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Implementing Lectio Divina in Spiritual Revitalization of Protestant Pastors in Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore and implement the practice of Lectio Divina and analyze its theological and practical implications for the spiritual growth of Lutheran pastors in North Sumatra, Indonesia. We argue that Lectio Divina is effective for enhancing the spirituality of pastors. This research employs a participatory action research design with qualitative orientation and limited quantitative pre-post measurement. There are several things this study aims to accomplish, namely: to explore the early understanding of Lectio Divina, to delve deeper into and to unravel the history of its emergence and development, and the application of this practice in the ecumenical church in the 21st century. This article also explains the four practical steps of the Lectio Divina spiritual formation. The research found that the implementation of Lectio Divina among pastors had a significant impact on their spiritual growth and behavior. Finally, the author proposes the practice of Lectio Divina can be contextually applied in Indonesian Lutheran churches.

Keywords: Bible reading; deep contemplation; patristic; prayer; spiritual formation

INTRODUCTION

Pastors are spiritual leaders and role models. But if their own spiritual lives are poor, how can the church grow? The researchers found that the level of spirituality of Lutheran clergy in North Sumatra, measured by two categories: the regular reading of the Word of God and the discipline of prayer, was in the worrying category. From 2004 to 2007, we conducted a survey of 1600 Lutheran congregations in North Sumatra, Indonesia. We found that only 37% of all respondents were faithful to pray or read the Bible every morning and evening.¹

In 2010, the authors surveyed 149 respondents, of which 54 people (36.2%) answered that they prayed every morning and night.² In 2011, the authors continued to conduct the same survey. The result was that out of 700 respondents, only 157 respondents (22.5%) were faithful in praying and reading God's Word.³ In the same year the authors also researched 28 Lutheran pastors, of these 28 pastors, only 33.92% were disciplined in praying and reading the Bible.⁴ In 2017, we continued the similar

survey, out of 83 church ministers, only 35% prayed and read the Bible every day.⁵ Accumulated research on spirituality from 2004-2013 and 2017 shows that the average daily practice of disciplined prayer and Bible reading is less than 40%.⁶ Our findings, based on twenty years of intensive research, show a decline in the importance of spiritual disciplines, particularly prayer and Bible reading, in churches in North Sumatra.

The Lutheran church in Sumatra is characterized by an insufficient number of ministers relative to the number of congregations. One pastor usually serves five to seven branches with thousands of members. Some field ministries are quite far apart, the financial situation of church ministers is mainly inadequate, and the high mental and spiritual demands sometimes lead to burn-out. Western-paradigm Lutheran theology emphasizes rationality, whereas the community's thinking model emphasizes spiritual experience, which is rooted in local mysticism. Luther's legacy of spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and Bible reading, is also increasingly forgotten in the practice

¹ Jaharianson Saragih and Parulihan Sipayung, "Disiplin Doa Marthin Luther Dan Aktualisasinya Di Tengah-Tengah Gereja Protestant (Lutheran) Di Sumut Saat Ini," in *Hidupku Adalah Ibadah* (Pematang Siantar: KN LWF, 2013), 43.

² Saragih and Sipayung, 44.

³ Jaharianson Saragih and Andri Vincent Sinaga, "Spiritualitas Dan Karakter Pelayan Yang Ideal

Dalam Konteks GKPS," in *Karakter Transformatif* (Jogjakarta: KBM, 2024), 49-50.

⁴ Saragih and Sinaga.

⁵ Saragih and Sinaga.

⁶ Saragih and Sinaga.

of the church. In such a context, a spiritual enrichment model is necessary to refresh pastors' spirituality so they can effectively live and serve the congregations.

This prompted the authors to elaborate on what pastoral methods are relevant in enhancing the spirituality of God's servants. Martin Luther was a role model for living with *Lectio Divina*. Even today, we can see his discipline in the Lutheran model of *Susukara* (Church Handbook, *Almanak*), which provides daily devotions in the morning and evening, including prayer time. This tradition seems to have been lost in Indonesian Lutheranism. However, little research has been conducted on reviving this model in Protestant, especially Lutheran, pastoral settings in Indonesia.

