



Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Via di Grottarossa, 301 -00189 ROMA

Lectio Divina

FMSC in mission



enlightened and guided by the Word of GOD

Year 2017-2018

LECTIO DIVINA

Year 2017-18

*FMSC IN MISSION,
enlightened and guided
by the Word of God*

SOURCES OF REFERENCE:

Sacred Scriptures: *Letters of Saint Paul*

Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*

Guidelines of CIVCSVA: *New wine in new wineskins*

Writings of Fr Gregory: *Historical Memoirs*

Chapter of missions

Letters of the First general Superiors

General Chapter Document 2017

Rome, October 4, 2017
Solemnity of St. Francis

Dear Sisters,

I reach all of you with affection in the place where Providence has sent you, wishing the joy and peace of the Lord who has prepared the journey for us.

I assume the strong and convinced solicitations of the XX General Chapter about the need to re-assimilate our missionary charismatic identity to be in the world, wherever we are, fruitful evangelizers.

Everyday let us be challenged by the Word-Jesus to announce to everyone the salvific proclamation: the Lord is risen and is always with us!

Let us experience His Presence and His Love within us and then convey it first and foremost in fraternity, in the community sharing of His Word which becomes for all and for each one, light, strength, joy, communion, unconditional self-giving.

As the *Evangelii Gaudium* says: *The Holy Spirit, who inspired the word, “today, just as at the beginning of the Church, acts in every evangelizer who allows himself to be possessed and led by him. The Holy Spirit places on his lips the words which he could not find by himself”. There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call lectio divina.* (Cfr. EG 151, 152).

Therefore, with gratitude and joyful commitment, we welcome this simple tool that is offered to us for our personal and communal growth, as a precious method for our on-going formation.

The theme of the congregational ***Lectio divina*** for this year is: ***FMSC IN MISSION enlightened and guided by the WORD OF GOD.***

The various *Lectio* were prepared by keeping in mind the first chapter of the ***Chapter Document: FMSC in Mission***, with all the spiritual

and missionary commitments and paths we decided to take.
Each Lectio has three parts:

Our missionary charismatic identity

The passages from the Historical Memoirs, the Chapter on Missions, and the short writings of the our First general superiors highlight, through our history, the founding element of our missionary identity.

Enlightened and guided by the Word

In the letters of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, our being “missionary” finds strength and joy to feel again sent to manifest the vitality of the Word that gives salvation and the love that wants to reach and redeem everyone.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today!

Some passages from the Ecclesial Documents: Evangelii Gaudium and New Wine in New Wineskins point out the missionary urgencies for today’s humanity, inviting us to respond with the coherence of life and true evangelical passion for “being a Mission” in the Church.

With you, I ask Mary, the first disciple and missionary of His Son to help us, personally and as a fraternity, to allow ourselves to be surrounded and transformed by the Word to become, in today’s world, living images of the Son Jesus, Missionary of the Father’s Tenderness and Love.

With love

*Sr Paola Dotto
Superior general*

1. APOSTLES of PEOPLE by VOCATION

Our charismatic missionary identity

The project of the Duchess was to found Tertiary Franciscan Sisters, with the two-fold purpose of instructing poor girls of the place where they would have a house and to give personal help to the Apostolic Missions. (Historical Memoirs pag. 8)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rm 1:1-6)

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel about his Son, descended from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles, among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 12)

In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. The real newness is the newness which God himself mysteriously brings about and inspires, provokes, guides and accompanies in a thousand ways.

The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that *“he has loved us first”* (1 Jn 4:19) and that he alone *“gives the growth”* (1 Cor 3:7). This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. God asks everything of us, yet at the same time, he offers everything to us.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 12 n. 1)

We want... to assume and transmit, with audacity and creativity, the missionary inheritance entrusted to us by our Founders and the first Sisters.



2. BEING EDIFIED in the CHURCH to BECOME GOD'S DWELLING

Our charismatic missionary identity

I advance that day in which that pious person, of whom you speak, will found in Gemona the Tertiary Franciscan Sisters, with the two-fold purpose to form pupils for the needs of Foreign missions and to give instruction for poor girls...

