TASTE Reflection Questions
24 September 2026

The Vision of TASTE that Marian had 20 Years Ago
Fr. Larry Swink

Then I will rejoice in the Lord,
Exalt in God's Salvation. Psalm 35:9

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1. MARIAN'S VISION: DRAWING WOMEN CLOSER TO CHRIST

- Father Larry asked whether, since coming to TASTE, we have experienced "light bulbs" going off or found ourselves more drawn to Jesus. **How has TASTE affected your relationship with Christ or your understanding of your faith?**
- Marian's vision grew out of time before the Blessed Sacrament. **When you need direction from God, where or how do you usually seek Him? Can you recall a time when an answer gradually became clear through prayer?**

2. THE APOSTLES' TEACHING: KNOWING AND LIVING THE FAITH

- **What Catholic teaching have you come to understand more deeply as an adult—or through TASTE—that you previously misunderstood or simply never thought much about? How has that understanding affected your life?**
- We receive many competing messages from our culture, media, friends, and even other Catholics. **How do you determine whether what you hear is consistent with what the Church actually teaches?**

3. FELLOWSHIP: GOD GIVES US ONE ANOTHER

- C. S. Lewis suggested that God may choose Christian friends *for one another*. **Who has God placed in your life who has helped you grow spiritually? What has that person given you?**
- **Do you have people with whom you can honestly talk about your faith, doubts, struggles, or need for prayer? How can our TASTE group become that kind of community for one another?**

4. BREAKING OF THE BREAD: A LIFE CENTERED ON THE SACRAMENTS

- Marian intentionally connected TASTE with Mass and Confession. **Has your appreciation for either the Eucharist or Reconciliation changed over the years? What helped bring about that change?**
- Father Larry described women returning to Confession after many years and others beginning to attend Mass more frequently. **Is there one way God may be inviting you to deepen your own sacramental life now?**

5. PRAYER: LISTENING FOR GOD AND LEARNING TO DO HIS WILL

- Father Larry acknowledged that prayer can sometimes feel dry, distracted, or unproductive. **What do you find most difficult about prayer? What has helped you remain faithful when prayer does not "feel" fruitful?**
- Father Larry described meditation as "connecting the dots" and learning to see our lives from God's larger perspective. **Looking back on a difficult or unexpected experience, can you now see something God may have been doing that you could not see at the time?**
- Marian's suffering eventually became part of her witness of trust and hope in God. **What might it mean in your own life to move from asking only, "Why is this happening?" toward asking, "Lord, how do You want me to respond to this?"**

1. MARIAN'S VISION: DRAWING WOMEN CLOSER TO CHRIST

- TASTE began in **prayer**. Marian faithfully attended Mass, prayed the Rosary, and spent time before the Blessed Sacrament with her notebook, seeking God's direction. She sensed a call to help women draw closer to Christ and understand **what Jesus was asking of them at this time in history**.
- Father Larry compared Marian's experience to Fulton Sheen's practice of seeking inspiration before the Eucharist. When we need direction, we can bring our questions to Jesus and trust that, over time, He will guide us.
- Father Larry recognized Marian's vision in **Acts 2:42**: the early Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." These four elements became the foundation of TASTE.
- He invited each of us to consider whether TASTE has produced a change: greater understanding of the faith, spiritual growth, and above all, a **deeper desire for Jesus**.

2. THE APOSTLES' TEACHING: KNOWING AND LIVING THE FAITH

- Marian recognized the confusion Catholics can experience when **culture, personal opinion, and conflicting messages** influence how we understand the faith. She wanted women to know what Christ and His Church actually teach and why.
- Father Larry emphasized the difference between **Church teaching and Church practice**. Practices may change, but this does not mean that the truths handed down from Christ and the apostles have changed.
- TASTE provides opportunities to explore teachings that Catholics may never have fully understood—including the Eucharist, Confession, moral teachings, purgatory, and other fundamentals of the faith.
- This formation is not simply about gaining knowledge. Its purpose is to help us **recognize truth, grow in holiness, and confidently live what they believe**.

3. FELLOWSHIP: GOD GIVES US ONE ANOTHER

- Marian understood that we need **Catholic friendships**—people with whom we can share our faith, struggles, questions, and experiences and who will support us when life becomes difficult.
- Drawing on C. S. Lewis, Father Larry suggested that Christian friendships are not necessarily accidental. God may providentially bring particular people into our lives because they can help us grow closer to Him.
- This is why Marian insisted on **small-group discussion**. She did not want us simply to hear a speaker and go home. She wanted us to talk about what touched us, challenged us, or helped us and to learn from women at different stages of their spiritual journeys.
- TASTE therefore becomes not simply a place to **learn the faith**, but a community in which we can **live and grow in the faith together**.

4. BREAKING OF THE BREAD: A LIFE CENTERED ON THE SACRAMENTS

- Marian had a profound love for the **Mass**, attending daily whenever possible. She deliberately structured TASTE around Mass and made Confession available because she wanted the sacraments to surround and support everything we were learning.
- Father Larry recalled seeing women return to Confession after many years and others begin attending Mass more frequently. The formation they received was leading them into a **deeper sacramental life**.
- Drawing on Padre Pio, Father Larry described Confession as the regular cleansing of the soul. Spiritual growth requires recognizing sin, receiving God's mercy, and continually beginning again.
- The goal of TASTE, therefore, is not merely to teach us about Catholicism, but to lead us more deeply into an **encounter with Jesus through the Eucharist and the life-giving sacraments of the Church**.

5. PRAYER: LISTENING FOR GOD AND LEARNING HIS WILL

- Marian wanted TASTE to form **women of prayer**. Father Larry remembered her as a genuine "prayer warrior" whose promises to pray for others were real commitments.
- Prayer is not merely talking to God; it is a **dialogue** in which we also learn to listen. Like Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, we need time simply to be with the Lord and allow Him to speak.
- Prayer will not always feel fruitful. Father Larry acknowledged that even after years of daily prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, he experiences dryness, distractions, and times when he does not know what to say. The important thing is to **remain faithful rather than become discouraged**.
- Marian also valued **spiritual reading**. Father Larry explained that God can use Scripture, good Catholic books, Church teaching, friendships, and the circumstances of our lives to help us "connect the dots" and recognize what He is doing.
- Ultimately, Marian's vision was to help women see their lives from **God's larger perspective**—trusting that through prayer, teaching, friendship, the sacraments, and even life's difficulties, He is continually drawing them closer to His Sacred Heart.