

LECTIO DIVINA

Liturgical Year 2015-2016

Missionaries of His Heart!

Let us witness with passion and courage
the mercy of God!

SOURCES OF REFERENCE:

The Holy Scriptures

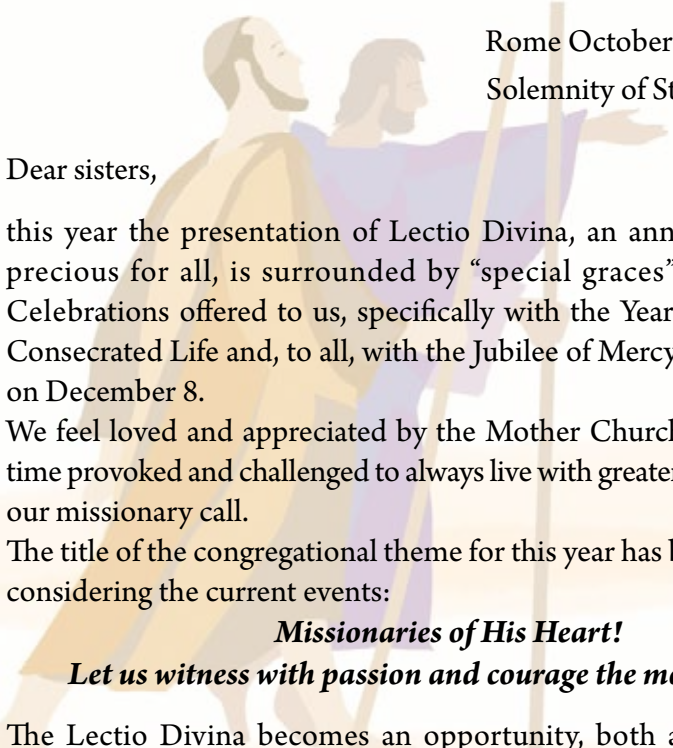
Apostolic Exhortations: *Evangelii Gaudium*

Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis
to all Consecrated People

Bull of indiction of the extraordinary

Jubilee of Mercy: *Misericordiae vultus*

Rule, Constitutions and Directory



Rome October 4th , 2015

Solemnity of St. Francis

Dear sisters,

this year the presentation of Lectio Divina, an annual appointment precious for all, is surrounded by “special graces” for the Church Celebrations offered to us, specifically with the Year dedicated to the Consecrated Life and, to all, with the Jubilee of Mercy which will begin on December 8.

We feel loved and appreciated by the Mother Church but at the same time provoked and challenged to always live with greater truth and fidelity our missionary call.

The title of the congregational theme for this year has been changed just considering the current events:

Missionaries of His Heart!

Let us witness with passion and courage the mercy of God!

The Lectio Divina becomes an opportunity, both at individual and community level, to reflect and meditate on topics that can help us to appreciate once again the beauty of our missionary charism, deeply rooted in the Church’s mission and meeting the challenges of today’s world!

The structure of each Lectio includes three parts:

The Voice of the Church urges us ...

With quotations from recent Church documents

to be challenged by the Word ...

With selected passages from the Word of God

(bearing in mind the Chapter VI of the Chapter Document 2011)

to live with faithfulness our missionary identity.

With articles of our Rule, Constitutions and Directory

Afterwards, it is proposed a question that can help in the personal reflection and evaluation.

The message of Pope Francis for World Mission Sunday this year has highlighted once again the link between mission and word, between our missionary commitment and the life of prayer and sharing in the sacrifice of Christ Crucified.

“The mission of the servants of the Word is to allow everyone, without exception, to enter into a personal relationship with Christ. In the full range of the Church’s missionary activity, all the faithful are called to live their baptismal commitment to the fullest, in accordance with the personal situation of each. A generous response to this universal vocation can be offered by consecrated men and women through an intense life of prayer and union with the Lord and his redeeming sacrifice”.

May the commitment of the Lectio Divina be for all a means to grow in a more intimate relationship with the Lord, in the knowledge and mutual respect for each other and in the missionary passion so that we may continue to be, wherever we are, true missionaries of His Heart.

