

**CONFEDERACIÓN CARIBEÑA Y LATINOAMERICANA
DE RELIGIOSAS/OS – CLAR**



“Let us go out with haste to meet with life”

1. CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

**Faithful to the way of Jesus and in view of a
personal, communal lifestyle that leads us out**

**Guidelines for a Prayerful Reading
of the Visitation Icon**

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ENTERING INTO
THE LECTIO DIVINA**

- 1.** The prayer space can be prepared by placing in the center an image or symbol of the Holy Trinity, a lit candle and an open Bible.
- 2.** Before invoking the Holy Spirit you can listen to the audio “Culture of Encounter”

1. INVOCATION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Merciful God, you who went out to encounter the disciples of Emmaus, grant us a missionary spirit to meet our brothers and sisters, to join in their daily walk, to hear their sorrows and joys, to light their hearts with the fire of your Word; prepare them to recognize you in the Eucharist and send them as missionary disciples to share the joy of the Gospel to present and future generations of every race, language and culture.




We ask this from our fervent hearts in the Holy Spirit, in the name of your beloved Son and through the intercession of our Mother Mary of Guadalupe, Star of the New Evangelization. Amen

(Prayer of the Fifth Pastoral National Meeting of Hispanic / Latina)

2. AWAKENING OUR HEART

In a silent moment, try to enter into your heart inhabited by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Notice this presence and give thanks for it. Along with this Trinitarian presence, what other presences inhabit your heart this day? What situations, people, feelings, etc.? In the following box, you can write the answers to these questions:



3. WE PRAY WITH THE WORD

READING: *"What does the text say?"*

As Latin American and Caribbean Consecrated Life, we are pondering the Visitation Icon; it has its root in the Visitation that God himself makes to Mary through the angel Gabriel. Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit, receives the visit and conceives Jesus in her womb, and begins her journey, in haste, leading her to meet with Elizabeth, her cousin. Other encounters are generated from this one where the joy and life of these two women and the little ones they carry in themselves are at the centre of the scenario. Mary and Elizabeth's encounter will unleash the irruption of the Magnificat on Mary's lips. Let us listen with faith and love to this Word:



Culture of Encounter

The Gospel According to Luke 1, 39-56:

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home”

The word of God

- ✓ *Re- read the text once or twice.*
- ✓ *Ask yourself: What are the calls the Lord is making through this text? Where are those joys coming from? In what ways are your encounters a manifestation of joy in the presence of God? Where and to whom do your steps lead you? What situations lead you to go out in haste? Do these situations, motivate you to awaken the magnificent in you and in others? How does this message energize you? What newness am I being invited to recognize and welcome?*
- ✓ *You can appropriate the text underlining or memorizing some of its expressions.*

What word or phrase of this biblical text touches your heart today? What feelings can you identify? If you want to write them down here:

- ✓ *You can share it in community, as an echo, aloud.*

MEDITATION: *“What does this text says to me?”*

At this moment stop and stay with the word or phrase that you have written down above. Repeat it interiorly several times. Keep it in your heart in union with Mary; let Her teach you to meditate it.



In the following box reflect the main invitation that the *Ruha* makes to you through this text:

- **Suggestions from the Inspirational Guide of the Consecrated Life of The CLAR to continue deepening in the richness of the Word:**

The Consecrated Life in Latin America and the Caribbean Region urges us today to: ¹

*“Energize a **“culture of encounter”** faithful to the style of Jesus: a culture given to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue; one that goes beyond internal and external prejudices so as to forge an ecclesiology of communion and inclusive participation; one that helps us revise our personal and communal lifestyles and pushes us out of our self-referential enclosures.”*

¹ CLAR, Inspirational Guide 2015-2018, pág. 7.

- Suggestions *from* the invitations made by Pope Francis in the *Evangelii Gaudium*:

The “Culture of Encounter”

At the beginning of the EG, Pope Francis makes an exhortation to all Christians: *“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.”*².

“Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-referential enclosure. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization”.³.

The culture of the encounter referred to by Pope Francis demands that the Church is lived from the “hastiness of Mary”. The Pope affirms that *“The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. ¡Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved”*.⁴.

