

Looking to Mary As Your Own Mother **Kitty Cleveland**

Hi friends, I'm Kitty Cleveland. Welcome back to our fourth and final week of our advent retreat together. It has been such a joy to be with you, and I'm so grateful to have been invited, to speak to you, and to share a little bit of my own journey with you, into the heart of the Trinity. So, let's start first of all, with a prayer. Yes?

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Lord Jesus, we love you. We want more of you. Lord, we thank you for this time together, this time to step back from our ordinary responsibilities and duties, just the busy-ness, to make more space for you. Where we give you permission, we give you our hearts. We give you our lives, we give you everything. And we ask Lord, that you be formed in us, and that we can birth you into the world in a new way, in a more profound way, in this coming year. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Mary from a Distance

So last week, we spoke about living with Mary and the heart of the Trinity and learning from her. What it means to be the beloved of the Father, mother of the Son and spouse of the Holy Spirit. This week, as promised, I want to share with you, my own personal journey of healing, that happened with Mary. Now, I grew up in New Orleans, a very Catholic city, and we had Catholic churches on just about every few street corners. And I lived, in fact, in uptown New Orleans, just a block and a half from St. Rita school. But my mom was a convert from Methodism, and my dad was the son of a divorced couple.

And so, they didn't really grow up with a strong devotion to Our Lady. And Mary was just not a part of our family life, before my parents went through something of a profound conversion when I was in high school. And this was also in the 1970s, when a lot of the traditions, like praying the rosary, and other Marian devotions, were left in the past. However, we did still have a May crowning. And so, we had this wonderful neighbor down the street, my little sisters and I would go to her house, Mrs. Joko, and she would cut roses from her garden, for the May crowning. And every year, at school, they would pick the cutest little, tiniest girl to be picked up and to crown Mary.

And so, Mary was way distant up there on the pedestal, and only those cute little tiny girls got picked up, that was not me. So let me just say, that in my little mind, little Kitty, thought, "Well,

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Mary must love her more than she loves me." And then I heard about Fatima and Lourdes, and I thought, "Well, she never appeared to me. So I guess she loves them more than she loves me."

So, this is how I was thinking, okay? And she wasn't much of a part of our daily life. So, it wasn't really until decades later, and a friend of mine put a book in my hand, 33 Days to Morning Glory, a Consecration to Mary, written by Father Michael Gaitley. And so, I was headed to the adoration chapel, I flipped it open, and there, in the introduction to the book, Father Gaitley said, "It's Mary's God-given mission to be your mother personally, by name. And if you could just see the longing in her silence, as she stands next to you, waiting for your yes, your fiat that to her, giving her permission to be your spiritual mother, taking her into your heart, that it would give her great joy."

So, I'm sitting here in adoration, and I looked up at the Lord in the monstrance, and I was like, "Okay, I don't understand. This does not make sense to me, Lord. Help me understand this. Because I feel like I've been trying to get Mary's attention my whole life. And she just hasn't been that interested. She doesn't like me very much. I think, was how I basically felt about Mary. And that I wasn't holy enough and all of that. And so, I thought, well, wow, perhaps the reality is different. Perhaps she is right next to me, giving me all this love and attention, and I've been oblivious to it, because of my own woundedness. And so I said, "Yes, of course, of course."

It doesn't matter how old you are, you need a mama. And so then, we got to the section in the book, where he talks about, I believe it was St. Maximilian Colby, who referred to Mary as the mediatrix of all grace. Hmm. Well, what does that mean, Lord? I don't understand. Practically speaking, what does it mean for Mary to be a mediatrix of all grace?

A Touching Vision

And then I had this vision. Another one of those daydreams where I was completely transported, that got me so much in so much trouble when I was growing up in school. And, I saw this country cottage, like you would see in the English countryside, it was a stone cottage. I was peering through the window, and there was a hearth. It was so cozy inside. There was a hearth burning in the fireplace. And then suddenly, I was inside the house. And I realized that this was my soul. And the fire, burning in the hearth there, was the Holy Trinity, having been poured into me at my baptism, and yours.

So, then I went to the front door, and I opened the front door, and was surprised when I looked down, and I saw this pile of presents. Who doesn't love presents? Yay, presents. So, I brought the presents inside. I don't remember opening them. But I understood it was the next day. And I went to the door. I opened again, more presents on my doorstep. But the second time, I looked up, and I saw Mary.