May the Father’s mercy and the tenderness of Mary, Mother of the Crucified and Risen Christ, accompany each one of you and every fraternity in this journey of grace and fidelity.

Sr. Paola Dotto
Suor Paola Dotto
Superior General

Prot. N.105/2015



1. Receive the Holy Spirit



The voice of the Church urges us...

Spirit-filled evangelizers means evangelizers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit made the apostles go forth from themselves and turned them into heralds of God's wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language.

The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence.

(EG 259)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of John (Jn 20: 19-22)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

(Jesus) said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit”.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 63

§ 2. The sisters, in response to the redemptive love of the Heart of Christ crucified, are sent anywhere in the world to proclaim the Gospel by example, the word and the testimony of fraternal life.

For personal reflection.

Looking at my consecrated and missionary life, which attitudes are manifesting that “I have been sent” and that it is the Spirit to guide me?



2. Go...I am with you always, until the end of the age.



The voice of the Church urges us...

A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him.

He senses Jesus alive with him in the midst of the missionary enterprise. Unless we see him present at the heart of our missionary commitment, our enthusiasm soon wanes and we are no longer sure of what it is that we are handing on; we lack vigour and passion. A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody.

In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves. In the end, what we are seeking is the glory of the Father; we live and act “for the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:6).

If we wish to commit ourselves fully and perseveringly, we need to leave behind every other motivation. This is our definitive, deepest and greatest motivation, the ultimate reason and meaning behind all we do: the glory of the Father which Jesus sought at every moment of his life. As the Son, he rejoices eternally to be “close to the Father’s heart” (Jn 1:18). If we are missionaries, it is primarily because Jesus told us that “by this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit” (Jn 15:8). Beyond all our own preferences and interests, our knowledge and motivations, we evangelize for the greater glory of the Father who loves us. (EG 266, 267)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 28:16-20)

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they

doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 55

§ 1. The Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart recognizes its specific aim in the apostolic mandate, which the Church entrusts to it and which makes it share in the mission of Christ who consecrated Himself to the glory of the Father.

Const . Art. 58

The missionary spirit of the Franciscan sister is genuinely expressed in the constant and universal promotion of peace and good.

Both in community and in the exercise of her Gospel mandate, the sister makes shine the image of God, who is all Good, so that men and women upon hearing and seeing her glorify and praise the heavenly Father.

For personal reflection.

Can I truly say that I am walking with Jesus? My being and my doing, personally and in community, are revealing His presence, His sentiments, His words?



3 What we have seen and heard, we proclaim



The voice of the Church urges us...

How good it is to stand before a crucifix, or on our knees before the Blessed Sacrament, and simply to be in his presence!

How much good it does us when he once more touches our lives and impels us to share his new life! What then happens is that “we speak of what we have seen and heard” (1 Jn 1:3). The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love, lingering over its pages and reading it with the heart. If we approach it in this way, its beauty will amaze and constantly excite us.

But if this is to come about, we need to recover a contemplative spirit which can help us to realize ever anew that we have been entrusted with a treasure which makes us more human and helps us to lead a new life. There is nothing more precious which we can give to others.

(EG 264)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the first letter of John (1Jn 1:1-3)

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life - for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us -

what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Dir. Art. 54.

The sisters, in order to communicate the love of the Heart of Jesus for all people and their zeal for the spread of the Kingdom, not only pray individually and communally, but also commit themselves to organize prayer encounters for the missions in collaboration with the local Church officials.

For personal reflection.

As a FMSC sister, I have to grow in the contemplation of Jesus Crucified: am I nourishing my prayer and my life with this mystery of Love? How?



4. Missionaries of Mercy



The voice of the Church urges us...

The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person. The Spouse of Christ must pattern her behaviour after the Son of God who went out to everyone without exception.

In the present day, as the Church is charged with the task of the new evangelization, the theme of mercy needs to be proposed again and again with new enthusiasm and renewed pastoral action. It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy. Her language and her gestures must transmit mercy, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father.

(Misericordiae Vultus 12)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of Luke (Lk 6:36-38)

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Dir. Art. 50

§ 2. Each time she goes among the people to proclaim the Word of truth and hope, the sister:

- is meek and modest;
- is a sign and invitation to true conversion;
- manifests her serenity and readiness to listen;
- is sisterly in the face of every sorrow

always giving evidence of the compassion of the Heart of Christ.

