

A Time to Reflect on Mary

By **Bishop David Walker**

At Easter we focus on Jesus in his passion. In this month of Mary, it can be good for us to make Mary the focus of the passion.

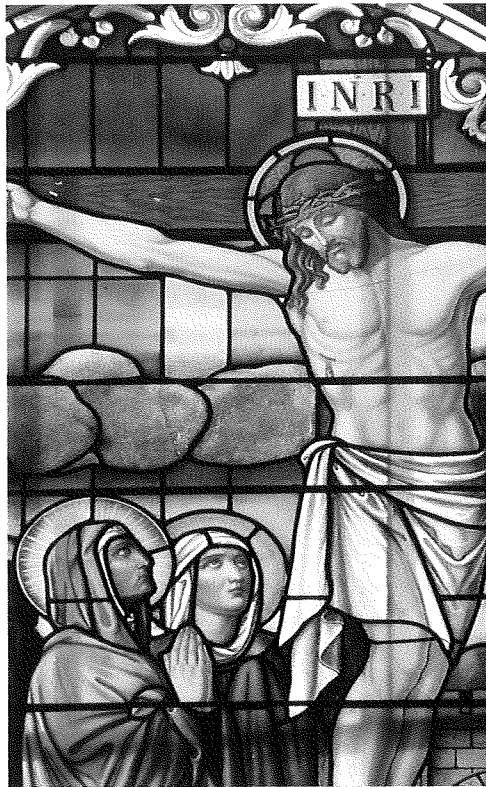
I urge you to read the Scripture on this page using the *lectio divina* (sacred reading) guidelines outlined. As you do, perhaps consider the following in your meditations:

- What did this week mean to her?
- How was her faith tested during these days?
- What was her prayer to her heavenly Father?
- What can we learn from Mary at this time?

Reading

"Standing by the cross of Jesus was his mother..." Jn 19:25

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.



A time to feed our daily journey

"Committing herself whole-heartedly, she devoted herself totally, as a servant of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption." LG 56

By **Eileen Luthi**
Diocesan Liturgy Co-ordinator

Mary, standing by the cross, offers to us a model for our posture and attitude for prayer and contemplation. Her physical presence is one of silence, of an intensity of awareness and immersion into the being of the Son.



Strengthened by this silent standing-with, she was able to move: to hold him in her arms, to go back to the city with the disciples, to share their fears while waiting on the Spirit and to be energised and faithful as the days of grief became years of hope and mission.

With very few words, but with a powerful sense of availability, Mary is a model for our physical coming before God. She who struggled in childbirth stood in total love and support before the death struggle.

We could look at our posture, our gestures and our actions at Mass and in prayer, and learn from Mary.

First, do we fully descend into a silence that speaks of self-emptying and of a servant response?

Secondly, are we people who can bring our physical selves before God, in a wholeness of heart and mind and body?

We might check out these ideas:

- In our liturgy and our prayer, are we aware of our body being an offering of praise and gratitude to God as we stand, sit and move?
- In our prayer, do we still our hands and feet, freeing ourselves to become the hands and feet of Christ, to become his Body?
- Are we freed then to stretch and raise our arms, and dance in the healing joy of the Spirit?

Rejoice! Christ is risen. Alleluia!

Lectio divina

Opening prayer

"Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the Living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in the holy Scriptures, and to discover your face there." (Guigo II)

Reading: getting to know the text

1. Take in all the elements of the text
2. Be aware of context, related texts, quotes
3. Note the key characters; what are key words?
4. Don't choose any one thing to work with at this stage
5. You are becoming familiar with the text: gathering food for thought

Meditation: Engaging with the text, making it my own

1. Here, faith life and the Word interact and seek integration
2. What does the text tell me about the God who speaks?
3. What does it tell me about responding to that God?
4. What does the text teach me about my faith life?
5. What do I need to do to transform my life?
6. We cannot do it alone; we are humbled, we turn to God in prayer

Prayer: Let prayer emerge from your working with the text

1. This prayer emerges from our reading / meditation
2. It is shaped by our personal prayer practice
3. We seek the grace to achieve what emerged from meditation.
4. Prayer commits us to transformation of life.
5. All that we can do in prayer, is done here

Contemplation: God's response

1. What happens here, only God can give
2. Do not expect this to happen: go with it if it does
3. God does not wait, breaks in, runs to meet us
4. There is no need to be silent to let God speak

Action: throughout the day

1. Now choose a word, phrase, sentence
2. Bring it to mind frequently during the day
3. Let it recapture the experience of your lectio
4. Use it especially in situations relating to your lectio
5. "Daily and hourly till the soil of the heart with the Gospel plough"