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Told you all, I would cry. I saw Mary standing outside the doorstep of my soul. And I understood in that moment, that every grace and blessing, my entire life, had come through her intercession. The fact that I'm getting to talk to you right now, Mary got this for me. And that she had brought every grace that I would need for the day, day by day, since I was conceived in my mother's womb. So not only was she not aloof, but she knew me so intimately, and had taken such good care of me. And I didn't even know she was there. And I had never said, thank you to her. And I had never invited her in to my heart.

Consecrate Your Life to Her

So yes, I had the Trinity living inside of me. But I had this good mother who had obtained, from the heart of God, every good gift for her beloved daughter, me. That's true of every human being, especially those consecrated to her. Who've really taken her in, into their hearts. And so that changed everything for me. Don't tell anybody, but I'm 55 now. I still need a mom. And I still have an earthly mom. She's wonderful. She has a husband. She has her own life. She lives an hour away. Sometimes I just need a mama, right there by my side. And so friends, she's here for you. She's next to you right now, extending her mantle around you, giving you her blessing.

If you have not consecrated yourself to her, in a very deliberate way, and invited her into your heart. And in imitation of John Paul II, said, "Totus tuus." Everything is yours. She'll take it. All her whole job is to bring you to Jesus. We lose nothing of our relationship with Jesus when we love His mother. Just like you wouldn't, if you are married to someone, and you loved their mom, as your own, that's all it is. Only, she's perfect.

So, I want to invite you to do that. Whether the St. Louis de Montfort Consecration, the Mary's Mantle Consecration, the 33 Days to Morning Glory Consecration. If you do the 33 Days to Morning Glory, I was given permission to read the whole book. And those videos are on YouTube. And I can post links to all of that. Though, I do encourage you to get the book. But it changes everything. Being consecrated to Our Lady, to Jesus, through Mary, changes everything. She is Noah's Ark, the ark of the New Covenant, and the ark for us in these very difficult, trying times in human history. She is our safe refuge. Run to Mary. Consecrate yourself to her, consecrate your family to her.

Have her images in your home. I think I have a statue in every room. This one is in my front entry, Our Lady of Grace. I did this painting of the Holy Family. I don't know if you can see it very well. But that's their flight into Egypt. I just love having her presence here in my house. So, that's my homework for you.

Pray the Rosary

My final parting words to you, as we wrap this up. And I also want to invite you to pray the rosary every day, every day, without fail, don't ask why, just do it. The understanding will come later. But over and over and over again in the approved apparitions, she has been saying, "Pray the rosary, pray for peace." Wars can be stopped with the rosary. Under the title of Our Lady of Victory, it's because a war was stopped. So, if that's hard for you, and until you really love it, it's hard. And sometimes even after you love it, it's hard. I want to invite you to join me.

My daughter and I, she's a senior in high school, 17 years old. She gets up with me very early, every morning, 6:00 a.m., central time. We go live on the air, on YouTube and Instagram, as of this recording. And pray the rosary, every day, we've got a couple hundred people that join us live. And the meditations are different every day, because I never know what the Holy Spirit's going to do. And they're just spontaneous meditations. But there's a wonderful community there. And it helps to have some accountability, you can write your intentions there, and just wait for the miracles. Wait to see what Our Lady will do for you, because she loves you. And she cares for you.

And so, I want to close just by chanting the Ave Maria, as a prayer for you, personally, individually. Our Lady loves you so much. And I invite you maybe even to close your eyes. And have mercy on me, if it doesn't sound perfect. But I just really sense that she wants me to sing right now. And that you would just open your hands in your lap. And mom, I ask you to take the hands of each of your children, and to give them a kiss on the forehead. And to lead them on the way of sanctity, into the heart of God, into the heart of the Holy Trinity, our destiny. And then in heaven, we will understand everything. Amen.

Ave Maria

Ave Maria, Gratia plena
Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu
In mulieribus, Et benedictus
Fructus ventris tui Jesus
Santa Maria, Mater Dei
Ora pro nobis, Peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora Mortis nostrae
Amen, Amen.

God bless you, my friends. It's been a joy.