This study addresses the main question: how *Lectio Divina* can improve the spirituality of Lutheran pastors in Indonesia? This study aims to explore and reinterpret the practice of *Lectio Divina*, then analyze its theological and practical aspects for the spiritual growth of Lutheran pastors in Indonesia.

On Definition of *Lectio Divina*

Lectio Divina derives from the Latin language. *Lectio* is “a reading,” *divina* is “divine,” simply means “divine reading” or the reading of Scripture.⁷ The reading is not like the commonly understood reading, but a close reading.⁸ The reading is also called spiritual reading. The goal is not just to gather information but to transform oneself.⁹ The paradigm is neither an academic commentary on the biblical text nor an intellectual exploration. It is to reap the wisdom of intimate communion with the Word of the living God.¹⁰ This method of reading is inseparable from prayer. Thus, in the practice of the Church Fathers from the first century of Christianity, Bible reading and prayer were inseparable.

Enzo Bianchi translates the *Lectio Divina* beyond the literal meaning. He does not interpret it as simple divine reading. To him, *Lectio Divina* could be “the Word prayed” or “praying the Word.” This translation has a profound meaning. The placement of the adjective (prayed, praying) and the noun (the Word) becomes a kind of play on words. It explains the dual function of

⁷ Timothy Gray, *Praying Scripture for a Change: An Introduction to Lectio Divina* (US: Ascension Press, 2014), ch. 2.

⁸ Mariano Magrassi, *Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 15.

⁹ Basil Pennington, *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998).

¹⁰ Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God. A Study of Monastic Culture* (London: SPCK, 1978), 89.

the Word as the partner in prayer and as the one who prays.¹¹ Duncan Robertson describes this practice as a deep conversation, “an intimate dialog” with the living, present, active Word, who is the divine intercessor who responds the Bible reader's petitions.¹²

Robertson gives the example of a man named Anthony in St. Augustine's book “The Confession.” One day Anthony heard the Word of God, which said, “Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor ... and come, follow me” (Matt. 19:21).¹³ Immediately, Anthony felt that the Word he read was addressed to him. The encounter with the Word of God that day changed Anthony's life dramatically.

Based on the tradition of the Church Fathers from the practice of Lectio Divina, the term *Ora et Labora* emerged.¹⁴ At the beginning of its development, Lectio Divina was seen as a central means of spiritual formation. The reason for this was that the practice had the potential for the renewal of hearts, the transformation of attitudes, and the orientation of people toward God.¹⁵ The

practice of Lectio Divina can be divided into 4 stages, namely *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. This part will be discussed in the next section.

History and Development of Lectio Divina

Benedict: The Pioneer Church Father of Lectio Divina

Benedict (480-547 AD) was a church father from Nursia. He was the founder of the famous Benedictine monastery. Benedict's three main purposes in founding the Benedictine monastery were a spiritual school for renewal, study, and sanctification: “Benedict of Nursia established his monasteries, they were intended to be schools of conversion, learning and sanctification.”¹⁶ In the monastery, he exercised very strict discipline. Each member had to go through a probationary period of one year, and each person who was accepted into his monastery had to make a promise to remain in the monastery forever and to be faithful to it.¹⁷

Even though Benedict imposed strict spiritual rules, he was also tolerant of the

¹¹ Enzo Bianchi, *Praying the Word. An Introduction to Lectio Divina* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1998), 27.

¹² Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011), preface.

¹³ Robertson.

¹⁴ Lawrence Cunningham and Keith J. Egan, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 75.

¹⁵ James C. Wilhoit and Evan B. Howard, *Discovering Lectio Divina: Bringing Scripture into Ordinary Life* (US: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 8.

¹⁶ Wilhoit and Howard.

¹⁷ David M. Knowles, “St. Benedict,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Benedict-of-Nursia>.

monks' living conditions. He allowed his monks to adjust their clothing according to the season, and the monks were also given adequate food and allowed to sleep about 8 hours a day.¹⁸ One of the interesting legacies of Benedict is the disciplined division of activities. For example, 5 to 6 hours of regular liturgy and prayer, 5 hours of general chores such as housework, gardening, and monastery work, and 4 hours of Scripture study.¹⁹ From this discipline of monastic life we can see how Benedict saw the balance between working, studying, and praying.

