

Visio Divina: A spiritual practice – background and instructions

Background: One thing we hope to nurture and encourage among us in this community are practices for “going deeper.”

Visio Divina is a less common spiritual and deepening practice that is about engaging with an image. Often people use religious images but that isn't necessary. As your image you might choose a fixed image like a photo or painting or still life or even what is outside your window.

Each month this year we will offer an image for you to reflect on. You can do that once or multiple times throughout the month, seeing how your reflections remain the same or change with each practice.

To begin, choose your image we have provided this month or perhaps another image, if you wish. We suggest getting a notebook or some way to take notes close at hand. Turn off all distractions so you have some uninterrupted time. Next, allow your body to get comfortable. Breathe.

1. Look at the image and let your eyes stay with the very first thing that you see. Keep your attention on that one part of the image that first catches your eye. For right now, try to keep your eyes from wandering to other parts of the picture. Breathe and let yourself gaze at that part of the image for a moment. [Pause]
2. Now, let your eyes gaze at the whole image. Take your time and look at every part of the photograph. See it all. Reflect on the image for a minute or so. [Pause.]
3. Consider the following questions:
 - What is coming up for you or inside you?
 - What emotions does this image evoke in you?
 - What thoughts does the image bring forth in you?
 - Does this image raise questions or associations, yearnings or fears?

Now we invite you to take a minute to write down anything you might want to capture from this time, maybe something that you can carry into the day or week ahead. It might be a question, a wondering, an insight, anything you want to capture.

If you were to hold some intention or make some prayer right now what might it be? Write this down, if you wish to.

We are coming to the close of this practice. Take a deep breath. And another one. Now, gently return your attention to your surroundings.

Thank you for participating in this practice today.