

To The Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Most Holy Rosary – The JOYFUL MYSTERIES

How many graces I received from the Blessed Virgin through the Rosary: Magnificat anima mea Dominum! I wish to lift up my thanks to the Lord in words of his Most Holy Mother, under whose protection I placed my Petrine ministry: Totus Tuus! I felt drawn to offer a reflection on the Rosary, an exhortation to contemplate the face of Christ in union with, and at the school of, his Most Holy Mother. To recite the Rosary is to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ “when the Mother is honoured, the Son ... is duly known, loved and glorified”.⁸ In the present historical and theological context the Rosary can risk being wrongly devalued, and no longer taught to the younger generation. I desire that the Rosary should be especially emphasized and promoted in the various Christian communities. *(The following texts are from Pope JP II’s Letter on the Year of the Rosary 2002-3.)*

The Joyful Mysteries – (Monday, Saturday) – with accompanying prayers to end the decade

20. The first five decades, the “joyful mysteries”, are marked by the joy radiating from the event of the Incarnation. To meditate upon the “joyful” mysteries, then, is to enter into the ultimate causes and the deepest meaning of Christian joy. It is to focus on the realism of the mystery of the Incarnation and on the obscure foreshadowing of the mystery of the saving Passion. Mary leads us to discover the secret of Christian joy, reminding us that Christianity is, first and foremost, euangelion, “good news”, which has as its heart and its whole content the person of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the one Saviour of the world.

1st – The Annunciation – “Jesus, who wanted to take on our human condition”

The very **first mystery, the Annunciation**, is clearly marked by the joy radiating from the event of the Incarnation. Gabriel's greeting to the Virgin of Nazareth is linked to an invitation to messianic joy: “Rejoice, Mary”. The whole of salvation history, in some sense the entire history of the world, has led up to this greeting. If it is the Father's plan to unite all things in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10), then the whole of the universe is in some way touched by the divine favour with which the Father looks upon Mary and makes her the Mother of his Son. The whole of humanity, in turn, is embraced by the fiat with which she readily agrees to the will of God.

Let us pray: Father, grant each of us and all your children a heart humble like that of Mary; to truthfully see our human condition and complete dependence on You, and yet remain open to your Word, trusting in your care, ready to obey your will, and eager to please You in all things. Amen.

2nd – The Visitation – “Jesus, who did wonders for you”

Exultation is the keynote of the encounter with Elizabeth, where the sound of Mary's voice and the presence of Christ in her womb cause John to “leap for joy” (cf. Lk 1:44).

Let us pray: Father, fill us with your divine love, that like Mary we too may be so filled with love of our neighbor that we joyfully join her in serving them without concern for ourselves. A

3rd – The Nativity of Jesus – “Jesus, who found no room in the home of men”

Gladness fills the scene in Bethlehem, when the birth of the divine Child, the Saviour of the world, is announced by the song of the angels and proclaimed to the shepherds as “news of great joy” (Lk 2:10).

Let us pray: Father, lead us in the obedience of your plan and will for us; mold our hearts in poverty of spirit, ready to endure every privation and bear in solidarity the sufferings of others. A

4th – The Presentation of Jesus – “Jesus, who enters the Temple to purify it”

The final two mysteries, while preserving this climate of joy, already point to the drama yet to come. The Presentation in the Temple not only expresses the joy of the Child's consecration and the ecstasy of the aged Simeon; it also records the prophecy that Christ will be a “sign of contradiction” for Israel and

that a sword will pierce his mother's heart (cf Lk 2:34-35).

Let us pray: Father, as Mary and Joseph obeyed your will in all the requirements of their religious duties; so help us – like them – to know and fulfill all that our faith requires of us. Amen.

5th – The Finding of Jesus – “Jesus, who returned with you to Nazareth and was subject to you”

Joy mixed with drama marks the fifth mystery, the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple. Here he appears in his divine wisdom as he listens and raises questions, already one who “teaches”. The revelation of his mystery as the Son wholly dedicated to his Father's affairs proclaims the radical nature of the Gospel, in which the closest human relationships are challenged by the absolute demands of the Kingdom. Mary and Joseph, fearful and anxious, “did not understand” his words. (Lk 2:50)

Let us pray: Father, in the boyish zeal of Jesus You reveal the One who became our Good Shepherd; who tirelessly gives us the joy of being found. Grant us the same zeal to seek out souls that wander from You and get lost; that we might give Jesus greater joy in helping Him find them. Amen.

Let us pray together: O God, whose only begotten Son, by his life, death, and resurrection has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee; that meditating upon these mysteries in the most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael – St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the Power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits, who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

The Memorare of St. Bernard

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly to Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother! To Thee do I come, before Thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Mary, Queen of Holy Angels, pray for us!

Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, Lord of the harvest, we come to you with confidence. Raise up priests to proclaim your Son Jesus to all, to reveal his presence among us, to gather your people in unity and help us to grow. May our community be truly alive and our families firm in faith so that the pastors of tomorrow may spring from their midst. Nurture men and women with hearts to be faithful and devoted husbands and wives, witnesses of faith, and generous parents. Raise up deacons, missionaries, and consecrated persons to also teach us to give of ourselves in service to others. Build us up, married and celibate, as one family to spread your Kingdom and to share the joy of being your children. Amen.

Prayer for Our Country

Heavenly Father, we commit this, our beloved land, to the Kingship and Lordship of Jesus Christ. We ask You to renew our country in the power of the Holy Spirit that all Canadians will bow their knee and confess with their tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord. We pray that our political leaders receive wisdom and knowledge from on high to govern this land according to your sovereign Will; so we may prosper in justice and in peace, in love and in truth; until Christ our Lord is indeed the King of Canada from coast to coast, from sea to sea. We pledge a covenant of prayer and witness so that the powers of evil be defeated and the enemy of God, Satan, be subdued. Let Jesus Christ be Sovereign in every City Hall, every Parliament and every Court in our land until the day of his glorious coming. Amen.