

# *Growing Pains:* *The Demands of Our Lenten Journey*

**A Track-Guided Devotional  
by Luminous Ministries  
Carol Kurivial & Kristen (Kurivial) Hug**

# *Growing Pains:* *The Demands of Our Lenten Journey*

**A Track-Guided Devotional**

**Ideal for private reflections,  
Bible study and faith-sharing groups,  
religious education experiences,  
and youth group gatherings**

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# How to use this Devotional:

- **Begin by making the Sign of the Cross inviting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into this sacred time and asking them to help you accept the demands of truth, courage, and love.**
- **Click on the underlined title of the day's reflection. (This will open to a YouTube video featuring the track necessary to guide that day's devotion.)**
- **Listen to the track.**
- **Read the message of the day.**
- **Discern/Discuss the reflection questions.**
- **Act on the truth revealed.**

*"For God so loved the world that  
He gave His only Son, so that  
everyone who believes in Him might  
not perish, but might have eternal life."*

*~ John 3: 16*



# *Dear Friends in Christ,*

Growing pains...we've all felt them. They come unwelcomed, but always with something to be gained. The gift of life demands that we accept these pains and grow from them if we are to navigate our way through the journey we each must take.

Lent is a time to welcome these unwelcomed pains. It is a time to explore the details of our life's happenings: our choices, our habits, our passions, and our plans. How are we doing on this journey to eternal life? How does Jesus think we're doing? How does our journey parallel His? How are we emulating Him, following Him, pursuing Him, and pleasing Him? How are we growing in virtue?

Another important question we might ask is, how did some of His greatest followers respond to their own experience of Jesus? And how are we called to follow their example?

As a way of growing closer to Christ this Lent, join us as we explore Christ's Crucifixion and death as viewed through the eyes of three Biblical women. Real people. People like you and me. People who witnessed the Passion up close and personal. We have chosen Claudia Procula (wife of Pontius Pilate), Mary Magdalene (friend and follower of Jesus), and Mary (Mother of Jesus). Each woman's experience is explored through the lens of a distinct theme: truth, courage, and love.

As you begin your Lenten journey, we invite you to start your reflection time with a prayer for openness to where God may lead. Next, play the track from the CD (also available on iTunes, YouTube, & Spotify) indicated for each devotion. Finally, individually or as a group, read the reflection and discern your thoughts on the three questions offered.

Perhaps you will find new ways to accept the demands of truth, courage, and love...turning your own pain into crucial testimony for the Kingdom.

Blessings as you begin your journey,

*Carol & Kristen*

## Day 1: Introduction to the Demands of Truth [Track 1]



Claudia Procula! It's a name that demands attention just in the pronunciation. Interesting that they referred to her in the Gospel of Matthew (27:19) as the wife of Pontius Pilate and chose not to use her actual name. But even more interesting is the fact that this unnamed spouse of Pilate was to play such a critical, albeit, disturbing, role in the Passion of Christ. Legendary or historical, Claudia Procula is a force to be reckoned with, a woman who was not afraid to give her husband a warning, a person who paid attention to her dreams and their significance. If we were writing a biography of her today, it would be fair to say that she was a "details woman" who had a keen sense of awareness and responsibility...a courageous woman of strong conviction. Claudia has one brief reference in Scripture, and two thousand years later she is still talked about, discussed in interested circles, and the central character in many books. And all because she was brave enough to act on her sense of truth and justice.

1. What unnamed person has played a crucial role in your spiritual life?
2. If your biography was being written today, what testimony would it provide for the Kingdom?
3. When have you last acted on your sense of truth and justice?



## Day 2: Claudia's Entrance & Conversation with Pilate [Track 2]



"You mean to tell me there is a man in your jurisdiction performing miracles in the name of the God of Israel, and you aren't the least bit concerned about learning the truth?" spits Claudia at her husband, Pilate, in the dramatic interpretation you just experienced. It's not an uncommon reaction, really. How many of us would rather keep our heads buried in the sand than confront the real truth of a situation? Be courageous! Look deeply into your own life and peer honestly into the details of certain situations that hold tension. What is the real cause of the tension? What is your own role in all of it? What might you do to ease the tension and present thoughts that will get to the real truth, bringing peace and freedom to the scene? That is what Claudia was asking Pilate to do. That is also what Jesus is asking us to do.

