

LECTIO DIVINA

of the Family of the Rogate

“The Visitation and the Cantic
of the Magnificat: The Missionary Haste
of Vocation and the Prophetic Voice
of the Rogate”

*“My soul magnifies the Lord...
for He has looked upon the lowliness
of His handmaid.”
(Lk 1:46, 48)*



Invocatory Hymn to the Holy Spirit Reading: Lk 1:39–56

- a. Receive the Word in sacred silence.
- b. Re-read the passage personally and prayerfully.
- c. Share a word or phrase that strikes the heart.
- d. Connect this passage with other texts of Sacred Scripture. e. Prayerful refrain (chosen ad libitum)

Understanding the meaning of the text

LECTIO – WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

Listening to the Word in its literal and salvation-historical meaning

GUIDE: Let us welcome with an open and vibrant heart the Word of God, which today comes to meet us as prophecy in the Gospel of Luke (1:39–56). In this journey of *Lectio Divina*, we are invited to ascend the hill country of Judea, accompanying the footsteps of Mary, the first bearer of the great Harvest. In Mary’s Visitation we discover the deepest dynamic of every vocational response: the dynamism of charitable haste and the grateful praise that springs from a heart wholly consecrated to the designs of the Father. Let us dispose our spirit to listen, meditate, pray, and contemplate, allowing the joy of the Gospel to transform our lives into a perpetual *Rogate* incarnated in history.

L1: The passage of Luke 1:39–56 narrates the prophetic encounter between two mothers and two promises that mark a turning point in the history of salvation. Immediately after the Angel’s announcement, Mary rises and goes with haste (*metà spoudês*) to the hill country, to a town of Judah (v. 39). This Lucan “haste” signifies the interior readiness and missionary solicitude of one who carries within her womb the very Lord of the Harvest. Entering the house of Zechariah and greeting Elizabeth, the text describes a true anticipatory Pentecost: at the sound of Mary’s greeting, the child leaps for joy (*eskirtēsen en agalliāsei*) in Elizabeth’s womb, and she is instantly filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 41).

L2: Elizabeth’s acclamation (vv. 42–45) introduces the first beatitude in Luke’s Gospel, founded upon the faith of the young maiden of Nazareth: “Blessed is she who believed” (*makaría hē pisteúsasa*). Elizabeth recognizes Mary as “the mother of my Lord,” a title of messianic and sovereign dignity. Luke’s exegesis shapes this encounter in parallel with the coming of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sam 6), where the presence of the Ark—now the virginal body of Mary—brings blessing, sanctification, and exultant joy to the entire household. Mary is the perfect disciple because she has heard the Word and put it into practice, conceiving the Word in faith even before conceiving Him in the flesh.

L3: In response to Elizabeth’s prophecy, Mary bursts forth into the Cantic of the Magnificat (vv. 46–55), a theological mosaic woven from citations of the Old Testament, especially the cantic of Hannah (1 Sam 2). The hymn begins with an explosion of personal praise in which her soul magnifies (*megalynei*) the Lord and her spirit rejoices in God her Savior. The reason for her gratitude is the divine election that has fixed its gaze upon the lowliness (*tapeînōsin*) of His handmaid (v. 48). Mary celebrates the sheer gratuity of God, who chooses what is small and hidden in the eyes of the world to accomplish His greatest works of salvation.

L4: In the second part of the canticle (vv. 51–55), the horizon widens from Mary to the entire history of salvation, revealing the revolutionary criteria of the Kingdom of God. The Lord performs a true eschatological and social reversal: He scatters the proud, casts down the mighty from their thrones, exalts the lowly, fills the hungry with good things (*peinôntas eneplēsen agathôn*), and sends the rich away empty. The Canticum concludes by recalling God’s fidelity to His mercy (*elēous*) and to the promises made to Abraham and his descendants forever, showing that God’s action in history is continuous, steadfast, and faithful.

MEDITATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY TO US?

Pastoral and Rogationist Foundation

GUIDE: The contemplation of Mary hastening through the hill country of Judea places us at the very heart of our spiritual and pastoral identity. Mary’s haste is the very haste that must animate the heart of every laborer in the Lord’s harvest. When a vocation is authentic, it does not retreat into comfort or self-referential isolation; rather, it impels us to go forth from ourselves to meet the human realities most in need of care, consolation, and proclamation. Mary teaches us that pastoral ministry flows from an overflowing love and from the urgency to share Christ, whom we carry within us.

L1: The mandate of the *Rogate* becomes luminously transparent when we contemplate the humility celebrated by Mary in the Magnificat. To pray to the Lord of the harvest means to adopt the interior disposition of the Virgin of Nazareth: to recognize ourselves as small, needy, and totally dependent upon the grace of God. The laborers whom Jesus commands us to implore from the Father are not men and women proud of their technical abilities, but humble hearts that allow the Lord to act through them. To pray for vocations is to ask for shepherds who know how to bend down before the little ones and who possess the prophetic courage to proclaim a God who lifts up the fallen and fills the hungry with good things.

