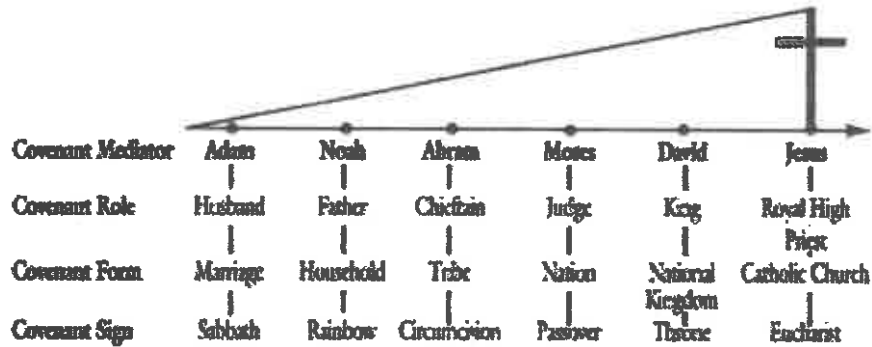


# Exploring the Word of God

“Indeed, the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12 (NRSV)



Chapter 1; A Father who keeps his promises - Scott Hahn)

## Recommended resources:

### The Bible!

Nothing beats simply picking up the bible and reading it!!!

- if you don't have one there are so many different translations it can be hard to choose! Here are a few recommended translations
- The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Catholic edition
- The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) which is the same as the current Mass readings we have at church
- The English Standard Version (ESV) will be the text used for the new liturgical books from Advent 2023.

### Bible reading Apps

- Ascension Press Bible and Catechism App download link: [link.ascension-app.com/JLwnGim42Ab](http://link.ascension-app.com/JLwnGim42Ab)
- Universalis - Daily mass readings and prayer of the church - App download link: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/universalis/id284942719>

### Bible Studies for personal or groups/parish courses:

- The Big Picture - Cafe Course  
<https://faithcafe.org/collections/the-big-picture-course>
- Bible timeline / The Great Adventure Bible Course - Jeff Cavins (Ascension Press  
<https://ascensionpress.com/collections/the-bible-timeline-the-story-of-salvation>
- English Bible Timeline course provider - Mauro Ianicelli  
<https://www.comeandsee.org/btcourse>
- St Paul Center Bible studies e.g. Genesis to Jesus  
<https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/journey-through-scripture/genesis-to-jesus/>

## **Podcasts**

- Bible in a Year - Fr Mike Schmitz (Ascension Press)
- Bible in a Year - Nicky Gumble (Alpha resource using only the Protestant Bible - some great reflections)

## **Bible magazines focussed on scripture:**

- Magnificat (Mass readings and reflections, prayer times for morning and evening)
- Bible Alive - reflections on the daily Mass readings
- Blessed is she - sign up for daily reflections on the mass readings

## **Prayer of the Church**

- also known as:

- Liturgy of the Hours
- the Breviary
- The Divine Office

This can be bought physically as the books or you can try it using Universalis either by downloading their app (see above) or on the website: <https://universalis.com>

These daily prayers are compulsory for religious and Priests to pray - but the whole church were encouraged by the Second Vatican Council for lay people to pray it. Very scriptural, focussed on the psalms and other scripture passages.

## **Visual Arts/Media**

So much art and media are based on scripture.

Try searching for images online with certain Bible references to so Visio Divina with. Or visit any art gallery to see Christian/religious art!

We also recommend reading biblically based novels and watching shows based on scripture such as:

**Recommended Biblical Fiction authors:**

Chris Aslan  
Connilyn Cossette  
Tessa Afshar

**Biblical based films/TV shows:**

The Chosen which you can watch for free here:  
<https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>  
en

**“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”**

***2 Tim 3:14-16 (NRSV)***



## **What is visio divina?**

“Sacred seeing” or “praying with the eyes of your heart” is an ancient form of Christian prayer in which we allow our hearts and imaginations to enter into a sacred image, in silence, to see what God might have to say to us.

1. Gaze at the entire picture.

Notice the shapes, the colours, and the lighting.

Notice the detail of both the foreground and background.

Once you have taken in the artwork, note down what has immediately struck you as you have taken this initial look at this picture.

2. What draws your attention?

How is God speaking to you?

Why do you think God drew your attention to this particular part?

Do you sense an invitation?

Do you hear a call?

What emotion/feeling is evoked?

What Word(s) come to mind as you look at this picture?

Write these thoughts and words down.

3. God has been speaking to you as we have meditated on this artwork – it’s now time to respond to the divine.

What is your response to what God has revealed to you?

What is your prayer?

What yearnings or desires has this experience brought up for you?

Write all these things down.

Lectio:

Philippians 4:6-9 ·

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

First reading - Meditatio (Meditate) - what personal message does this piece of scripture have for me. What word or words touched my heart.

Second reading - Oratio (speak) - what do I say to the Lord in response to His Word

Third reading - Contemplatio (contemplation) - what conversion of mind, heart, and life is God calling forth from me today?