1. How and/or when are you most like Pilate?
2. How willing are you to confront truth and take righteous action?
3. What might you do to ease the tension in your own life?



## Day 3: Who is this Man? [Track 3]



This is a question we must all answer for ourselves. Who is this man? Or better yet, who is Jesus to you? When we've grappled with this question, we come back to these two facts. One, history tells us that Jesus was a real person who walked the face of this earth, so we cannot deny His existence. And two, every major world religion acknowledges Him, so we cannot explain Him away. Perhaps one of the reasons so many people want to deny His existence is because His teachings threaten their lifestyle. Other reasons might be that it requires too much, it is inconvenient, and it is messy. But how do these reasons stand up against the truth?

1. Who is Jesus to You?
2. What truths solidify your belief in Jesus?
3. How does Jesus threaten your current lifestyle?

## Day 4: Claudia's Question [Track 4]



Claudia was not content to merely question her husband about this Jesus; she wanted the truth. It reminds us of the true story by Lee Strobel entitled, *The Case for Christ*. Lee was an atheist and an investigative journalist for the *Chicago Tribune*. His wife threw him for a loop when she became a Christian. Refusing to believe, he decided he would use his investigative skills to disprove Christianity once and for all by finding the evidence that the Resurrection never occurred. Lee was not satisfied by merely questioning Christianity. He wanted answers. The answers led him to the Truth.

1. Are you content to merely question? Why or why not?
2. What case could you write for Christ?
3. What evidence could you share for your faith in Jesus?

## Day 5: Haunted [Track 5]



Are you haunted by Jesus? Do you identify as Claudia because you too are unsure of who He is? Or is it that you feel haunted by what He demands of you? Or do you feel haunted because you see yourself as unworthy of His love and so you keep Him at an arm's length? St. Augustine famously addressed this haunted feeling by putting it this way. He said, "You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." But did you know St. Augustine also said, "...I set about to find God and found that I could not find Him until I embraced the mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus, who is all over all these things, who was calling me and saying: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life...'"

1. Are you haunted by God or do you have peace?
2. Have you tangled with the Divine?
3. Have you embraced the mediator, Jesus Christ?



## Day 6: The Dream [Track 6]



Claudia had a dream...nothing unusual there. According to the latest research, unless we have some kind of brain injury, we all dream every single night. In fact, it's thought that each night's sleep includes up to two hours spent either dreaming or in a dreamlike state. That's a whole lot of dreaming going on out there. But there was something very specific about Claudia's dream that convinced her to send Pilate a note ASAP. And she didn't just think about it ~ she did it. On the double! Realistically, that couldn't have been easy. Kind of reminds us of the book *Do Hard Things* written by twin brothers, Alex and Brett Harris. They wrote the book in their teen years to encourage their peers to practice doing hard things for the glory of God. The book was designed to rebel against low expectations and give its readers a "tangible glimpse of what is possible for teens who actively resist cultural lies that limit their potential." We think these two guys have what we like to call "Claudian" courage and we hope it's contagious.

1. Are you willing to do hard things for the glory of God?
2. In what areas of your spiritual life have you set low expectations?
3. When is the last time you resisted a cultural lie?



## Day 7: Pilate, Am I Too Late? [Track 7]



We've all been in situations where we've been afraid that our actions, our answers, and our resources would come too late. These moments torture us and keep us up at night. They cause great stress and an inability to perform even simplistic tasks. Claudia was precisely in that kind of space when she implored Pilate to see the truth at long last. She was desperately afraid that her warning would come too late or that her husband would ignore it altogether. She was determined to save him from his ill-fate. And it appears as if she was very concerned for Jesus as well. There was just something about the situation that didn't rest easy. It felt somehow different and she responded with a sense of urgency because she knew it mattered. We think most would agree that there is a sense of urgency in turning more hearts towards Jesus. In many ways we are living in a post-Christian America and it's going to take the urgent response of the multitudes to get things turned around. Let's get to work before it's too late!

1. Who are you determined to save?
2. What urgent situation in our society most troubles you?
3. What could/will you do to help change the culture of that situation?