Early Practice and Development of Lectio Divina

In the Benedictine monastic rule, specifically rule 48,²⁰ Benedict required all his monks to pray *Lectio Divina*. But even though Benedict made this explicit, the practice had long been used and practiced by early Christians. Over time, the practice grew. In particular, toward the Middle Ages, a monk named Guigo II practiced this pattern intensively. He explained that Bible reading, reflection, prayer, and meditation were essential. But he did not establish a

rigid order. For him, this could be done flexibly. Guigo II explained his views as follows, "Reading without meditation is sterile; meditation without reading is liable to error; prayer without meditation is lukewarm, meditation without prayer is unfruitful, prayer when it is fervent wins ..." ²¹ In subsequent developments, the practice of *Lectio Divina* has become culturally inseparable from the culture of monastic life. This has been discussed in greater depth by several authors and can be explored particularly in two important writings by Jean Leclercq,²² and Michael Casey.²³

After Benedict and Guigo II, Martin Luther was a figure who strongly emphasized the importance of Scripture. One of his principles was *Sola Scriptura*. For him, the Bible was the source of transformation of heart, mind, and life. However, unlike previous traditions, Luther not only emphasized the conversational aspect of the Bible, but he also added the importance of scholarly and responsible exploration of the Bible. This is what set Protestantism apart from the Catholic Church of the day. Protestantism took a critical approach to every church

¹⁸ Knowles.

¹⁹ Knowles.

²⁰ Dom David Foster OSB, "Lectio Divina: Reading in The Rule of St Benedict," *Countertext-A Journal for the Study of the Post-Literary* 7, no. 1 (April 28, 2021): 30–45, <https://doi.org/10.3366/COUNT.2021.0213>.

²¹ Guigo II, *The Ladder of Monks and Twelve Meditations* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1978), 82.

²² Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God. A Study of Monastic Culture*.

²³ Michael Casey, "Seven Principles of Lectio Divina," in *The Undivided Heart* (Petersham: St. Bede's Publications, 1994), 4-9.

practice and gave it a careful reinterpretation based on an examination of Scripture. Moreover, Luther's approach to the Bible had much in common with the tradition of *Lectio Divina* that had been practiced in the monastic tradition for hundreds of years. Luther read the Bible not as an object, but as a source of meaning, direction, and purpose. Of course, we cannot deny that Luther was also brought up in the monastic tradition. The influence of his predecessors such as Tertulian, Origen, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas was an integral part of influencing and shaping his spiritual life.²⁴

For Luther, the only way to be a good theologian was to love and practice the message of the Bible. This was the goal of the Reformation, to increase interest and earnestness in the study and application of biblical principles.²⁵ Luther took Psalm 119 as an example of the practice of reciting *Lectio Divina*. He explains, "There you will find three rules, amply presented through-

out the whole Psalm. They are *Oratio*, *Meditatio*, *Tentatio*, ..., if you study hard in accord with his [David's] example, ... then do not be afraid to hope that you have begun to become a real theologian."²⁶

Moreover, today the practice of *Lectio Divina* is not only practiced within Christianity, but some experiments have even been carried out interreligiously and with other religious texts.²⁷ The practice is considered very beneficial in achieving contemplation, inner clarity, restoration and renewal of life. Another interesting development in the practice of *Lectio Divina* is how a study of this method has greatly helped war veterans find peace and recovery from the inner turmoil of earlier difficult times.²⁸ In recent trends, the practice of *Lectio Divina* has also been used to find hope and courage (*consolatio*), direction in life (*discretio*), motivation of the will (*deiberatio*), and practice of a way of life (*actio*).²⁹

²⁴ John Paul Jackson and John E. Thomas, *The Art of Praying the Scriptures: A Fresh Look At Lectio Divina* (Texas: Streams Ministries, 2016), 7-8.

²⁵ Wilhoit and Howard, *Discovering Lectio Divina: Bringing Scripture into Ordinary Life*, 19.

²⁶ Wilhoit and Howard.

