



THE ASCENSION


# Lenten Companion

Walking with Mary to Jerusalem

## STEP BY STEP: HOW TO DO THE ASCENSION LENTEN COMPANION IN YOUR PARISH OR SMALL GROUP

### Before Lent

- Order *The Ascension Lenten Companion: Walking with Mary to Jerusalem* journals in bulk for your group or parish. Here are the bulk discounted prices:



INDIVIDUAL COPIES		PRICE
1-9 copies		\$13.95 per copy
10-19 copies		\$8.50 per copy
BOXES OF 20		PRICE
1-5 boxes		\$5.95 per copy (\$119/box)
6+ boxes		\$2.50 per copy (\$50/box)

- Spread the word! Use [these free resources](#) from Ascension, including flyers, bulletin announcements, and pulpit announcements.
- Bring everyone together to watch the 7-minute [Ash Wednesday video](#) or email it out. Distribute the journals at this event or make them available at the back of the church.

## During Lent

- Each week, email participants the link to the video, which varies between 6 and 10 minutes. We have partnered with Flocknote to create the emails for you—[find them here!](#)
- Arrange for your small groups to meet once a week during Lent. You can structure a weekly meeting of 60 to 90 minutes like this:

Pray opening prayer	5 minutes
Watch the video for the week	6-10 minutes
Optional: Invite each member to share a high and a low for the week	10-15 minutes
Go over the weekly reflection questions (found in the journal) as a group	40-55 minutes
Pray closing prayer	5 minutes

- Encourage participants with children to use the *Lenten Companion* family resources available in the journal for each week.

## *The Ascension Lenten Companion: Walking with Mary to Jerusalem* Weekly Reflection Questions

### *Week of Ash Wednesday (March 5-8)*

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** Fr. Toups says in the video that what is profound is personal. As you look back at your own life, do you find this to be true? Jesus' journey to the Cross was profound for Mary because it was personal. He was her son. In what ways can you make his journey personal to you this Lent? Ask Mary to help you see Lent through her eyes.
- This week we saw that Mary has a unique and profound relationship with each person of the Blessed Trinity. While it is not necessary for us to have a relationship with Mary to have a relationship with God, Mary is of interest to God, so she should be of interest to us. Instead of asking if a relationship with Mary is required, maybe we should ask if it is desired. If God wants to bless you with a new experience of Mary, will you receive it?
- We are beginning our journey this week by thinking about where we are right now in our relationship with the Blessed Mother. Like Jesus, Mary will always meet us where we are. Where are you in your relationship with Mary? Have you always had a deep devotion to Mary and a personal relationship with her, or do you question her role in the Church and in your life and struggle to trust her?
- Now take a moment to reflect on these first days of Lent, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

### **First Week of Lent (March 9–15)**

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** We recalled this week how Mary's yes to the angel at the Annunciation reflects her openness to God throughout her life. Every question she had she made available to God to answer. Every fear was available for God to transform. Every need was available to God so that he could fulfill it. Every desire and dream was available to God so he could lead her. In what ways has Mary revealed her heart to you this week? Share with her some of the questions, fears, needs, and desires in your own heart. Ask Mary to help you bring them to her son and lay them at his feet this Lent.
- We mentioned earlier this week that Mary has seen things that no one else in the world ever saw. Mary saw the details of Jesus' infancy, childhood, and adolescent years. Mary witnessed Jesus' relationship with Joseph. Mary saw Jesus growing into his identity. Consider Mary's unique perspective on Jesus' journey to the Cross. What do you think she saw that no one else saw?
- Mary is completely available to God. We all have parts of ourselves we would rather keep hidden from others, things we've done that bring us shame or things we fear might happen in the future. How can you make yourself more fully available to God? How can you give him, in trust and peace, every part of yourself, including the parts you'd rather hide?
- Now take a moment to reflect on these first days of Lent, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

### **Second Week of Lent (March 16–22)**

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** Fr. Toups mentions that Mary was no stranger to suffering. Mary was able to find God with her in her suffering. Follow along with Fr. Toups as he prays Psalm 118. Imagine Mary praying these words in the midst of her suffering. How do you handle suffering? Are you able to cry out to God when you suffer, or do you resist his help? If you struggle, what holds you back? Pray the words of Psalm 118 with Mary.
- This week we talked about how Mary experienced tremendous suffering throughout her life. Even though she was chosen among all women to be born without sin and to be the mother of God, she did not get a free pass from the sorrows that God asked her to endure. We all have suffering in our lives, from extended hard times to little inconveniences throughout our days. How does Mary teach us to welcome these moments of hardship? How did she confide in our Lord, her son, when these moments arose in her life?
- How are you feeling now, at the end of the second week of Lent? Are your original intentions and fasts going strong, or have you had to adjust your expectations? Ask Mary to help you remain close and faithful to her son in your Lenten sacrifices.
- Now take a moment to reflect on the past week, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

