

***Lectio Divina* for December 4, 2011**

A short example for Advent/Christmas

Step 1: Before you start, be quiet and recollect yourself

Take a minute now, invite the Holy Spirit in, and slowly read aloud each *italicized* phrase below. Ponder this Word and consider some of the questions below it.

Step 2: Read and Meditate

Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

Mary was told her cousin Elizabeth was pregnant; can you imagine her going “with haste” to visit her? Why “haste”? What (or Who) is Mary bringing to Elizabeth?

Think of the little, but growing “baby” life of Christ in you. This is Advent, the time of joyful waiting for the Christ-Child to be born in us. What does it mean to you that Jesus, by faith, is growing in you? Would you hasten to take Jesus in you to someone you know in need? Your relationship with Jesus is growing in you in the secret darkness of Advent. What has Jesus given you which might help another? Can you share the presence of Jesus in you without words? How?

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”

At Mary’s voice, John the Baptist leapt in Elizabeth’s womb. John leaped before Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, just as David danced before the Ark of the (old) Covenant. Does your “secret” life of faith in Christ within jumped for joy, knowing that Mary, the Mother of God, is with you? If you empty your heart of the dross of sin and selfishness now (think Sacrament of Reconciliation), won’t there be more room for the Holy Spirit of peace and joy and healing to fill you? Do you cry out in the Rosary, “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb?”

Why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy.

“Why” is a tough question to answer – if you carried Love in you, like Mary, wouldn’t you hasten to bring Him to another? Is this part of the Father’s plan for Elizabeth, and for you? Is this a call for you to welcome Mary (and Jesus) more joyfully into your heart, and your life now? Are you one of the billions of believers who bless Mary and Jesus every day in the Rosary? Out of great love for you, is the Father asking you to give Mary a place of honour in your heart today? And everyday?

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

The Lord is speaking to you in His Word – do you believe? Do you believe that you will bring Jesus to birth in your life this Christmas? Do you believe that you will be God’s instrument, like Mary, to bring Jesus to others?

..., And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned home.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth to help her, to be with her – Mary is also committed to you as your Mother. When you go to help someone, do you really serve them? Do you give them your best? God will help you. Mary will help you and stay with you. Do you believe? Do you trust?

Step 3: Pray for God’s help

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you – ask our Blessed Mother to help you, to show you where you need to try harder with the Lord’s help to live your call as a committed Christian, to truly know and follow Jesus.

Step 4: Contemplate the Love of God

Be still and be aware of the presence of Jesus and Mary in your life now, and their love for you. Be grateful. Thank the Lord.