²⁷ Compare with Thomas Cattoi, "Interreligious *Lectio Divina*: Reflecting on the Transfiguration with Maximus the Confessor and the Bhagavad Gītā," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 23, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 44-48, <https://doi.org/10.1111/TETH.12522>; Kathleen Gallagher Elkins, "Using *Lectio Divina* for Non-Scriptural Texts: A Successful Classroom Teaching Tactic That Other Instructors Can Replicate," *Teaching Theology and*

Religion 22, no. 2 (April 1, 2019): 128, <https://doi.org/10.1111/TETH.12480>.

²⁸ Marek S. Kopacz, Mary S. Adams, and Robert F. Searle, "Lectio Divina: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Chaplaincy Program," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 23, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 87-97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854726.2016.1253263>.

²⁹ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium* (Washington, DC: Vatican City: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013).

The Four Steps in Lectio Divina

Reading (Oratio)

What is meant by reading in this context is not reading in the usual sense of the Word. It is not reading for information or knowledge. This reading is also called reading beyond reading. As we read, we also hear. Ambrose, for example, mentions, “We speak to Him when we pray; we listen to Him when we read the divine oracles.”³⁰ Then St. Augustine says, “Your prayer is your word addressed to God. When you read the Bible, God speaks to you; when you pray you speak to God.”³¹ In the same way, Cyprianus asserts, “Diligently practice prayer and lectio divina. When you pray, you speak with God; when you read, God speaks to you.”³² Thus, reading the Bible and listening to God's Word together not only opens the ears of hearing, but also opens the ears of the heart.³³

Meditating (Meditatio)

Meditation does not mean emptying the mind, as is practiced in some religious traditions. In the Christian sense, meditation means activating the power of the mind at

the highest level, deep reflection, letting the message penetrate and sink into the depths of our hearts, letting the word speak in a personal way, letting it be remembered and experienced, stimulating self-examination, imagining, guiding, rebuking, converting and awakening the spirit. In meditation we hear and receive a word of God. This word has a special personal meaning for us. This word may be a single word with a powerful meaning. It may also be an emotion or a feeling or a message that God symbolically communicates through His living Word, present and active in the light of the Holy Spirit.

When we meditate, we are like chewing food, we savor the taste slowly, we interpret it more deeply, we do it again and again until we get the taste and the core meaning of the message. Luther taught us to read and re-read God's Word with attention and clear contemplation so that the reader can understand what the Holy Spirit meant.³⁴ So, at this stage, a good heart attitude is like the Word of God: “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 3:15).

³⁰ Ambrose of Milan, *De Officiis Ministrorum* 1.20.88, *Patrologia Latina* [PL] 16:50.

³¹ Augustine of Hippo, *Ennarratio in Psalmum* 85.7, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* [CCL] 39: 1177.

³² Cyprian of Carthage, *Ad Donatum* 15 (*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* [CCL] 3A:12)12.

³³ Benedict's famous saying is “listen with the ears of your heart,” see Benedict of Nursia, *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in English* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982), 15.

³⁴ Wilhoit and Howard, *Discovering Lectio Divina: Bringing Scripture into Ordinary Life*, 84.

Praying (Oratio)

Prayer is not just a communication but a communion with God. Prayer is an authentic and profound dialogue with God. Dialogue means that God speaks to us through His Word and we speak to God in response after hearing His Word.³⁵ This is the focus of prayer in the context of *Lectio Divina*. In prayer, God gives us space to approach him with our whole being. In prayer, God invites us and gives us permission to pour out in words the burdens of life, the bitterness, the sense of sin and the struggles we are going through. In prayer there is no pretence, because before we say anything to God, He has already understood us. In fact, He knows us more deeply than we know ourselves. So, prayer is really a space for God to accept us as a whole. However, prayer in the context of *Lectio Divina* has a more specific meaning than prayer in general. In this prayer we communicate to the Word that we have read and reflected on. We ask God to guide us through the word in order to discover what it is that God wants us to do.

³⁵ Stephen Binz, *Lectio Divina Bible Study: Learning to Pray in Scripture* (US: Our Sunday Visitor Pub., 2011), 16.

