

To PRAY the HOLY ROSARY



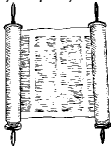
**biblical and liturgical suggestions to
pray the holy rosary in communion
with the pope and the church**

three instruments to pray the Holy Rosary with the church

From the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

29. Announcing each mystery, and perhaps even using a suitable icon to portray it, is as it were to open up a scenario on which to focus our attention. The words direct the imagination and the mind towards a particular episode or moment in the life of Christ. In the Church's traditional spirituality, the veneration of icons and the many devotions appealing to the senses, as well as the method of prayer proposed by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises*, make use of visual and imaginative elements (the *compositio loci*), judged to be of great help in concentrating the mind on the particular mystery. This is a methodology, moreover, which corresponds to the inner logic of the Incarnation: in Jesus, God wanted to take on human features. It is through his bodily reality that we are led into contact with the mystery of his divinity.

This need for concreteness finds further expression in the announcement of the various mysteries of the Rosary. Obviously these mysteries neither replace the Gospel nor exhaust its content. The Rosary, therefore, is no substitute for *lectio divina*; on the contrary, it presupposes and promotes it. Yet, even though the mysteries contemplated in the Rosary, even with the addition of the *mysteria lucis*, do no more than outline the fundamental elements of the life of Christ, they easily draw the mind to a more expansive reflection on the rest of the Gospel, especially when the Rosary is prayed in a setting of prolonged recollection.



30. In order to supply a Biblical foundation and greater depth to our meditation, it is helpful to follow the announcement of the mystery with the proclamation of a related Biblical passage, long or short, depending on the circumstances. No other words can ever match the efficacy of the inspired word. As we listen, we are certain that this is the word of God, spoken for today and spoken "for me".

If received in this way, the word of God can become part of the Rosary's methodology of repetition without giving rise to the ennui derived from the simple recollection of something already well known. It is not a matter of recalling information but of allowing God to speak. In certain solemn communal celebrations, this word can be appropriately illustrated by a brief commentary.

35. In current practice, the Trinitarian doxology is followed by a brief concluding prayer which varies according to local custom. Without in any way diminishing the value of such invocations, it is worthwhile to note that the contemplation of the mysteries could better express their full spiritual fruitfulness if an effort were made to conclude each mystery with a prayer for the fruits specific to that particular mystery. In this way the Rosary would better express its connection with the Christian life. One fine liturgical prayer suggests as much, inviting us to pray that, by meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary, we may come to "imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise".

Such a final prayer could take on a legitimate variety of forms, as indeed it already does. In this way the Rosary can be better adapted to different spiritual traditions and different Christian communities. It is to be hoped, then, that appropriate formulas will be widely circulated, after due pastoral discernment and possibly after experimental use in centres and shrines particularly devoted to the Rosary, so that the People of God may benefit from an abundance of authentic spiritual riches and find nourishment for their personal contemplation.

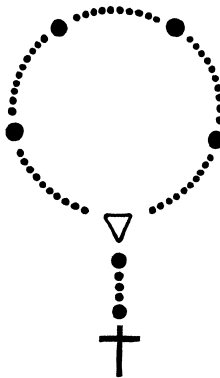
MYSTERIES: great moments or facts of the Gospel about our salvation
The Mysteries of the Holy Rosary are 20, and are divided into four groups

"The Rosary is made up of two things: mental prayer and vocal prayer. In the Holy Rosary mental prayer is none other than meditation of the chief mysteries of the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother. Vocal prayer consists in saying twenty decades of the Hail Mary, each decade headed by an Our Father, while at the same time meditating on and contemplating the twenty principal virtues which Jesus and Mary practiced in the twenty mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

In the first five decades we must honour the five Joyous Mysteries and meditate on them; [in the second five decades the Luminous Mysteries]; the third group the Sorrowful Mysteries and in the forth group of five, the Glorious Mysteries.

So the Rosary is a blessed blending of mental and vocal prayer by which we honour and learn to imitate the mysteries and the virtues of the life, death, passion and glory of Jesus and Mary."

