



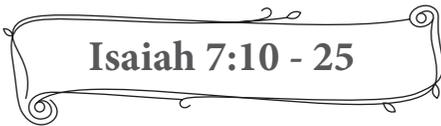
WALKING *with* MARY: A Scripture Study with WINE

— An 8-week intimate journey with Mary, our Mother —

Lesson 2

Walking with Mary “The Sign of Immanuel”

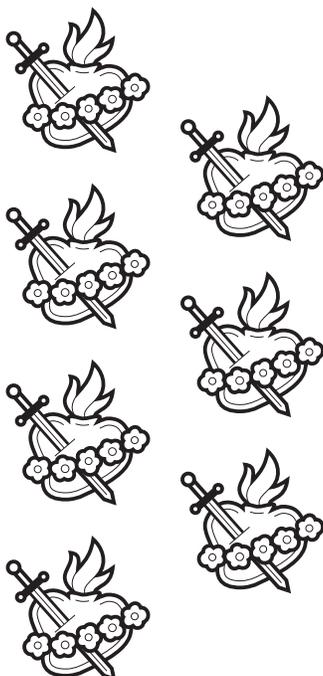
by Maria Morera Johnson



Isaiah 7:10 - 25

Daily Lectio Divina

Walk with Mary by spending each day prayerfully praying Genesis 2:4-3:24. As each new day brings a new experience, be sure to capture your thoughts, prayers, and insights in your Called by Name WINE Journal. Check your heart each day as you pray by coloring in one of the Immaculate Hearts below.



The book of Isaiah not only introduces him as a major prophet of the Old Testament, it also establishes the series of events that lead to the judgment and restoration of the Kingdom of Judah. The House of Israel has become wicked and corrupt and the Lord has decreed that a judgment, by way of invasion and enslavement from other kingdoms, would befall this nation. Chapter 7 of Isaiah reveals that a frightening political crisis is building to the north of Judah, and its king, Ahaz is undergoing a spiritual crisis of little faith. An invasion is imminent, and will surely destroy Judah. However, God sends the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz to reassure him that Judah will be spared from this invasion if Ahaz will put his trust in God and believe. Annoyed, King Ahaz responds angrily, refusing to believe God has time for him by providing a sign.

God's understanding of Ahaz's lack of confidence is compassionate. He offers to give Ahaz a sign as proof of his love and protection but Ahaz refuses. His refusal has consequences. Nevertheless, God still provides the sign, albeit one that will pass over Ahaz and cause suffering for his people. The once vibrant and prosperous kingdom will be reduced to an impoverished state; its land conquered and its people desolate and enslaved. If only Ahaz would have repented of his wickedness. If only Ahaz would have trusted in the Lord. God's sign, the coming of the child Emmanuel, has meaning for the people of Ahaz; s time, but also points to the coming of Jesus -- in other words, God's ultimate plan for our salvation. The lesson here is simple, and yet proves much too difficult time and again: trust in the Lord to deliver us from evil. In Isaiah's time, God's Chosen People had turned away from Him, pursuing their own path. Their faith in God was diluted, twisted, and abandoned. Even with political threats and warfare on the horizon, the people would not turn to God with true faith. Ahaz did not deny God's existence -- he rejected God's mercy. "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Matthew 15:8) King Ahaz's behavior is not unlike ours today. The circumstances might change, but the human condition remains the same. We are a people in crisis, and have always been since that fateful day in the garden. God asks one simple and yet enormous thing from us, and like Ahaz, we reject His love. Whether we do this out of insecurity or pride, the separation from God's love separates us from His mercy. We are not promised freedom from suffering, but we are promised God's saving grace. We would do well to remember King Ahaz; his pride rejected God's sign for his salvation, but God provided that sign in Emmanuel anyway. Let us be comforted in this sign, that we, too, will be saved in Christ's mercy -- if we would put our trust and faith in the Lord.

