

Imitating Mary - Living in the Heart of the Trinity **Kitty Cleveland**

Hi friends and welcome back to week three of our Pray More Novena's healing retreat this Advent. I'm Kitty Cleveland, and I'm so glad to be back with you. Let's start with a prayer.

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. Lord Jesus thank you for this time together. We thank you for the season of Advent, where we step back from our duties, from our responsibilities. We create that space Lord to listen to You this mini-Lent. Lord we want to hear what Your spirit is saying to us now. What new things do You want to do in and through us. We're available to You Lord.

And mother Mary, we ask for your intercession as we strive to imitate you in all things by praying, Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

A Daydream

So, friends, I'm so excited to talk about this particular topic. My title is "Mary in the Heart of the Trinity" or "Imitating Mary in the Heart of the Trinity," which might sound kind of complicated and deep. And I suppose in some sense it is, but I'm going to try to unpack that with you. Not that I'm a great scholar, I'm not. But I just want to share with you some of the things that I've learned, especially over the last few years about what it means to imitate Mary.

So about three years ago, maybe four, I was at mass singing, and during the homily I had a little daydream, which I'm afraid is par for the course for me. But I believe this was Holy Spirit led. And he was talking about the Trinity, and all of a sudden, I saw the Trinity, for lack of a better word. We can't comprehend the Trinity. It's an incredible mystery, the three persons of God. But what I saw was sort of like the Celtic knot that you've probably seen. It's sort of overlapping loops like this with a space in the middle where it overlaps. And it was like fire, this nuclear explosion if you will of love. The three persons of the Trinity giving and receiving love simultaneously. And then there in the middle was Mary. And she was looking at me, and had her hands out, and without words she said, "Learn from me."

Learn what it means to be a beloved daughter of the Father, mother of the Son and spouse of the Holy Spirit. And so, that rocked my world. For about two or three weeks, that's all I could really

think about. And what does that mean? How do I learn from you? How do I imitate you in those three relationships with the three persons of God. There's a different flavor if you will to each of those relationships, so let's talk about that.

Three Important Relationships

So first, beloved daughter or son of the Father. To know that we are beloved. Do you know that? Sometimes it can be a struggle, especially if you had a difficult relationship with your own dad. Your father was absent perhaps, maybe an alcoholic. If there was a disconnect with your own father, then it can be difficult to know how beloved you are. But Mary knew that. She knew that. Well, of course she had saints for parents, which helps, Joachim and Anne. But she wants us to learn the reality that perhaps is different from your own experience: that you are beloved. Perhaps meditating on the scripture passage of the prodigal son will help you with that. Especially if you had a father who was a taskmaster or who was really strict or punitive, to know the father of mercy who runs out to meet you on the road as soon as you turn back home. His love and His mercy and His delight in you are incomprehensible, but we can try.

So, I want to encourage you this next week to really ask the Father to show you how you are beloved. What does He love about you? You know, there's no one like you in the whole world. What does He love about you? How does He see Jesus in you? You are a unique reflection of God's own self in this world that no one else can imitate.

So that's your first homework for this week. Maybe meditate with a prodigal son passage, put yourself in the place of the prodigal son. Because we've all been both brothers, right? The prodigal and the self-righteous brother at home at different times. To meditate with that passage and to ask the Father why... And what name do you want for Him? Abba, Papa, Daddy? There's an intimacy there that Jesus taught us. Abba, it's daddy, daddy. And allow Him to reveal the reality of His delight and His love for you. Mary knew that. She knew who she was.

Mother of the Son

Okay, secondly, mother of the Son. So how do we, especially men and women, how do we mother Jesus, how do we parent Jesus? I think in two ways. One, we do it by spiritually parenting Jesus in other people. The Jesus that needs love, that needs compassion, perhaps that needs counsel, direction, intercession. And when we do it for the least of these, we do it for Him. So truly, we can mother and father Jesus in other people.

But secondly, I think even primarily, or it needs to come foundationally, is that we love Jesus and mother and father Him by consoling Him. I was woken up last night around 3:00 in the morning. And usually when that happens, it's because the Holy Spirit is asking me to intercede.