## Day 8: What Is Truth? [Track 8]



"My Kingdom does not belong to this world." (John 18:36) There is undoubtedly a difference between God's Kingdom and any other kind of kingdom that has ever existed. Perhaps that's what made the situation so complicated. However, Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, he knew the truth, and he probably didn't need Claudia to point it out. He had his own personal experience of Jesus. The truth for Pilate was that he didn't want "complications" with the Jewish leaders that would eventually get in the way of his career plans and enviable prestige. Maybe there has been a time or two in your own life when you've actually felt sorry for the poor guy. And that's because most of us have been in situations where we, too, secretly enjoyed the limelight and the status to some degree. We can be sympathetic because we relate to those same weaknesses. But at some point we will each have to decide which king we will honor and adore ~ our earthly kings or Christ the King!

1. Pilate made a bad decision in order to protect his power and prestige. In what ways have we been known to do the same?
2. Why is status/fame such a strong temptation?
3. Who/what do you honor and adore?

## Day 9: Who was this Man? [Track 9]



"The Chief Priests and Rabbis said He was a liar. But the people outside said Lord..." In today's world there is an abundance of noise...so many voices saying so much...and we are influenced by all that we hear and see and experience. That's why it's so important to listen to the voices of truth. Sometimes those utterances come from the smallest among us, the little children, like when a 4-year-old, Autumn Owens, said, "Miss Carol, did you know that God loves you so much He knows exactly how many hairs are on your head?" These voices of truth lift up our spirits and draw us closer to the King of our souls.

1. Who are the voices of truth in your life?
2. What has been said that has drawn you closer to Christ, the source of Truth?
3. In what ways have you made Jesus the King of your soul?



## Day 10

*"I am the way, and the truth,  
and the life.*

*No one comes to the Father  
except through Me."*

*~ John 14: 6*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?



## Day 11

*"Guide me in Your truth and teach me,  
for You are God my Savior.*

*For You I wait all the long day,  
because of Your goodness, Lord."*

*~ Psalm 25:5*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 12

*"And the Word became flesh  
and made His dwelling among us,  
and we saw His glory,  
the glory as of the Father's only Son,  
full of grace and truth."  
~ John 1: 14*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 13

*"For the Lord is compassionate  
and merciful; He forgives sins  
and saves in time of affliction,  
and He is the shield of all who  
seek Him in truth."*

*~ Sirach 2: 11*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?



## Day 14

*"Jesus then said to those Jews  
who believed in Him,*

*'If you remain in My word,  
you will truly be My disciples,  
and you will know the truth,  
and the truth will set you free.'  
~ John 8: 31-32*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?



## Day 15: Introduction to the Demands of Courage [Track 10]



This introduction reminds us of these famous words by German pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act." While we need to prayerfully discern our spoken words and our actions, we DO need to speak and we DO need to act. However, it is important to speak truth in a way that inspires the hearer to change. Anyone can lash out. What we need is to respectfully proclaim the facts. This sort of action and this sort of speech is perhaps the true definition of courage.

1. What have been some of your most courageous acts?
2. What have been some of your most courageous spoken words?
3. What kind of delivery inspires you to change?

## Day 16: Hosanna [Track 11]



The crowd is going crazy as Jesus enters Jerusalem. Everyone feels the excitement as we hear shouts of “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (from Psalm 118:26) But what they think and pray is happening is not actually happening. Yes, they are yelling “Hosanna” which in Hebrew means “help” and/or “save” and they are waving the palm branches which symbolize a victorious ruler in their midst, but they are doing it because they want Jesus to become king, in the traditional sense, of Israel! They are looking to Jesus to become their great liberator! The mood is festive and the hope is real. They are thinking that it is high time for some good and decent military leadership and Jesus is their man! They were so joyful because they thought this man was coming to help them, to bring them out of their oppression...and He was...but not in the way they were expecting.

1. When have we misconstrued Jesus’ message because we wanted something so badly?
2. What gives you hope?
3. In what ways do you expect Jesus to liberate you?

## Day 17: Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem [Track 12]



"Please, break my heart, O God, with what breaks your heart, O God. Please, break my heart. For the sick, for the poor, for the ones who need more tenderness and justice, break my heart. For the lost, for the lame, for those suffering in pain, help me see you in each face through a broken heart." These lyrics come from Jennifer Martin's song "Break My Heart" (also known as "The Compassion Song"), and they immediately came to mind while revisiting this moment where Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. There is so much that breaks the heart of our Lord, and oftentimes, we are calloused to it all. On this 17th day of our Lenten journey, let's pray that the Lord will break our hardened hearts so that we will see what grieves Him and respond.

