

LECTIO DIVINA

Year 2019-2020

FROM THE WORD OF GOD...

THE PATHS TO EMBRACE

THE WORLD TODAY!

REFERENCE SOURCES:

Holy Scripture

Recent Church documents

Franciscan sources

2017 General Chapter document



Rome, October 4, 2019
Solemnity of St. Francis

Dearest Sisters,

to each and every one of you my greeting of “Peace and Joy” in the Lord!

The annual presentation of the Community Lectio Divina is always an occasion to urge ourselves to renew our journey of conformation to Jesus as FMSC, allowing ourselves to be illuminated and guided by the Word.

His Word in fact offers us, as the Final Document of the Synod of the youth (n.133) says, *“the ability to read one’s own experience and the events of history in faith”*.

The same document explains how *“from listening to the Word we pass to the joy of an encounter that fills the heart, gives meaning to existence and infuses new energy.”* (Final Document of the Synod of the youth n.114).

I hope that the experience of these years of sharing the Community Lectio Divina has confirmed the irreplaceable value of this means for our journey of ongoing formation.

I therefore present this new path with so much confidence in the constant and active presence of the Holy Spirit and in the responsibility of every sister and community.

The scheme of Lectio Divina 2019-2020 follows the theme:

From the Word of God... the paths to embrace the world today!

It considers the Congregational formative theme of this year, inserted

in the six-year period that intends to help everyone to nourish and renew our specific missionary identity.

Each Lectio has a specific theme that is presented by:

- a passage from the Word of God;
- a passage from the recent documents of the Church (Synod of the Youth and Message of the World Mission Day 2019) or Franciscan Sources;
- a point of the document of the General Chapter 2017 that presents a specific commitment we have taken on precisely by the Chapter.


The themes also want to help us to make the journey of missionary renewal that the Church is proposing to all the people of God with the ***Extraordinary Missionary Month*** (October 2019).

I invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *whose eyes, reflecting the light of the Holy Spirit, looked at life with faith and treasured all things in her youthful heart.* (Christus Vivit 46).

May her example of great docility to the Word help each of us and each community to remain ...

In union with her Son, ... *to set out ... to be involved in the mission of Jesus, ... the mission of cooperating, ... with the Church, in bringing new sons and daughters of God to birth in the Spirit and in faith.* (World Mission Day 2019)

A blessed journey to all


Sister Paola Dotto
Superior general

Prot. n. 93/2019

1. JESUS: THE EMBRACE OF GOD THE FATHER IN THE WORLD

From the Gospel of John (Jn 1: 14-18)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'"

And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

From the Message of Pope Francis For World Mission Day 2019

Our filial relationship with God is not something simply private, but always in relation to the Church. Through our communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we, together with so many of our other brothers and sisters, are born to new life.

This divine life is not a product for sale – we do not practise proselytism – but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission.

We received this gift freely and we share it freely (cf. Mt 10:8), without excluding anyone. God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation.

From the Chapter document 2017

The blessing embrace of the Father that we experience every day leads to trustful abandonment to His Will, revives faith, strengthens hope, communicates Trinitarian Love and is the source of true joy in fraternal life and mission.



2. THE DESIRE AND THE RESEARCH OF THE ENCOUNTER

From the Gospel of John (Jn 20: 1-18)

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

From the final document of the Synod of young people (n 115)

Having a profound desire for the Lord and defying the darkness of the night, Mary Magdalene runs to Peter and the other disciple; her movement triggers theirs, her womanly dedication anticipates the path of the apostles and opens up the way for them. At the dawn of that day, the first day of the week, she experiences a surprise encounter: Mary went in search because she loved, but she finds because she is loved. The Risen One makes himself known as he calls her by name and he asks her not to cling to him, because his risen body is not a treasure to be locked up, but a mystery to be shared. Thus she becomes the first missionary disciple, the apostle of the apostles.

From the Chapter document 2017

With the gaze turned to the love of the Father who embraces us, we commit ourselves to:

- reserve time and space for personal and community prayer, for a living and vitalizing encounter with Christ, recognizing that we are in need of salvation.



