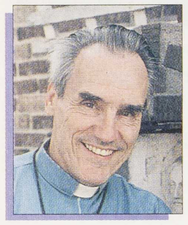
Mary's Way

Waiting with Mary

We wait in lines to purchase so many things — from this week's groceries to tickets for the big upcoming football game or the concert featuring our favorite singer. Waiting is a major aspect of our everyday lives.



Fr. David Knight

It is also a characteristic of our religion. Every Eucharist reminds us that we "wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." In Advent, we eagerly wait for the birth of Jesus at Christmas; in Lent, for His victorious Resurrection at Easter, and then for the fullness of the Spirit at Pentecost. To be a Christian is to know and believe that God is doing great things — that He is about to bless us anew.

But waiting can be painful, too. We wait for prayers to be answered, and sometimes it seems as if God isn't listening. We wait for God's kingdom to be established, and it can seem as if God has abandoned the world to its blindness, greed, and hate. A long wait for an answer to our prayers can discourage us, tempting us to doubt God's love, presence, and power.

It helps us to recall that Mary, the most highly favored woman of all time, experienced the same sort of trials.

God left Mary in an unexplained pregnancy until her fiancé, Joseph, was ready to break off the engagement. When Mary was ready to give birth, God didn't relieve her anxiety by providing a place for her to rest until the last moment — and then it was in a stable.

When Herod tried to kill the Child, God sent an angel to Joseph, not to promise protection to the young family, but just to say, "Run!" And how much anxiety did Mary and Joseph feel on the road to Egypt: homeless, penniless, unable to speak the language, and unemployed?

> *"Waiting has value. Our knowledge and love of God get better with age"*

Later, when God left Mary and Joseph looking for their 12-year-old for three days before finding Him in the temple, what did His mother feel? And what about the other three days, after the horrible three hours of watching her Son die on the cross — apparently abandoned by His Father?

With hindsight, we see now that Mary's unexplained pregnancy was necessary to establish the truth that no one but God was Jesus' Father; that it was a blessing to see Jesus born in the poverty of a stable; that the flight into Egypt was to fulfill the prophecy, "Out of Egypt, I have called My Son" (Mt 2:15).

So, too, we can now see that when God let Mary lose Jesus for three days as a child, it was to prepare her for the time when she would lose Him again in the same city 21 years later. Her first pain would make the second pain easier to bear.

We see all of this now. But she did not see it then. That is why Mary is our model for faith and trust.

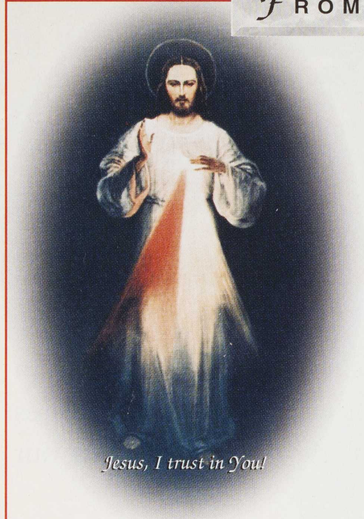
It's easy to see why throughout the ages, people in pain have had devotion to Mary the Sorrowful Mother who waited under the cross. By the instinct of grace, when we are in doubt or confusion, or when we find God hard to understand, we gather around Mary for solace.

She shows us that waiting has value. Both knowledge and love get better with age — especially our love and knowledge of God. In faith, we surrender our minds to seeing with His invisible light.

When God asks us to trust Him blindly, He is asking us to surrender our lives into His arms, so He can carry us where we are not able to go. What would Mary be for us now if she had refused her embarrassing pregnancy, the homeless night in Bethlehem, the exile into Egypt, the three hours under the cross, the three days of darkness before the Easter light?

And what will the Third Millennium bring if we refuse to keep working for the reign of God when all of our efforts seem useless?

***Fr. David M. Knight is pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Memphis, TN. He is the author of many books, including his latest,* Reaching Jesus — Five Steps to a Fuller Life.**



A "firm resolution to become a saint"

As we prepare to celebrate Sister Faustina's canonization, we invite you to prayerfully reflect on these passages from the **Diary.** *(The words of Our Lord are in boldface.) They show Sister Faustina's wholehearted desire to be a saint and even include a prophetic message she received confirming that her desire would be fulfilled.*

My Jesus, You know that from my earliest years, I have wanted to become a great saint; that is to say, I have wanted to love You with a love so great that there would be no soul who has hitherto loved You so (1372).

This firm resolution to become a saint is extremely pleasing to Me. I bless your efforts and will give you opportunities to sanctify yourself. Be watchful that you lose no opportunity that My providence offers you for sanctification. If you do not succeed in taking advantage of an opportunity, do not lose your peace, but humble yourself profoundly before Me and, with great trust, immerse yourself completely in My mercy (1361).

I want to write down a dream that I had about Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. I was still a novice at the time and was going through some difficulties. …

The sufferings [the situation] caused me were so great that I did not know how to go on living, but suddenly the thought occurred to me that I should pray to Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. I started a novena to this saint, because before entering the convent I had had a great devotion to her. …

On the fifth day of the novena, I dreamed of Saint Therese, but it was as if she were still living on earth. She hid from me the fact that she was a saint and began to comfort me, saying that I should not be worried about this matter, but should trust more in God.

She said, "I suffered greatly, too," but I did not quite believe her and said, "It seems to me that you have not suffered at all."

But Saint Therese answered me in a convincing manner that she had suffered very much indeed and said to me, "Sister, know that in three days the difficulty will come to a happy conclusion." When I was not very willing to believe her, she revealed to me that she was a saint.

At that moment, a great joy filled my soul, and I said to her, "You are a saint?" "Yes," she answered, "I am a saint. Trust that this matter will be resolved in three days." And I said, "Dear sweet Therese, tell me, shall I go to heaven?" And she answered, "Yes, you will go to heaven, Sister." "And will I be a saint?" To which she replied, "Yes, you will be a saint."

"But, little Therese, shall I be a saint as you are, raised to the altar?" And she answered, "Yes, you will be a saint just as I am, but you must trust in the Lord Jesus." …

This was a dream. And as the proverb goes, dreams are phantoms; God is faith. Nevertheless, three days later the difficulty was solved very easily, just as she had said. And everything in this affair turned out exactly as she said it would. It was a dream, but it had its significance (150).

Readers receiving graces and favors through the devotion to The Divine Mercy or through the intercession of Sister Faustina Kowalska are encouraged to send their letters to: Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, MA 01262.

I bestow special graces on those souls for whom you intercede.

***Words of Our Lord to Sister Faustina,* Diary, 599.**