1. What do you think breaks God's heart?
2. What breaks your heart? How can this heartbreak draw you closer to Christ?
3. How will you respond to the suffering around you?



## Day 18: Truth's Been Revealed [Track 13]



If you were listening carefully to the song lyrics, you might have heard the phrase, "the battle for souls." And that's it in a nutshell! Jesus was and is battling for souls. That's always been His mission and He has remained persistently true to the cause, not willing for any to fail or fall. And our response? Well, some of us are paying attention to the truth He has revealed. We believe it and we want to live our lives like we believe it. Some of us believe God's truth, but really struggle to live it, and have all but given up trying. Some of us just flat-out don't even believe it at all. Not one bit! Or perhaps we are too preoccupied and distracted with life to pay much attention. And some of us flutter in and out of these various positions on the battlefield. We may be inconsistent in our allegiance to Jesus, but He never gives up fighting for us.

1. What is your position on the battlefield?
2. How are you most distracted and preoccupied and what can you do about it?
3. What is one small action you can take today to help Jesus with the battle for souls?

## Day 19: The Passover [Track 14]



Every time we read or hear this Scripture passage we can't help but think of a banner that hangs in our Eucharistic chapel at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Bryan, Ohio which states: "What difference does it make if the bread and wine turns into the Body of Christ and we don't?" We've both seen the banner hundreds of times, and have known this truth for most of our lives, but somehow, when put like that, we have felt a huge responsibility to clean up our acts. Yes, we were affected, and that was the point! Right? We've even written the words carefully into our journals so we wouldn't forget them...not that we could! What about you?

1. What effect does this banner message have on you?
2. What difference DOES it make if the bread and wine turns into the Body and Blood of Christ and you don't?
3. Does your life fail to be transformed because you fail to believe in the True Presence?

## Day 20: Judas Betrays Jesus [Track 15]



They say you have not truly read the Bible until you see yourself as each person. In this scene, it is easy to identify with Mary Magdalene who is outraged by Judas' betrayal. But how do you identify with Judas? This is a question so many of us would rather not ask ourselves, but we must. How have you, like Judas, betrayed God? If we had to wager a guess, we would say that it was probably one small decision against Christ that Judas allowed himself to get comfortable with, that turned into another not so great decision...and then another. You get the point. It probably all started out as a relatively small thing, but swelled over time. Worldly things like fame, power, money and earthly security can get the better of us. And it all starts with a single decision against Christ. But in the same way, the pendulum can swing with one good decision, and then another, and another. One of the best decisions you can make to turn the tide is to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation.

1. When is the last time you received the sacrament of Reconciliation?
2. What is keeping you from embracing the forgiveness and love of Jesus?
3. How do you actively work to forgive and remedy your shortcomings?



## Day 21: Peter, Don't Run Away! [Track 16]



Isolating. That's how we think it felt to be Mary Magdalene in this moment. In the midst of crisis, she wanted all of Jesus' friends and followers to band together, and instead, it was every-man-for-himself. This is not so unlike what we experience today. Pastor Rick Warren articulated this directly when he said, "Unfortunately, Christians, you and I are often disorganized and demoralized, our faith is compartmentalized, and our witness is compromised. So what do we need? We need to revitalize our worship, minimize our differences, mobilize our members, and evangelize the lost, and we need to re-energize our families." Are we doing this? Not exactly. The reality is that we are living in a world with an ever-growing number of people who claim no religious affiliation. In the midst of this current crisis, we as Christians need to band together and show the world the power of Christ's message...a message of love, hope, grace and truth.

1. What is your response to the growing number of unaffiliated? Are you banding together with other Christians or running away altogether?
2. What are you doing to bring the unaffiliated back to the Church?
3. How will you help bring about the culture of life?