St. Louis de Montfort



The word "Rosary" means "Crown of Roses". Our Lady has revealed to many people that every time we pray a Hail Mary it is like offering a beautiful rose to her and that for every complete Rosary we offer her a crown of roses. Rose is the queen of flowers, so the Rosary it is the rose of all devotions. This is important: the Holy Rosary is considered a complete prayer, because reiterate in synthesis all history of our salvation. With the Rosary we meditate the "mysteries" of joy, of light, of sorrow and of glory of Jesus and Mary. It is a prayer that is simple and humble like Mary. It is a prayer that we do with her, the Mother of God, when with the Hail Mary we invite her to pray for us. Our Lady always listens to our petitions, because she joins her prayer with ours. Our prayer becomes more efficient, because when Mary asks, she always gets what she asks for. In fact Jesus cannot say no to any request of her mother. In all apparitions, Our celestial Lady invites us to pray the Rosary as powerful arm against the evil one, to bring us to the true peace. "Crown of Rosary is like a bunch of roses full of perfume and reach of colours set at the foot of Mary".

From the “DIRECTORY ON POPULAR PIETY AND THE LITURGY”, Vatican City, December 2001

197. The Rosary, or Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is one of the most excellent prayers to the Mother of God. Thus, “the Roman Pontiffs have repeatedly exhorted the faithful to the frequent recitation of this biblically inspired prayer which is centred on contemplation of the salvific events of Christ’s life, and their close association with the his Virgin Mother. The value and efficacy of this prayer have often been attested by saintly Bishops and those advanced in holiness of life”.

The Rosary is essentially a contemplative prayer, which requires “tranquillity of rhythm or even a mental lingering which encourages the faithful to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord’s life”. Its use is expressly recommended in the formation and spiritual life of clerics and religious.

199. With due regard for the nature of the rosary, some suggestions can now be made which could make it more efficacious.

On certain occasions, the recitation of the Rosary could be made more solemn in tone “by introducing those Scriptural passages corresponding with the various mysteries, some parts could be sung, roles could be distributed, and by solemnly opening and closing of prayer”.

200. Those who recite a third [now forth] of the Rosary sometimes assign the various mysteries to particular days: joyful (Monday and Thursday), sorrowful (Tuesday and Friday), glorious (Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday). [Now, joyful (Monday and Saturday), luminous (Thursday), sorrowful (Tuesday and Friday), glorious (Wednesday and Sunday)].

Where this system is rigidly adhere to, conflict can arise between the content of the mysteries and that of the Liturgy of the day: the recitation of the sorrowful mysteries on Christmas day, should it fall on a Friday. In cases such as this it can be reckoned that “the liturgical character of a given day takes precedence over the usual assignment of a mystery of the Rosary to a given day; the Rosary is such that, on particular days, it can appropriately substitute meditation on a mystery so as to harmonize this pious practice with the liturgical season”. Hence, the faithful act correctly when, for example, they contemplate the arrival of the three Kings on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, rather than the finding of Jesus in the Temple. Clearly, such substitutions can only take place after much careful thought, adherence to Sacred Scripture and liturgical propriety.

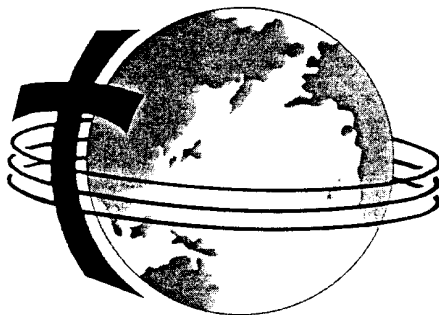
201. The custom of making an insertion in the recitation of the Hail Mary, which is an ancient one that has not completely disappeared, has often been recommended by the Pastors of the Church since it encourages meditation and the concurrence of mind and lips.

Insertions of this nature would appear particularly suitable for the repetitive and meditative character of the Rosary. It takes the form of a relative clause following the name of Jesus and refers to the mystery being contemplated. The meditation of the Rosary can be helped by the choice of a short clause of a Scriptural and Liturgical nature, fixed for every decade.

202. “In recommending the value and beauty of the Rosary to the faithful, care should be taken to avoid discrediting other forms of prayer, or of overlooking the existence of a diversity of other Marian chaplets which have also been approved by the Church”. It is also important to avoid inculcating a sense of guilt in those who do not habitually recite the Rosary: “The Rosary is an excellent prayer, in regard to which, however, the faithful should feel free to recite it, in virtue of its inherent beauty”.



five colours to pray the Holy Rosary with the world



The Missionary Rosary

We can pray also with the “*Missionary Rosary*”, made of five colours.

Some times ago, after the Second World War, some Xaverian Missionaries in America had a beautiful idea. To paint the Rosary with the colours of the five continents of the world. A great preacher in the U.S.A., Archbishop Fulton John Sheen, Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, New York, spread this idea all around the world and become a universal - or “catholic” - custom to pray also in this way for the missions.

