



## Listen to the Heartbeat of God

### *Music suggestions:*

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (C. Wesley) or other Advent hymn; Listen (Dyer); There Is a Longing (Quigley); Spirit of the Living God (Iverson); Summons (Bell, Iona); Veni Sancte Spiritus or Stay Here and Keep Watch (Taizé). These or other hymns or instrumental music may be used at the beginning, conclusion or during the reflection time as desired.

### *Ambiance suggestions:*

A single candle burning in a semi-dark room. This prayer lends itself to the Advent season, when the Scripture text appears in the liturgy, but it is also appropriate for any context where deep listening for God is the grace desired.



### **Introduction/opening prayer:**

The delegates of the 34th General Chapter acknowledge this moment in our history, in our Church, and in our world as both deeply graced and extraordinarily challenging. As we ponder the Gospel and our time, we hear a renewed and deepened call to respond to the joys and sorrows of people today.

—Acts of the 34<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, July, 2016

### **Readings:**

Reading I: Mt. 1:18-25

Reading II: “Really?” (Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM)

Joseph, already listening, long  
for the heartbeat of God,  
“a just and honorable man,” they called him  
practiced in listening to his own heart, to what is right.

But now?  
His intended is pregnant, not his child.  
What to do?  
Listen, listen again for the heartbeat of God. . .

Even in sleep  
and dreams—God comes in dreams, he knows  
so vivid, so strange.  
Don’t be afraid.

Who is this Holy Spirit?  
How can this be?  
Jesus, Yeshua, Savior.  
Really?  
Don't be afraid.

The prophet, could it be?  
“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son  
and they shall name him Emmanuel.”  
God with us.  
Really?  
Really.

The dream, so vivid.  
Yes, she shall be my wife.  
We will go forward together  
listening to the mystery,  
the heartbeat of God.

And the Promised of the dream became flesh and dwelt among us  
full of grace and truth  
so we can hear anew the heartbeat of God  
beating within the world.  
Now.  
Really.

**Reflection questions:**

- ♥ Describe one place where, as you listen deeply, you hear the heartbeat of God in our time.
- ♥ How does that heartbeat call to you? To us?

**Time for reflection/sharing**

**After quiet and sharing:**

The present day calls for courage and audacity.  
We must discover new paths and allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of the Lord. Mother Marie-Rose lived in insecurity. She knew struggles, anguish, opposition, even injustice but she was always confident and serene because she believed in God. My dear Sisters, we are her daughters. Her spirit must find expression in our times.



--Mere Philippe-de-la-Croix, 1968 November 30, SNJM 150th Calendar

We hear the urgent call of Pope Francis to radically re-image religious life and mission and to find our identity on the peripheries among the marginalized and those living in poverty. We affirm that opening our imaginations, hearts, minds and lives to others will lead to a new life for our Church and our world, as well as for our Congregation.

--Acts of the 34<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, July 2016 (SNJM congregational statement)

**Intercessory prayers:**

**Closing prayer:** Prayer for the 34<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, July 2016

God of our past, our present our future,  
You call us from a future abundant in grace, full of challenge  
and rich in possibility.  
You invite us to leave the familiar, to forge new paths,  
to risk moving forward with the destination uncertain.

Grant us continually renewed fidelity  
to the radical call of the Gospel and to our founding charism.  
Help us to listen deeply as we discern together our response to the needs of our community, the  
church and the world today.

Launch us anew with passionate love.  
Give us a daring spirit.  
Fill us with hope.



I hope you will be courageous and  
that you will not grow weary.  
Our Divine Lord is there  
just as he is here.

--Mother Marie Rose



Prayer service created by: Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM

The Spiritual Ministries Network of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) provides a variety of prayer services for personal and group spiritual nourishment. May your prayer life draw you closer to the Divine.

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