## Day 22: Lord, Help Me to Stay [Track 17]



There have been many times in my life when I (Carol) desperately wanted to flee the scene. Most especially in situations when emotions were high due to overwhelmingly difficult life-happenings. I don't remember the very first time I ever wanted to flee, but I remember that I started to understand that feeling at a very young age. I was only four years old when two men knocked on our front door and gently told my mom that her husband had just died in a winter storm accident. Although I didn't understand that my dad would never be coming back to our earthly home again, I did understand that something had gone terribly wrong and I wanted to flee. I also wanted to flee the scene the day I was sitting in a doctor's office with my sister, Mary, and her physician gave her some very bad news about the condition of her health. I again wanted to flee when we were told her treatments were not working...and again when they recommended hospice. I could not believe this was happening. I wanted so badly to flee. I wanted to wake up from this nightmare. I wanted it to all just go away. But it WAS happening and I had a decision to make...flee or stay. How could I ever abandon my own sister? I couldn't. What I have learned is that the right decision is rarely the easy one, that BEING courageous rarely equates to FEELING courageous, and that in moments like these, words are often unnecessary...just being present is what truly speaks.

1. When is a time you wanted to flee the scene?
2. When is a time you abandoned Jesus?
3. What is happening in your life right now where you could use God's gentle reassurance to stay and pray? Who needs you, not to speak, but to just be present?

## Day 23: The Way of the Cross [Track 18]



Devastated. That's how I (Kristen) feel when listening to this detailed account of the murder of Jesus. Devastated by the conviction of an innocent man. Devastated by the cruelty inflicted upon Him. Devastated by His death. Devastated by the knowledge that we killed our God. And it's a feeling I don't want to sit with...I want to flash forward to what I know comes three days later, but I don't allow myself. His sacrifice deserves my devastation. As Catholics, every Good Friday we acknowledge His sacrifice collectively by kneeling in silence at the words, "...and bowing His head, He handed over His spirit." (John 19:30) Prior to my aunt's death, this moment of pause in church with my fellow believers was more mechanical. Down. Quiet. Up. Continue. But after my aunt died something happened. I was rereading the text messages sent during that time when I stumbled upon two words. On January 28, 2014 at 4:53 PM, I simply wrote, "She's gone." And when I read those words, I stopped everything I was doing and just allowed myself to feel the weight and gravity of her loss. And that is what I try to do now, every Good Friday when we hear the words, "...and bowing His head, He handed over His spirit." I kneel and allow myself to feel the devastation of this loss and the devastating level of love Christ has for me.

1. How does the suffering and death of Jesus make you feel?
2. What makes the Crucifixion real for you?
3. Do you allow the gravity of this loss and love to sink in?



## Day 24

*"Have I not commanded you?*

*Be strong and courageous.*

*Do not be frightened,  
and do not be dismayed,  
for the Lord your God is  
with you wherever you go."*

*~ Joshua 1:9*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 25

*"Be strong,  
and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the Lord!"  
~ Psalm 31: 24*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 26

*"Even though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil, for You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff,  
they comfort me."*

*~ Psalm 23: 4*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?



## Day 27

*“Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let  
your heart take courage;  
wait for the Lord!”  
~ Psalm 27: 14*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 28

*"I have said these things to you,  
that in Me you may have peace.  
In the world you will have tribulation.  
But take heart: I have overcome the world."  
~ John 16: 33*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 29: Introduction to the Demands of Love [Track 19]



Over the course of our ministry, an interesting comment that comes up frequently is how unapproachable many Catholics find Mary. "She was too perfect," they say, or, "I cannot relate to her experience." Our response when we encounter this line of commentary is to encourage people to meet her in their sorrow. The Catholic Church identifies "The Seven Sorrows of Mary":

1. The Prophecy of Simeon
2. The Flight into Egypt
3. The Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple
4. The Meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Way of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion
6. The Taking Down of the Body of Jesus from the Cross
7. The Burial of Jesus.

And there were many other things that grieved her heart. If anyone can relate to our suffering, it is our Mother, Mary. If you have been humiliated, meet Mary there. If someone has shared something devastating about the future of your child, meet Mary there. If you were ever forced to move, meet Mary there. If you ever lost track of your child, meet Mary there. If you ever saw your child suffer, meet Mary there. If you ever experienced the death of a child, meet Mary there. She knows your suffering and she shares your sorrow. You are not alone. Your Mother is waiting.

1. How do you relate to Mary?
2. Which of your sorrows can you unite to Mary's sorrow?
3. How can you grow into a deeper relationship with Our Lady?



