways. Among all the participants, there were 4 who answered that they read the Scriptures every day, with different durations. Four participants read the Scriptures before going to bed, some read the Scriptures before starting their activities in the morning, and there was also a participant who read the Scriptures during work breaks. Additionally, 3 participants answered that they read the Scriptures almost every day of the week. There were also 2 participants who mentioned that they used to read the Scriptures frequently but due to work commitments taking up their time, they now rarely read the Scriptures. Furthermore, there was 1 participant who answered that they had completely stopped reading the Scriptures. Interestingly, this participant used to be part of a Scripture reading group.

Then the author asked a follow-up question, namely "Is it important to read the Scriptures?" Overall, the participants unanimously answered that it is important, but with various reasons. Some participants gave reasons such as "yes, because there are many lessons that can be gained from the Scriptures that sometimes provide enlightenment or reinforcement in certain situations." Some participants also stated that "reading the Scriptures is important to get to know Christ's teachings better." There was also a participant who shared their experience of feeling attacked by other religions, so they became more diligent in reading the Scriptures and as a Catholic felt it was very important to read the Scriptures in order to better understand and as a guide in their daily lives and to defend their faith. From all the participants, there was also an interesting reason, namely "reading the Scriptures is very important because it teaches us about love, so with love, we can act, speak, behave, and live according to Jesus Christ."

In this third part, the author first asked the participants about "Is the Scriptures a means for us to meet and know God?" Ten participants answered "yes" simultaneously. They acknowledged that the Scriptures are a means for humans to meet and know God. Although

the participants answered "yes" simultaneously, they gave various reasons regarding the Scriptures as a means for humans to meet and know God. Some participants gave reasons like "by reading the Scriptures and pondering His Word, and implementing it in daily life, we can perhaps encounter God who is present in everyday activities and in our fellow human beings." Some also answered, "The Scriptures are a book of love and God is love, so we can say that the Scriptures are God Himself expressed in writing. Thus, when we read the Scriptures, we can automatically meet and know God." There was also a participant who answered, "by reading the Scriptures, we know God's plan and His will for our lives." Another participant answered with a metaphor, saying "one of God's ways of delivering messages is through the Scriptures. Let's say it's like long-distance relationship, we meet through social media used for chatting as a means to meet."

Then, the author asked the participants to share their experiences regarding the meaning of the Scriptures as a means of experiencing God. Some participants closed themselves off, so the author could not find their experiences. However, there were also participants who could share their experiences. One participant shared, "I used to get angry when things didn't go according to my expectations. But when I casually joined a group reading the Scriptures, I was transformed. The Scriptures taught me to forgive, to understand God's intervention in every event that happens in my life, to understand that there is God's best plan for me even though sometimes I don't know God's plan." Another participant shared as follows, "Brother, back then I got to know the Catholic religion in 1965 at SPGK Malang. At that time, I was not yet Catholic. I was a devout Muslim, praying, fasting, and studying. Of course, my religion at that time introduced me to Allah. In that school, I learned Catholic values and began to be interested in the Catholic religion. When Father Harmelink taught about the Catholic religion, especially the Gospel of John which tells the story of the Wedding at Cana, I began to realize that Jesus is truly great. I started to delve deeper into Jesus. After graduating from SPG, I taught in Jember, at SDK Maria Fatima II. After receiving my salary, I bought the Scriptures at the rectory. Then, I read about the story of Jesus in the Scriptures. Wow, Jesus is truly great, brother. My admiration for Jesus grew even more. Then I read the Scriptures from the beginning. And I asked to be baptized and join the Catholic religion. Until now, I still read the Scriptures even though sometimes I don't really understand the meaning of the book. Since this corona virus appeared, my enthusiasm for reading and contemplating the Scriptures has increased, brother."

Next, the author asked the participants about the obstacles they encountered when reading and meditating on the Scriptures. At first glance, almost all participants felt that they often did not understand the meaning of the Scriptures because they realized that the language of the Scriptures is not easy to understand. Also, the language of the Scriptures sometimes made the participants feel drowsy because it uses language that is not easily understood or "elevated" language. After understanding this, the author tried to deepen the meaning of the participants' stories. Some participants expressed that sometimes when reading and meditating on the Scriptures, they lose concentration either externally or internally. One participant

expressed, "sometimes my mind wanders and I lose focus." Some of them also answered, "sometimes I remember the bitter past, brother, which makes me uncomfortable to continue." Another obstacle for participants in reading and meditating on the Scriptures is laziness.

After that, the author asked all participants about their efforts to know God in the Scriptures. Most of the participants answered that their efforts to know God are by more frequently reading and meditating on the Scriptures and praying for the grace of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, one participant answered, "to know God in the Scriptures, one must often read the passages of the Scriptures but not like reading short stories or novels. Reading the Scriptures must be done slowly, and each sentence is read repeatedly." The reason is so that we can know God from the meaning of the sentences in the Scriptures.