³⁶ John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love 3.28," in *The Collected Works of Saint John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez,

Contemplating (Contemplatio)

Contemplation means dwelling silently in God's fullness and presence. In *Lectio Divina*, this stage comes at the end. After we have read the Word of God, actively meditated on its meaning, and then prayed, this final part is the moment when we allow God to embrace us in His presence. Lawrence Cunningham distinguishes between meditation and contemplation. The Christian tradition describes meditation as an active human effort to contemplate, to search for meaning and to hear the voice of God.

In the Christian tradition, this concept of seeking is unique. Where man seeks God, but God's own desire to seek man is far greater than man's own desire.³⁶ Contemplation, on the other hand, is an initiative from God that enlightens people. Cunningham explains "meditation is what they can do through graced human effort and contemplation is what only God can do."³⁷ Furthermore, Cunningham explains "meditation is a search for God."³⁸ While contemplation is "we consider to be the gifted and transforming experience of the presence of

rev. (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, n.d.), 684.

³⁷ Cunningham and Egan, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*, 85.

³⁸ Cunningham and Egan, 84.

God.”³⁹ Cunningham emphasizes that meditation and contemplation are not the same, although they are related. Meditation can be a door to “divine gift.”⁴⁰ In the medieval monastic tradition, there was a tendency for monks to persist in meditation in order to receive enlightenment or special messages or visions through contemplation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a participatory action research design with qualitative orientation and limited quantitative pre-post measurement. The research was carried on in Samosir, January 2022, involving nine Lutheran pastors and a candidate of pastor. The researcher used twelve criteria, which can be seen in the research findings section, to analyze the spiritual discipline of the participants and observe changes after implementing Lectio Divina. The techniques used were interviews, participation, questionnaires, observations, and instrument validation. In this study, data was collected through specially prepared sheets of cardboard. Each participant was asked to write what was felt, what happened or what was experienced during the morning Lectio Divina prayer. This was then discussed during the afternoon sharing.

After the retreat, participants were also asked to continue the practice of Lectio Divina in their respective homes. Data was then collected nine months later, both before and after the twice daily Lectio Divina intervention. The data collected is important to see if the changes that occur after Lectio Divina are permanent or temporary. This study analyzed quantitative data from questionnaires descriptively to observe behavioral changes. Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews and observations were coded thematically to identify recurring spiritual patterns.

The authors acted as a Lectio Divina prayer guide and also as a researcher but did not participate as a participant to be studied. Semi-structured interviews were conducted daily, while field notes captured participants’ reflection during sharing sessions. A 12-item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used before and after the intervention to assess prayer discipline and spiritual behaviour.

The theoretical framework underpinning this research is derived from a theological paradigm that explores Sandra M. Schneiders and Alister E. McGrath's theory of Christian spirituality. Schneiders argues the Christian spirituality studies life experiences, insights, personal practices,

³⁹ Cunningham and Egan.

⁴⁰ Cunningham and Egan, 86.

and discipleship models inspired by the Christian faith.⁴¹ Schneiders further explains that experience does not refer only to spontaneous or ordinary experiences. Rather, it refers to experiences based on conscious choices and principles of living that are pursued deliberately, continuously, and with commitment.⁴² Other hand, Alister E. McGrath places significant emphasis on spirituality as the quintessence of faith. Spirituality is not merely a concept; rather, it is a fundamental element that imbues life with meaning and purpose.⁴³ McGrath underscored that Christian spirituality is not merely a matter of belief or doctrine, but rather a way of life that is informed and guided by one's encounter with, contemplation of, and ongoing relationship with Jesus.⁴⁴

This study will accomplish several things, namely: the early understanding of Lectio Divina, the role of Benedict, a church father who pioneered this practice, the history of its development from the beginning to the Middle Ages, and the application in the ecumenical church in the 21st century. The authors will also explain the four simple steps of Lectio Divina. In the final section, the author will outline

some evidence to prove its effectiveness. Based on these findings, the authors propose to apply Lectio Divina in Indonesian churches, especially in North Sumatra.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted from January 10 to January 16, 2022, in a retreat format at the Toledo Inn Samosir in North Sumatra, Indonesia. This prayer practice took place in the morning after breakfast and in the afternoon before dinner. Subsequent phases of the research were initiated in November 2022, with a focus on the long-term implications of Lectio Divina. Daily activities were presented in Table 1.

