

LECTIO DIVINA

Trusting in His Word

let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

journeying on the path of holiness



Year 2018-2019



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Year 2018-19

***Trusting in His Word,
let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm
journeying on the path of holiness.***

SOURCES OF REFERENCE:

Sacred Scripture: *Letters of the New Testament*

Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete ed Exsultate*

Our Constitutions

Document of the General Chapter 2017



Rome, October 4, 2018
Solemnity of St. Francis

Dear sisters,

I greet each one of you fraternally with joy and with the deep desire to continue together the journey of holiness.

The Congregational theme that guides us this year 2018-2019: ***Let us renew our evangelical enthusiasm*** is a formative course that intends to involve everyone, personally and communally, to live our consecration and mission with greater awareness.

Also the ***Lectio Divina*** wants to be a further aid to help us on this journey by finding in the Word of God the source from which to draw an ever stronger faith, a more certain hope and a constantly renewed love.

Providentially, the Church, with Pope Francis, has offered us, at this time, the apostolic exhortation: ***Gaudete et Exsultate***, on the call to holiness in the contemporary world. A precious text that fits well in our journey of renewed fidelity to the call of our consecrated, missionary and therefore holy life.

His words enlighten us and exhort us: *“The prayerful reading of God’s word, which is “sweeter than honey” yet a “two-edged sword”, enables us to pause and listen to the voice of the Master. It becomes a lamp for our steps and a light for our path. ... The Word has the power to transform life. (Gaudete et Exsultate 156).*

Sharing the Word and celebrating together the Eucharist makes us a fraternity and transforms us gradually into a holy and missionary community”.

This year formative itinerary of Lectio Divina really wants to combine the themes of holiness and missionary:

*Trusting on His Word,
let us renew our evangelical enthusiasm by
Journeying on the path of holiness.*

Each Lectio is divided into three parts:

Trusting on His Word:

The biblical passages taken from the letters of the New Testament are precious exhortations to find light and strength in our journey.

Journeying on the path of holiness.

The texts chosen from the apostolic exhortation motivate and challenge our daily personal and community choices so that our missionary identity is constantly renewed and revitalized on the path of holiness of everyday life, in the small things that can and must be chosen and lived for a Greater Love.

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

This section proposes to us, with the texts subdivided for each Lectio, the path we have chosen in the Document of the General Chapter 2017 following the second Chapter: Let us renew the evangelical enthusiasm.

I present to you this formative instrument with the desire that the Word may bear fruit in you and abundant fruit, as in the Virgin Mary. *“Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side”.* (Gaudete et Exsultate 176)

With love,

Sr. Paola Dotto
Superior general

1. Let us renew the ardour to announce the Gospel

Trusting in His Word

From the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor. 9:14, 16-20, 22-23)

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

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, and 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 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.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

In referring to obstacles to evangelization, [we]spoke of a lack of fervour (*parrhesía*) that is “all the more serious because it comes from within”. How often we are tempted to keep close to the shore!

Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets. He bids us spend our lives in his service. Clinging to him, we are inspired to put all our charisms at the service of others.

May we always feel compelled by his love and say with Saint Paul: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel”.

(Gaudete et exsultate 130)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p 19 n 4)

«...In response to the redemptive love of the Heart of the Crucified Christ ...sent everywhere in the world to proclaim the Gospel», we are urged to a joyous evangelical spirit without any hypocrisies “and moved” to a simplification that finds the faith of the simple and the audacity of the Saints».



2. The Mission: a journey of holiness

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (*Eph. 1:3-14*)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love, he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favour of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.

In him, we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favour that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit, which is the first instalment of our inheritance toward.

The Word of God

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for “this is the will of God, your sanctification”. Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel.

(Gaudete et exsultate 19)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 18 n. 2)

The «need for consecrated men and women to have a new aspiration to holiness, which is “unthinkable without a jolt of renewed passion for the Gospel at the service of the Kingdom».