Being a question of such a beneficial and holy work, I not only give my full consent, but I am waiting impatiently for its realization.

(Historical Memoirs pag 21-22)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

(Eph 2:17-22)

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.

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.

Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangeli Gaudium (n. 130)

The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelizing Church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church. They are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a small group for safekeeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the centre which is Christ and then channelled into an evangelizing impulse. A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God's holy and faithful people for the good of all.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 11)

We, FMSC sisters, are aware of “being mission” in the Church through Baptism and religious consecration and by charismatic mandate.



3. CALLED to SPREAD the PERFUME of CHRIST in the WORLD

Our charismatic missionary identity

“In truth, it is similar to a prodigy to contemplate in this province, in this our Archdiocese, and, precisely in this adventurous country a group of candid virgins who... have come to set their abode here and to pour around the good odor of Christ, to rejoice this land with the fragrance and the perfume of the most beautiful virtues, to recover the Catholic Church”.

(Historical Memoirs pag. 49)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(2 Cor 2:14-15; 17)

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ and manifests through us the odor of the knowledge of him in every place.

For we are the aroma of Christ for God...

Who is qualified for this?

For we are not like the many who trade on the word of God; but as out of sincerity, indeed as from God and in the presence of God, we speak in Christ.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 39)

The Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others.

Under no circumstance can this invitation be obscured! All of the virtues are at the service of this response of love.

If this invitation does not radiate forcefully and attractively, the edifice of the Church's moral teaching risks becoming a house of cards, and this is our greatest risk. It would mean that it is not the Gospel which is being preached, but certain doctrinal or moral points based on specific ideological options. The message will run the risk of losing its freshness and will cease to have "the fragrance of the Gospel".

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 7)

Oh, how blessed are we as we are in a special Institute dedicated to the Missions!

Let us not make us unworthy of such a grace!

(Mother Angela Dell'Angelo, Letters 2 a, p. 159).



4. CALLED to BE SENT to PROCLAIM

Our charismatic missionary identity

My dearest daughters, prepare yourselves for this holy mission to which you have been especially called. When you shall turn the prow of the ship... towards strange shores,... to diffuse the dew of heavenly treasures. Oh that the winds may be propitious to you... so that it will be possible for you to carry benedictions, peace and salvation.

(cfr. Historical Memoirs pag. 53)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rm 10: 8-15)

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we preach), for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.

For the scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.”

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him.

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone to preach?
And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written,
“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (the) good news!

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 24)

The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved !

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 16 d)

*We draw from the missionary charismatic identity:
The joy and willingness to be sent.*



5. THE STRENGTH of GOD'S EXPERIENCE

Our charismatic missionary identity

God speaks to the soul as a friend speaks to his friend, fills it with his spirit, reveals to him or her the secrets that He keeps hidden from the wise and the prudent of the century, fills the soul of the peace that the world disowns ... the soul is purified, ... and learns more and more to know God, .. is flamed and filled of His charity.

(Historical Memoirs – Italian -pag.35)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

(Eph. 6:10-11; 13-18)

Draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil.

...put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. 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.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 262)

Spirit-filled evangelizers are evangelizers who pray and work. Mystical notions without a solid social and missionary outreach are of no help to evangelization, nor are dissertations or social or pastoral practices which lack a spirituality which can change hearts.

These unilateral and incomplete proposals only reach a few groups and prove incapable of radiating beyond them because they curtail the Gospel. What is needed is the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity. Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out. The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer ...

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 12 n. 2)

We want... to consistently nourish a profound experience of God and renew our daily "YES" to the Lord, with Franciscan authenticity and joy.



6. MISSIONARIES ...in CONSTANT CONVERSION

Our charismatic missionary identity

The religious who will go to the Holy Missions ... remember that souls ... must learn from the religious to love Jesus Christ more and more. May they eagerly strive for the acquisition of virtues, the practice of prayer, to despising of the things of the earth, and to love those of heaven.

(From the Chapter of Missions F 2 pag 60)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians

(Gal 5: 16-18: 22-26)

I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want.

But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law...

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ (Jesus) have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

New wine in New Wineskins (n. 35)

The formation is truly continuous only when it is ordinary and carried out in the reality of everyday life...