## Day 30: What Greater Joy? [Track 20]



We think one of the most interesting aspects of our Blessed Mother is her duality. She was constantly full of sorrow and full of joy. Yesterday we explored “The Seven Sorrows of Mary.” Today we want to share “The Seven Joys of Mary,” also known as the “Franciscan Crown” or “The Rosary of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary”:

1. The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully Conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit.
2. The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully carried Jesus visiting Elizabeth.
3. The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully brought Jesus into the world.
4. The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully exhibited Jesus to the adoration of the Magi.
5. The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully found Jesus in the temple.
6. The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully beheld Jesus after His Resurrection.
7. The Immaculate Virgin Mary was joyfully received by Jesus into heaven, and crowned Queen of heaven and earth.

When examining these lists side by side, Mary’s seven joys and Mary’s seven sorrows, you notice the overlap, and that is because the source of her joy was also the source of her sorrow.

1. What do you find interesting about Mary?
2. In what ways has Jesus been a source of sorrow in your life?
3. In what ways has Jesus been a source of joy in your life?

## Day 31: Reliant [Track 21]



Over the past few years something new has evolved in our prayer time. It was a revelation of sorts that we have our own inner sanctuary housed right in our own body and soul, and we can go there anytime to be alone with God. Guess what? You have it too. Just think of it...your own perfect and private sanctuary...a safe and sacred space. And to add to the beauty of this experience, Jesus always makes us feel like this time together is so important and special to Him. We get the definite impression that our time together makes Him very happy. It makes us happy too. Unlike most things in life, He's steady, stable, constant, and reliable. He hears us out and He accepts our moods. He welcomes our distracted thoughts and is gentle with our pain points. He laughs with us, but He also cries with us. He gets us; we've never doubted that, not even for a second. We've never found a better confidant and trusted friend. But don't trust us. Pay a visit to your own personal and private sanctuary and see what you think.

1. Have you ever thought of your soul as your own private and sacred sanctuary?
2. Does the thought of your own private sanctuary appeal to you or make you uneasy?
3. What keeps you from spending time in that space?

## Day 32: Those Words [Track 22]



We have long thought the phrase “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” was absolute, as the British say, rubbish. Words ARE important! They can heal and they can hurt. They can lighten or linger. They can calm or cause chaos. In this case, Mary is haunted by the words of Simeon when he prophesied about the great things her Son would do...but also the horrors He must endure. Oh, that last part tears at our hearts. What a burden those words must have brought to our Blessed Mother. And, yet, she continued to do the next right thing, and the next, and the next.

1. What words have pierced your soul?
2. What words have made your soul soar?
3. Despite words for good or bad, how do you continue to do the next right thing?



## Day 33: Help Me [Track 23]



Every time I (Carol) hear the word “help” I can’t “help” but think of the Beatles and their hit song “Help!” I’ve even been known to play the song to certain groups who I’ve consulted with in the past as a way of communicating that we all need help from time to time...even the Beatles in the height of their popularity. And when I say we all need help, I really mean that we all need God to be front, center, core, and ever-present. We need His wisdom, His counsel, His grace, His presence, His everything. He isn’t just another thing to add to the plate. He IS the plate. We can know and live it now, or we can find out the truth of it all later. Our choice. I think you could safely say that Herod needed help. So unwilling was he to play second fiddle that he ordered the brutal murders of a multitude of innocent souls. That’s what happens when pride comes to the forefront and we lose our Focus, our Center, our Messiah, our Chosen One. Unlike Herod, our grace-filled mother, Mary, had the good sense to keep herself centered in Christ. She knew where her real “help” came from and depended on God’s grace to see her through her “yes.”

1. How has God helped you in the last 24 hours?
2. In what ways have you been a Herod in the last 24 hours?
3. Where is God’s grace leading you today?

