



# CHRISTMAS MEDITATIONS

Inspired by Global Nativities

# How to Engage With CHRISTMAS MEDITATIONS

## Inspired by Global Nativities

Throughout the world, Christians display nativities that depict the birth of Christ. In portraying Christ's birth, each artist has a unique expression of the scene that is informed by their experiences, geographical location, and culture, among other things. Differences between the nativities can be observed in color, texture, shape, space, and in the material, or medium, used.

Rev. Emily Scatterday Holehan, Pastor of Flourishing at Maple Avenue Ministries, has contributed photos of her nativity collection from around the world to be used for reflection.

As you look at these nativities from around the world, you are invited to engage in the spiritual discipline of Visio Divina, or "divine seeing." In "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook," Adele Ahlberg Calhoun defines Visio Divina as a spiritual practice where "we intentionally seek God by praying with images, icons, created media and creation itself." This practice can include "allowing the creativity of others to open a path to worship" that can result in "gratitude, a holy imagination, and hearts that worship the Creator."

The following pages will prompt you to reflect on what you observe in the various nativities accompanied by Scripture. We pray that this resource helps you reflect, pray, and worship Jesus Christ, the hope of the world!

# CHINA



## Porcelain

### Isaiah 9:6-7

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government  
and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his  
kingdom, establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this."

### Visio Divina Reflection

- \*What do you notice in this nativity?
- \*How would you describe this image?
- \*Does this image bring forth a name of God for you?
- \*How might God be speaking to you through this image?

# NEPAL



## Felt

### Matthew 1:20-21

"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# JERUSALEM



## Olive Wood

### Luke 2:15

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# JERUSALEM



## Olive Wood

### Luke 2:4-7

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# BETHLEHEM



## Olive Wood

Micah 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among  
the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# FRANCE



Wood

Luke 2:19

"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

**Visio  
Divina  
Reflection**

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# ETHIOPIA



## Wood

### Isaiah 40:1-5

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# KENYA



## Pottery

### Matthew 2:1-2

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?"

We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# SOUTH AFRICA



## Wood

### John 1:1-4

"In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things were made;  
without him nothing was made  
that has been made.

In him was life,  
and that life was the light of all mankind.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## Cross Stitch

Luke 1:34-38

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.

For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered.

"May your word to me be fulfilled."

Then the angel left her."

CHRISTMAS MEDITATIONS

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



**Tin**

**John 1:9**

"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world."

## **Visio Divina Reflection**

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# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## Pottery

### Isaiah 60:1-3

"Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the Lord rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.  
Nations will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# ALASKA



## Pottery

### Luke 2:13-14

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# MICHIGAN



## Yarn

### Luke 1:30-33

"But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# TENNESSEE



## Pottery

### Matthew 2:9a-11

"...and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# MEXICO



## Pottery

Luke 1:46-50

"And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has been mindful  
of the humble state of his servant.  
From now on all generations will call me  
blessed, for the Mighty One  
has done great things for me—  
holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# HAITI



## Clay & Coconut Shell

Luke 2:16-18

"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



## Mixed Mediums

Isaiah 11:10, 12

"In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



## Pottery

### Isaiah 7:14

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:  
the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son,  
and he will call him Immanuel."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# COSTA RICA



## Pottery

Luke 2:28-33

"Simeon took him in his arms  
and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you  
have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what  
was said about him."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# GUATEMALA



## Wood

### Luke 2:8-12

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

### Visio Divina Reflection

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# NICARAGUA



## Wood

### Isaiah 11:1-3

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge  
and fear of the Lord—  
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord."

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# NICARAGUA



## Pottery

John 1:14

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

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# PERU



## Pottery

### Isaiah 32:1-2

"See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land."

## Visio Divina Reflection

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# URUGUAY



Luke 2:39-40

Wood

"When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him."

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