



New Life and Repentance

The Third Sunday in Lent

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They came for the meeting. I was amazed as I sat and listened to the sharing! Suffering, anguish, and pain surfaced in honesty. Hearts were attuned to one another. There was holy awe as each one revealed her story. There were revelations of deep grief; loss of spouses, children, and grandchildren; a victim of incest; the possibility of incarceration for a daughter. Tears were shed.



The first reading from Exodus captivates my imagination. “I have witnessed the affliction of my people and hear their cry of complaint. I know well their suffering. I have come down to rescue them and lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey.”

Did Montfort’s vision of the role of Mary embody some of the messages of these scriptures? I think

so. Mary wants her children to be free of their burdens in order to come into a relationship with her Son, Jesus. Certainly, “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

We continued to meet week after week as we prepared for the Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary. An element of the journey pivotal in our program was the sacrament of Reconciliation. Each made a plan. For some individuals, this was a difficult step. It was a long time since their last confession. One by one they came to the group to say that they now understood how important this act of repentance was for their spiritual journey.

The gospel story for the Third Sunday of Lent is a strong call to repentance. The preparation for the Consecration with its stress on divesting oneself of the spirit of the world as well as a seven-day focus on knowledge of self naturally leads to introspection. The hoped-for outcome of this interior work is repentance.

On the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the final steps were taken. The group made the Total Consecration during mass.

What happened after those weeks of preparation? Were there any signs of the Kingdom or the land flowing with milk and honey?

I decided to ask individually. What changes do you see in yourself?



- My mind is much lighter—more peaceful
- Lingering depression has passed
- I am forgiving much more
- I am praying constantly
- Patience
- My spirituality has deepened
- I am now bringing Jesus into the activities of my life
- I experienced a deep joy as when I made my first communion
- Devotion to Our Lady is central to my life
- I don't fail to say my daily rosary
- I am more forgiving
- I've experienced an increase in faith
- I see Jesus in all I do in my day

These meetings with participants convinced me more than ever of the value of Total Consecration. The wealth found in the scriptures for the Third Sunday of lent enabled this reflection to become a reality.