For personal reflection.

Does my whole life (attitudes, my way of thinking and acting etc..) manifest the compassion of Christ's Heart, the mercy of God the Father?

In what am I called to change myself?



5 He was moved with compassion



The voice of the Church urges us...

How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich! During this Jubilee, the Church will be called even more to heal these wounds, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism!

(Cfr. *Misericordiae Vultus* 15)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of Luke (Lk 10:30-37)

Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.

A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.

He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, "Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back." Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"

He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 74

Following the example of St. Francis who began to follow Christ by bowing before the suffering lepers, the Franciscan sister exercises her ministry with that compassionate love which draws from the Heart of Christ and helps the suffering to understand the redemptive value of their loneliness and pain.

For personal reflection.

To have compassion: am I allowing myself to be moved by this sentiment and attitude towards my sisters in the community and towards others?



6 The Spirit of the Lord... has sent me to...



The voice of the Church urges us...

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is nothing else than the culmination of the way he lived his entire life. Moved by his example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world.

But we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives.

Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others.

He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches, which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people's lives and know the power of tenderness.

(Cfr. EG 269 -270)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of Luke (Lk 4:14-21)

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day.

He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 56

The sisters in fidelity to the charism of the institute, apostolic and missionary since the foundation, wish to respond to the redemptive love of Christ and to His divine plan of salvation.

They do so by dedicating themselves, wherever they are sent, to the task of evangelization through:

- their prayer for the spreading of the faith;
- the direct participation in the missionary activity of the Church and its pastoral ministry;
- the mission of education;
- the charitable assistance to the poor and needy.

For personal reflection.

How do I allow myself to be touched by the wounds of the Lord revealed to me through my needy brothers and sisters?



7. God so loved the world



The voice of the Church urges us...

Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love, which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realize that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging, we cannot understand our deepest identity.

(EG 268)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of John (Jn 3:11-17)

I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Congregational Sources F.3, p 40

May the sisters give witness to the One who dwells in their heart- the Crucified Saviour...

In such a way that people coming in contact with them are edified and inspired to practice virtue.

For personal reflection.

How many judgements are in my way of thinking and speaking ... how much Mercy?



8 Should you not have had pity...?



The voice of the Church urges us...

The parable of the “ruthless servant” contains a profound teaching for all of us. Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father, it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are. In short, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardoning offences becomes the clearest expression of merciful love, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive!

And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully... let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”

(Misericordiae Vultus 9)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 18:21-33)

Then Peter approaching asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants.

When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount.

Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt.

At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.

When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.'

Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.

Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?'

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Rule and Life 20.

Let the sisters and brothers be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, mild and humble, speaking respectfully to all in accord with their vocation. Wherever they are, or wherever they go throughout the world they should not be quarrelsome, contentious, or judgmental towards others. Rather, it should be obvious that they are "joyful, good-humored," and happy "in the Lord" as they ought to be (cf. Ph 4:4). And in greeting others, let them say, "The Lord give you peace."

For personal reflection.

Which sentiments am I keeping in my heart: forgiveness, mercy, acceptance or other sentiments that are not showing that I am loved and forgiven?

9 Proclaim... the kingdom of heaven!



The voice of the Church urges us...

I also expect from you what I have asked all the members of the Church: to come out of yourselves and go forth to the existential peripheries. “Go into all the world”; these were the last words which Jesus spoke to his followers and which he continues to address to us (cf. Mk 16:15).

A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world’s goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine...

Don’t be closed in on yourselves, don’t be stifled by petty squabbles, don’t remain a hostage to your own problems. These will be resolved if you go forth and help others to resolve their own problems, and proclaim the Good News. You will find life by giving life, hope by giving hope, love by giving love.

(Letter of Pope Francis to all consecrated II 4)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 10:7-12)

As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave.
As you enter a house, wish it peace.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 57

The Congregation strives to be present wherever the urgent needs of the Church call it. As its identity is Franciscan and missionary, it carries out its activities in the style of:

- pilgrim and availability;
- minority and preference for the poor;
- attentiveness to the signs of the times ;
- obedience to the Church.