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And these horrible images were flashing in my mind. And it reminded me of what the Lord, just a tiny drop of what He experienced in the garden. The sin that He saw. And I just sensed all these people needing intercessory prayer. And so, I did that, and that is one way that I mother Jesus, that I console Him. Allow Him to put His head on my shoulder, you know? And Lord, what can I do for You today? What can I do for You? How can I serve You today?

Spouse of the Holy Spirit

Okay, and then third, spouse of the Holy Spirit. Now, Our Lady had a unique and privileged call in all of creation to physically receive the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and the literal incarnation of the third person of the Trinity, or second person of the Trinity in her womb and give birth to the Messiah, the Word made flesh. But we are called to imitate that also, in not as lofty a way but still a very essential way. To allow the Holy Spirit to form Jesus in us that we might birth Him into the world, that we might be His hands and His feet. Literally to be His presence in the world, to say what He would say, to do what He would do. That's our baptismal call, that Holy Spirit was poured into you at baptism, stirred up at confirmation.

I don't know about you, but I wasn't quite ready to step into that role. And it wasn't really until later when I received something of a baptism of the Holy Spirit, excuse me, where as an adult I really gave the full assent of my will and said yes, yes. Now, that was many years ago, probably oh gosh, 30-something years ago when I did that. It's an ever-deepening commitment.

In fact, just two days ago, I'm going to read it to you, it was a quote that I got from the Marians in Stockbridge. I get the daily diary of Saint Faustina. Just a quote from her diary. And this is what Jesus said to her and it really hit me. "During this retreat," And we're in a retreat right now, so perhaps these words are for you as well. "I will strengthen you in peace and in courage so that your strength will not fail in carrying out my designs. Therefore," this is the part that really got me. "You will cancel out your will absolutely in this retreat. And instead, my complete will shall be accomplished in you. Know that it will cost you much, so write these words on a clean sheet of paper." You ready? Quote, "From today on, my own will does not exist." And then cross out that page. And on the other side write these words: "From today on, I do the will of God everywhere, always and in everything."

Whoa! So, that was quite a challenge. And I thought about it and I said, what's holding me back from that? Why not? And if we're going to imitate Mary, isn't that exactly what she did? And isn't that what we pray every time we say the Our Father? Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven? That means in me too.

Things to Ponder On

So, your two homework items for you. The prodigal son, meditate on that, allow the Father to really reveal to you His delight in you. Actually, let me give you three. Secondly, with Jesus, ask Him how you can mother or father Him this week in other people and just for His own sake, just the two of you together. How can you console Him? And then third, with the Holy Spirit, to be docile to all that the Holy Spirit is asking of you each day. It's going to lead you to your greatest happiness and to the God's greatest glory. So why would we say no? Self-love, yes guilty.

And so, I want to invite you to get out your piece of paper. I did it, I even posted it on Instagram and Facebook. Because I need accountability so that if I'm acting perhaps not in accordance with God's will, and it's evident to other people, they can remind me. Humility is a beautiful thing. And so you can write: "From today on, my will no longer exists. My will does not exist." And then put an X on it, you might put the date on it, turn the page over, "From today on, I do God's will everywhere," Let me read it again so I have it exactly right. "Everywhere, always and in everything." Amen, so I'm going to put some songs, we'll do some links for further reflection for you this week, and I'll be praying for all of you. Please pray for me too.

Next week I can't wait to talk to you about a very personal story of my healing in my relationship with Mary. It happened also through this vision while I was doing a consecration to her, and it completely changed my paradigm. I especially want you to tune in if you don't quite fully get the whole Mary thing. Because I'm going to be sharing that story from the heart, and I'll probably cry, so forgive me. Let's close in a prayer.

Closing Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. Oh Lord Jesus thank you for giving us so good a mother. And Holy Trinity thank you for loving us. Father we are Your beloved children. Bring us back to You. Show us how to love You and to honor You, to give You the respect that is owed to You as our Papa who love us so much.

Lord Jesus continue to be formed in us. May we be Your hands and feet and voice in this world that needs You so desperately. And Lord, may we console You today and every day and never do anything to offend You again.

And finally, Holy Spirit, we ask You to overshadow us, to fill us anew every day with more and more of Your presence. We give You all of our will. Take it. Form Jesus in us. And increase our capacity to receive the presence of God and His love that we might pour ourselves out to the glory of God, amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

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See you next week.