



ADVENT 2020

JOURNEY WITH US
THROUGH THE ADVENT
SEASON

NOVEMBER 29, 2020 -
DECEMBER 24, 2020



Advent is the season when Christ followers prepare for the coming of Jesus. We ask for a renewed awe and wonder at the mystery of His birth, a greater sense of His presence with us now, and a posture of anticipation for His return. He came, has come, and is coming all at the same time!

As you begin your Advent journey for 2020, pause and invite the Spirit of God to walk you through the events leading up to the birth of Jesus, to grant you the grace to recognize Him there, and for a greater awareness of your own place in His story.

Each week you are invited to engage in three ancient spiritual practices.

- Visio divina (Holy Seeing),
- Lectio divina (Holy Reading),
- Audio divina (Holy Listening)

These are tools that have been used in the church for centuries to open us up to the movement of God, the beauty of His holiness and the reality of His presence in our lives.

In the early church, lectio divina was the primary way people engaged with scripture. A passage would be read aloud and those listening would enter into it through their imagination, seeking a word or phrase that would nourish them throughout the week.

The church has long relied on stained glass, murals, and icons depicting Biblical scenes to draw the eye with their beauty and point to the ultimate splendor and majesty of God.

The Spirit of God has used the instrument of music to speak deep truths and give voice to our deepest longings throughout all time and history. This is God's gift to us this 2020 Advent Season. As we take the ancient paths may we all encounter Immanuel, God with us!

Week 1: Hope

John the Baptist : *"A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight paths for Him'."* Luke 3:4

Visio Divina (Holy Seeing) As you gaze at the image, consider the following questions. Stay with the ones that draw you and ignore those that don't. At the end, offer a word or phrase to the Lord that expresses your experience of the image, as prayer.

- Before you begin, settle yourself in God's presence and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you.
- As you gaze at the image, notice your breath and your body. Don't alter anything, just notice your body in front of this image.
- Let your eyes explore the image freely. When your eye is drawn to something, stay there until you're ready to move on.
- Notice what stirs within you as your eyes move over the image, and when you pause on what you are drawn to. What responses, memories or feelings does the image evoke?
- Can you imagine yourself in the image? Where would you be? How might you feel?
- What connection does the image make to your life? Take your time.
- What desires rise up in you? What are you uncomfortable with?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing. Tell Him what you want to take with you and remember about this time of prayer. Offer Him a word or phrase that expresses this experience with Him.

Journal your experience: Write or draw what you have noticed, and what you sense God's invitation is to you today. Come back to this image as you feel drawn throughout the week. Ask the Lord to expand and deepen the word He spoke to you. (Breugel's "The Sermon of St. John")



Lectio Divina (Holy Reading) Luke 3:1-20

- **Settle In** - Before you begin, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths allowing yourself to be aware of the presence of God with you. Stay in that quiet space and offer yourself and this time to Him.
- **Read** - Read Luke 3:1-20 slowly and out loud if possible. Sit with the word or phrase that catches your attention and savor it as the word of God for you today.
- **Meditate** - Read the passage again and pay special attention to this man John. Enter into the scene with your imagination using your five senses. What do you notice about John? How do you react to what he is saying? Does his message hold any hope for you? What are you drawn to, and what do you resist? Is there another character you relate to? Hold these noticings before the Lord, and look at your desire and resistance together.
- **Pray** - Read the passage one more time, listening attentively. What is God's invitation to you through what you have noticed? Let your noticing lead you into an honest and spontaneous prayer of response.
- **Contemplate** - Allow yourself some time to stay in this place with the Lord. Let the word God spoke to you settle deeply into your soul before heading out into your day. Let that word be the thing that brings you back to an embodied awareness of His presence with you all day long.

Journal your experience: Write or draw what you have noticed, and what you sense God's invitation is to you today. Come back to this encounter as you feel drawn throughout the week. Ask the Lord to expand and deepen the word He spoke to you.

Audio Divina (Holy Listening)

***Adapted from Christine Valters Paintner- The Soul of a Pilgrim**

Holy Spirit - Jesus Culture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBifjXFA-W4>)

- **Settle In:** Before you begin, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths allowing yourself to be aware of God present with you. Ask the Holy Spirit to tune your heart to hear His personal invitation of hope today.
- **Listen:** Play the piece of music once to enter into its landscape. Allow the music to fill you, breathing it in. If there is a dominant sound, image or feeling that rises up in you, stay with that image for a moment to savor it.
- **Reflect:** Play the music a second time and allow that sound, image or feeling that first called to you, to draw you more deeply into the experience of it. Let God expand it. Rest for a moment in what has moved in you at the end of the piece.
- **Respond:** Listen to the piece a third time. This time focus on how your heart wants to respond. What is the invitation in the unfolding sounds, images, memories or feelings for you today? How is God speaking in your life, in this moment, through this music? Use your voice to express to God what you are feeling and noticing. What does your "yes" to God sound like today?
- **Rest:** Close your eyes for a moment and rest in the stillness and simple awareness of God's presence. Open yourself to gratitude for whatever has been revealed and offered in this time of listening prayer.

Journal your experience: Come back to this song as you feel invited. Ask the Lord to expand and deepen the word He spoke to you. Let this be the song sung in your heart this week!