The author's last question was about the experience of encountering God when reading and meditating on the Scriptures to the participants. Most of the participants felt that God is truly present in their lives. Participants are aware that sometimes they do not understand the meaning of the Scriptures or do not fully understand the meaning of the text, but they believe that God works behind it all. However, one participant answered as follows, "actually, God is difficult to imagine, brother. By reading and meditating on the Scriptures, I increasingly believe that God is within me through daily experiences, God is transforming my life."

### *Discussion*

The Scriptures are an essential element for every Catholic. This is because the Scriptures serve as a guide for the life of the Catholic community. The Scriptures always teach about the love of Christ for humanity. Love is the command of Jesus Christ to the Christian community so that they may love one another as He loves His people (cf. John 15:12).

The Scriptures are the word of God to humanity, using human words (*Dei Verbum*, 1). The Holy Scriptures are the revelation of God that has been written down. The Scriptures are a source of living faith. The Scriptures are the benchmark of perfect truth, thus becoming the absolute source of Christian faith. The Scriptures also narrate the actions of God, namely His salvific work.

The Scriptures were written by humans in human language and in a specific cultural context (Welzen, 2018). However, the truths proclaimed in the Scriptures do not originate from the thoughts of the writers themselves but from God. The Scriptures are not textbooks in the ordinary sense, not ordinary history books that do not bring knowledge, but the Scriptures are the revelation of God. The writers of the Scriptures were inspired by the grace of God. This is expressed in *Dei Verbum*. This document states that in composing the sacred books, God chose people whom He used, and while they used their own abilities and skills, they acted in such a way that, although He worked in them and through them, as true authors, they only wrote what He desired, and nothing more.

The Scriptures are the Word of God because in the Scriptures, God meets humanity and speaks to them (CCC, 64). The Scriptures become the most valuable source for knowing God and His will. Through the Scriptures, God teaches humanity, reveals mistakes, corrects behavior, educates in truth, gives wisdom, and guides towards salvation (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15-

16). The Scriptures are a great source of inspiration, providing teachings and comfort to Christian believers.

Through the Scriptures, believers can learn about the mercy of God and Jesus Christ, who draws everyone to Him. Paul once said to Timothy, "and how from infancy you have known the Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15-17). The Gospel of Jesus is made the core and foundation of the teachings of faith. "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (2 Timothy 1:14).

The Scriptures are the primary source of Christian faith teachings. The Scriptures contain instructions about the will of God, principles of wise living, promised blessings, and consequences to be borne if teachings are violated or neglected. The Scriptures open minds to noble things, stir and delight the heart, refresh the soul, strengthen principles, and make the eyes bright.

The Church respects the Scriptures as the Word of God. In the Scriptures, the Church finds its identity (Wright, 2019). Thus, the Scriptures are very important in the lives of believers. On the other hand, the Church also acknowledges that the truth of faith is not only found through the Scriptures but also through Tradition. Tradition and the Scriptures have a very close and integrated relationship because both flow from the same Divine source and in a certain way merge into one and aim towards the same goal. Both present and utilize the mysteries of Christ within the Church, which lives together with the chosen people of God until the end of time.

The Scriptures are a source of wisdom. They guide humanity to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures provide perseverance and hope because they constantly bring humanity face to face with God Himself, who is the "source of endurance and encouragement" (Romans 15:4-5, 13).

Lectio Divina is the reading of the Sacred Scriptures, meditated upon for the purpose of prayer and living from the Word of God (Butler, 2020). The book used, of course, is the Bible. Lectio Divina needs to be distinguished from other readings, such as reading a newspaper to seek information or reading a novel for entertainment. Divine reading already shows its distinctive feature, namely to build spirituality, living according to the Spirit of God. This reading is directed towards building the relationship of believers with their God, who is believed to be the sustainer of this life. God continuously speaks to responsive humans about His plan of salvation. The plan and will of God are what believers intend to respond to in divine reading. The effort to respond seriously to the word of God is carried out in divine reading. The experiences of believers in the past provide only hints of how people gain spiritual wealth from detailed and careful reading (Aryanto & Kurniawan, 2022).

Divine reading will succeed if one's life is animated by several spirits and beliefs as follows: First, life lacks clear direction if not guided by the word of the Lord. Humans will not know God, who has loved them so much, know themselves, and the loftiest purpose of life. Humans tend to walk in darkness rather than light. The word of the Lord is a lamp for every

step humans must take and should be a personal statement of faith for everyone. Humans must first believe that there is only one thing needed in this life, which is to sit at the feet of Jesus, listen to His word, and obey it.

