

Walking With Mary in Lent: 10 Little Steps

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The Lenten desert can be a place of decrease where the false self and unrealistic expectations are put to death for good. Passages from death to new life are not always easy. Mary can accompany us and help us to discern what we need to let go of in order to receive the greater gift of God.

Mothers are adept at helping us to clean up, get ready, and put things in proper order again. Mothers are skillful at applying healing salves to the wounds of children. Mary excels at holding us close to her heart in an embrace that brings peace and strength. Mary never tires of repeating the truth that we are beloved of God. She can help break the chains that bind us from true freedom such as the pesky addictions (alcohol, food, TV, Internet), the compromises (missing times of prayer and the sacraments, illicit relationships, numbing laziness, or frenzied busyness). If we invite Mary into our brokenness, her holiness will take over and help to sever whatever binds us from authentic freedom, love and joy. She doesn't invade our lives; we need to invite her.

Mary enriches our spiritual journey always. Perhaps we can consider living the Lenten season with Mary as fulfilling our Marian consecration also.

How do we walk with Mary during Lent? Here are 10 little steps.

1. Take up Mary's spiritual practices, which likely included, praying the Psalms, meditating on the Scriptures, offering hymns of praise and gratitude to God such as her Magnificat.
2. Imitate Mary's courageous "yes" more intentionally as you walk the Stations of the Cross with her.
3. Imitate Mary's forgiveness and mercy at the foot of the cross where she also forgave her Son's executioners.
4. Imitate Mary's complete focus on her Son Jesus during all the phases of his suffering; and her intercessory prayer for everyone involved.
5. Strive to live Mary's faith, hope and love, simplicity, sacrifice, service and obedience—even in the face of such terrorizing agony.
6. With Mary, sit at the feet of Jesus, choosing the better part—perhaps attend Eucharistic Adoration more frequently and read John's Gospel, Chapter 19.
7. Take up Mary's "beads". Intentionally, live Mary's memories! Linger in contemplation of the Sorrowful Mysteries, asking Mary to help you encounter Jesus in His Passion that you may love him more.
8. Consider when Jesus breathed his last and Mary did as he said, "Behold your son"—John the Beloved. She took him into her heart and brought forth the best of his Priesthood. Consider the vocation of spiritual motherhood or fatherhood of priests.
9. With Mary, receive Holy Communion more often, mindful that Mary helps you to encounter Jesus more intimately.
10. Console the Sorrowful Mother along the Via Dolorosa, perhaps offering to share in her pierced heart for love of God and neighbor.

Julian of Norwich wrote about Mary, “Our Lord showed me our Lady, Saint Mary, to teach us this: that it was the wisdom and truth in her, when she beheld her Maker, that enabled her to know him as so great, so holy, so mighty, and so good. His greatness and his nobleness overwhelmed her. She saw herself so little and low, so simple and poor compared to God that she was filled with humility. And so from this humble state she was lifted up to grace and all manner of virtues, and stands above all. This above all causes the soul to seem small in its own sight, to see and love its Maker. And this is what fills it with reverence and humility, and with generous love to our fellow-Christians. The seeking, with faith, hope and love, pleases our Lord, and the finding pleases the soul and fills it with joy.” (*Enfolded in Love*).