## Day 34: My Precious Rose [Track 24]



Several years ago I, (Carol) directed the Disney musical *Beauty and the Beast*. You know the story...an arrogant prince and all of his servants are cast under a spell by an enchantress, who turns the prince into a hideous beast until he learns to love and be loved in return. To add to the suspense, his conversion must take place before the last petal of a glass-encased rose falls. Enter "Belle" into the scene and some authentic transformational love eventually ensues. This story, and the role that the rose plays, when compared to the representation of Jesus as a "precious Rose" is vastly different. Instead of the rose representing a ticking clock counting time for someone to learn how to love, this "Rose" represents someone whose love is so complete, unconditional and pure, but whose time on earth has come to an end, hence, a very different scenario. One is learning HOW to love, the other IS love. Both have limited time. It occurs to me that WE, humans, are the Beast. Our time, too, is finite. And the question we need to ask ourselves is, will we truly learn to love like Jesus before the last petal falls?

1. In what ways can you most relate to the Beast?
2. What is an example of transformational love in your own life?
3. What might transformational love be demanding of you today?

## Day 35: The Fulfillment of the Prophecy [Track 25]



In the dramatization Mary looks Jesus in the eye and says, "I love you. I love you." She truly loved Jesus and understood what that love demanded of her...release. Mary knew that ultimately Jesus did not belong to her, but to God, and that her role in loving her Son was a commitment to do everything she could to help Him become all that God wanted Him to be...all that God created Him to be. The same is true for you. The people you love are not yours. Your loved ones belong to God. In choosing to love someone you are committing to doing everything you can to help them become all that God wants them to be...all that God needs them to be...all that God dreamed them to be. And so, during this scene, Mary demonstrates real love by releasing her Son back to the Father, because for the love and "salvation of souls, Jesus was born. And for the salvation of souls, Jesus, would die."

1. Who do you need to release to the Father?
2. How do you help those you love become all God created them to be?
3. What in you needs to die for the salvation of souls?



## Day 36: In the Tomb [Track 26]



What mother can separate herself from the suffering of her child? When your child feels threatened you instantly feel the effects of a mama bear. When your child is alone and lonely you would climb Mount Everest to cheer them up. When your child is sick or in pain you want to storm heaven for the cure. When your child is persecuted, most especially for a crime they never committed, you are devastated. And this was the experience of Our Blessed Mother Mary. She felt it all. She endured the cross right along with her Son. She tolerated unspeakable anguish, and through it all, refused to leave His side. He would not bear this suffering alone. She walked the journey with her Son, and she, too, was crushed, bruised and beaten with the pain of His great sacrifice. She went through utter hell. Even so, she kept going. We need to follow the example of our Blessed Mother. Keep going. Keep trusting. Keep praying. Keep loving. Because...love always involves the cross, but after the cross, there is Resurrection.

1. When you are going through hell, how do you keep going?
2. In what areas of your life has there been resurrection?
3. In what areas of your life are you still waiting for resurrection?

## Day 37

*"And now these three  
remain, faith, hope, and  
love, but the greatest of  
these is love."*

*~ 1 Corinthians 13: 13*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 38

*"I give you a new commandment:  
love one another. As I have loved you,  
so you also should love one another.  
This is how all will know that you are  
My disciples, if you have love for one another."  
~ John 13: 34-35*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?



## Day 39

*"Above all,*

*let your love for one another be intense,  
because love covers a multitude of sins."*

*~ 1 Peter 4:8*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

## Day 40

*"As the Father loves me,  
so I also love you.  
Remain in My love."  
~ John 15:9*

Contemplate this Scripture by discerning the following questions:

1. What word or phrase speaks to your soul?
2. Why might this word or phrase be speaking to your soul?
3. How might God be using this word or phrase to prompt your soul to respond?

# *Luminous Ministries*

Carol Kurivial and Kristen (Kurivial) Hug,  
a mother-daughter team,  
offer tailored programming,  
retreats, missions, and musicals  
that will energize your faith life  
and revitalize your soul via song, stories,  
Scripture and sacred moments.



*...creatively  
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Thank you for entering into the Passion via the perspectives of these three Biblical women: Claudia Procula (wife of Pontius Pilate), Mary Magdalene (friend and follower of Jesus), and Mary (Mother of Jesus).

*Growing Pains: The Demands of Our Lenten Journey* explored the themes of truth, courage, and love and the role these virtues play in your life.

We pray this devotional experience has stimulated your senses and enhanced your 40-day walk with Jesus.

Many prayers that your Lenten journey has been profound and transformational and that this time of carrying the cross has led your soul to a place of resurrection!

*Carol & Kristen*