3. Primarily... Belonging to God

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rom. 12: 1-3)

I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

Only on the basis of God's gift, freely accepted and humbly received, can we cooperate by our own efforts in our progressive transformation. We must first belong to God, offering ourselves to him who was there first, and entrusting to him our abilities, our efforts, our struggle against evil and our creativity, so that his free gift may grow and develop within us: "I appeal to you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1).

(Gaudete et exsultate 56)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 18 n 2)

The Word of God transforms and exhorts us to live with joy, with conviction, to be women of prayer.



4. The fullness of the mission in Christ

Trusting in His Word

From the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(2 Cor 5:14-21)

For the love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died.

He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh; even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer.

Therefore, whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold new things have come.

And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake, he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

That mission has its fullest meaning in Christ, and can only be understood through him. At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life.

It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord's death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with him. But it can also entail reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus' earthly life: his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love.

(Gaudete et exsultate 20)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 19 n. 3)

“The Joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the whole life of those who meet Jesus”. Such experience manifests itself in fidelity to our vocation and missionary commitment, participating in «the work of salvation, not only in the ministry, but above all with the testimony of our consecrated life, lived in fraternal communion, prayer and sacrifice».



5. To be holy ... at the image of the HOLY ONE

Trusting in His Word

From the first letter of St. Peter (1 Pt. 1:6-9,13-16; 2:3-5)

In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of (your) faith, the salvation of your souls.

Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly, and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy."

...for you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

Just as you cannot understand Christ apart from the kingdom, he came to bring, so too your personal mission is inseparable from the building of that kingdom: “Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Mt 6:33).

Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace. Christ himself wants to experience this with you, in all the efforts and sacrifices that it entails, but also in all the joy and enrichment it brings. You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavour.

(Gaudete et exsultate 25)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Documento Capitolare 2017 (p. 20 a)

Nurture the attitude of listening attentively to the Word of God and to inner freedom, creating ordinary spaces of inner and outer silence, and recovering the value of contemplation, of recollection, of personal examination of conscience and community evaluation of life. Thus we foster discernment and announce with joy that “We have met the Messiah”.



6. The Lord brings ... to fulfilment

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians (Phil. 1:3-11)

I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the Gospel from the first day until now.

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel.

For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

From the Apostolic Exhortation May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life. Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.

(Gaudete et exsultate 24)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 18 n 2)

The Gospel illuminates, inspires, frees us, guides us, makes us feel the challenges of this world, drives us to go to the frontiers and gives us strength to cross the boundaries.



7. Together “Saints and missionaries” as community

Trusting in His Word

From the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 1:1- 3, 8-10)

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ...

He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.

The Word of God.



Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness"... We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community.

(Gaudete et exsultate 6)

Each community is called to create a "God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the risen Lord".

Sharing the word and celebrating the Eucharist together fosters fraternity and makes us a holy and missionary community.

(Gaudete et exsultate 142)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 19 n.5)

The fulfilment of our mission requires the strength of a united community to avoid individualism in our fraternities and to embrace together the problems and anxieties of a globalized world.

8. The Eucharist: holiness and proclamation

Trusting in His Word

From the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor. 11:23-27)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

Meeting Jesus in the Scriptures leads us to the Eucharist, where the written word attains its greatest efficacy, for there the living Word is truly present. In the Eucharist, the one true God receives the greatest worship the world can give him, for it is Christ himself who is offered. When we receive him in Holy Communion, we renew our covenant with him and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives.

(Gaudete et exsultate 157)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Constitutions (Art. 42)

The Eucharist is the centre of religious life and of every action in evangelization. Therefore, the sisters daily participate, and possibly in common, in the Holy Sacrifice and at the Eucharistic Banquet renewing the offering of themselves to the Lord.



9. With Mary in mission on the path of holiness

Trusting in His Word

From the Gospel of Luke (LK. 1:41-55)

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.

He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.

He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.

The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The Word of the Lord.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

Mary... lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other. She is that woman who rejoiced in the presence of God, who treasured everything in her heart, and who let herself be pierced by the sword.

Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others.

She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side.

