Script for Visio Divina: Toronto at Night

Hello, my name is Les Miller.

I’m the author of a new book from Novalis: *Northern Light: A Canadian Prayer Book*. As the title suggests, it is a book of prayers and reflections featuring various places across Canada. A photo of each place accompanies the text.

In this video, we explore a form of prayer I used in preparing the book. With this technique, you can use photographs as prayer to draw closer to the Creator.

Visio Divina, or divine seeing, is a way of encountering the sacred using images, such as the photographs I took for *Northern Light*. Visio Divina has its roots in Lectio Divina (or divine reading), the use of icons in worship, and sacred art. Recently, practitioners have used secular art and nature as well. In fact, a sub-genre of Visio Divina is Visio Natura, where one contemplates a natural scene to discern the presence of God. Many of the images in *Northern Light* were the result of Visio Divina of aspects of creation.

We will use *Toronto at Night* to illustrate the process of Visio Divina. This photo was taken as part of the *Northern Light* project to illustrate the prayer of the same name. Because there were already two Toronto prayers (Commuter Camino and A Pearson Airport Visitation) in the book, *Toronto at Night* and a few other prayers and photos were placed on the companion website. See en.novalis.ca or lesmiller.ca for these extra pieces.

Let’s begin...


2. Now open your eyes. Gaze at the image. Let your eyes rest on the scene. Note your feelings as you explore it. What do you notice? Listen to the prayer...
Toronto at Night
Light of the world,
Bless this brightness in the darkness.
Bless this lattice of lights laid over this city.
Bless the brightness that defies the gloom.
Bless the office towers and corner stores.
Bless the Advent wreaths, Hanukkah candles and Diwali lights.
Bless the neon of Dundas Square and the reflection of the Toronto sign at City Hall.
Bless the CN Tower illuminations.
Bless the headlights that pierce the driving snow.
Bless the spotlights, traffic lights and searchlights.
Bless the moonlight rippling over Humber Bay.
Bless all these mirrors, particles, shards and fragments of your original light.
But also:
Bless the light in our minds that reflects your wisdom in our deliberations.
Bless the light in our hearts that reflects your compassion in our treatment of the wounded.
Bless the light in our eyes as we contemplate your creation.
God of light and loveliness,
Shine in our lives, we pray.

[pause]

3. How does the prayer connect with the photo?

4. Gaze at the photo again. Imagine yourself among the buildings. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you sense?

5. What else would you bless?

6. How is the sacred present to you in this experience?

7. How does this Visio Divina relate to your life now?

8. What insight from this experience do you want to retain? How will you do that?

9. Complete the Visio Divina by offering a prayer of thanksgiving.

I will post another Visio Divina soon. In the meantime, try it yourself using other images in the book, which is available from en.novalis.ca. For more information about me, my books and presentations, visit lesmiller.ca.