The Decades, each of a different colour - Green, Red, White, Blue, Yellow -, remind us of the five continents and their peoples.

With Mary, the Queen of the Missions, we embrace them in prayer and intercede for their needs:

- The **Green Decade** is dedicated to Africa. The green colour remind us of the immense African rain forests.
- The **Red Decade** represents the continent of the Americas, inhabited by the legendary red-skinned indigenous groups.
- The **White Decade** invites us to pray for Europe and the “*White Father*”, the Pope in Rome.
- The **Blue Decade** refers to Oceania and the vast expanse of islands dotting the blue waters of the Pacific.
- The **Yellow Decade** reminds us of Asia, with its huge population, a great part of which belong to the yellow race.

Finally, the last grains, in the five colours of the continents, are prayed for the intention of the Pope, the great missionary of the Church. He is the new Peter in charge to bring the good new to the ends of the world

introduction

O God, come to my aid. O Lord, make haste to help me. Glory be to the Father.

or: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

or: Apostles' Creed, Our Father, 3 Hail Marys (*for faith, hope and love*), Glory be.

the 20 new mysteries of the Holy Rosary according to the proposal of the Pope

I. JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Monday and Saturday

1. The ANNUNCIATION of Gabriel to Mary	Lk 1,26-38
2. The VISITATION of Mary to Elisabeth	Lk 1,39-56
3. The BIRTH of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem	Lk 2,1-21
4. The PRESENTATION of Jesus in the Temple	Lk 2,22-38
5. The FINDING of Jesus in the Temple (<i>Ordinary time</i>)	Lk 2,41-52
or the MANIFESTATION of the Lord in the Epiphany (<i>Christmas time</i>)	Mt 2,1-12

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

20. The first five decades, the “joyful mysteries”, are marked by the joy radiating from the event of the Incarnation.

This is clear from the very first mystery, the Annunciation, where 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.

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).

Gladness also 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).

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).

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 in effect 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 even the closest of 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).

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.



THE FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Annunciation (Luke 1,26-38)

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" ³⁵ And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Let us pray. O God, you chose that at the message of an angel your Word should take flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grant that we who believe that she is the Mother of God may receive the help of her prayers. We ask this through our Lord ... Amen.



THE SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY
The Visitation (Luke 1,39-56)

³⁹ In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

⁴⁶ And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, ⁴⁸ for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, ⁵² he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.” ⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

Let us pray. Lord our God, Saviour of the human family, you brought salvation and joy to the home of Elisabeth through the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the ark of the New Covenant. We ask that, in obedience to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we too may bring Christ to others and proclaim your greatness by the praise of our lips and the holiness of our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord ... Amen.



THE THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY ***The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2,1-14)***

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. ² This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸ And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the

Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; ¹¹ for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”

Let us pray. O God, you sent your Son from heaven into the womb of the Blessed Virgin to be your saving Word and our Bread of Life. Grant that like Mary we may welcome Christ by treasuring his words in our hearts and celebrating with deep faith the mysteries of our redemption. We ask this through our Lord... Amen.



THE FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY ***The Presentation (Luke 2,22-40)***

²² And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷ And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹ “Now, Master, you are letting your servant go in peace as you promised; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen the salvation ³¹ which you have made ready in the sight of the nations; ³² a light of revelation for the gentiles and glory for your people Israel.”

³³ And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him; ³⁴ and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her

virginity, ³⁷ and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Let us pray. Lord, grant that the Church, the chaste bride of Christ, may keep unbroken the New Covenant of love and, like your humble handmade, who presented to you in the temple the author of the New Law, may the Church keep its faith unspotted, grow in hope of heaven and deepen its heartfelt love for you. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives ... Amen.



THE FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY (*Christmas time*)
The visit of the Magi (Matthew 2,1-12)

from the "DIRECTORY ON POPULAR PIETY AND THE LITURGY":

200. ... Hence, the faithful act correctly when, for example, they contemplate the arrival of the three Kings on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, rather than the finding of Jesus in the Temple. Clearly, such substitutions can only take place after much careful thought, adherence to Sacred Scripture and liturgical propriety.

