

Lectio divina – Week 4 from Dec 9th to 15th 2018

Small communities of faith

3rd Sunday of Advent – Year C – Sunday of Joy

(maximum 1 ½ - 2 hours)

1. **Welcome....** And let's start
2. **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.)
3. **Sharing** Take a few moments to discuss the "highlight of my week". How was my week? For what am I most grateful? What graces have I received? 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.

4. **Lectio Divina** **Scripture Sunday December 16th**
1st reading: Zephaniah 3, 14-20

(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. Focus on only **1** reading from the Sunday Scripture. This week Song of Isaiah (Is 12, 1-6) replaces the psalm. Afterwards, do *Lectio* (all the steps) with the *one* text 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.

5. **Read the meditation** We will discuss it during the sharing of a meal or a snack, if that is what you have planned. For the time being, just read it. Read again at home.
6. **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...*

7. **The meeting is ended, our last meeting** We have our snack or potluck meal now, or coffee and cookies as you may have planned.... finally!! ☺

8. **Share your experience of these four weeks**

During the snack or meal, look back on the four weeks spent together. How did I benefit from our meetings? What did I learn? Did I grow in my faith, as a person? What touched me more specifically? And now ... what could our small community do?

Advent 2018

Meditation 4 – for small community faith groups 3rd Sunday of Advent (year C) – December 16th

Text from *Evangilii Gaudium* The Joy of the Gospel

5. The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ's cross, constantly invites us to rejoice. A few examples will suffice. "Rejoice!" is the angel's greeting to Mary (Lk 1:28). Mary's visit to Elizabeth makes John leap for joy in his mother's womb (cf. Lk 1:41). In her song of praise, Mary proclaims: "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour" (Lk 1:47). When Jesus begins his ministry, John cries out: "For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled" (Jn 3:29). Jesus himself "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21). His message brings us joy: "I have said these things to you, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11). Our Christian joy drinks of the wellspring of his brimming heart. He promises his disciples: "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy" (Jn 16:20). He then goes on to say: "But I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (Jn 16:22). The disciples "rejoiced" (Jn 20:20) at the sight of the risen Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the first Christians "ate their food with glad and generous hearts" (2:46). Wherever the disciples went, "there was great joy" (8:8); even amid persecution they continued to be "filled with joy" (13:52). The newly baptized eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" (8:39), while Paul's jailer "and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God" (16:34). Why should we not also enter into this great stream of joy?¹

Questions to Ponder

What is Christian joy? Is this the same as "happy".

Can one have deep joy, and yet be sad or discouraged?

What is this "stream of joy" of which the pope speaks?

Christmas is not an easy time for many people. Where does our joy spring from?

Spiritual Exercise

Try to imagine the scene, in your mind, of the nativity. Imagine the animals, Joseph, the shepherds, the smells, the cold, the humidity, the flies, and all of the real stuff. Imagine that you are in the scene, and try to put yourself in the shoes of ... a shepherd ... of Joseph ... or Mary ... of the angel ... and experience their "joy" or "wonder".

Two videos of the Nativity played by children and produced by "stpaulsartsandmedia".

Here are the links :

The Christmas story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zduwusyip8M>

Star News Bethlehem <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBaTUwhq0-4>

¹ Francis I, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangilii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, Chapter One, The Church's Missionary Transformation, n°5, (https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)