



TASTE Reflection Questions
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A Lenten Journey into the Heart of Mary: Becoming Maternal Ambassadors of the Triune God's Divine Love (2)

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Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry. ~ Padre Pio

1. THE CONDITION OF THE GARDEN

- What is the current "season" of your garden?
(e.g., Winter:Barren/Dry; Spring:New Growth; Summer:Fruitful but intense; or Some Combination)
- Where in your heart have you felt pierced, hardened, or wounded lately?
- Is there a place in your life where you sense Jesus gently knocking, but you haven't fully invited Him in?

2. ATTACHMENTS & HUMILITY

- Where do you most tend to seek affirmation or validation?
(e.g., Home, Work, Extended Family/Family of Origin, Ministry)
- Which line from the Litany of Humility is hardest for you? Why?
(e.g. fear of being forgotten, desire to be preferred, etc)
- When you go to confession or reflect on your weaknesses, do you tend toward mercy or shame?
What helps you receive mercy more fully?

3. WEEDS AND GROWTH

- What "weeds" might currently be blocking the light in your garden?
(e.g., Resentment, Busyness, Self-reliance, Comparison, Fear)
- Are you carrying a cross right now that feels heavy?
Is it possible that you are moving at a pace God never asked of you?
- Is there someone you may need to forgive – or begin again with?

4. FROM EVE TO MARY

- Where do you notice the "Eve tendency" in yourself?
(e.g., reaching for control, recognition, or the forbidden fruit)
- What would it look like this week to take one small step from Eve toward Mary?
(e.g., Removing a "padlock," Slowing down, Inviting Jesus intentionally into one struggle)
- Where is God in your current storm? Can you see even a small sign of His presence?

ENTERING THE GARDEN OF THE SOUL WITH MARY

- This reflection continues our journey: contemplating the infinite love of God the Father and the healing of our identities as daughters, sisters, and mothers. Where Eve lost trust in the garden, we now return to the “garden of our soul” with Mary, asking for healing, restoration, and deeper union with Christ.
- Drawing from *Lumen Gentium*, Mary is presented as our spiritual mother who accompanies us on our pilgrimage toward heaven. Her maternal charity continually intercedes for us, and her deepest desire is to draw us into intimate fellowship with her Son, Jesus, who leads us to the Father. As the first and most perfect disciple, Mary models what it means to follow Christ wholeheartedly. Imitating Mary is inseparable from imitating Christ.
- A key distinction is made between **pondering** and **dwelling**. Mary pondered in her heart—quietly, trustingly, and receptively. We are invited to move from dwelling (heady intellectual analysis) to pondering (a heart-centered encounter). In the “garden” of our soul, we examine our wounds, attachments, fears, and places hardened by sin or shame. In the garden of our soul, Jesus—the Divine Physician and Divine Gardener—desires to heal us.

CHRIST’S PASSION – Using the framework of St. Thomas Aquinas, Christ’s suffering is presented as both: 1) a remedy for sin and 2) an example for how we are to live. From the Cross, we learn:

1. LOVE – “Greater love has no man than this...” Christ’s self-gift calls us to lay down our lives in our own vocations. At the Cross, Mary becomes Mother of the Church. Her “yes” includes receiving us as her children. Women, in particular, are affirmed in their unique spiritual motherhood—through nurturing, receptivity, emotional intelligence, generosity, and the creation of spaces for reconciliation and unity. Echoing St. John Paul II’s *Letter to Women*, every form of womanhood—mother, wife, daughter, worker, consecrated woman—is honored as indispensable to the Church and society.

2. HUMILITY – Unlike Mary, who was full of grace, we begin with an awareness of our weaknesses. True self-knowledge leads to humility, not shame. St. Teresa of Kolkata and St. Catherine of Siena remind us that self-knowledge must be “seasoned with mercy.” Without remembering Christ’s Precious Blood, self-awareness can become a discouragement. The enemy tempts us to define ourselves by sin, but God calls us by name. [The Litany of Humility](#) challenges our disordered desires for esteem, approval, and recognition. The prayer does not deny our human need for love, but asks for freedom from attachment to it. Humility prepares the soil of the soul so grace can take root.

3. OBEDIENCE – Just as Adam’s disobedience brought sin, Christ’s obedience brings righteousness. Mary’s fiat involved not only offering her womb, but her maternal heart. Spiritual motherhood requires weeding disordered appetites and cultivating virtue. The saints describe the soul as a garden where Christ desires to rest. We are asked: What weeds block the light in our garden?

4. PATIENCE – True patience is the suffering that we could avoid, yet choose not to. Jesus freely embraced the Cross. A powerful reflection emphasizes that Christ never imposes the Cross on us, but gently fits it to the soul as it grows in love. If impatience, anger, or unforgiveness weigh heavily, we are invited into an act of forgiveness—an act of the will, not a feeling—asking God to bless those who have wounded us.

5. DETACHMENT – To “despise earthly things” means prioritizing God above material or worldly validation. In storms, we are challenged to ask: *Where is God in this?* Through baptism, we already belong to heaven. When we intentionally invite God into our struggles, grace flows more freely.

FROM EVE TO MARY – Every woman, except Mary, carries the inheritance of Eve—defiance, wounded desire, and reaching for forbidden fruit. Each of us must journey from Eve to Mary. This requires humility, repentance, and receptivity to mercy. We are encouraged to examine obstacles blocking grace—like umbrellas shielding us from rain. Even if we cannot yet surrender everything, we are invited to take one step: remove a padlock, tear down caution tape, allow the Divine Gardener access to one guarded corner.

HOPE AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS – The reflection concludes with a powerful invitation: when afraid of rejection, doubtful of God’s love, burdened by past sins, or discouraged in the pursuit of holiness—look at Mary at the foot of the Cross. Her compassion mirrors the Father’s mercy. She always leads us to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. With renewed enthusiasm and trust, we are called to continue the Lenten journey — claiming Christ’s promises, tending the garden of our souls, and allowing Mary to accompany us into deeper healing, humility, and holiness.