### *Third Week of Lent (March 23–29)*

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** Fr. Toups mentions that it is sometimes hard for us to let God see us and to accept his mercy in the midst of our sin. Follow along with Fr. Toups as he prays the words of Psalm 103. Imagine Mary praying these words over the people in the crowd as they listen to Jesus tell the parable of the Prodigal Son. Is it hard for you to believe that God offers you the same mercy and forgiveness he offered the crowds that day? Is it hard for you to imagine Mary seeing you with the eyes of a mother?
- Jesus shared his message of love and mercy with everyone: faithful and unfaithful, proud and humble, rich and poor. Which group of people do you identify with the most as you listen to Jesus' message? The apostles? The Pharisees? Jesus' other followers? The outcasts and sinners?
- What emotions do you imagine filled Mary's heart as she heard Jesus share God's love through different stories, such as the parables of the lost coin, the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan? Do you think Mary had heard these stories before?
- Now take a moment to reflect on the past week, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

### *Fourth Week of Lent (March 30–April 5)*

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** As Jesus gets closer to Jerusalem and confronts the scribes, Pharisees, tax collectors, and others, the tension is rising. According to the norms of the day, Jesus is talking to people he shouldn't have any dealings with (like the tax collectors), and he is speaking too boldly to the religious authorities (like the scribes and Pharisees). Have you ever been in a tense situation when someone was speaking the truth, and it made everyone uncomfortable? How did you react? How do you think Mary is feeling as her son challenges those around him?
- The scribes and Pharisees were humiliated that a humble teacher from Nazareth was challenging them. Have you ever felt this way—that someone in your life didn't have the right or the ability to teach you anything? Can you think of a time when truth and goodness came to you from an unexpected source? How can you better embrace the virtue of humility in your life?
- Are there areas in your life where, like Peter, you need Jesus to save you? Have there been times in your life, or even just this week, when you took your eyes off Jesus and began to sink into the water? What areas, situations, hopes, and fears do you need to surrender to Jesus? Do you trust him to take care of you?
- Now take a moment to reflect on the past week, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

### *Fifth Week of Lent (April 6–12)*

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** Mary lived her life in obedience to God. She was always saying yes to God and doing what he asked of her. She continued to say yes to God's will even as she faced the mounting tension arising from Jesus' own radical obedience to his Father. Obedience requires trust. Can you think of a time in your life when God asked you to do something, and you knew your obedience would cause tension or other uncomfortable consequences? How do you think Mary was able to continue obeying God through increasingly difficult circumstances?

- After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the scribes and Pharisees panicked and began to look for ways to silence Jesus. Have you ever had moments in your life where, like the religious authorities, you were threatened, your pride was hurt, or you were humbled by someone unexpected? How did you handle that situation? How do you hope to handle a similar situation in the future? How do you think Jesus calls us to react when we are humbled and shown the truth by someone unexpected?
- Judas, in his doubt and fear, isolates himself and sinks deeper into darkness—further away from Jesus, “the light of the world” (John 8:12). What sins, sufferings, struggles, or pain are you hiding from Jesus and the people you love most? What wounds do you need to bring into the light so that Jesus can heal them?
- Now take a moment to reflect on the past week, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

### **Holy Week (April 13–19)**

- **VIDEO REFLECTION:** It can be hard to see someone we love suffer. Often there is not much we can say or do to take their suffering away, but our presence can be a great comfort. Mary knew that she could not prevent or lessen her son’s pain, but she stayed with him throughout his suffering. All but one of his disciples ran away, but she did not leave him. Can you think of someone who stayed with you during a particularly difficult time in your life? How did their presence and support help you?
- What were your feelings and emotions heading into Holy Week? How do you feel now, on Holy Saturday? Were you prepared for the things Jesus has revealed to you? Or were you feeling unprepared and afraid? Share all your emotions, the polished and the raw, with Jesus.
- What guided meditation moved you the most this week? What feelings did it evoke? What was the most powerful takeaway?
- Now take a moment to reflect on the past week, going over the meditations that bore the most fruit in your prayer and your reflections on the video. How has your prayer changed this week?

**More questions?** Please contact us—we’d love to hear from you!

[support@ascensionpress.com](mailto:support@ascensionpress.com)

1-800-376-0520