Each individual is called to let himself or herself be touched, educated, provoked and enlightened by life and by history, by what he or she proclaims, celebrates, by the poor and excluded and by those near and far...

This means teaching a free heart to learn from the story of each day throughout life in the style of Christ to be of service to all.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 15 c)

We celebrate with evangelical courage the mercy of the Father by undertaking an authentic conversion path.



7. THE BEAUTY of MISSIONARY FERTILITY... with MARY

Our charismatic missionary identity

May the Heart of Jesus, ... 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...

(F.3, p. 147-148)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians (Gal 4: 4-6)

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.

As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 284;286; 287)

With the Holy Spirit, Mary is always present in the midst of the people. She joined the disciples in praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14) and thus made possible the missionary outburst which took place at Pentecost. She is the Mother of the Church which evangelizes, and without her we could never truly understand the spirit of the new evangelization ...

in her motherhood which brings forth new children for God ...

Mary let herself be guided by the Holy Spirit on a journey of faith towards a destiny of service and fruitfulness. Today we look to her and ask her to help us proclaim the message of salvation to all and to enable new disciples to become evangelizers in turn.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 15 b)

We strengthen our fidelity to the Lord and we manifest the beauty of discipleship.



8. FRATERNAL LIFE: the FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT!

Our charismatic missionary identity

... in those first times the Sisters were genuinely all very fervent and very edifying.

(Historical Memoirs pag.81)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians

(Col 3: 12-17; 23-24)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him...

Whatever you do, do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for others, knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance; be slaves of the Lord Christ.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 92)

A mystical fraternity, a contemplative fraternity. It is a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does.

Here and now, especially where we are a “little flock” (Lk 12:32), the Lord’s disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt 5:13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 14 a)

We live our being missionary rooted in the love of God.

With minority, benevolence and compassion we are committed in fraternity, to welcome the sisters with their positive characteristics and together the diversity and limits.



9. THE GIFT and the CHALLENGE of INTERNATIONALITY and INTER-CULTURALITY

Our charismatic missionary identity

On the Sunday, April 21, 1861, the Archbishop of Udine Giuseppe Luigi Trevisanato, made the solemn opening ceremony of the Monastery of S. Maria degli Angeli ... The Pontifical Solemn Mass was held in the Cathedral to which they intervened the new Sisters with their Founder. The 53 Novices were of so many nations: 26 Italians, 4 French (not including the founder), 9 from Tyrol, 9 German, 3 French and 2 from Belgium.

(Historical Memoirs F 1 p. 45)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

(Eph 4:1-7; 11-13)

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift...

And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work

of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

New wine in New Wineskins (n.38)

Cultural diversities force a double path for taking roots in a specific cultural being, as well as the ability to transcend limits of an ever-wider evangelical scope.

With religious profession, the consecrated person chooses to mediate between their own specific cultural inscription and their aspiration towards an evangelical life, which inevitably widens their horizons and enhances their sensibility.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 16 e)

We revitalize, with prophetic power, the grace of our consecration; we responsibly embrace our sense of belongingness, and witness with our life the richness of our multicultural and international family.



10. MISSIONARIES of JESUS CRUCIFIED

Our charismatic missionary identity

*Missionaries ... to be sent for the good of the peoples...
committed to follow Jesus Christ mortified and crucified out of love.*
(Madre Angela Dell'Angelo, Epistolario 2b, p. 108)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 2:1-5)

When I came to you, brothers, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom.

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive (words of) wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 264)

The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him. What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known? If we do not feel an intense desire to share this love, we need to pray insistently that he will once more touch our hearts...

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).

From the Chapter Document2017 (p. 13 n 3)

To Keep our gaze on Jesus Crucified, the face of the Father’s mercy, to testify “what we have seen, heard and touched” (cf.1 Jn 1:1-3), as true missionary-disciples.



11.HAVING the SAME SENTIMENTS of CHRIST for the POOR

Our charismatic missionary identity

Considering many other great and small events ... it will seem fitting to say that God wants these sisters, to remember that they are daughters of the great Patriarch of the poor St. Francis, are also that they should live, indeed being really poor.

