***Visio Divina*** Your Personal Prayer Guide to Accompany ***“A Pentecost Vigil Moment”***

By Debbie Stollery

Columbian American artist, Jerry Dueñas, created this painting for the Pentecost Vigil Project. Entitled “A Pentecost Vigil Moment,” this work has many elements within it: the Blessed Mother and the infant Jesus, people of many ethnicities and nationalities, the continents of the world, symbols of the Holy Spirit, the apostles, creation itself, a table around which all are gathered, and more, which the Lord will reveal to us as we pray with this work. The color palate was inspired by the official logo for the Synod on Synodality.

We invite you to pray with this work, using a traditional process called *Visio Divina.*

**What is *Visio Divina***? It is an ancient form of Christian prayer in which we allow our hearts and imaginations to enter into a sacred image, in silence, to see what God might have to say to us.

**How do I practice this form of prayer**? Like its sister prayer, *Lectio Divina,*  there are steps to follow to open the doorway to the Divine Spirit:

* As you gaze at the image, notice your breath and your body.  Ask the Lord to open your senses and then return to your quiet awareness of your breath and your body.
* Simply be present to the image and allow it to speak to your heart, without any particular agenda. It might speak to you in words or wordlessly.
* How do you feel looking at the image?
* If you had to describe the image in a sentence or two silently to yourself, what would you say?
* If you were in the image, where would you place yourself?
* Do you get a glimpse of the sacred from this image? Is God speaking to you in this image?
* Does a name for God arise for you from this image? In silence, sit with what you have received.

If you are alone, you might choose to write down a word or phrase to express your experience of the image. Perhaps this will serve as a prompt for you to move into journaling prayer. Perhaps this just becomes a means for you to capture your sacred word from this prayer.

If you are experiencing this in a small group, this is where you may choose to share a word or phrase to express your experience of the image.

**A shared reflection** on one experience of *Visio Divina* with “A Pentecost Vigil Moment.”

As I began this prayer, and first looked at the painting (but of course, not my first time ever). What I sensed was an energy, a power and remarkable diversity. My heart felt unsettled, alert, and quickly my mind shifted to curiosity as my eyes flowed in no pattern or order, around the painting.

My unsettled sense combined with the energy, initially made it hard for me to focus on anything but the large bird…a dove I presume, golden and yet flecked with red…blood perhaps? A reminder that the Spirit was sent by Jesus but only after his blood was shed…or perhaps that’s not “right.”

Oh wait…this is not about a “correct” interpretation. It’s about the Lord trying to speak to me…let go of “right” and enter into what God is speaking today. The dove, splitting through the chaos, and hovering over all of creation. I’m reminded of Genesis, when God spoke, and creation came to be…and now the Spirit arrives, and a new creation comes into being. One people, from all continents, with endless stories, languages and perspectives…all gifted with the Spirit. And now the cacophony of color and lines starts to come into focus a little better.

I find myself wearing pink, standing a little alone, but not far from the Blessed Mother…with a flame connecting to me…but what are those dots connecting the flame to me? I don’t know…but the connection is direct, the dots varied, and they rest on my shoulder. What is God trying to say to me? As I look around the painting, I see those dots over and over again, close to the people, touching some, hovering near others, surrounding us all…anointing everything with energy, connectivity, hope. For the Spirit is at work, in charge, creating a new global community…one Body, diverse, dispersed and yet one. Amen. Amen. Amen. In our divided, warring, polarized world, what a gift this seems to be.

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