¹ After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east ² asking, "Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. ⁴ He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "At Bethlehem in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶ And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel." ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared ⁸ and sent them on to Bethlehem with the words, "Go and find out all about the child, and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage." ⁹ Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place

where the child was. ¹⁰ The sight of the star filled them with delight, ¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² But they were given a warning in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Let us pray. Lord our God, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, you revealed your Son to the world as the glory of Israel and the light of the nations; grant that as we follow his teaching and example may we strengthen our faith in Christ and acknowledge him to be the one mediator and the saviour of the world, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY (Ordinary time)
The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2,41-51)

⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; ⁴³ and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; ⁴⁵ and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; ⁴⁷ and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." ⁴⁹ And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

Let us pray. All-holy Father, in the wonder of your wisdom and love you decreed that your son should be born of a woman, and be subjected to her guidance; grant that we may enter more and more into the Mystery of your incarnate Word and with him lead a hidden life on earth until, escorted by his Virgin Mother, we may joyously enter your home in heaven. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

II. LUMINOUS MYSTERIES (or MYSTERIES of the LIGHT)

Thursday

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| 1. The BAPTISM of our Lord at the River Jordan | Mt 3,13-16 |
| 2. The WEDDING at Cana in Galilee | Jn 2,1-11 |
| 3. The PROCLAMATION of the Kingdom of God: the 8 Beatitudes | Mk 1,14-15 |
| 4. The TRNSFIGURATION of our Lord | Mt 17,1-8 |
| 5. The LAST SUPPER: when the Body and Blood of Jesus was given to us | Mt 26,26-29 |

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

21. Moving on from the infancy and the hidden life in Nazareth to the public life of Jesus, our contemplation brings us to those mysteries which may be called in a special way “mysteries of light”. Certainly the whole mystery of Christ is a mystery of light. He is the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12). Yet this truth emerges in a special way during the years of his public life, when he proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom. In proposing to the Christian community five significant moments – “luminous” mysteries – during this phase of Christ’s life, I think that the following can be fittingly singled out: (1) his Baptism in the Jordan, (2) his self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana, (3) his proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with his call to conversion, (4) his Transfiguration, and finally, (5) his institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery.

Each of these mysteries is a revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus.

The Baptism in the Jordan is first of all a mystery of light. Here, as Christ descends into the waters, the innocent one who became “sin” for our sake (cf. 2Cor 5:21), the heavens open wide and the voice of the Father declares him the beloved Son (cf. Mt 3:17 and parallels), while the Spirit descends on him to invest him with the mission which he is to carry out.

Another mystery of light is the first of the signs, given at Cana (cf. Jn 2:1- 12), when Christ changes water into wine and opens the hearts of the disciples to faith, thanks to the intervention of Mary, the first among believers.

Another mystery of light is the preaching by which Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. Mk 1:15) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. Mk 2:3-13; Lk 7:47- 48): the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation which he has entrusted to his Church (cf. Jn 20:22-23).

The mystery of light par excellence is the Transfiguration, traditionally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor. The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to “listen to him” (cf. Lk 9:35 and parallels) and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit.

A final mystery of light is the institution of the Eucharist, in which Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and testifies “to the end” his love for humanity (Jn 13:1), for whose salvation he will offer himself in sacrifice.

In these mysteries, apart from the miracle at Cana, the presence of Mary remains in the background. The Gospels make only the briefest reference to her occasional presence at one moment or other during the preaching of Jesus (cf. Mk 3:31-5; Jn 2:12), and they give no indication that she was present at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Yet the role she assumed at Cana in some way accompanies Christ throughout his ministry. The revelation made directly by the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan and echoed by John the Baptist is placed upon Mary’s lips at Cana, and it becomes the great maternal counsel which Mary addresses to the Church of every age: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). This counsel is a fitting introduction to the words and signs of Christ’s public ministry and it forms the Marian foundation of all the “mysteries of light”.



THE FIRST LUMINOUS MYSTERY ***The Baptism of the Lord (Mt 3,13-16)***

¹³ Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. ¹⁴ John tried to dissuade him, with the words, "It is I who need baptism from you, and yet you come to me!" ¹⁵ But Jesus replied, "Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands." Then John gave in to him.

¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptised he at once came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him.

Let us pray. Almighty, eternal God, when the Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan, you revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit, faithful to our calling. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, ... Amen.



THE SECOND LUMINOUS MYSTERY ***The Wedding at Cana in Galilee (Jn 2,1-11)***

¹ On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. ³ And they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the feast had all been used, and the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴ Jesus said, "Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not come yet." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water," and they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he

said to them, “Draw some out now and take it to the president of the feast.”⁹ They did this; the president tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew, the president of the feast called the bridegroom¹⁰ and said, “Everyone serves good wine first and the worse wine when the guests are well wined; but you have kept the best wine till now.”

