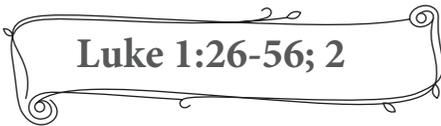




# WALKING *with* MARY: A Scripture Study with WINE

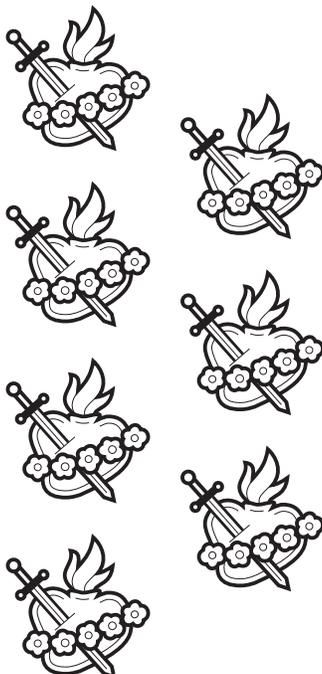
— An 8-week intimate journey with Mary, our Mother —

## Lesson 4



### Daily Lectio Divina

Walk with Mary by spending each day prayerfully praying **Luke 1:26-56; 2**. 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.



## Walking with Mary “In Sorrow and Joy”

by Sharon Perkins

Much commentary has ensued from this week’s selected passage from Luke’s Gospel, probably the most lengthy and continuous Marian text in Scripture. So what more can be said about it? As is the case with *lectio divina*, understanding and wisdom can come from a repetitive, prayerful reading.

Persons familiar with the Rosary might notice that the passage provides the basis for all five Joyful Mysteries: the first decade corresponds to the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), the second, the Visitation (Luke 1:39-56), followed by the Birth of Our Lord (Luke 2:1-20), the Presentation at the Temple (2:22-38), and the Finding in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52).

Of course, all are occasions for great joy, not only in the life of the Blessed Mother, but also for all generations of humankind for whom they herald God’s great mercy and redemption. But note the thread of sorrow that winds its way through each narrative. At the risk of raining on everyone’s parade, why reflect on this paradox?

Upon closer reading, it’s apparent that Mary experiences a range of human emotions, some less than joyful. She is “greatly troubled” at Gabriel’s announcement; even on the heels of her fiat, Gabriel’s departure (1:38), might have left her feeling bereft and confused by many unanswered questions.

Mary’s visit to Elizabeth and her joyful Magnificat would have been preceded by the emotional hardship of travel away from home. And what would she have felt upon her return, an unmarried but obviously pregnant young girl met by the curious whispers and stares of the townspeople?

According to the Church’s dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the effects of original sin—the multiplication of physical pain during labor—did not apply to Mary at her Son’s birth. But upon the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Simeon foretold the sorrow that would certainly “pierce through Mary’s own soul” (2:35) as the drama of salvation would unfold through the life, suffering and death of her Son.

And finally, the rejoicing at finding Jesus in the Temple follows Mary’s self-admitted anxiety during an agonizing three-day search—and his cryptic response must have prompted some motherly bewilderment and hurt. So how can these mysteries be called Joyful?

In Luke 2:19 and 2:51, one finds the answer. Mary did not avoid the sorrow intrinsic to each event, but she embraced these experiences fully, “pondering them in her heart.” Even while confronted by the probability of sorrow, her trust in God leads inexorably to joy. And so it is with us, who walk in Mary’s way.

# Pray, Ponder, and Put Pen to Paper

## Question 1:

Catholic Christian piety often regards Mary as superhuman (placing her on a “pedestal”), without considering her genuinely human reactions to what is happening to her. Sometimes this approach can keep us from developing a close personal relationship with our spiritual mother. In what way has this *lectio* helped you to connect with Mary on a deeper, more personal level?

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## Question 2:

Have you ever prayed the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary? What sorts of images, insights, or feelings have come to you while praying with these passages of Scripture? How has this *lectio divina* with Luke 1-2 helped you in your praying of the Rosary?

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## Question 3:

Christian missionary and author Elisabeth Elliott is quoted as saying, “Joy is not the absence of suffering, but the presence of God.” Ponder how this understanding of “joy” is distinct from the experiences of “pleasure” or “happiness” with which joy is often confused. Have you had an experience of true joy—the presence of God—in the midst of suffering?

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## MEET *the* AUTHOR

Guiding You as You walk with Mary



### Sharon Perkins

is wife to Mike and mother of three adult children. She is a 30-year veteran of Catholic parish and diocesan catechesis, a columnist on spirituality and real life, and co-author of “Word to Life.” Sharon is the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Austin, Texas and a doctoral candidate in theology.



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