

# The PERFECT Lenten Companion



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

*By Dr. Robert Fastiggi*

## *Who Leads Us to Christ*

*At the wedding feast of Cana, Mary told the servers: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). In a similar way, Mary directs us all to be faithful to Christ, her Divine Son. If we wish to draw closer to Christ during Lent, there is no better way than by entrusting ourselves to Mary, our spiritual mother.*

*In his great work, "True Devotion to Mary," St. Louis de Monfort (1673-1716) teaches that the entire purpose of devotion to Mary is to provide "a smooth but certain way of reaching Jesus Christ" (No. 62). He says that devotion to Mary "is a way of reaching Jesus perfectly, loving him tenderly, and serving him faithfully" (ibid).*

*For St. Louis, "the more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus," and consecration to Mary "is the perfect reward of the vows and promises of holy baptism" (No. 120). If Lent is a season when we recall our own baptism, devotion to Mary is one of the best ways to do this.*

## *Teacher of Prayer*

*Lent is a time to deepen our prayer life, and Mary provides the best example of prayer in her canticle, known as the Magnificat (Lk 1: 46-55). This canticle expresses the attitudes of praise, gratitude and humility that are at the heart of all authentic prayer to God.*

*Paul VI speaks of Mary as "the virgin in prayer" who "praises the Lord unceasingly and intercedes for the salvation of the world." As our spiritual mother, Mary not only teaches us how to pray, but she prays for us "now and at the hour of our death."*

*...to be continued*

## 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.

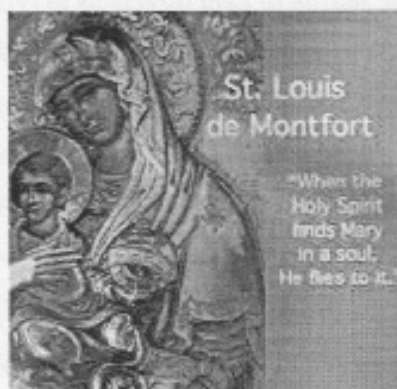
### Pray the Rosary

- 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.



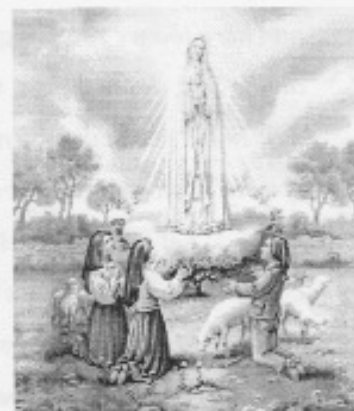
### Meditate before an Icon

More common in Eastern Christianity, icons are meant to guide us to deeper prayer and reflection. Mary with the child Jesus is frequently depicted.

### Participate in First Saturdays

It would also be helpful to begin the five first Saturdays requested by Our Lady of Fatima in 1925. She revealed to Sister Lucia that she would:

*"assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for their salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me."*



### Consider Consecration

Some might decide that this Lent will be when they begin their preparation for making the total consecration to Mary according to the method of St. Louis de Montfort. There are a number of groups that help people prepare for this consecration, which usually involves a 33-day period of preparation.