¹¹ This was the first of Jesus’ signs: it was at Cana in Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Let us pray. All-holy Father, in your divine wisdom and love you chose that the blessed Virgin Mary should play her part in the mystery of our salvation; grant that by heeding the words of Christ’s mother we may do what he commands us in the gospel he has given us, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE THIRD LUMINOUS MYSTERY ***The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mk 1,14-15)*** ***and the Beatitudes (Mt 5,1-12)***

¹⁴ After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, ¹⁵ “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.”

¹ Seeing the crowds, he went onto the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

³ How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ⁴ Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance. ⁵ Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness: they shall have their fill. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

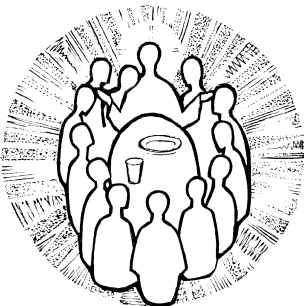
Let us pray. Lord our God, through the Blessed Virgin Mary you have shown us the example of a disciple, who is faithful to the words of life; open our hearts to receive your saving word, so that by the power of the holy Spirit it may speak to us in our daily lives and bring forth a rich harvest of holiness. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE FORTH LUMINOUS MYSTERY
The Transfiguration (Mt 17,1-8)

¹ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as dazzling as light. ³ And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter spoke to Jesus. “Lord,” he said, “it is wonderful for us to be here; if you want me to, I will make three shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵ He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and suddenly from the cloud there came a voice which said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.” ⁶ When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. ⁷ But Jesus came up and touched them, saying, “Stand up, do not be afraid.” ⁸ And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but Jesus.

Let us pray. God our Father, in the transfigured glory of Christ your Son, you strengthen our faith by confirming the witness of your prophets, and show us the splendour of your beloved sons and daughters. As we listen to the voice of your Son, help us to become heirs to eternal life with him for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE FIFTH LUMINOUS MYSTERY
The Last Supper (Mt 26,26-29)

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. “Take it and eat,” he said, “this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them saying, “Drink from this, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant,

poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ From now on, I tell you, I shall never again drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.”

Let us pray. God our Father, we gathered often to share in the supper, which you only Son left to his Church to reveal his love. He gave it to us when he was about to die and commanded us to celebrate it as the new and eternal sacrifice. We pray that in every eucharist we may find the fullness of love and life. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns ... Amen.

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

31. Listening and meditation are nourished by silence. After the announcement of the mystery and the proclamation of the word, it is fitting to pause and focus one's attention for a suitable period of time on the mystery concerned, before moving into vocal prayer. A discovery of the importance of silence is one of the secrets of practicing contemplation and meditation. One drawback of a society dominated by technology and the mass media is the fact that silence becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. Just as moments of silence are recommended in the Liturgy, so too in the recitation of the Rosary it is fitting to pause briefly after listening to the word of God, while the mind focuses on the content of a particular mystery.



For the intentions of the Holy Father, one may recite at the end of the Rosary one “Our Father”, three “Hail Mary”, and one “Glory Be”.

Glory be to the Father
3 Hail Marys
Our Father
Apostles' Creed

III. SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

Tuesday and Friday

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. The AGONY of our Lord in the Garden of Olives | Mt 26,36-56 |
| 2. The SCOURGING of our Lord at the Pillar | Mt 27,20-26 |
| 3. The CROWNING of our Lord with thorns | Mt 27,27-31 |
| 4. Jesus CARRIES the Cross to Calvary | Jn 19,17 |
| 5. The CRUCIFICTION and DEATH of our Lord | Mt 27,33-56 |

from the Apostolic Letter **ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE**:

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 relieve them.

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.

And the cost of this 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: 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.



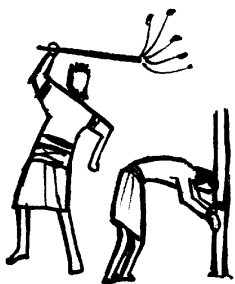
THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Agony in the Garden (Mark 14,32-42)

³² And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I pray." ³³ And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. ³⁴ And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch." ³⁵ And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." ³⁷ And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon,

are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer him. ⁴¹ And he came the third time, and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Let us pray. Lord, by shedding his blood for us, your son, Jesus Christ established the paschal mystery. In your goodness, make us holy and watch over us always. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives ... Amen.



THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY ***The Scouring at the Pillar (Matthew 27,20-26)***

²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²² Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified.” ²³ And he said, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified.”

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this righteous man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” ²⁵ And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Let us pray. Be mindful, Lord, of this your family, for whose sake our Lord Jesus Christ, when betrayed, did not hesitate to yield himself into his enemies’ hands, and undergo the agony of the cross: he who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY ***The Crowning with Thorns (Matthew 27,27-31)***

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, ²⁹ and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

Let us pray. Lord break the bonds of sin which our weakness have forged to enchain us, and in your loving mercy forgive your people's guilt. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY ***The Carrying of the Cross (John 19,17)***

¹⁷ So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.

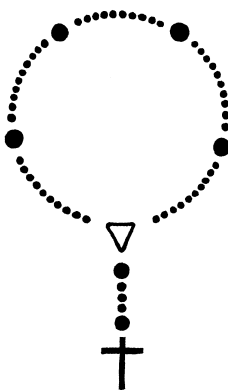
Let us pray. Lord our God, you placed at the side of your suffering Son his mother to suffer with him, so that the human race, deceived by the wiles of the devil, might become a new and resplendent creation. Grant that your people may put aside their inheritance of sin and put on the newness of life won by Christ the Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY
The Crucifixion (John 19,18-22)

¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. ¹⁹ Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹ The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” ²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

Let us pray. Lord our God, you decreed that the mother of your Son should stand by his cross, suffering with him. Safeguard in your family the fruits of your great work of redemption and in your goodness make them grow daily more and more. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



For the intentions of the Holy Father, one may recite at the end of the Rosary one “Our Father”, three “Hail Mary”, and one “Glory Be”.

Glory be to the Father
 3 Hail Marys
 Our Father
 Apostles' Creed



IV. GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

Wednesday and Sunday

1. The **RESURRECTION** of our Lord
2. The **ASCENSION** of our Lord
3. The **DESCENT** of the Holy Spirit
4. The **ASSUMPTION** of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven
5. The **CORONATION** of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Jn 20,1-29
Lk 24,36-53
Acts 2,1-41
Rev 12,1-2
Judith 15,9

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

23. "The contemplation of Christ's face cannot stop at the image of the Crucified One. He is the Risen One!" The Rosary has always expressed this knowledge born of faith and invited the believer to pass beyond the darkness of the Passion in order to gaze upon Christ's glory in the Resurrection and Ascension.

Contemplating the Risen One, Christians rediscover the reasons for their own faith (cf. 1Cor 15:14) and relive the joy not only of those to whom Christ appeared - the Apostles, Mary Magdalene and the disciples on the road to Emmaus - but also the joy of Mary, who must have had an equally intense experience of the new life of her glorified Son.

In the Ascension, Christ was raised in glory to the right hand of the Father, while Mary herself would be raised to that same glory in the Assumption, enjoying beforehand, by a unique privilege, the destiny reserved for all the just at the resurrection of the dead.

Crowned in glory – as she appears in the last glorious mystery – Mary shines forth as Queen of the Angels and Saints, the anticipation and the supreme realization of the eschatological state of the Church.

At the centre of this unfolding sequence of the glory of the Son and the Mother, the Rosary sets before us the third glorious mystery, Pentecost, which reveals the face of the Church as a family gathered together with Mary, enlivened by the powerful outpouring of the Spirit and ready for the mission of evangelisation. The contemplation of this scene, like that of the other glorious mysteries, ought to lead the faithful to an ever greater appreciation of their new life in Christ, lived in the heart of the Church, a life of which the scene of Pentecost itself is the great "icon".

The glorious mysteries thus lead the faithful to greater hope for the eschatological goal towards which they journey as members of the pilgrim People of God in history. This can only impel them to bear courageous witness to that "good news" which gives meaning to their entire existence.



THE FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY ***The Resurrection (John 20,1-10)***

¹ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So

she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³ Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. ⁴ They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; ⁵ and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, ⁷ and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for the gift of faith which has shown us the risen Christ. Help us to reflect on that experience; help us to see our own lives in the light of Christ. Teach us to look beyond our limits of human sight and to understand the dignity of our fellow man in the light of resurrection. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



THE SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY ***The Ascension (Acts 1,6-11)***

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

⁹ And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Let us pray. God our Father help us to understand something of the new life to which you are calling us. Help us to measure our present life in terms of the resurrection. In our moments of doubt show us your Son, the Redeemer. Give us the power to see that - despite all our sins and failures - we belong to you who are God for ever and ever. Amen.