She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us.

Our converse with her consoles, frees and sanctifies us. Mary our Mother does not need a flood of words. She does not need us to tell her what is happening in our lives. All we need do is whisper, time and time again: “Hail Mary...”

(Gaudete et exsultate 176)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

From the introductory letter of the Chapter Document 2017

(p.6)

May Mary, Mother of “YES” and of Evangelization, lead us in the journey of interiorization of the charismatic identity and in the renewed audacity of a more fervent missionary life.



10. Holiness: the fullness of charity

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rm 12:9-18)

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honour.

Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

Bless those who persecute (you), bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

The Father's plan is Christ and ourselves in him. In the end, it is Christ who loves in us, for "holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full". As a result, "the measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on his". Every saint is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people.

(Gaudete et exsultate 21)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 22 e)

Have the audacity of being always on the part of the "poor", listening to them, letting ourselves to be evangelized by them, scrutinizing in them the wisdom of God, caring for them, encouraging them, giving voices to the voiceless and motivating our collaborators to act in this way.



11. Strong...with the armour of God

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

(Eph. 6:10-11, 14-20, 24)

Draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power.

Put on the armour of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil...

So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the Gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one.

And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones and also for me, that speech may be given me to open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, so that I may have the courage to speak as I must... Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in immortality.

The Word of God.

J *ourneying on the path of holiness*

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

God's word invites us clearly to "stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph 6:11) and to "quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Eph 6:16). These expressions are not melodramatic, precisely because our path towards holiness is a constant battle. Those who do not realize this will be prey to failure or mediocrity. For this spiritual combat, we can count on the powerful weapons that the Lord has given us: faith-filled prayer, meditation on the word of God, the celebration of Mass, Eucharistic adoration, sacramental Reconciliation, works of charity, community life, missionary outreach. If we become careless, the false promises of evil will easily seduce us. (*Gaudete et exsultate* 162)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 18 n 1)

On the example of Francis of Assisi, of our Founders and of our first Sisters, we FMSC Sisters as pilgrims sent to this world, we want to observe the Holy Gospel. In it is the vital root of the mission, the Word that questions and strengthens us, which gives us the courage and the confidence to "persevere, for the sake of the Gospel, in the difficulties and fatigues".



12. Artisans of peace

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:13-18)

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it.

He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

Peacemakers truly “make” peace; they build peace and friendship in society. To those who sow peace Jesus makes this magnificent promise: “They will be called children of God” (Mt 5:9). He told his disciples that, wherever they went, they were to say: “Peace to this house!” (Lk 10:5)

It is not easy to “make” this evangelical peace, which excludes no one but embraces even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life or simply uninterested. It is hard work; it calls for great openness of mind and heart. ... We need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill.

(Gaudete et exsultate 88-89)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 22 f)

Deepen mutual knowledge, to accept one another, to be open with sincerity to others culture, to mutually forgive and support each other also in our fragility, by making our fraternities «places of sympathetic hospitality where different customs and cultures can gain strength and significance unknown elsewhere and thus, highly prophetic.



13. Carriers of a great treasure

Trusting in His Word

From the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(2 Cor. 4:1-2,5-7, 13-15)

... Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy shown us, we are not discouraged.

Rather, we have renounced shameful, hidden things; not acting deceitfully or falsifying the word of God, but by the open declaration of the truth we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ... For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for the sake of Jesus.

For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of (Jesus) Christ.

But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us....

Since, then, we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we too believe and therefore speak, knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence. Everything indeed is for you, so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

Look at Jesus. His deep compassion reached out to others. It did not make him hesitant, timid or self-conscious, as often happens with us. Quite the opposite. His compassion made him go out actively to preach and to send others on a mission of healing and liberation.

Let us acknowledge our weakness, but allow Jesus to lay hold of it and send us too on mission. We are weak, yet we hold a treasure that can enlarge us and make those who receive it better and happier. Boldness and apostolic courage are an essential part of mission.

