



Lectio Divina for the Fourth Week of Advent

We begin our prayer:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hear in kindness, O Lord,
the prayers of your people,
that those who rejoice
at the coming of your Only Begotten Son in our flesh
may, when at last he comes in glory,
gain the reward of eternal life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

(Collect, December 21)

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture two or three times.
Matthew 1:18-24

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this

took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

If practicing lectio divina as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.

Prayer (*Oratio*)

Read the Scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops



CATHOLIC.BIBLE

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:

What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

Joseph her husband ... was a righteous man. What injustices do I see in my community? How can I work to eliminate these injustices and build a community of righteousness and peace?

He will save his people from their sins. How can I express my gratitude for God's gift of salvation? How can I grow in my reliance on God's mercy?

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. How do I discern God's will for my life? How can I become more docile to God's will?

After a period of silent reflection and/or discussion, all recite the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Closing Prayer

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?
One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.
Such is the race that seeks for him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

(From Psalm 24)

Living the Word This Week

How can I make my life a gift for others in charity?

If possible, invite someone to join you for Christmas Mass and your Christmas celebrations.

Excerpts from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.