3. “PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP” WITH JESUS

From the Gospel of Luke (Lk 5:1-5)

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret.

He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets.

Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.”

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit* (n. 141)

When everything seems to be standing still and stagnant, when our personal issues trouble us, and social problems do not meet with the right responses, it does no good to give up.

Jesus is the way: welcome him into your “boat” and put out into the deep! He is the Lord! He changes the way we see life. Faith in Jesus leads to greater hope, to a certainty based not on our qualities and skills, but on the word of God, on the invitation that comes from him. Without making too many human calculations, and without worrying about things that challenge your security, put out into the deep.

Go out of yourselves.

From the Chapter document 2017

With the gaze turned to the love of the Father who embraces us, we commit ourselves to:

- contemplate His presence in ourselves, in the events of personal, community and social life, seeing Providence guiding History.



4. MARY EMBRACES EVERY PERSON IN JESUS

From the Gospel of John (Jn 19: 25-30)

So the soldiers did this. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfil the scripture, "I thirst."

A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* (n. 44, 45)

What promise is present in my heart that I can take up? Mary's mission would undoubtedly be difficult .

Without yielding to evasions or illusions, "she accompanied the suffering of her Son; she supported him by her gaze and protected him with her heart. She shared his suffering, yet was not overwhelmed by it. She was the woman of strength who uttered her 'yes', who supports and accompanies, protects and embraces.

She is the great guardian of hope ... From her, we learn how to say 'yes' to the stubborn endurance and creativity of those who, undaunted, are ever ready to start over again".

From the Message of Pope Francis for the World Mission Day 2019

We entrust the Church's mission to Mary our Mother. In union with her Son, from the moment of the Incarnation the Blessed Virgin set out on her pilgrim way.

She was fully involved in the mission of Jesus, a mission that became her own at the foot of the Cross: the mission of co-operating, as Mother of the Church, in bringing new sons and daughters of God to birth in the Spirit and in faith.



5. THE HOLY SPIRIT OPENS THE HEARTS TO THE WORLD

From the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-11)

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language?"

We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travellers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

From the Message of Pope Francis For World Mission Day 2019

A renewed Pentecost opens wide the doors of the Church, in order that no culture remain closed in on itself and no people cut off from the universal communion of the faith. No one ought to remain closed in self-absorption, in the self-referentiality of his or her own ethnic and religious affiliation.

The Easter event of Jesus breaks through the narrow limits of worlds, religions and cultures, calling them to grow in respect for the dignity of men and women, and towards a deeper conversion to the truth of the Risen Lord who gives authentic life to all.

From the 2017 Chapter document

With missionary passion, we commit ourselves:

- To educate to justice, to peace, to universal fraternity, to the safeguarding of creation, to the search for the common good, to relationships of gratuitousness and mercy, to fight courageously against the corruption of the world and the destruction of the “common home”.



6. EMBRACING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

From First Letter of St. John (1 Jn 1: 1-7)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us -that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

From the Message of Pope Francis for World Mission Day 2019

The Church is on mission in the world. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God's own eyes and heart. Hope opens us up to the eternal horizons of the divine life that we share.

Charity, of which we have a foretaste in the sacraments and in fraternal love, impels us to go forth to the ends of the earth.

A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion.

From the 2017 Chapter document

The Word of God, revealed to us in the sacramental life and in the liturgy, animates the life of fraternity and motivates the proclamation of what we have seen and contemplated.



7. THE EMBRACE OF CONVERSION

From the Gospel of St. Mark (Mk 1: 40-45)

A leper came to him and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean."

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean. "The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once.

Then he said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

From the Legend of the three companions (3 Comp 11; FF 1407)

One day when he was praying earnestly to the Lord, he heard himself say: "Francis, if you want to know my will, you must despise and hate all that you loved and desired in the world. When you have begun to do so, it will seem unbearable and bitter to you as it was attractive and sweet to you before; and from the things that once disliked, you will draw great sweetness and immense pleasure ".

Happy with this revelation and having become strong in the Lord, Francis, while one day rode around Assisi, met a leper on the road. Of these unfortunates he felt great repulsion, but this time, by conquering his instincts, he dismounted and offered the leper money, kissing his hand. And receiving a kiss of peace, he mounted his horse and continued on his way.