For personal reflection.

We are called to proclaim the presence of the Kingdom of God.
Is our lifestyle in community and personally revealing His kingdom or our “small kingdoms”?



10 Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!



The voice of the Church urges us...

My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an “extra” or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing.

(EG 273)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 9:14-23)

In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel.

I have not used any of these rights, however, nor do I write this that it be done so in my case. I would rather die. Certainly no one is going to nullify my boast.

If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!

If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible.

To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law - though I myself am not under the law - to win over those under the law.

To those outside the law I became like one outside the law - though I am not outside God's law but within the law of Christ - to win over those outside the law.

To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 59

Each sister by her profession in this Congregation is a missionary wherever she is. This task of evangelization demands of each one the fundamental option of availability and cooperation, of service and of animation.

For personal reflection.

How am I accepting and living the mission God has entrusted to me now... where I am?



11 Bear your share of hardship for the Gospel



The voice of the Church urges us...

We need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor 4:7). This certainty is often called “a sense of mystery”. It involves knowing with certitude that all those who entrust themselves to God in love will bear good fruit (cf. Jn 15:5).

This fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable. We can know quite well that our lives will be fruitful, without claiming to know how, or where, or when. We may be sure that none of our acts of love will be lost, nor any of our acts of sincere concern for others. No single act of love for God will be lost, no generous effort is meaningless, no painful endurance is wasted. (EG 279)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the second letter of St. Paul to Timothy (2 Tm 1:6-14)

For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands.

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.

So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.

He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed preacher and apostle and teacher.

On this account I am suffering these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know him in whom I have believed and am confident that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.

Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Const. Art. 65

Ready to live joyfully the constant relation between the missionary charism and the cross, the missionary sister finds in prayer, in the support of the sisters and in the guidance of the Superiors, the strength to persevere, for the love of the Gospel, in her difficulties and in fatigues.

For personal reflection.

How am I accepting and offering the inevitable “sufferings” of the journey of my consecrated and missionary life?



12 Behold, your mother!



The voice of the Church urges us...

On the cross, when Jesus endured in his own flesh the dramatic encounter of the sin of the world and God's mercy, he could feel at his feet the consoling presence of his mother and his friend. At that crucial moment, before fully accomplishing the work, which his Father had entrusted to him, Jesus said to Mary: "Woman, here is your son". Then he said to his beloved friend: "Here is your mother" (Jn 19:26-27).

These words of the dying Jesus are not chiefly the expression of his devotion and concern for his mother; rather, they are a revelatory formula, which manifests the mystery of a special saving mission. Jesus left us his mother to be our mother. Only after doing so did Jesus know that "all was now finished" (Jn 19:28). At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey without a mother, and our people read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel...

She is the missionary who draws near to us and accompanies us throughout life, opening our hearts to faith by her maternal love.

As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God's love. (Cfr. EG 285-286)

...to be challenged by the Word

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

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw

his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, 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 into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.” There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Congregational sources F.3, p. 147

It is sufficient for us to stand in silence at the foot of the cross with Mary, our Mother.

It is there that our hearts find nourishment for a true devotion ...

Your favourite devotions ought to be that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Mother, Mary Immaculate.

May the Heart of Jesus, which is united to your heart each morning in Holy Communion, and the Mother of God who guards and protects you from heaven ... inspire you as to how to pray while working and how in thinking of them, it is possible to convert each action into a loving prayer.

For personal reflection.

How am I feeling and living the presence
of the Blessed Virgin Mary in my hardships?



13 With great power... they bore witness to the resurrection



The voice of the Church urges us...

“Man cannot live without hope: life would become meaningless and unbearable”. If we think that things are not going to change, we need to recall that Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death and is now almighty. Jesus Christ truly lives. Put another way, “if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain” (1 Cor 15:14).

The Gospel tells us that when the first disciples went forth to preach, “the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message” (Mk 16:20). The same thing happens today. We are invited to discover this, to experience it. Christ, risen and glorified, is the wellspring of our hope, and he will not deprive us of the help we need to carry out the mission which he has entrusted to us. Christ’s resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up.