(Gaudete et exsultate 131)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p.21 c)

Keep alive the missionary enthusiasm in our relationships and apostolic service and use the same Word of God to illuminate those who are approaching us.



14. Saints... in mission

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of James

(James. 2:12-18, 21-24)

So speak and so act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. For the judgment is merciless to one who has not shown mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?

So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works...

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?

You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God."

See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

The Word of God

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et exsultate*

We may think that we give glory to God only by our worship and prayer, or simply by following certain ethical norms. It is true that the primacy belongs to our relationship with God, but we cannot forget that the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others.

Prayer is most precious, for it nourishes a daily commitment to love. Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously, and allow God's gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters.

(Gaudete et exsultate 104)

Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p. 21 d)

Living in the spirit of the Beatitudes and Franciscan Minority in a style of simplicity, educating our heart, seeking the balance between prayer, activity and rest for a more authentic and significant testimony.



15. Always on the journey

Trusting in His Word

From the letter of James

(James. 1: 16-25)

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers: all good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change.

He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath,

for the wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.

Therefore, put away all filth and evil excess and humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls.

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror.

He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like.

But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.

The Word of God.

Journeying on the path of holiness

From the Apostolic Exhortation : *Gaudete et exsultate*

“Rejoice and be glad” (Mt 5:12), Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake. The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.

The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible. We see it expressed in the Lord’s words to Abraham: “Walk before me, and be blameless” (Gen 17:1).

(Gaudete et exsultate 1)

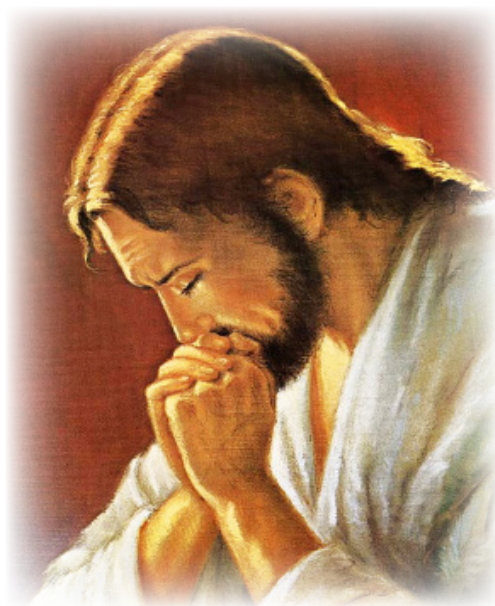
Let us renew our evangelic enthusiasm

Chapter Document 2017 (p.20 b)

Enhance and enjoy listening to the Word of God in daily meditation and in the common *Lectio divina*, which must include not only participation and sharing but also the ability to make concrete commitments together on which to test ourselves: «this is the only attitude that allows us to recognize the mysterious paths of grace until new hope in the fruitfulness of the Word is reborn».



*Invocation
prayers
before the
LECTIO DIVINA*



1. Spirit of God, give me a docile heart to listen ... so that I may accept the word of the Lord and put it into practice ...

Grant that I allow myself to be penetrated by the Word “in order to understand with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height and depth, and to know the love of Christ” (Eph 3: 18-19).

Grant that I do not place obstacles to the Word that will come out of the mouth of God. May this Word not return to Him without having worked in me what He desires and without having achieving the aim for which He has sent it (Is 55.11).

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 reign with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit for all ages of 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 Consoler Spirit; fill our life with your light so we can be witnesses of the crucified and risen Christ. Come in our midst, and may us 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. 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. 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
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 prudent without vain fears of the world and its judgments.

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. 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. Inflamm 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.

3. Jesus, Divine Master, who came down from heaven to give the abundance of Grace, increase it in us and make it become a river that overflows into eternal life.

The fire enkindled by your love gives us the strength to follow the invitation to the infinite perfection of the Father.

Grant us the firmness of faith; the ardour of charity, the certainty of unshakable hope.

Give us the desire of heroism in every virtue and the confidence to reach holiness, with the help of Your Mother and yours.

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)