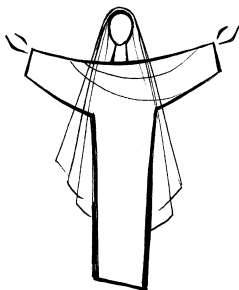
THE THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY ***Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2,1-8)***

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

Let us pray. Father in heaven, teach us the true worth of our present life. Help us to perceive the power of your Spirit working in us, to find the wisdom, love and compassion which he offers us, and also the understanding and knowledge which leads us through the darkness of failure and the consciousness of our inadequacies. Bless us with the fruits of the Holy Spirit; joy and patience; kindness and long-suffering. Above all, show us your Spirit at work in the people of God and give us courage and strength to take our part in building your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or:

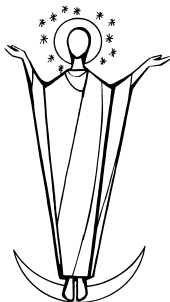
Let us pray. Lord our God, as the Blessed Virgin was at prayer with the apostles you poured out on her in abundance the gift of the Holy Spirit; grant through her intercession that we too, being filled with the same Spirit, may persevere with one mind in prayer and bring to the world around us the good news of salvation. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives ... Amen.



THE FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Assumption of Mary (Revelation 12,1-2)

¹ And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; ² she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, strength our belief that you have already begun to transform our lives from the moment of our baptism. Help us to recognize your power in our lives and to work continually to use the talents you have given us for the fulfilment of your will. Help us to find in Mary and the Church the assurance that with our cooperation we can become exactly what you wish us to be. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



THE FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY
The Crowning of Mary (Judith 15,9)

⁹ And when they met her they all blessed her with one accord and said to her, “You are the exaltation of Jerusalem, you are the great glory of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation!”

Let us pray. Father in heaven, strengthen us in one another and help us to love your Church which is a foretaste of heaven. Teach us to pray together; purify our vanity and self-consciousness; help us to pray with honesty and simplicity. Help us to live together in the same way, to share ourselves with one another and to make this life a true preparation for the glorious community of the saints who lives with you for ever and ever. Amen.

For the intentions of the Holy Father, one may recite at the end of the Rosary one “Our Father”, one “Hail Mary”, and three “Glory Be”.

from the Apostolic Letter **ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE**:

24. The cycles of meditation proposed by the Holy Rosary are by no means exhaustive, but they do bring to mind what is essential and they awaken in the soul a thirst for a knowledge of Christ continually nourished by the pure source of the Gospel. Every individual event in the life of Christ, as narrated by the Evangelists, is resplendent with the Mystery that surpasses all understanding (cf. Eph 3:19): the Mystery of the Word made flesh, in whom “all the fullness of God dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). For this reason the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* places great emphasis on the mysteries of Christ, pointing out that “everything in the life of Jesus is a sign of his Mystery”.

The “*duc in altum*” of the Church of the third millennium will be determined by the ability of Christians to enter into the “perfect knowledge of God’s mystery, of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:2-3). The Letter to the Ephesians makes this heartfelt prayer for all the baptized: “May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power... to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (3:17-19).

The Rosary is at the service of this ideal; it offers the “secret” which leads easily to a profound and inward knowledge of Christ. We might call it Mary’s way. It is the way of the example of the Virgin of Nazareth, a woman of faith, of silence, of attentive listening. It is also the way of a Marian devotion inspired by knowledge of the inseparable bond between Christ and his Blessed Mother: the mysteries of Christ are also in some sense the mysteries of his Mother, even when they do not involve her directly, for she lives from him and through him. By making our own the words of the Angel Gabriel and Saint Elizabeth contained in the Hail Mary, we find ourselves constantly drawn to seek out afresh in Mary, in her arms and in her heart, the “blessed fruit of her womb” (cf Lk 1:42).



from the “DIRECTORY ON POPULAR PIETY AND THE LITURGY”:

203. *Litanies are to be found among the prayers to the Blessed Virgin recommended by the Magisterium. These consist in a long series of invocations of Our Lady, which follow in a uniform rhythm, thereby creating a stream of prayer characterized by insistent praise and supplication. The invocations, generally very short, have two parts: the first of praise (Virgo clemens), the other of supplication (Ora pro nobis).*

The liturgical books contain two Marian litanies: The Litany of Loreto, repeatedly recommended by the Roman Pontiffs; and the Litany for the Coronation of Images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which can be an appropriate substitute for the other litany on certain occasions.