(EG 275-276)

...to be challenged by the Word

From the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4:24-31,33)

And when they heard it, they raised their voices to God with one accord and said, “Sovereign Lord, maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, you said by the holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, your servant: ‘Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples entertain folly?

The kings of the earth took their stand and the princes gathered together

against the Lord and against his anointed.’ Indeed they gathered in this city against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do what your hand and (your) will had long ago planned to take place. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness, as you stretch forth (your) hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness...

With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.

...to live with faithfulness our missionary identity

Rule and Life 30.

As they announce peace with their lips, let them be careful to have it even more within their own hearts. No one should be roused to wrath or insult on their account, rather all should be moved to peace, goodwill and mercy because of their gentleness.

The sisters and brothers are called to heal the wounded, to bind up those who are bruised, and to reclaim the erring. Wherever they are, they should recall that they have given themselves up completely and handed themselves over totally to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

For personal reflection.

Are our relationships in community able to be edifying, to give witness to the Risen Lord?

Can we help each other to decide community journeys that can manifest our faith and hope? How?



Invocation prayers before the Lectio Divina

1. *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*
2. *Lord Jesus, send us the Spirit that we may read your Word free of all prejudice, so that we may meditate your proclamation in its integrity and not selectively, so that we may pray that we may grow in communion with you and with our brothers and sisters, so that we may, finally, act, contemplating the reality that we are living this day with your feelings and with your mercy. You who live with the Father and who grants us Love. Amen.*
3. *Holy Father, through Jesus your Son, the Word made flesh for us, send me your Holy Spirit, that my ears may be opened to hear the "letter of love" that you have written to me and enlighten my mind that I may understand it in depth. Make my heart docile that it may receive your will with joy and help me to give witness to it. Amen*



4. *Merciful Father, in this holy time of prayer and of listening to your Word, send also to me your holy angel that I may receive the proclamation of salvation and that, after opening my heart, I may offer my yes to Love. Let, I beg you, the Holy Spirit overshadow me as an overwhelming power. As from now, Father, I do not wish to express anything other than my "Yes!" and to say to you: "Behold, I am here for you. Do unto me whatever pleases you". Amen*
5. *Lord Jesus, send your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that you read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, you helped them to discover the presence of God in the events of your passion and death. Create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples from Emmaus, may experience the force of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace. We ask this of you, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed to us the Father and sent us your Spirit. Amen*
6. *Lord God, our Father, you are not far away from any of us, for in you we live and move and exist and you live in us through your Holy Spirit. Be indeed with us, Lord, send us your Holy Spirit of truth and through him deepen our understanding of the life and message of your Son, that we may accept the full truth and live by it consistently. We ask you this through Christ our Lord. Amen*

7. *Come, Holy Spirit, fill our minds with your light so that we can understand the true sense of your Word.
Come, Holy Spirit, enkindle in our hearts the fire of your love to inflame our faith. Come, Holy Spirit, fill our being with your force to strengthen what is weak in us, in our service to God. 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*
9. *O God, you who poured out the gifts of your Spirit to believers of all time, increase in we, with the power of the Spirit, the willingness to accept here and now, in this lectio divina, the seed of your word, in order to bear fruit in the testimony of the Gospel and in works of justice and peace, to reveal to the waiting world the blessed hope of your kingdom.*

10. COME HOLY SPIRIT WITH YOUR GIFTS

*Come Spirit of Wisdom
let us taste the sweetness of God's Word,
the tenderness of his love,
the infinite peace that comes from responding to his vocation,
the call that He has written in our hearts.*

*Come Spirit of Intellect
grant us the grace to be able to look at our life
to find in it Your Presence,
who is love that calls us to love.*

*Come Spirit of Science
make us able to know and follow Christ
the path of life that is revealed to us and proposed by you
day after day.*

*Come Spirit of Fortitude
Strengthen our faith,
make docile and meek our hearts
in listening to the Father's will.*