(Historical Memoirs pag. 32)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans

(Rm 15:1-3; 5-8; 13)

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up.

For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you fall upon me”... May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs... May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (n. 198)

For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor “his first mercy”. This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have “this mind ... which was in Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a “special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness”. This option – as Benedict XVI has taught – “is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty”. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us ... The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 14 a)

We are committed in the geographic and existential suburbs, to listen to the cry of the poor, the needy and the instances of the people seeking God.



12. TO LOVE and SERVE IN HUMILITY

Our charismatic missionary identity

The sisters may attend to preserve and have more and more the spirit of Jesus Christ; they are edifying throughout their outward behavior, so that by seeing others their good deeds, they give to God the glory and honor that is due to Him.

(Chapter of Missions F2 pag. 60)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians (Phil 2:1-11)

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others.

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangelii Gaudium (93. 97. 99)

Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord's glory but human glory and personal well-being. It is what the Lord reprimanded the Pharisees for: "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" (Jn 5:44). It is a subtle way of seeking one's "own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:21).

This stifling worldliness can only be healed by breathing in the pure air of the Holy Spirit who frees us from self-centredness...

Beware of the temptation of jealousy! We are all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 13 n 4)

We want... to go to the world in a spirit of Franciscan minority, the founding element of our identity, to give our life freely, as the Lord Jesus did for us.



13.. IN MISSION with JESUS, STRONG and JOYFUL in HIS LOVE

Our charismatic missionary identity

These religions have to go to work in the vineyard of Jesus Christ and ... are exposed to many dangers, so it is necessary to choose those ... more fervent in the service of God in the zeal of his glory and the spiritual good of souls.

(Chapter of Missions F 2 pag 60)

Enlightened and guided by the Word

From the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians

(Col 1:24-29)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church, of which I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God, the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory. It is he whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

For this I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me.

Provoked by the challenges of the Church, today

Evangeli Gaudium (n. 44-45)

Everyone needs to be touched by the comfort and attraction of God's saving love, which is mysteriously at work in each person, above and beyond their faults and failings.

We see then that the task of evangelization operates within the limits of language and of circumstances. It constantly seeks to communicate more effectively the truth of the Gospel in a specific context, without renouncing the truth, the goodness and the light which it can bring whenever perfection is not possible.

A missionary heart is aware of these limits and makes itself "weak with the weak... everything for everyone" (1 Cor 9:22). It never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness. It realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.

From the Chapter Document 2017 (p. 16 d)

*We draw from the missionary charismatic identity:
the perseverance in the difficulties of the mission;
the generosity in giving without calculations and
reservations, such as "minor sisters for the apostolic missions".*



Invocation prayers before the Lectio Divina



1. *Holy Spirit, Jesus revealed your mystery and said that You will be our Consoler every day until the end of time.*

Come and win every fear within us, make us happy to believe, to hope and to love. Give enthusiasm in our lives, gentleness and serenity in our hearts. Make of us one heart and one soul alone, so that the world may believe in Jesus, the Son of God.

Come, Holy Spirit! Let us love Scripture to recognize the living voice of Jesus; humble and simple listeners to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

Come, Holy Spirit! Mary is here with us, she meets us and prays and invokes for us the Gift of Love and the Fire of the Spirit. Come, Holy Spirit!

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. *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. *Come, Holy Spirit, in our hearts, and lit in them the fire of your love.*

Come, Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of Mary who has been able to contemplate, gather the events of Christ and remember them with love, give us the grace of reading and re-reading the Scriptures to treasure in us the events of Christ with loving, and active memory.

Holy Spirit, give us the grace to manifest these events in our lives. And give us, we pray an even greater grace: to grasp the work of God in the visible and working Church in history.

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. *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!*
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.
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.*
3. *God, Father of mercy, increase our faith in your providential love.
Lord Jesus, Samaritan of humanity, come next to every person plagued in body and spirit, with the power of your consolation.*

Holy Spirit, charity of God, that drives the Church to evangelization, make us witness to the faith and true announcers of the Good News.

And you Mother, blessed because you believed, sustain your children in their journey to endless joy. Amen.

(Benedict XVI)

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. *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)

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)

