

# Walking with Mary this Advent

**This past January, Bill and I made a pilgrimage to Israel.** We saw many beautiful sights, and as Advent approaches, I find myself meditating on those holy places. Among the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Annunciation, the Shepherds' Cave, and so many others, one image continues to stay with me: "Mary of Nazareth."

In this depiction, Mary is rushing to greet Elizabeth, her robes flowing behind her. One hand is placed over her heart—showing Jesus resting within—and her other hand is outstretched toward us, her children, saying, "Come, walk with me."

Now, during this Advent season, I invite you to walk with me in reflecting on this message.

## **We as women...**

**...who love to serve like Martha**, often find ourselves busy with all the tasks that come with the holidays. It becomes difficult to carve out time to nurture the presence of Jesus in our hearts. Sometimes it feels easier to rest our weary feet at home rather than rest them at church, or to rest our weary hearts before Jesus the way Mary did.

**...who long to keep peace in our families**, may find ourselves walking a fragile line this time of year. Conversation can be weighted with stress, old hurts, politics, or differences in faith. The peace we try so hard to create can feel delicate, even vulnerable.

**...who often carry the pain of unmet expectations**, know the ache when our hopes fall short. Whether it's the desire to wrap the prettiest gifts, bake the best cookies, or mend a relationship that needs healing—our hearts can feel heavy when things do not unfold in the time or manner we had prayed for.

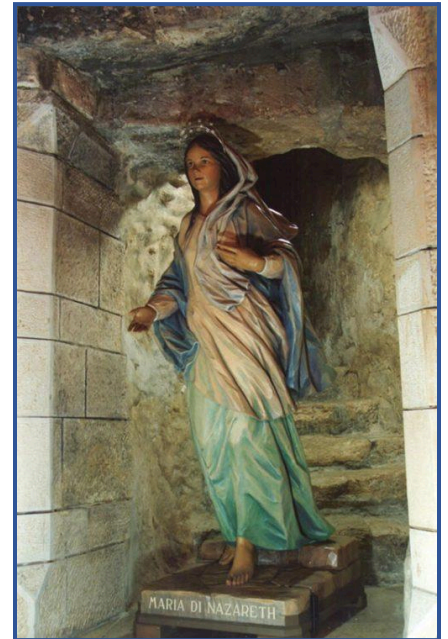
**As we prepare for Advent—one of the holiest seasons of the year-** we must remain aware of how quietly Satan can weave himself into our days of preparation.

He would gladly let small arguments grow into wounds.

He would discourage us from praying for the very family members who have caused our hurts.

He would relish creating division, tension, or distraction.

He would prefer we focus on our tired feet and aching hearts rather than choosing to worship Jesus in His holy dwelling place.



**And so, we return to Mary of Nazareth.**

She traveled nearly 90 miles to visit Elizabeth. Mary surely knew the questions she would face—no young woman was expected to travel alone—but she also knew that Jesus, the Savior, rested just beneath her heart.

And today she reaches out her hand to us again.

She invites us to walk with her.

To make the journey with her.

To carry Jesus within us even when the road is long, uncertain, or tiring.

To be prepared, as Scripture reminds us, for the resistance we may encounter along the way.

**May the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your heart this season.**

May His presence bring you joy, peace, and a love that carries you through every step of the journey.

**President Judy Weston**

Lincoln Diocesan Council of Catholic Women