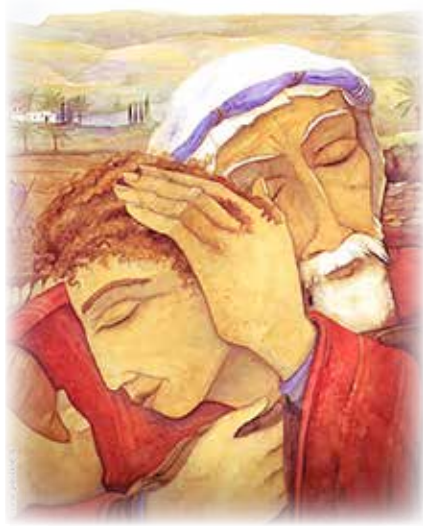
*Come Spirit of the Council
suggest what it should ask the Lord
and grant that we behave in a manner worthy
the vocation we have received.*

*Come Spirit of Piety
create in us an awareness of children infinitely loved by the Father,
made in the image of the Child Jesus,
filled with the joy of the Spirit.*

*Come Spirit of Fear,
give us the real confidence in the Father
and make us attentive to the signs that He places in our path.*



Prayers to conclude the Lectio Divina



1. Prayer for the Jubilee of mercy

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
Show us your face and we will be saved.
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved
by money;
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only
in created things;
made Peter weep after his betrayal,
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to
the Samaritan woman:
“If you knew the gift of God!”
You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
let the Church be your visible face in the world,
its Lord risen and glorified.*

You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

2. God, the Father of all wounded humanity.

*God, Father of all wounded humanity,
Lord of the fullness of Life,
make our choices according to your justice.
Help us to live forever with the poor,
without closing the door to their cry for help,
without going over, indifferent to their wounds.
Give us, Lord, a heart open to your Word,
make us recognize ourselves to be POOR before You,
because in every moment of joy or tiredness,
of inner poverty or full of faith,
we know that You are always on our side!*

3. We want to follow you

*We want to come after you, Jesus.
we want to continue to follow you, step by step,
on the Way of the Cross
bearing in our hearts every brother and sister as friends.*

*We want to be your faithful friends
but you, Lord Jesus,
do not let us leave grab by fear and fatigue.
Inflame the ardor of your Spirit in us to adhere to You
and with you, to give life to all by virtue of that greater love
which embraces every creature. Amen.*

4. Mary, Mother of Hope

*Mary, Mother of hope,
in You with confidence we rely.
With you we want to follow Christ,
the Redeemer of man:
may tiredness no overcome us
nor the fatigue make us to slow down,
neither the difficulties not extinguish our courage
nor sadness, the joy of our heart.*

*You Mary, Mother of the Redeemer
may you continue to be Mother for all,
watch over our way
and help your children,
so that they can meet Christ,
the way back to the common Father! Amen.*

(John Paul II)

5. To sow the Gospel

*O God, in Jesus you teach us the ways of love.
Enable us to listen more than to talk;
to learn more than teach.
Help me to spread the Gospel
and never be over anyone.*

*Help me to listen to you in the joys of lovers,
in the pain of the lonely and the abandoned,
in the will of redemption of the marginalized,
in the struggles of the excluded,
in the prayers of simple hearts,
in the tears of the people defeats
and in the dreams of peace and justice. Amen*

6. Missionary prayer

*Lord Jesus:
you call me by name
and send me to work on this earth.
Make me a universal sister,
with a heart open to the whole world.
Enable me to proclaim
the Good News of your Kingdom.
Let me be open
to the calls of others and close to their problems.
Grant me your peace,
show me the ways of peace,
so that I can announce it and achieve it.
Keep me united with You,
Lord of the Mission.*

7. Proclaimers

*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)

8. Mary, Our Lady of the way.

*Mary, Our Lady of the way,
You have walked the hills of Judea,
bringing, in haste, Jesus and his joy;
you walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem
where your child, our Lord was born;
you walked on the roads of exile
to save the Son of the Most High;
you walked on the road to Calvary
to become our Mother.*

*Keep walking alongside the missionaries of your Son
who, on the roads of the world want,
like you, Ark of Covenant,
bring to all nations Jesus,
His Gospel, His salvation.*

Guido Maria Conforti

9. Father, source of life.

*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.*

10. Prayer of St. Francis

*All-powerful, most holy, most high, supreme God:
all good, supreme good, totally good, You Who alone are good,
may we give You all praise, all glory, all thanks,
all honour, all blessing, and all good. So be it! So be it!
Amen.*



