

Chapter 8

Living a Moral Life in Christ

[*The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* by Michelangelo da Caravaggio]

This assignment will bring students face-to-face with the question of doubt: seeing is believing. First, read the story of “doubting Thomas” from John 20:24-29. Next, ask: How do you think Thomas felt before or after seeing Jesus? Do you think the nickname “doubting Thomas” is a fair one? After having read this, what do you think it means to “doubt”? Is seeing the same thing as believing? How does Jesus respond to Thomas? Is he cruel, kind, compassionate? Does he do what Thomas wants? Let these questions guide your viewing of the Caravaggio painting.

Continue by displaying the [artwork](#) and guiding the students through a visio divina exercise using the Visio Divina Script.

Visio Divina Script

1. *Visio*. This Latin word means “beholding,” “vision,” or “gaze.” Look at the painting in detail. Observe different moments, aspects, colors, and characters in the painting. Make notes about what stands out to you.
2. *Meditatio*. This word means, of course, “meditation” or “reflection.” What stood out to you? Think about this. Does it connect to your life? Could it inspire you to change something in your life or deepen some aspect of your life? Does your reflection raise up with it any questions or remembrances in your mind?
3. *Oratio*. This word means “prayer.” It could also be thought of as your personal *response* to what God has said to you in your time of reflection. Speak with God about what has come up for you – the questions, challenges, and memories. Ask him for help. Pray for those in your life who have come to mind during this time. Thank God for what he has blessed you with and what he might bless you with in future.
4. *Contemplatio*. This word means “contemplation.” Spend some time in the presence of God. Turn over your reflection in your mind again. Does anything jump out at you a second time? Remind yourself of what you prayed for and ask God to stay with you. What do you hear from God? Is he saying anything to you? Breathe deeply. Rest in God’s presence.
5. *Actio*. This word means “action.” This is the step in the process that leads to *conversion*—turning our lives in a new direction, which is what happens when we encounter God. Do you want to be closer to God? How? Do you want to be closer to those around you? How? In other words, now that you’ve had this prayer experience, what are you going to do? Has anything risen up in your heart that could help you live a better or different life? Plan out some steps to make that happen.