² Evangelii Gaudium n. 3

³ Ídem, n. 8

⁴ Ídem, n. 24

“Faced with postmodern and globalized individualism, the culture of the encounter is a proposal to get out of it and progress more and more to meet the other, welcomed in his being as a gift “⁵. Hence the Pastoral activity “needs to bring out more clearly the fact that our relationship with the Father demands and encourages a communion which heals, promotes and reinforces interpersonal bonds.”⁶

As Consecrated Life, we assume the attitude of Mary to leave in haste to meet her cousin Elizabeth. Other attitudes and challenges are being generated; to this Pope Francis refers: *“Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a “mystique” of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled! To go out of ourselves and to join others is healthy for us.”⁷*

We need to assume from Mary the solid learning that will lead us more and more to create the conditions for the culture of encounter, which Pope Francis reminds us is possible. “She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town “with haste” to be of service to others (Lc 1,39). This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization”⁸ We implore

⁵ Mensaje del papa Francisco para la Cuaresma 2017.

⁶ Evangelii Gaudium, n. 67

⁷ Ídem, n. 87

⁸ Ídem, n. 288

her maternal intercession to show the ways that lead us to our friend Jesus and to our brothers.

PRAYER:

“What do I say to God with this text?”

- ✓ Now is the moment to express to the Lord what is present in your heart after having heard His Word: What invitation can you gather here and now and which is latent in yourself?
- ✓ Which paths do you need to go through to live the attitude of Mary, going out in haste to meet others?
- ✓ Who are these “others”?

You can write your sentence in the following space:



CONTEMPLATING:

- ✓ *It is time to ponder; to contemplate the experience just lived, that has been given to you.*



- ✓ By way of slogan, you may choose a phrase that accompanies you to live attentively the attitude of Mary of Nazareth in her willingness to encounter others.

4. LET'S TAKE THE WORD TO OUR LIFE

Before we finish this moment of prayer, let us make present with our actions the dynamism of the Word, so that to every person we meet in our paths we will honor Him "as Christ, and satisfy his hunger, his thirst for justice, and of relationship ... " We can ask ourselves:

What commitments would you undertake TODAY as Consecrated person to leave in haste, like Mary, to encounter Life?

What attitudes should we strengthen in ourselves, in our communities and in the living of our charisms to be the CL that lives from the relational style of Jesus, and thereby encourage the "culture of encounter"?

God has led us out of ourselves; his mercy has set loose our Magnificat. With Mary let us go out in hast to meet with life. Let us serve one and all.

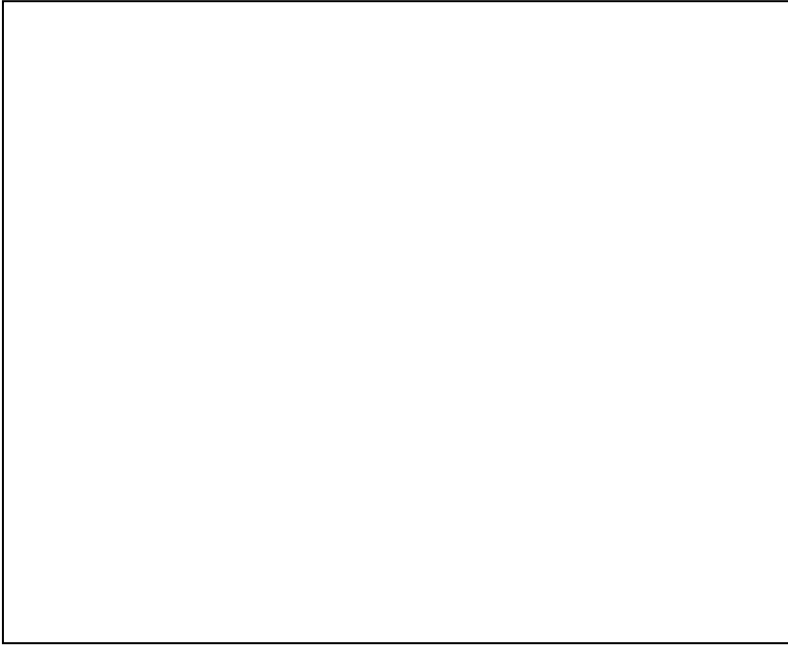
✓ *How can succeed in making our communities places where the culture of encounter flourishes?*

✓



* We share prayerfully our own Magnificat with Mary, Our Lady of Swiftmess, who rushed without delay to come to the aid of others (Lk 1:39).

In the following box, should you wish, you can write the hymn of thanks that springs from your deepest self.



Pray

Star of the new evangelization, help us to shine in the witness of communion, of service, of ardent and generous faith, of justice and of love of the poor, so that the joy of the Gospel reach to the ends of the earth, enlightening every corner.

Mother of the living Gospel, fount of joy for God's little ones, pray for us. Amen. Aleluya.