L2: The words of the Magnificat purify our pastoral vision in the face of the contradictions present in the field of the world. Many times we become discouraged before structures of injustice, before indifference to so much suffering, or before the scarcity of vocational responses. Mary’s song reminds us that God holds history in His hands and that His mercy extends from generation to generation. He acts from below, through the hidden leaven and through the fidelity of the poor. The *Rogate* is, in itself, an act of prophetic resistance: by praying for vocations, we profess our faith that God continues to intervene in history, overturning the idols of selfishness and raising up laborers capable of transforming the world’s vastness through love.

Meditation Hymn (as chosen)

In the silence of prayer, let us allow ourselves to be questioned by the Word, and let us welcome these reflections in truth, so that the light of Christ may illumine and guide our path.

The missionary haste within our pastoral life: What truly moves our service within the community? Do we possess Mary’s charitable readiness to go forth toward the peripheries and the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, or are we immobilized by our comforts?

The prayer of the Rogate born from littleness: How can we cultivate within ourselves and within our group the humility that Mary proclaims in the Magnificat, recognizing that the vocational work belongs to God and that we are merely servants of His harvest?

Proclaiming the mercy that transforms: In what way can our community become a visible sign of the God who “exalts the lowly and fills the hungry,” fostering a culture in which young people find space to respond generously to the Lord’s call?

Sharing the Word

GUIDE: To welcome this mystery of the “Visitation” as a community invites us to share our personal vocational and pastoral journeys with openness and fraternity. Let us allow the joy of this encounter to illumine our words.

A moment of free sharing follows.

ORATIO – WHAT DO WE SAY TO GOD?

Responding to the Word that has visited us

GUIDE: United to Mary’s canticle of praise and gratitude, and conscious of the urgency for laborers in Your harvest, we lift up to You, O Lord of Life, our loving response, chanting with confidence the wonders of Your grace:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked upon the lowliness of His handmaid. From this day all generations shall call me blessed.

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His Name. His mercy is from age to age upon those who fear Him.

He has shown the strength of His arm, He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly;

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of His servant Israel, remembering His mercy, as He promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

CONTEMPLATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD DO WITHIN US?

Adoring silence; welcoming the mystery A soft musical background may accompany this moment.

GUIDE: In the recollection of our hearts—where the Word seeks to take deep root—let us enter the silence of contemplation and allow ourselves to be shaped by the mystery.

▪ Contemplate the embrace:

Contemplate the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth, where the presence of Jesus generates an invisible current of joy and prophecy. Feel the Holy Spirit fertilizing your heart with the desire to bring Christ to others.

▪ Contemplate God's gaze upon your littleness:

Silence every fear and fix your eyes upon the Father who has chosen you and calls you—not because of your strength, but because of your frailty. Rest in the certainty that His power is made perfect in your weakness.

▪ Contemplate the world through the Magnificat:

Look upon history and upon those who suffer with Mary's eyes. Contemplate the promise already fulfilled: that evil will not have the final word, and that the Lord's harvest will be gathered in the fullness of justice.

ACTIO – HOW DOES THE WORD SEND US FORTH INTO LIFE?

The Word becomes action; the Gospel becomes choice

GUIDE: So that this prayerful encounter with the Virgin of the Visitation may bear concrete fruits of vocational and rogationist life, let us now assume its commitments.

Each one personally becomes aware of the fruits born from the Lectio.

CONCLUSION OF THE LECTIO DIVINA

GUIDE: Having reached the end of this path of listening and prayer, let us treasure in the memory of our hearts Mary's blessed haste and the certainty that God's fidelity never fails. May the mysticism of the Visitation enkindle our daily actions and sustain the dynamism of the *Rogate*. Let us now raise our filial supplication to her who is, in the fullest sense, the Mother of all vocations. Let us pray:

ALL:

O Mary, Virgin of the Visitation and Mother of the Rogate, to you we entrust the laborers of the harvest and all hearts striving to respond to the call of your Son. You who climbed the mountains with the haste of love, grant us swift feet and free hearts to proclaim the Gospel without fear.

Teach us to sing the Magnificat in hours of difficulty, placing our full trust in the mercy of the Father who exalts the lowly. Look upon the present harvest—so vast and so in need of generous hands; intercede with the Lord that shepherds after His own Heart may never be lacking, and that consecrated men and women may spend their lives for the smallest ones.

May our life, in your image, be a perpetual prayer that draws holy laborers for the Kingdom of God. Amen.

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