From that day he began to free himself from his own selfishness, to the point of knowing how to overcome himself perfectly, with the help of God. After a few days, he took with him much money and went to the sanatorium of the lepers; he gathered them together and gave alms to each one, kissing his hand. On his return, the contact that he had previously resisted, that is, to see and touch the lepers, became really sweet.

From the 2017 Chapter document

With the gaze turned to the love of the Father who embraces us, we commit ourselves to:

- live in a permanent state of conversion from which come inspiration and concrete choices to announce and give the world the infinite love of the Father.

With missionary passion, we commit ourselves to:

- allow ourselves to be moved by the suffering of so many poor, marginalized brothers and sisters, near and far, engaging us ... in their human drama with delicacy of mind and sympathetic listening, taking care of those who lack love, human values, means ...



8. THE EMBRACE THAT TRANSFORMS THE LOVER INTO THE BELOVED

From the Letter to the Galatians (Gal 6: 14-18)

But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

From the “Legenda major” of St. Bonaventure (LegM XIII, 3,4,5)

Thus the seraphic ardor of desire caught him in God and a tender sentiment of compassion transformed him into the One who wanted, by excess of charity, to be crucified. One morning, as the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross approached, while he prayed on the side of the mountain, he saw the figure like a seraph, with six wings so bright as fiery, descend from the sublimity of the heavens: it, with very rapid flight, holding on hovering in the air, he came close to the man of God, and then the figure of a man appeared in his wings, a crucified man, who had hands and feet stretched out and stuck on the cross. Two wings rose above his head, two stretched out to fly and two veiled the whole body. At that sight he was greatly surprised, while joy and sadness flooded his heart. He felt joy for the kind attitude with which he saw himself looked at by Christ, under the figure of the seraph. But seeing him stuck on the cross pierced his soul with a sword, painful of compassion. He stared, with full of wonder, at this vision so mysterious, aware that the infirmity of the passion could not possibly co-exist with the spiritual and immortal nature of seraph.

But from here he understood, finally, by divine revelation, the purpose for which the divine providence had shown that vision to his eyes, that is, to let him know in advance that he, the friend of Christ, was about to be transformed into a portrait visible of Christ, crucified Jesus, not through the martyrdom of the flesh, but through the burning of the spirit.

Disappearing, the vision left in his heart a wonderful ardor and similar signs wonderful left imprinted in his flesh. Immediately, in fact, in his hands and in his feet, signs of nails began to appear, like those he had observed earlier in the image of the crucified man.

The hands and feet, right in the centre, were seen nailed to; the head of the nails protruded in the inside of the hands and in the upper part of the feet, while the points protruded from the opposite side. The heads in the hands and feet were round and black; the points, on the other hand, were extended, bent backwards and riveted, and came out of the flesh itself, sticking on the rest of the flesh. The right side was like a spear and covered with a red scar, which he often gave off sacred blood, soaking his cassock and underpants...

From the 2017 Chapter document

The trustful abandonment to the Father is expressed in the life of ardent, intense prayer, lived in every moment of the day, which generates, through the presence of the Spirit, communion with Christ and transforms us.



9. MISSIONARIES IN THE FRATERNAL EMBRACE

From the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 18: 21-35)

Then Peter went up to him and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?'

Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times. 'And so the kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants.

When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet, with the words, "Be patient with me and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt.

Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow-servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him, saying, "Pay what you owe me." His fellow-servant fell at his feet and appealed to him, saying, "Be patient with me and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt.

His fellow-servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him.

Then the master sent for the man and said to him, "You wicked servant, I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow-servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart."

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* (n. 217)

In a word, to create a “home” is to create “a family”. “It is to learn to feel connected to others by more than merely utilitarian and practical bonds, to be united in such a way as to feel that our life is a bit more human. To create a home is to let prophecy take flesh and make our hours and days less cold, less indifferent and anonymous. It is to create bonds by simple, everyday acts that all of us can perform. A home, as we all know, demands that everyone work together.

