

The Virgin Mary offers us the perfect model of discipleship, leading us ever closer to Jesus

The Perfect Lenten Companion



Mother of Sorrows

By Dr. Robert Fastiggi

In the Gospel of Luke, Simeon told Mary that her heart would be pierced so that "the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed" (Lk 2:35). This prophecy was fulfilled during Christ's passion when Mary stood beneath the cross witnessing her Son's crucifixion (Jn 19: 25-27). Vatican II tells us that Mary "faithfully persevered in her union with her Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly

consenting to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth"
(*Lumen Gentium*, No 58).

Lent, along with the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15, is a special time for venerating Mary as our sorrowful mother. This is done in the Stations of the Cross, which often includes the singing of parts of the medieval hymn, *Stabat Mater*, whose most memorable verses are:

*"At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping.
Close to Jesus to the last,
Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
All his bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had pass'd.
Oh, how sad and sore distress'd
Was that mother highly blest
Of the sole-begotten One!"*



ADDITIONAL MARIAN ACTIVITIES FOR LENT

Devotion to Mary is a privileged way for deepening our Lenten experience. Asking Our lady to accompany us as we journey through the 40 days of Lent is excellent. Any Marian devotion one pursues during Lent will bring forth many graces and consolations. Because Mary is "Our Lady of Grace" she will help us in our Lenten journey. If the goal of Lent is to draw closer to Jesus, then devotion to Mary will be a most assured path.

*The
ROSARY
is the weapon for
these times.
St. Pio of Pietrelcin*

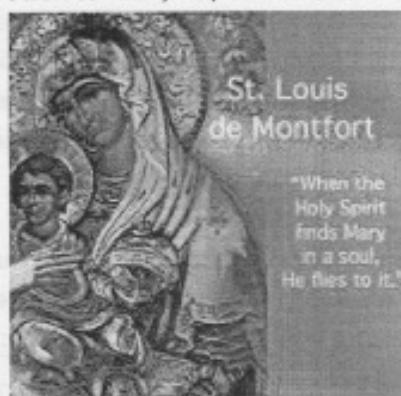
Pray the Rosary

- During this centenary year of the apparitions of Fatima, a resolve to pray the Rosary daily would prove especially fruitful. For those who have trouble finding time to pray five mysteries daily, even one decade every day will be a source of grace.



Read a book about Mary

Reading a book about Mary during Lent would be a great idea, especially a classic like "True Devotion to Mary" by St. Louis de Montfort.



Learn about Fatima

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of Fatima. Watch a movie or read a book about this miracle. The message of prayer and sacrifice resonates with Lent.

Pray the Stations of the Cross

Families might also plan to participate in the Stations of the Cross on the Fridays during Lent. The 14 stations have a definite Marian quality, especially station 4, which recalls Jesus meeting his Mother along the way of the Cross.



Pray other Marian Prayers

In addition to the Rosary, there are other Marian prayers that could be recited together, such as the Litany of Loreto, Prayer to Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the various Marian novena prayers.