

Lectio divina – Week 3 from Dec 2nd to 8th 2018

Small communities of faith 2nd Sunday of Advent – Year C (maximum 1 ½ - 2 hours)

Welcome.... And let's start

Take time in silence. Take a few minutes of silence... just silence... stillness. Concentrate on your breathing. Be aware of the Lord's presence. Don't think. Just be present. If you have difficulty to be still just read a few words or sentences from a psalm. (You can also listen to 3 minutes of quiet and inspiring music while keeping silent, but eventually it's good to just live this moment in silence.)

Sharing Take a few moments to discuss the "highlight of my week". How was my week? For what am I most grateful? If you are comfortable, try to share something you are struggling with these days? Where do I need the Lord's help? Where do I need the community's prayers? Please be brief (max 2 min).

Note: All that is said between the participants must remain confidential in order that everyone feels at ease to share freely about oneself. Thank you for respecting this.

Lectio Divina Scripture Sunday December 9th

Psalm 126

1st reading: Baruch 5, 1-9

(I prefer that you use your own bible, no photocopies. This forces you to open your Bible and read it... what a great idea!) It is best the group use various translations. This will allow for a more interesting conversation. During *Lectio* we usually center on only **1** reading from the Sunday Scripture. But this week we will also do psalm 126. So we will do *Lectio* (all the steps) with the **two** texts suggested. The essential thing in *Lectio* is reflecting in depth on *one* text, letting the Word of God sink into you, not going through all the readings. Let the Holy Spirit guide you.

Read the meditation for this week. This year we will share what touches you in the meditation. Re-read it at home and do the spiritual exercise.

Time of prayer together (There will be a time of spontaneous prayer before we say our final prayer.) Take turns to pray... as you so wish. Here are a few suggestions:

a) prayer of thanksgiving, of praise, of blessing and adoration

I thank you Lord for.... I praise you Lord for.... I bless you Lord for....

b) prayer of petition, of intercession *I ask you Lord for... I pray for this... situation...*

The meeting is ended. It is time to head home, till the next meeting, the following week. There should be no coffee and cookies after the meeting... However, you might want to prepare a potluck meal or snack for the next and last meeting, the week of December 9th.

ADVENT 2018

Meditation 3 – for small community faith groups

2nd Sunday of Advent (year C) – December 9th

Text from *Evangelii Gaudium* The Joy of the Gospel¹

6. There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved. I understand the grief of people who have to endure great suffering, yet slowly but surely we all have to let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet yet firm trust, even amid the greatest distress: “My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is... But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness... It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (*Lam* 3:17, 21-23, 26).

Questions to Ponder

At its deepest, the joy of the gospel transcends my own particular joy. It is a joy “for all mankind”. What is this joy?

How can human beings rejoice in this Christmas mystery? After all, what are human being’s worst fears and terrors?

Think of the sources of our sadnesses. Is Christian joy, just “make believe”, or is it rooted in reality?

Joy springs from faith and hope. What is this hope and what is this faith, which is the ground of joy?

Spiritual Exercise

Imagine that you know nothing about Jesus. Imagine that you are completely blind to all of this knowledge. Imagine that you have never heard about God’s love, the news about “after death”, and never heard about “God” dieing on a cross, like us. Imagine that you know nothing, and just wander through life ... knowing only what you see and hear: make money. Buy a house. Have as much fun as you can. Get old, and ... lose your strength.

Where would your hope and joy be? What would that be like?

Now, compare to what you do know now.

¹ Francis I, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, Chapter One, The Church’s Missionary Transformation, n°6, (https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