Time	Activities
05.00 am - 06.00 am	Begin fasting with a personal prayer
07.00 am - 08.30 am	Breakfast and preparation for fasting. Fasting food and drinking and smoking. Those who cannot fast are allowed to drink.
08.30 am - 10.30 am	The prayer of Lectio Divina.
10.30 am - 16.30 pm	Personal reflection based on daily theme
16.30 pm - 18.00pm	Lectio Divina'prayers and sharing
18.00 pm - ...	End of the fasting day – Dinner and free time

Table 1. Daily Activities

⁴¹ Sandra M. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 16.

⁴² Schneiders.

⁴³ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 2.

⁴⁴ McGrath, 3.

No.	Name	Age	Length of Pastoral Ministry
1	AT	57 Years, 9 months	30 Years
2	JS	40 Years	13 Years, 7 months
3	DP	39 Years	11 Years, 7 months
4	FS	39 Years, 2 months	10 Years, 6 months
5	ES	38 Years	12 Years
6	JD	37 Years	9 Years, 6 months
7	SS	33 Years	9 Years
8	MM	33 Years, 9 months	3 Years, 9 months
9	AN	24 Years	-

Table 2. Participants List

The data in Table 2 shows that there are nine participants in the Lectio Divina retreat with different ages and different lengths of service. One participant is over 50 with 30 years of service. There are six participants in the age range of 30 to 40 years with a length of service of nine to 13 years. In addition, there was one participant who, although in his 30s, had three years and nine months of service. Finally, there was one participant with zero years of service.

No	Questions	Before	After
1	Praying in the morning	Always	Always
2	Praying in the evening	Always	Always
3	I pray for my wife	Always	Always
4	I pray for our children	Always	Always
5	I generally pray for fellow pastors	Seldom	Sometimes

6	I pray for the GKPS Synod Leadership	Seldom	Sometimes
7	I prayed for my work partners (the evangelist).	Seldom	Sometimes
8	Morning quiet time	Always	Always
9	Evening quiet time	Always	Always
10	Giving tithes or monthly offerings to the church	Seldom	Sometimes
11	Giving tithes or monthly offerings to people in need	Seldom	Sometimes
12	My service enthusiasm and motivation is high	Always	Always

Table 3. Behavioural and Spiritual Growth

Table 3 depicts behavioural and spiritual growth before and after Lectio Divina. The first respondent is AT, 30 years of pastoral ministry. The same questions and structure apply to all participants. From Table 3 there are seven items where AT is in the level of “always” category, namely: praying every morning and evening, praying for the wife, praying for the children, having a quiet time every morning and evening, and always serving with enthusiasm. From the same table, there are five items in the “seldom” level, namely praying for fellow pastors, praying for synod leaders, praying for co-workers, tithing regularly to the church, and tithing for the needy.

After attending the Lectio Divina retreat, seven items that were already at the “always” level were consistent. There are

five items or things that change from “seldom” to “sometimes,” namely praying for fellow pastors, praying for synod leaders, praying for work co-workers, and giving tithes to the church and the needy. In other words, the change that occurred was at the 100% level. In addition, AT also felt more peace in the ministry and the level of anxiety and stress decreased.

The second respondent was initialized as JS, 13 years length of pastoral ministry. Questions were the same as in the previous table. The survey results show that before attending the Lectio Divina retreat, there were three items where JS was at the “always” level, namely: praying every morning and evening, and giving tithes to the church. Three other items were at the “often” level, namely: praying for his wife and children and having a quiet time in the morning. Three items were in the “sometimes” category: praying for co-workers, tithing for the needy, and enthusiasm in ministry. There are two items at the “seldom” level, namely praying for synod leaders and having a quiet time every evening. And one item at the “never” level relates to praying for fellow ministers.

