

## **Week 1 Handout:**

**Visio Divina—Divine Seeing with Collage, Tina Karagulian**

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Visio divina, Latin for divine seeing, is praying with images to listen to the Divine. This process of Visio divina includes creating a picture of images you put together into a collage. There are times in our life that we have not fully felt experiences from our lives, and they are stored in our bodies. Sometimes we cannot put words to these experiences yet, and images are a wonderful first step in that process. They help us understand, express, and to integrate experiences so that we are freer in our bodies. For example, one woman began to put together images of a young girl, and other images of sunlight, dark clouds, etc. Only later did she realize that she left behind a beautiful part of herself from her childhood that she needed in her life now. She felt sadness for not having that part of herself, and felt the feelings of loss, and then felt the sunlight warm her. The Holy within guided her in the creating of her collage, so that she could feel the feelings that were stuck or frozen inside her. She could then integrate, or bring together, these experiences, able to feel the sunlight of her soul within her. Each time she felt and integrated experiences, she felt more available to follow her heart and to be present for herself and others.

Collages can also help us in many different times of our lives: to remember a loved one who died, to see how we were supported during a moment of our lives, to put images of what we would like more of in our lives, or to visually show gratitude for the present blessings and gratitude for our lives right now. Collecting images, cutting through our own stuck places by cutting (or ripping) images, and re-assembling images in new ways help us to do the same with our lives. We bring to life what is often hidden, not yet spoken, or stuck within us. The Holy inside of our hearts works with us to honor our feelings, let them go, and to radiate the light of our sacred hearts. No one can interpret or fully understand your collage. The Divine within you walks with you to see the wonderful unfolding of your life.

### **Steps of Visio Divina Collage:**

#### **Materials:**

For a collage, collect magazines (such as National Geographic that include photographs of people from many cultures), photocopies of family photographs (optional), scissors, glue sticks, and paper. Add any materials you feel inspired to bring.

**Quiet mind and body:** Ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit within your heart. Breathe, in and out, slowly. Move out of your head. Soften. Soften more. Rest in your heart. With each breath, go deeper into your sacred heart. Rest here as long as you need.

**Collect images:** Cut or rip out images from a magazine or photocopies of photographs that mean something to you. It is not necessary to understand why an image comes to you. Just notice which ones speak to you in some way. If you always cut things neatly, experiment with ripping images, to allow for a different experience. Take your time, and make a pile of these images. Notice in your body when the process is finished, or complete for you. (You

may collect and cut/rip words out at this point, too.)

**Assemble images for a collage:** With the paper for your background, put images from your pile of images onto the paper. Notice what naturally wants to go together. Another way is to select an image, put glue on the back with your glue stick, and place it on the paper as you go. Repeat with another image. There are no right or wrong ways—there are many ways to create your collage. Experiment with placing images on top of each other in layers, (writing words under images if you choose), placing images in different directions on your paper, or place your image off the side of the paper. When the process feels complete to you, or you feel a stopping point in your body, go to the next step.

**Collect words:** If you are led, select, cut or rip, and assemble words onto your collage. Create as many collages as you choose.

**In one sitting, you may choose to create more than one collage. Follow your inner guidance.**

**When finished:** Look at the collage slowly, noticing the colors, people, places, and things. Remain with the image for one to two minutes. If you would like, write down a few words about the image.

Take a second, deeper,  
look. Where is there movement?  
What relationships do you see?  
Engage your imagination.  
Where are you in the artwork?  
What do you see from that perspective?  
What deeper meaning emerges?

**Respond to the image with meditation / prayer / contemplative presence (Be with, sit with your image over time. Let it inform and interact with you in any way that comes):**

Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Are there feelings that wanted to be felt and given to God?  
Offer that prayer to the Divine, and ask to feel and understand what is lifegiving for you at this time.  
Write down a few words about your experience.

**Quiet mind and body. Breathe, in and out, slowly. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms and legs.**

**Soften. Rest in your heart. With each breath, go deeper into your sacred heart. Rest there as long as you need.**

**Feel the fullness and life radiating in your sacred heart, and savor the feelings generated in your heart.**

**Breathe them in, deeply.**

**Thank the Holy within your heart, and all those whom you invited to support you (ancestors, saints, and holy ones) who were with you today.**