

Second Week Prayer Units
Prayer Unit 10

Theme: God chooses to fulfil God's deepest desires through the Word made flesh.

Grace: To ask for what I desire -- a deep-felt knowledge of how God has chosen to fulfil the dream of God's heart through Jesus' conception and an intimate knowledge of the Trinity's deep desires for ourselves and for our planet.

Prayer Texts:

Spend the first three days using more of a pondering approach -- that is, pondering the prayer material concerning the Incarnation as you would a love letter. Ask God the kinds of questions about the story that are likely to evoke reactions and responses in your heart. Allow the mysterious and wonderful truth of the Incarnation to fill your mind and heart. Here are some questions that may help your wondering:

What was God's dream behind these historical events? What happened? Why did it happen that way? Who was there? What were the surroundings like? How could it be? Why that way? So what? If the historical conception were to take place today, what would be the circumstances? Would this child be female? In what way is this mystery taking place in our present time?

a) Incarnation With the First Prelude of the Incarnation Exercise [102]-[109], ponder with mind and heart how our Nurturing God contemplates how our planet is struggling. "... the whole of creation has been groaning in labour pains until now" (Rom 8:22). With the help of your active imagination, enter into God's personal deep-felt concerns about the condition of our planet. Listen with your heart to the discussion between the persons of the Holy Trinity. What is the dream of God's heart for us?

b) Repetition Consider how they labour for our salvation through Mary and the conception and life of Jesus. Ask yourself and God's Spirit some of the questions from the introduction above.

c) Repetition Return to the places in your last two prayer exercises where there have been movements in your heart. Remain with them and allow these movements to unfold themselves.

Note: During the next three days, enter your prayer exercise more explicitly with your powers of imagination. Allow the scripture text to fill your imagination as you look at the persons, hear what they are saying, and take part in their activities. Let yourself be drawn into the event as if it were taking place with you right now.

d) Lk 1:26-38 Announcement of the conception of Jesus. Watch this taking place, listen to the words, dialogue with Mary about it ... be there. Contemplate the growth of cells developing into the special child in her womb!

e) Repetition
or Lk 1:39-56

Walk with Mary into the hill country to visit Elizabeth.

f) Mt 1:18-25

Joseph, engaged to Mary, discovers that she is with child not by him. The predicament is clarified through a dream. This conception affects all their dreams, understandings and desires for an expected "typical family life" in a Jewish village.

The dream of God's heart for the world is expressed in Jer 31:31 where the covenant is imaged as being placed in each person's heart replacing stony hearts. The effect of this dream is recorded in Zech 14:20-21 which images everything in life having become sacred, even the pans in the kitchen and the bells on the horses. In Mic 6:8, God's hopeful dream is fulfilled by our doing justice, in our loving tenderly, and in our walking humbly with our God. Jesus prayed for the achievement of this dream in Jn 17, " ... Abba, may they be one as we are one." The completion of this dream is expressed in Rev 21:1-7 where the heavenly Jerusalem is imaged as coming down from the heavens with the Holy One wiping every tear from our eyes.

Our sensuality is grounded in nature, in compassion, and in grace.

In our sensuality, God is.

God is the means whereby our substance and our sensuality are kept together
so as never to be apart.

-- Julian of Norwich

Additional Readings for reflection outside prayer times:

Jn 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word.

Jn 3:16-18

God loved the world so much that God sent God's Son.

Eph 1:3-14

God's plan of salvation.

Phil 2:5-11

God poured out God's very self and became one of us.

Gal 4:1-7

At the appointed time, God sent God's own Son born of a woman.

Titus 3:3-8

God saves us with a heart of compassion.

Ps 40

Song of praise. Now at last our Caring God has stooped toward me.