Lectio Divina will succeed if humans believe in the superiority of the Scriptures over other books or writings. The Scriptures are, first and foremost, the source of eternal life. The Jews read the Scriptures because they believed that through them they obtained eternal life. Jesus affirmed this and explained that these books provide eternal life precisely because they testify about Him. Eternal life is to know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent into the world. Whoever believes and comes to Him will receive this life because "in Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (John 1:4).

Divine reading demands that humans, in reading the Scriptures, be moved by a desire to repent. Humans must be willing to change their lives to be like Christ. Those who repent will guard their hearts. They will have humility to confess their sins and not boast about themselves. They will be like the sinful Samaritan woman who, after speaking with Jesus, testified, "He told me everything I ever did" (John 4:39).

Lectio Divina must be conducted in the Holy Spirit. Humans must pray for the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within them, "but you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:17). Since the Scriptures were written in the Holy Spirit, they "must be read and interpreted in that same Spirit." Also, for the word of God that resounds in the ears to truly bear fruit in the heart, the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary. Thus, do not read the Scriptures without praying first. Without asking for the Holy Spirit, it is futile for humans to read the Scriptures because they do not understand the meaning or purpose of the Scriptures, and because this book conveys the thoughts and secrets of God Himself. Also, without the Holy Spirit, humans cannot believe that Jesus is Lord. Without the Holy Spirit, humans cannot live according to the demands of the Gospel and do not know how to pray. Thus, the Holy Spirit is the essence that animates humans to read the Scriptures and engage in Lectio Divina.

There are steps to conduct Lectio Divina. These steps are called *lectio*, *meditatio*, *contemplatio*, and *oratio*. What needs to be considered and how these steps are performed will be discussed in the following conversation (Maddix, 2018).

### 1. Lectio – Reading

Lectio is a noun, derived from the Latin verb *legere*, which can mean, among other things, to collect, gather, select, review, read, or read aloud. The noun *lectio* indicates a process of activity such as selection, reading, or recitation. Such activities require certain skills and abilities. In this effort, the mind plays the most important role. The formulation and form are observed for understanding. Sentence structure, scenes, and vocabulary used in its sequence certainly have meaning. In this way, reading the word of God can then become a dialogue or relationship with the experience of the evangelist, understanding what was experienced, and its significance for faith life, both personally and communally. Reading will open up insights and deep understanding of a text that actually has vast richness. Reading is then a digging up of the riches available from ancient times so that it can be relevant again for today.



## 2. Meditatio – Repeating – Deepening

The word *meditatio* also comes from Latin. The verb *meditari* means to meditate deeply, prepare, study, and train. The noun *meditatio* indicates a process of meditation effort, preparation, training, and careful consideration. Usually, such activities occur while repeating, reciting repeatedly. This activity is often described as the activity of animals chewing their cud, re-chewing what has been consumed to make it a part of their life.

In the effort of *meditatio*, the main actors are the mouth, ears, and mind. The mouth for uttering, the ears for listening, and the mind for understanding. This can be emphasized by attentive eyes, a feeling heart, and an intuition that penetrates the depth of that experience. It is done by repeating, whether it be one word, one sentence, or one passage that is impressive, so that what is impressive or interesting truly penetrates the soul and enriches personal life experience.

## 3. Contemplatio – Imagining – Engaging

The term *contemplatio* comes from the verb *contemplari*. The meaning of the word *contemplari* is to gaze – in Javanese it is *njinggleng* – with full attention, focused on what is being seen. The noun then indicates the activity of looking with full concentration, fully engaging. Such activities can occur when one is greatly amazed, so that one becomes fully engaged in the sight. It can be compared to when one watches soccer with great interest, eventually being moved to kick the ball, or when one watches badminton and follows the ball's movements left and right. The actors in this effort are imagination, fantasy, especially concentration. All personal powers are utilized to engage oneself. People let all senses work to develop a picture. Eyes, ears, touch, everything needs to be activated.

*Contemplatio* is the reading activity that significantly determines the richness of people's experiences with what they read. Fantasy is the power of love life that has no bounds. Imagination is the power of creative reason to capture the whole so that one can see the matter in its entirety. When utilized, life is enriched. Concentration is the power to find the intensity of what we see.

## 4. Oratio – Prayer, personal relationship with God – being present in His presence

The verb *orare* comes from the noun *oratio*. *Orare* has various meanings, including speaking as in a lecture, defending as in court, pleading, and in a religious context it means prayer. The noun *oratio* emphasizes formal speaking activities. The oration that has emerged in this reformation era means passionate speech, defending interests together. There is a formal and urgent element in such activities.

In this religious effort, faith is the main actor. The eyes of the heart see the work of God who cares for humans, improving the quality of life and respect for them. The effort to establish a personal relationship with God in a sincere manner is necessary. With sincerity and formality, one conveys to God what is personally observed (Dalton, 2018).

