

To The Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Most Holy Rosary – The SORROWFUL 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 Sorrowful Mysteries – (Tuesday, Friday) – with accompanying prayers to end the decade

22. The Gospels give great prominence to the sorrowful mysteries of Christ. From the beginning Christian piety, especially during the Lenten devotion of the Way of the Cross, has focused on the individual moments of the Passion, realizing that here is found the culmination of the revelation of God's love and the source of our salvation. The Rosary selects certain moments from the Passion, inviting the faithful to contemplate them in their hearts and to relive them. The meaning, origin and fulfilment of man is to be found in Christ, the God who humbles himself out of love “even unto death, death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). The sorrowful mysteries help the believer to relive the death of Jesus, to stand at the foot of the Cross beside Mary, to enter with her into the depths of God's love for man and to experience all its life-giving power.

1st – Agony in the Garden – “Jesus, who asks that the Father’s will be done and not his own”

The sequence of meditations begins with Gethsemane, where Christ experiences a moment of great anguish before the will of the Father, against which the weakness of the flesh would be tempted to rebel. There Jesus encounters all the temptations and confronts all the sins of humanity, in order to say to the Father: “Not my will but yours be done” (Lk 22:42 and parallels). This “Yes” of Christ reverses the “No” of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

Let us pray: Father, let your Son’s agony ever move us to deeper regret for our sins and sorrow for those of others. May it move us to determined resistance to every temptation. Amen.

2nd – The Scourging at the Pillar – “Jesus, whose wounds heal us”

And the cost of Jesus’ faithfulness to the Father's will is made clear in the following mysteries; by his scourging, his crowning with thorns, his carrying the Cross and his death on the Cross, the Lord is cast into the most abject suffering: Ecce homo! This abject suffering reveals not only the love of God but also the meaning of man himself. Ecce homo!

Let us pray: Father, may Jesus’ torment at the pillar purify our hearts of every evil or unchaste desire, and free will to follow our Savior with undivided hearts and care for others. Amen.

3rd – The Crowning with Thorns – “Jesus, who is turned to mockery”

(The soldiers roughly stripped Jesus of his clothes, exposing his nakedness for all to see. He endured this indignity like a poor man without rights, like a criminal, like one caught in the jaws of the law – guilty and deserving of the severest punishment ever known to human civilization.)

Let us pray: Father, Jesus’ crown of suffering reveals his kingship as a service of love. Galvanize our will to imitate and follow Him with courage in the total service of your love. Amen.

4th – Jesus Carries his Cross – “Jesus, who collapses to the ground to lift us up from our falls”

(Jesus, abandoned by his apostles and disciples, no longer surrounded by his team, having willingly

Saint Pope John Paul II – Guide to the Sorrowful Mysteries – With Prayers – 2015

surrendered himself into the hands of jealous, proud religious leaders and merciless civil and military authorities, with considerable effort struggles to carry his cross and see it through. The heart and hands that forgave sins, healed illness, and restored sight and breath, must now assist in his own execution.)

Let us pray: Father, show us the daily cross Jesus calls us to carry in following Him. Grant us to learn that patience is simply the willingness to endure out of love whatever comes. Amen.

5th – The Crucifixion – “Jesus, who commends his spirit into the hands of his Father”

(It was only after a very long agony – hanging from pierced hands / wrists and feet for hours – pushing up with agonizing effort to briefly alleviate excruciating spasms of asphyxiation, that Jesus finally breathes his last. Still, He found time and energy to show mercy to the merciful thief next to him, and to pray out loud that his Father forgive all his tormentors – even offering an excuse on their behalf.)

Let us pray: Father, Jesus your Beloved Son was faithful in carrying out your will to the very end. By your Holy Spirit, strengthen us to persevere in the imitation of Christ. 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.