After participating in the Lectio Divina prayer retreat, there was a change from the “often” level with three items to the “always” level. Of the three items done

at the “sometimes” level, one changed to “always,” but two other items did not change, namely praying for fellow ministers in general and tithing to the person in need. One item that was at the “sometimes” level changed to “always,” namely enthusiasm for ministry. Two items that were at the “seldom” level also changed. One advanced from “seldom” to “sometimes” in relation to praying for synod leaders. The second changed from “seldom” to “often” in terms of having a quiet time every evening. Another change was in praying for co-workers from “never” to “sometimes.” From the above data, there are 3 things that JS always does, namely praying every morning and evening and tithing to the church. Of the remaining 9, 8 were found to change or 72% experienced change.

The third participant was initialed DP with 11 years of pastoral experience. Before going to the Lectio Divina retreat, there are two things that the DP does at the “always” level, namely, having a quiet time both in the morning and in the evening. Then there are three things at the “often” level, namely, praying every morning, tithing to the church, and serving with enthusiasm. Meanwhile, there are seven items that fall into the category of “sometimes,” namely: praying in the evening, praying for the wife, praying for children, praying for pastors in

general, praying for synod leaders, praying for work partners and serving with enthusiasm.

After participating in the *Lectio Divina* retreat, two items changed: praying for children from “sometimes” to “often” and enthusiasm for ministry from “often” to “always.” Two items at the “always” level remain unchanged, namely, having a quiet time each morning and evening. The “often” items of tithing and enthusiasm for service remained at the same level. The six items at the “sometimes” level, such as praying at night, praying for his wife, praying for fellow pastors, praying for synod leaders, and praying for co-workers, and giving tithe to the person in need also did not change. In other words, the changes that occurred were two out of 10 items, or 20%. Furthermore, DP remains consistent with the Bible reading program. He also became more sensitive to the spiritual needs of the church and encouraged him to serve more in the church. During the retreat, DP was among those who experienced strong catharsis. He felt guilty because he realized that he was too quick to get emotional when his wife forgot something when he left for the service, while his wife was very patient and never made demands. In other words, DP experienced enlightenment and change in his relationship with his wife.

The fourth respondent is FS, 10 years length of pastoral ministry. The data show that there are two items where FS are at the “often” level, namely, praying for children and tithing to the church. There are three items in the “sometimes” level, namely, praying in the morning and at night and giving tithes to the needy. There are seven items in the “seldom” level, namely: praying for wives, praying for pastors in general, praying for synod leaders, praying for co-workers, morning and evening bible reading, and enthusiasm in ministry. After attending the *Lectio Divina* prayer retreat, morning and evening prayer changed from category of “sometimes” to “always.” Praying for the wife changed from seldom to often. In terms of quiet time in the morning and evening, it changed from the level of “seldom” to “sometimes.” Regarding the enthusiasm in service, it changed from the level of “seldom” to “often.” There are two items where there was no change, namely, praying for the Synod leadership and tithing to the church. The data above shows that there are 10 items that have changed out of 12 items asked, or 83%.

The fifth respondent is ES, 12 years length of pastoral ministry. The ES data shows that there are seven items that are at the “always” level, namely: praying in the morning and night, praying for his wife,

praying for his children, praying for his co-workers, tithing to the church and serving with enthusiasm. There are three items that are done in the “seldom” level, namely praying for fellow pastors in general, praying for synod leaders, and giving tithes to people in need. There are two items that are at the “never” level, namely: reading the Bible every morning and night. After attending the Lectio Divina prayer retreat, ES was consistent with what had been done. All categories for all items remained the same. The seven items categorized as “always” level did not change. Likewise, those categorized as “often, sometimes, and never.”

The sixth respondent is JD, 9 years and 6 months length of pastoral ministry. The data describes that the items that JD always does are: praying for his wife, praying for his children, praying for pastors in general, praying for synod leaders, praying for work partners, having morning and evening devotions, tithing monthly to the church and to people in need, and serving enthusiastically. There are two items that fall into the “sometimes” category, namely morning and evening prayer. After attending the Lectio Divina retreat, the two items that was in the category of “sometimes,” namely praying in the morning and in the evening, became “always.” Meanwhile, 10 things that were always done remained the same or did not

change. In other words, the change has taken place in two items, or 100%.