If one wants to engage in *Lectio Divina*, they must meet the following supporting requirements: first, they must find a quiet place. This is what Jesus recommended, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:6). Indeed, the "room"

Jesus referred to here might be the room of the soul or heart. However, without a quiet and separate place for a while from others, one may find it difficult to engage in inner conversation with God. Also, they may not experience God.

The quiet or solitary place is not heaven (Jonasse, 2020). The Heavenly Father awaits humans there. However, this place will also be visited by demons who attack humans with all kinds of temptations. The primary temptation is through thoughts and worries. Silence and stillness can be felt as a burden. To fight against these temptations, and especially to become more aware of God's presence, some aids may help, such as placing an icon or placing a cross in front of the prayer with a burning candle. This is a means of prayer, but do not hesitate if it distances us, which only seems romantic or merely arouses emotions.

Second, one must set aside special time. For monks and priests, *Lectio Divina* must certainly become a routine event (PC, 6; PO, 13). The best time is in the morning or evening when one cannot or does not want to hear other voices except to listen to the word of the Lord. One must establish this specific time and faithfully adhere to it. This time must be truly special and should not be filled with empty time or leisure time. If one behaves this way, they are not serious about their spiritual life, they do not prioritize God above all else. It may be that the person experiences a false experience of God (Henderson, 2021). To engage in *Lectio Divina*, one must set aside at least half an hour to one hour every day. There are indeed simpler forms of *Lectio Divina*. However, the time must be sufficient and should not be done in haste or interrupted. One must faithfully allocate that specific time for *Lectio Divina*.

Third, one must have their own Bible so that by underlining key verses, warm and living love for the book begins to arise (SC, 24). In conducting *Lectio Divina*, the Bible should always be left open in front of the reader. This is very important to avoid deviation. It is highly recommended that in conducting *Lectio Divina*, one does not choose favored or deemed useful Scripture texts. The word of God must not be tampered with.

There is advice to follow some of the following methods: first, follow the reading order of the Eucharistic celebration according to the liturgical year or for those who pray daily worship, they can also follow that reading order. This method is very effective. The reading order of the Eucharistic celebration and daily worship is a semi-continuous or almost continuous reading according to its sequence in the book. Also, the books read in order as much as possible according to their order in the history of God's salvation. Events and key words in the history of salvation are displayed. There is an experience of God from those events. Thus, various moments and events in the history of salvation lead readers to experience God. If this action is faithfully and diligently followed, the person will not easily fall into improvisation or follow momentary whims. On the contrary, the person will be educated to enter into the spirit of the Church, namely the experience of God (Frederick et al., 2021).

The second suggestion is to take one book from the Bible and read it regularly from beginning to end. The intention is to read only a few verses from the book or at least one passage. The guideline is the readings of the Eucharistic celebration. Generally, these readings

are quite short. If the unity or passage is quite long, it is better to read one or two paragraphs. This applies especially to those who are not accustomed to *Lectio Divina*.

The results of *Lectio Divina* may not be immediately obtained sensorily, but what is visible is *compassio* and *operatio* (Firmanto, et al, 2023). *Compassio* is a deep awareness and sympathy for the suffering of others. Meanwhile, *operatio* means suffering together with others. Through this *compassio* and *operatio*, humans are united with God. Humans are enabled to open themselves to observe and love others and other creatures. Its form can vary, including prayer and acts of love. Common acts of love include helping those in need, and striving for peace with everyone. Finally, between prayer and action are not contradictory, but as an inseparable unity (cf. Luke 10:38-42).

To enter into unity with the Word of God or with Christ, one must enter into the passion (suffering) of others. Being like Christ also means embracing the destruction of our world, like Christ who was born in a manger, died among criminals, and rose from death. Jesus, who emptied Himself and became human with all His weaknesses (cf. Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus' self-emptying is useful for humans. Essentially, Jesus Christ is compassionate towards humans, especially towards the poor, the disabled, the sick, the imprisoned, the dying, the oppressed, and the exploited. Jesus' compassion becomes human compassion. When humans enter into the misery and pain of this world, they open themselves to God working in their lives. Thus, humans experience an experience of God (Firmanto & Wiwin, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

*Lectio Divina*, when practiced earnestly, has a meaningful impact on the spiritual development of an individual. In this context, reading the Scriptures and reflecting can lead a person to experience God. Everyone should realize that divine reading is done daily so that each day individuals are transformed and changed by God according to His will. Through *Lectio Divina*, people also become aware of their weaknesses and sinfulness. On the other hand, they also realize that God transforms human life for the better. Thus, *Lectio Divina* serves as a means for individuals to encounter and experience God in their daily lives. Of course, the experience of God is different for each person. The experience of God is a gift from the Lord given to everyone. This experience of God can be best understood by those who have experienced it themselves through the Scriptures.

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