



# Mary, Our Guide Through Advent

A Mini Retreat for Yourself or in a Group □ 45 – 50 min.

Dedicated to Men in Ministry

## Mary's Service amidst Men in Ministry

**Leader:** As we gather in this season of Advent, we are reminded of the steadfast bravery of Mary, who embraced God's will with her "Yes" in the midst of uncertainty. This Advent season, we are called to prepare our hearts, to live with hope, and to act with courage in our families, our local communities, our parish, and our Church. May this time inspire us to grow as people who lead with faith, serve with love, and trust in God's plan, even when the path is not yet clear to us.

**ALL:** Blessed Mother, whose calm "yes" set the world on an Advent path of love, guide me in my ministry to faithfully serve with a humble heart and firm, unswerving faith. As you prepared to bring Christ into the world, help me prepare my heart and hands to serve with charity, obedience, and readiness.

Teach me to be diligent in trial and united in brotherhood, that my work may replicate your patient strength and faithful example. Guard my mission to defend my parish and family, and lead me always to your Holy Son whom you presented to the world.

Inspire in me the courage to be a witness of joy and hope, to lift the poor and protect the innocent. Envelop my efforts in your cloak of grace and peace, that every act of service ministry this Advent Season may glorify God alone, following your model of love and faithful service. Amen.

**Leader:** Blessed Mother, whose quiet "yes" set love in motion, guide us to serve with humble hearts and steadfast faith. May we, like you, rush to the needs of others with hands of charity and a spirit of obedience. May our Advent efforts bring Christ to others.

Teach us perseverance in trial and unity with our brothers, that our works may mirror your silent strength. Guard our mission to defend the Church and our families, and lead us always to Christ, whom you first bore to the world.

Inspire in us the courage to witness with joy and hope, to lift the lowly and protect the innocent. Wrap our efforts in your mantle of grace and peace, that every act of Advent service by us and by all men may glorify God alone.

**Meditate:** As a man of faith, I am called to model my service after Mary's example. I begin first in silence and prayer, letting God shape my heart and direct my purpose. Mary responded to God's call with trust, humility, and unshakable faith. She believed in His plan even when she could not see where it would lead. She was first to prepare for Christ as we must every Advent. Like her, I am invited to serve with my heart surrendered to God first, attentive to the needs of others second, and focused not on comfort or recognition, but on giving glory to God.

As a Catholic man, I am called to follow Mary's example by trusting in God and saying 'yes' to the daily opportunities for service He places before me. Whether through small acts of kindness, leadership within my family, or support for those in need, I strive to reflect Mary's spirit of humble obedience. Advent is also a time of obedience to me. When I take time to pray and reflect on her life, my heart becomes more aligned with God's will - allowing my service to grow authentic, compassionate, and transformative. In this way, even the simplest act done in love becomes a reflection of Mary's faithful "Yes" and a living sign of Christ's presence in the world.

**Reader 1:** What questions of meditation would Mother Mary wish to reveal to us regarding unqualified service, love, and passionate ministry? Noting her own blessed faith and work, how can we respond to our own important calls to service, patience, and love? Following our prayer, let us review these questions further.

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Heavenly Father, I gather in faith, seeking to follow Your call with the same courage and trust that Mary showed when she acclaimed her own Advent, “Let it be done to me according to Your word.”

Open my heart in this time, that I may listen for Your voice in the stillness and allow Your Spirit to shape my life. Teach me to serve as a faithful son with humility, to lead with compassion, and to love with the strength that comes from You alone.

Grant me Your grace to serve with a heart aflame and a mind inspired, that I may see clearly the work I am doing and the work still to come. Help me to pray deeply and reflect often, walking always in Your ways. May I follow the example of Mother Mary, whose blessed ministry still touches the world, and let her faith, patience, and love guide every act of service I offer in my life and ministry. Help me awaken the Advent Season to others. Amen.

## SAYING “YES” TO GOD’S CALL

**Reader 2:** Humility calls us to step aside from our egos and let God’s will shape our actions, just as Mary did with her quiet “yes.” Trust invites us to believe that God’s plans are greater than our fears, even when the path is hidden. Obedience challenges us to act with courage and love, offering ourselves in service without hesitation or condition.

**Reader 3:** Mary’s courage to say “yes” to God was not born of certainty but of faith. Like Mary, we are invited to surrender—not as a sign of weakness, but of true strength as faithful sons.

### **Read, Mediate and Share:**

Read: *Luke 1:38* – “Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.’”

Meditate and Share: Mary’s courage to say “yes” to God was not born as total surrender.

- ◆ Do you feel called to surrender, as Mary did?
- ◆ Do you view it as genuine strength rather than weakness?
- ◆ Each day, ask: “*Where is God inviting me to say ‘yes’ today?*” — in my family, my work, or my service?

## WALKING HUMBLY WITH MARY

**Reader 4:** Mary lived humility and mercy perfectly. Our faith and ministry are shown not always in words, but in how we live with integrity, compassion, and humility.

### **Read, Mediate and Share:**

Read: *Micah 6:8* – “*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*”

Meditate and Share:

- ◆ Have I asked God to shape me into a man who leads by example?
- ◆ Is my strength and ministry measured by my devotion and mercy for others?

**Reader 5:** Mary gives all glory to God, recognizing His power working through her. Every good we do is God working through us. We bring Christ to others together this Advent.

### **Read, Mediate and Share:**

Read: *Luke 1:46–49* – “*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior....He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.*”

Meditate and Share:

- ◆ During the course of every day, do I thank God, as Mary did, for each moment His strength works through us?
- ◆ Do I consciously feel God's ever subtle, yet certain, tug in my soul and how?

**Reader 6:** Mary's humility prepared the way for her Son – her first Advent, as she showed us what true leadership looked like. Mary carried Jesus carefully as she traveled with Joseph, a great distance of 90 arduous miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem, due to a decree.

**Mediate and Share:**

- ◆ When in my ministry, have I had such trials as Mary had, while carrying Jesus?
- ◆ How could I have done things differently?

**Leader:** We rise in faith, ready to serve boldly, lead with love, and follow Christ with the courage of Mary. We gather in faith, seeking to follow Mary's example of ministry with the same courage and trust she showed when she said, “Let it be done to me according to Your word.

We open our hearts this Advent, that we may listen for God's voice in the stillness and allow His Spirit to shape our lives. Help us to serve with humility, to lead with compassion, and to love with the strength that comes from Him alone. May Mary's example inspire us to say “yes” to the ordinary and extraordinary Advent moments of discipleship that are placed before us.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

**ALL:** Lord God, I thank You for this time of reflection, fellowship, and renewal in faith. You have called me, like Mary, to trust Your plan and to bring Your love into the world through service and strength this Advent. Help me carry the spirit of this gathering into my daily life -- with the courage to act, the humility to serve, and a heart open to Your will. May my family see in me the gentleness of Joseph, the devotion of Mary, and the compassion of Christ. Remind me that no act of kindness is too small when done in Your name. Amen.