No one can be indifferent or stand apart, since each is a stone needed to build the home. This also involves asking the Lord to grant us the grace to learn how to be patient, to forgive one another, to start over each day. How many times should I forgive and start over? Seventy times seven times, as many times as necessary.

To create strong bonds requires confidence and trust nurtured daily by patience and forgiveness. And that is how the miracle takes place: we feel that here we are reborn, here we are all reborn, because we feel God’s caress that enables us to dream of a more human world, and therefore of a world more divine”.

From the 2017 Chapter document

Called to live as disciples of Jesus, we all welcome each other as sisters belonging to the same Family of God, manifesting unity in the diversity as FMSC.

In the fraternal encounter, we embrace each sister as a gift, without expecting the other to be better according to our ideas.



10. MISSIONARIES OF LOVE ... AND WITH LOVE

From the first Letter of St. John (1 Jn 4: 15-21)

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* (n.116)

His is "a love that does not overwhelm or oppress, cast aside or reduce to silence, humiliate or domineer. It is the love of the Lord, a daily, discreet and respectful love; a love that is free and freeing, a love that heals and raises up.

The love of the Lord has to do more with raising up than knocking down, with reconciling than forbidding, with offering new changes than condemning, with the future than the past".

From the 2017 Chapter document

The love drawn from the Heart of Christ and nourished in fraternal life urges us to embrace every brother and sister of every social condition.



11. LISTENING: THE FIRST EMBRACE THAT EVANGELIZES

From the book of Exodus (Ex 3: 6-10)

I am the God of your father, he continued, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

But the LORD said: I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry against their taskmasters, so I know well what they are suffering.

Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them up from that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now indeed the outcry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them. Now, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

From the final document of the Synod of young people (n. 6)

Listening is an encounter in freedom, which calls for humility, patience, readiness to understand, and an effort to respond in new ways.

Listening transforms the hearts of those who do it, especially when it takes place with an inner disposition of harmony and docility to the Spirit.

It is not simply a source of information or a strategy for achieving a goal, but the way that God himself relates to his people.

God sees the distress of his people and hears their cry; deeply moved, he comes down to deliver them. The Church, by her listening, enters into the movement of God who, in his Son, draws near to every human being.

From the 2017 Chapter document

As minor sisters, we live poorly among the poor, with an attitude of welcome and thoughtful concern, caring for every brother or sister without distinction.

To live as sisters, as gifts to each other, we commit ourselves to...:

- grasp opportunities to meet others, offering generously what we are and what we have, urging and encouraging, according to the circumstances, assistance or support interventions.



12. A HEART THAT KNOWS HOW TO CRY

From the Gospel of St. John (Jn 11: 11-15, 32-45)

Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* (n. 75-76)

As a Church, may we never fail to weep before these tragedies of our young.

May we never become habituated to them, for anyone incapable of tears cannot be a mother. We want to weep so that society itself can be more of a mother, so that in place of killing it can learn to give birth, to become a promise of life... Some realities in life are only seen with eyes cleansed by tears.

I would like each of you to ask yourself this question: Can I weep? Can I weep when I see a child who is starving, on drugs or on the street, homeless, abandoned, mistreated or exploited as a slave by society? Or is my weeping only the self-centred moaning of those who cry because they want something else?” Try to learn to weep for all those young people less fortunate than yourselves. Weeping is also an expression of mercy and compassion. If tears do not come, ask the Lord to give you the grace to weep for the sufferings of others. Once you can weep, then you will be able to help others from the hear

From the 2017 Chapter document

With missionary passion, we commit ourselves to:

- do not remain indifferent to events that afflict humanity in any part of the world, but donate time, prayer and availability of heart, with affectionate attitude and caring solicitude, to injured, “voiceless” and discriminated people.



13. FROM EXPERIENCE TO TESTIMONY

From the Gospel of St.Luke (Lk 15:11-24)

And he said, "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that falls to me". And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the pigs ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."'" And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son". But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to make merry.

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* (n.120)

"We are saved by Jesus because he loves us and cannot go against his nature. We can do any number of things against him, yet he loves us and he saves us. For only what is loved can be saved.

Only what is embraced can be transformed. The Lord's love is greater than all our problems, frailties and flaws. Yet it is precisely through our problems, frailties and flaws that he wants to write this love story.

