**VISIO DIVINA**

(From “Lectio Divina” by Christine Valters Paintner)

**Settling and Shimmering** (Lectio)

Close your eyes and prepare yourself for prayer by connecting to your body and breath, gently deepening the rhythm of your breath, bringing your awareness to your heart center. As you breathe in, imagine receiving the gift of vision, the sacred ability to see deeply below the surface of things. As you breathe out, imagine being able to allow your eyes to communicate love to others and to what you gaze upon. Allow a few moments of preparing your eyes to behold what is before you.

Gently open your eyes and gaze upon your chosen picture or nature scene softly with “the eyes of the heart.” This is a gently receptive gaze, not a hard, penetrating stare. Move your eyes over the image, taking in all of its colors, shapes, and symbols. Bring a sense of curiosity to this image, exploring it with reverence, noticing all of its textures and features that come with seeing more clearly.

As your eyes wander around the image in a brief visual pilgrimage, notice if there is a particular area or feature of the picture that draws your attention or stirs energy for you. Allow your eyes to rest gently there.

**Savoring and Stirring (Meditation)**

Be present to this place on the picture that is calling for more attention. Open your imagination to memories and other images that want to stir in you in response. Allow this place, these symbols or colors, to unfold, to make other connections. Savor what emerges. Notice if there are any feelings arising within you. Connect to your breath again, making room for whatever wants to move through you in this time.

**Summoning and Serving (Oration/prayer)**

As the picture moves your heart, listen for how you are being invited in this moment of your life out of this time of prayer. Make space for your heart to be touched and for a longing to respond to God’s call to move in you. The invitation may emerge as an image, a symbol or words.

**Slowing and Stilling (Contemplation)**

Close your eyes if they are still open and release the images you have been gazing upon Sink into stillness, slow your breath down, and rest in the grace of being for several minutes.

When you are ready to end your time of prayer, connect with your breath again and gently bring your awareness back to the room. In maintaining eyes of heart, sometimes it can be helpful to gaze upon the image one more time – following your prayer, taking the image in again, and seeing if you notice anything new. Then offer a moment of gratitude for the way this image touched your heart.