The seventh respondent is SS, 9 years length of pastoral ministry. The data shows that there is one item that SS always do which is tithing to the church. There are three items that are often done, namely nighttime prayer, praying for children and serving with enthusiasm. In the “sometimes” category there are 4 items namely: morning and night prayer and morning and night bible reading. The data also shows that there are four items that are in the “seldom” category, namely: praying for fellow pastors, praying for synod leaders, praying for co-workers and giving tithes for those in need. Things that changed include morning prayer changed from “sometimes” to “often,” evening prayer from “often” to “always.” Another change that occurred was also in terms of praying for his wife from the level of “sometimes” to “often”.

There are three things that have not changed, namely praying for children in the “often” category and praying for fellow pastors and Synod Leaders remain in the “seldom” category. Meanwhile, praying for work partners changed from “seldom” to “often.” Another thing that has also changed is in terms of morning quiet time from the category of “seldom” to always. Meanwhile, having a quiet time at night before going to

bed also changed from category of “often” to “always.” In terms of giving tithe offerings to the church, there was no change or in the category of “always.” Meanwhile, tithing to the needy changed from “seldom” to “sometimes.” The spirit of service also changed from “often” to “always.” Of the 12 things asked, 9 things changed. This result shows a 75% change.

The eighth respondent is MM, 3 years and 9 months length of pastoral ministry. MM's data show 12 items were answered in the category of “often.” After participating in the above activities, all of them changed to “always.” In other words, there were 100% changes in all categories. From the observations and interview during the retreat, MM was the participant who experienced the most catharsis by crying and screaming in the strongest voice. While screaming he said, “Forgive me God, forgive me God.” When asked what happened after the prayer session, he admitted that he had been intimidated by his elders and also by the leadership of his church to stop doing the healing and deliverance ministry. The leaders assume that this ministry is irrelevant.

The ninth respondent is AN, less than a year length of pastoral ministry. The data shows that there is one item that AN does in the category of “often,” namely in terms of praying in the morning. One item

is categorized in “sometimes” level, namely serve enthusiastically. Five items fall into the “seldom” category, namely praying in the morning, praying for the fellow pastor, praying for co-workers, and reading the Bible in the morning and night. There are three items that fall into the category of “never,” namely praying for the Synod Leader, giving tithes to the church and giving tithes to the needy.

The changes are as follows. In terms of praying in the morning, it changed from category of “often” to “always.” The enthusiasm of service that was in the category of “sometimes” changed to the category of “always.” In terms of praying at night, it changed from the category of “seldom” to “often” and praying for fellow pastors from “seldom” to “often.” In addition, there was also a change from “never” praying for the synod leader to “often.” There was also a change in the item of reading the Bible in the morning from “seldom” to “often” and reading the Bible at night from “seldom” to “sometimes.” In addition, there are two items, namely in terms of giving tithes to the church and to the needy, which changed from the category of “never” to “sometimes.” There are two items that AN did not fill in, namely praying for his wife and children because he is still single. Of the 10 items above, AN experienced spiritual changes in all items or 100%.

The implementation of the Lectio Divina method for the above 9 Lutheran clergy confirms that this method has a significant impact on spiritual growth and improvement of ministry. Overall, significant changes were found, even reaching 100%. The clergies who have carried out the spiritual practices mentioned in the questionnaire have increased their intensity from the level of “seldom” to “often” and even to “always.” One participant, ES, did not experience any change. ES is a special case who, according to our follow-up clinical deep interviews and observations, is struggling with a confidential issue that cannot be further explained here. In this case, ES needs special pastoral support. Above all, this lectio divina as a spiritual enrichment method has a high success rate. Furthermore, it is contextual and applicable in various settings.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Lectio Divina was found to be positively associated with increased consistency in prayer and spiritual practices among most participants. Lectio Divina as a model of spiritual formation is a spiritual heritage that has been practiced since the time of the Church Fathers and continued from the Middle Ages to the present day. Lectio divina has also been used by other sciences and religions in an interdisciplinary and interreligious way. This mo-

del of spiritual formation is flexible and can be contextually adapted. Most participants (8 out of 9) demonstrated measurable improvement in their spiritual practices across multiple indicators. We believe while this study is limited in scope, it provides preliminary evidence that Lectio Divina may be an effective spiritual formation method in certain Lutheran pastoral settings in Indonesia.

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