He embraced the prodigal son, he embraced Peter after his denials, and he always ... always ... always embraces us after every fall, helping us to rise and get back on our feet. Because the worst fall, and pay attention to this ... the worst fall, the one that can ruin our lives, is when we stay down and do not allow ourselves to be helped up”.

From the 2017 Chapter document

To live as sisters, as gifts given to each other, we commit ourselves to:

- rediscover a style of hospitality that is simple, genuine and sincere, open to interculturality and internationality;
- “say good” of our sisters, accepting all with respect, esteem and mutual trust and valuing the positive and what unites, avoiding jealousy, envy, prejudice and gossip;
- act with consistency and sincerity in seeking the truth in charity;
- open ourselves in a spirit of minority by forgiving and accepting forgiveness.



14. BEING WITNESSES ... WALKING TOGETHER

From the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2: 42-48)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people.

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

From the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit* (n. 36)

All should regard us as friends and neighbours, like the apostles, who “enjoyed the good will of all the people” (Acts 2:47; cf. 4:21.33; 5:13). Yet at the same time we must dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, purity, perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and the common good, love for the poor, and social friendship.

From the 2017 cChapter document

The redemptive love that we draw from the Heart of Jesus Crucified urges us to go out, to forget ourselves, to embrace wounded humanity in prayer and apostolic activity and to accompany it on the journey of life.





Prayers of invocation before the Lectio Divina

1. Lord, we thank you because you have gathered us in your presence to make us listen to your Word: in it you reveal your love to us and you make us know your will.
Make every other voice that is not your own be silenced in us; send your Holy Spirit to open our minds and to heal and enlighten our hearts.
Only in this way will our encounter with your Word be a renewal of the covenant and communion with you and the Son and the Holy Spirit, God blessed for ever and ever. Amen.
2. Our Father, here we are, listening to your living and efficacious Word: it will penetrate us as a double-edged sword and in the power of your Holy Spirit call us to conversion, transform our lives and make us disciples of Jesus Christ, your Son.
He who is your Word made flesh, your face and your image.
Be blessed now and forever and ever. Amen.

3. You wanted, O Father that at the Angel's Annunciation the Immaculate Virgin conceived your eternal Word, and filled with the light of the Holy Spirit would become the temple of the new covenant: make us adhere humbly to your will, like the Virgin who trusted in your Word.
For our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who is God, and lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit for all ages and ages. Amen
4. Lord Jesus Christ, today your light shines in us, source of life and joy! Send the Spirit of love and truth, so that we may discover and interpret in the light of the Word, the signs of your divine presence in our world.
May we welcome these signs in faith that we may always live in the joy of your presence among us. Amen
5. Come Holy Spirit the Consoler; fill our life with your light so we can be witnesses of the crucified and risen Christ.
Come in our midst, and may we remember the words of Jesus.
Come in our midst, and inspire us with Jesus' thoughts.
Come Holy Comforter Spirit, come here today and always in our existence, make fruitful our life with the strength of your Word, so that we can give birth to the Word of God and offer Him to the world. Amen
6. Our God, Father of light,
you have sent your Word into the world,
wisdom out of your mouth,
that has taken dominion over all the peoples of the earth.
You wanted your own Son, eternal Word with you,
to become flesh and place his tent between us.

Send us the Holy Spirit now to give us a heart capable of listening and allow us to meet him in these holy Scriptures and generate the Word in us. Your Holy Spirit leads us to the truth, give us intelligence and perseverance. We ask this for Christ, our Lord, blessed for ever and ever. Amen!”

7. O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you love and want to save all your children: pour out on us that Spirit with whom you consecrated Jesus and sent Him to announce the good news to the poor.
Give us the intelligence of the Gospel and of people so that we can bring Jesus to all our brothers and sisters, helping them to meet Him who is the only Saviour.
O Virgin Mary, of deep listening, make us docile disciples of the Word. Invoke the Spirit with us to descend and renew the face of the earth. Amen.
8. Spirit of truth, sent by Jesus to guide us to the whole truth, enlighten our minds so that we may understand the Scriptures. You, who overshadowed Mary and made her fruitful ground where the Word of God could germinate, purify our hearts from all obstacles to the Word.
Help us to learn like her to listen with good and pure hearts to the Word that God speaks to us in life and in Scripture, so that we may observe the Word and produce good fruit through our perseverance. Amen



***PRAYERS
TO CONCLUDE
THE
LECTIO DIVINA***



1. O Jesus, divine Missionary, consumed by zeal for the glory of your Father and the redemption of souls, you made of yourself an announcer and propagator of that Kingdom of holiness and grace.

