

Legio Mariae



2025 Lenten Letter to the Our Lady of Canada Regia (Ottawa)

On Marianizing Your Lent This Year

Dear Legionaries of Our Lady,

The season of Lent is upon us once again. This holy time of year is so important that I wanted to send you this brief letter to provide you with a few helpful tips on how to live this Lent in a spiritually profitable manner.

As you know, Holy Mother Church invites the faithful during Lent to embrace, with greater zeal than at other times of the year, the threefold practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. I would like to encourage you to live these three aspects of the Faith in a particularly Marian way this Lent.

In regard to prayer, I invite you to find something that you can add to your daily prayer routine during this Lenten season. In particular, I encourage you to embrace this added prayer in a Marian spirit. Choose an additional prayer that you can offer daily to Our Lady; or else, give a prayer that you usually offer to Our Lord a particularly Marian flavour. For example, you may wish to meditate on the Passion of Christ through Our Lady's Sorrowful Heart. This may involve praying the Chaplet of Seven Sorrows, or meditating on the Stations of the Cross as seen through the eyes of the Virgin Mary (for example, the "Marian Way of the Cross"). This will help you to grow in your Lenten devotion to the Passion of Our Lord through the compassion of Our Blessed Mother.

In regard to fasting, the Church includes under the umbrella of "fasting" all acts of penance and personal sacrifice. Besides fasting from food (above and beyond the Friday abstinence from meat which is required of all Catholics), you may want to "fast" from certain forms of entertainment and secular media as well. If you choose a particular physical form of fasting or abstaining from a food that you enjoy, I encourage you to offer up that sacrifice in union with Our Lady in order to obtain a particular grace. Besides fasting from food or other things that you enjoy, you may want to consider another type of sacrifice or penance that you can offer up to Jesus through the hands of Our Lady, such as spending more of your prayer time kneeling, or rising in the night to offer a nocturnal prayer to Jesus through Mary, thinking of Our Lord's night agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Any sacrifice embraced in a spirit of true love of God can be offered to Our Lord through Our Blessed Mother. In this way, your sacrifices will bear more fruit, since everything that Our Lady offers to her Son is well pleasing to Him.

And in regard to almsgiving, you may want to "Marianize" your works of charity by doing them in union with Our Lady, or using them to bring others closer to Mary. For example, an act of charity that you may want to engage in during the Lenten season might be the visiting of the elderly and the homebound. And when visiting them, why not pray with them a Chaplet of Seven Sorrows, or speak with them about the Virgin Mary's presence on the *Via Dolorosa* or at the foot of the Cross. This way, your work of charity could beautifully be transformed into a Marian charitable work — very much in the spirit of the Legion of Mary.

The few examples that I give in this letter are not meant to be exhaustive. They are merely intended to show you a few ways in which you might embrace the trinitarian Lenten practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in a more Marian way than you usually do. Pray through Our Lady; fast and offer sacrifices through Our Lady; perform all your charitable works towards others out of love for God through Our Lady.

Let us make all our prayers authentically Marian this Lent — by which I don't mean not to pray to the Father, or to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit; but rather, to offer all these prayers to the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity through her, with her, and in her. Let us do the same for our fasting and works of penance in general. Any penitential work of self-denial would bear so much more fruit if only we would offer them to God in union with His Holy Mother. And all our acts of charity (almsgiving), whether they be visiting the sick, assisting the poor, or providing spiritual strength to those whose faith is weak... all of these things would become so much more sanctifying if we learned to do them all through the hands of Mary.

As we know from the works of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, everything that we do and offer to God through the Blessed Virgin is so much more fruitful than what we do without her. So whenever you assist at Holy Mass, unite yourself to Mary, asking her to help you worship and adore her Son as she does. When you receive Holy Communion, never forget to invite Our Lady to come into your heart before receiving the King of Kings, so that He may rejoice to find our beloved Queen there as well.

My dear Legionaries of Mary, I pray that this Lent 2025 may be a spiritually and uplifting Lent for all of you: a truly Legionary Lent, a Marian Lent. This year being a Jubilee Year of Hope (the 2025th anniversary of the Incarnation and the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea), let us turn our gaze towards the Mother of Holy Hope (*Mater Sanctae Spei*), as the Church so beautifully calls her, asking her to strengthen the virtue of Hope within us and within all of mankind. Our Hope comes from God through the Blessed Virgin, which is why we sing in the beautiful hymn *Salve Regina: Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve!* (Hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope)! Mary is our hope during this season of Lent, since she always leads us to Jesus, the Hope and Saviour of the human race!



May God bless you abundantly through the intercession of Our Lady and of her Most Chaste Spouse, St. Joseph,

Fr. Hezuk Shroff,

Spiritual Director
Our Lady of Canada Regia (Ottawa)