

**40 MARIAN
REFLECTIONS
FOR PEACE
AND HEALING**

*Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney*



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Mary of Nazareth holds a place of honor and reverence in the Church. This humble woman, chosen to be the Mother of God, became the first disciple, the servant of the Word of God in the world. For those who desire to be servants of love, peace, justice, and compassion, Mary is a perfect model for personal prayer and reflection.

The writers of the Gospels show Mary as a person deeply involved in the life, ministry, and mission of Jesus—not a detached observer, but a true participant in the unfolding of God's plan in Jesus, the Son of God.

Today, many Christians search for ways to be more faithful to the Gospel, respond to the call of discipleship, and strengthen their spiritual life. Mary can teach all Christians how to embrace a life of discipleship with reverence and love. Mary's witness leads us to Jesus, the source of peace and healing.

These Marian reflections combine traditional practices of reading of sacred Scripture, meditation, and prayer. They offer an opportunity to be with the Word of God and with Mary, who pondered all things in her heart. As Mary did, may we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and welcome the possibility of healing and new life with God.

ONE

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us” (Matthew 1:23).

Reflection: We are each God-bearers in the world, with the responsibility to protect life and uphold the dignity of all people. Yet we are not always mindful of the presence of God. Our unawareness of God's presence harms God's creation and the people around us.

Prayer: Lord, Mary was constantly aware of the sacred presence of God within her. Help me to be mindful of your presence in creation and in the people I encounter today.

TWO

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:11).

Reflection: A part of us remains unspoiled by the materialism and institutionalism of our world. A baby is a reminder of our innate purity, innocence, and vulnerability.

Prayer: Lord, Mary did not let rich gifts distract her from her love of God. Teach me to reject the lure of wealth, power, and prestige. May my inner goodness be a light for others.

THREE

...[A]n angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–14).

Reflection: Wars, tornados, floods—chaos and danger are factors in the daily lives of millions of refugees. Inner chaos and danger are also destructive. Resentment, arrogance, and complacency prevent us from loving ourselves and our neighbors. Listening deeply to hear God’s good direction, we learn to move out of our inner chaos into a place of peace and compassion.

Prayer: Lord, Mary lived in a dangerous, chaotic world, yet remained grounded in your love. Free me from destructive thoughts and emotions, that I may be a messenger of peace in our world.