**Lectio Divina in Nature**

The following exercise helps us deepen our connection with God in creation. This *lectio divina* with nature is adapted from an exercise practiced by Nancy Wiens, who emphasizes that too often we think of ourselves as apart from nature. “We, too, are nature – the human part of nature that has the ability to be self-conscious and make choices by enacting free will. So, praying in the outdoors of nature helps us connect with our human nature before God.” This prayer can open us to experiences of God in ways that spoken prayers or word prayers did not do before.

Step One: *Silencio.* Become present to your surroundings in nature by sitting in silence for a few moments. Ask God to address you in this prayer through nature.

Step Two: *Lectio.* Look around you. Take some time to walk around and survey the piece of creation that surrounds you. As you do this, notice when something draws your attention. It could be something attractive, or even something that upsets you. As you gaze on it, imagine God also gazing on it.

Step Three: *Meditatio.* Continue to be with this part of nature that has drawn your attention. Think about what you know about this part of nature. What are the connections you might make with your life right now? Be aware of your feelings as well as your thoughts. What is God saying to you in this encounter with nature?

Step Four: *Oratio.* Express yourself in some way to God. Respond to God’s gift in nature in some way. Express your experience to God – your feelings, bodily sensations, and thoughts. Resist editing them. Simply communicate with God.

Step Five: *Contemplatio.* Rest with God in what you notice, and reflect on how that awareness speaks to your life. Open your whole self to God by moving beyond words and images. Bask in how your human nature has communed with the rest of nature and also with God.

From “50 Ways to Pray” by Teresa Blythe

*Be thou praised, my Lord, for brother Wind and for the air, the cloud, the serene and all kinds of weather, by which thou givest thy creatures sustenance.* St. Francis of Assisi (13th c.), from “Canticle of the Sun”