Grant us a ray of your spirit, which teaches us to give ourselves without reserve, to be understanding without weakness, firm and resolute without harshness, discrete and prudence without vain fears of the world and its judgments. I

Infuse your light, to discover the needs of people; your warmth and your strength, so as not to fail in the face of coldness or obstacles, the gentle efficacy of your grace, to move hearts and gently guide them to you.

2. *Prayer for the extraordinary Missionary Month 2019*

Our Father, Your Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ
risen from the dead, He entrusted to His disciples
the mandate to “go and make disciples of all peoples”;
You remind us of it through our baptism
we are made participants in the mission of the Church.
For the gifts of Your Holy Spirit, grant us grace
to be courageous and zealous witnesses of the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
still far from being realized,
can find new and effective expressions
that bring life and light to the world.
Help us to ensure that all peoples
can meet with saving love
and the mercy of Jesus Christ,
He who is God, and lives and reigns with You,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever. Amen.

3. Our Father, good and merciful,
through the gifts of your Spirit you make the Church
able to announce your Gospel,
to celebrate your praises and to serve you in the poor and suffering.
Accompany this community of ours
because it is light of life and love,
seed of hope and sign of salvation,
to realize the civilization of love,
accepting your Kingdom that will have no end.
We ask you that you have conquered death
And you are alive for ever and ever. Amen

4. Lord Jesus! Here we are ready to go to announce once again your Gospel to the world, where your mysterious, but loving providence has placed us to live!
Lord, pray the Father, as you promised,
so that through you He may send us the Holy Spirit,
the Spirit of truth and courage,
the Spirit of consolation, that make open, good and effective,
our testimony.
Be with us, Lord, to make us all one in You and fitted, to your virtue, to proclaim to the world your peace and your salvation.

(Paul VI)

5. Hail Mary, Woman of the New Covenant, we call you blessed because you have believed (cf. Lk 1:45) and have known how to “recognize the traces of God’s Spirit in events great and small.”
You sustain our watching in the night, until the light of dawn anticipates the new day.

Grant us a prophet’s voice to tell the world about the joy of the Gospel, about the blessedness of those who search the horizons of new lands and heavens and anticipate their presence in the human city.

Help us to proclaim the fecundity of the Spirit under the banner of the essential and the small.

Grant that we may perform, here and now, the courageous act of the humble, upon whom God looks and to whom are revealed the secrets of the Kingdom Amen.

6. Father, source of life, call us with faithfulness to get out of our safety and closures.

Father, source of life, call us like Abraham to get out of our land and our homes.

Jesus, the source of truth, send us to meet, with humility and respect, sisters and brothers of every continent.

Jesus, the source of truth, send us as your disciples to meet the brothers and sisters with an evangelical and sober style.

Holy Spirit, source of love, instill in us words of grace and joy, to be meek and simple.

Holy Spirit, source of love, instill in us words of light, to be bright signs of your presence. Amen

7. Mary, Virgin and Mother, you who,
moved by the Holy Spirit,

welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith:

as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,

help us to say our own “yes” to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus...

Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,

wellspring of happiness for God’s little ones, pray for us.

Amen. Alleluia!

(Pope Francis)

8. Spirit of Pentecost, who made the Church one Body, restore to us, the baptized, an authentic experience of communion; make us living signs of the Risen One's presence in the world, a community of saints that lives in service to charity.

Holy Spirit, who equips us for the mission,
grant that we may recognize that so many people in our time too are in quest of the truth about their life and about the world.

Make us work for their joy by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God's grain of wheat that enriches the soil of life and ensures an abundant harvest.

(Benedict XVI)



