

Using the images

There are quite a few images within these studies, and you may like to try this way to prayerfully use them.

It is called *Visio divina*, or 'Divine seeing' and all it requires is a few minutes of quiet, while we look at the images, what the artist might be saying, even putting ourselves into it, and allowing God to speak to us.

The four stages of *Visio divina*, assuming we are relaxed, quiet and with a copy of the picture in front of us, are as follows:

Here's an image you might like to practice with. The stages are the same.



1. Look at the picture slowly, noting the colors, people, places and things. Start in one corner and work your way around it. Remain with the image for one to two minutes. If you would like, jot down a few words about what you see, particularly anything you missed at first glance.
2. Take a second, deeper, look. Where is there movement? What relationships do you see? Engage your imagination. Where might you be within the picture? What do you see from that perspective? What deeper meaning emerges?
3. Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Offer that prayer to God.
4. Be still. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms and legs. Rest in this quietness and let God speak.

(The image is Hans Multscher, The Cross of Christ, 1437)