From a pastoral perspective, a proliferation of litanies would not seem desirable, just as an excessive restriction on them would not take sufficient account of the spiritual riches of some local Churches and religious communities. Hence, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments recommends “taking account of some older and newer formulas used in the local Churches or in religious communities which are notable for their structural rigour and the beauty of their invocations”. This exhortation, naturally, applies to the specific authorities in the local Churches or religious communities.

Following the prescription of Leo XIII that the recitation of the Rosary should be concluded by the Litany of Loreto during the month of October, the false impression has arisen among some of the faithful that the Litany is in some way an appendix to the Rosary. The Litanies are independent acts of worship. They are important acts of homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary, or as processional elements, or form part of a celebration of the Word of God or of other acts of worship.

Litany of Loreto of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy
Christ, hear us.
God, the Father of Heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God, the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, one God,

Holy Mary,
Holy Mother of God,
Holy Virgin of virgins,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,
Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of good counsel,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Saviour,

Virgin most prudent,

R/. Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy
Christ, graciously hear us.
Have mercy on us.
Have mercy on us.
Have mercy on us.
Have mercy on us.

R/. Pray for us

R/. Pray for us

Virgin most venerable
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,

Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honour,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of Gold,
Ark of the Covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,

R/. Pray for us

Queen of Angels,
Queen of Patriarchs,
Queen of Prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of Martyrs,
Queen of Confessors,
Queen of Virgins,
Queen of all Saints,
Queen conceived without original sin,
Queen assumed into heaven,
Queen of the Most Holy Rosary,
Queen of the family
Queen of Peace,

R/. Pray for us

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

R/. spare us, o Lord.
graciously hear us, o Lord.
have mercy on us, o Lord.

V/. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R/. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V/. Let us pray. Grant, we beseech you o Lord God, that we, your servants, may enjoy perpetual health, both of mind and body; and by the glorious intercession of blessed Mary ever virgin, may be delivered from present sorrow and attain to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen



Litany for the Coronation

According the "Directory on popular piety and the liturgy", published by the Vatican on December 2001, the Litany for the Coronation of images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, can be - on certain occasions - an appropriate substitute for the Litany of Loreto. This is the text offered us in the Liturgical book.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

R/. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

God, our Father in Heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God, the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, one God,

R/. Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,

Holy Mother of God,

Most honoured of virgins,

R/. Pray for us.

Chosen daughter of the Father,

Mother of Christ the King,

Glory of the Holy Spirit,

R/. Pray for us.

Virgin daughter of Zion,

Virgin poor and humble,

Virgin gentle and obedient,

R/. Pray for us.

Handmade of the Lord,

Mother of the Lord,

Helper of the Redeemer,

R/. Pray for us.

Full of grace

Fountain of beauty,

Model of virtue

R/. Pray for us.

Finest fruit of redemption

Perfect disciple of Christ

Untarnished image of the Church

R/. Pray for us.

Woman transformed

Woman clothed with the sun

Woman crowned with stars

R/. Pray for us.

Gentle Lady

Gracious Lady

Our Lady

R/. Pray for us.

Joy of Israel

R/. Pray for us.

Splendour of the Church
Pride of the human race

Advocate of grace
Minister of holiness
Champion of God's people

R/. Pray for us.

Queen of love
Queen of mercy
Queen of peace

R/. Pray for us.

Queen of angels
Queen of Patriarchs and prophets
Queen of apostles and martyrs
Queen of confessors and virgins
Queen of all saints
Queen conceived without original sin
Queen assumed into heaven

R/. Pray for us.

Queen of all the hearth
Queen of heaven
Queen of the universe

R/. Pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,

R/. spare us, o Lord.
hear us, o Lord.
have mercy on us.

V/. Pray for us, o glorious Mother of the Lord.

R/. That we may become worthy of the promises of Christ.

V/. Let us pray.

God of mercy,
listen to the prayers of your servants
who have honoured your handmade Mary as mother and queen.
Grant that by your grace
we may serve you and our neighbour on hearth
and be welcomed into your eternal kingdom.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen



from the “**DIRECTORY ON POPULAR PIETY AND THE LITURGY**”:

198. The Blessing for Rosary Beads indicates the Church’s esteem for the Rosary. This rite emphasises the community nature of the Rosary. In the rite, the blessing of rosary beads is followed by the blessing of those who meditate on the mysteries of the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord so as to “establish a perfect harmony between prayer and life”. As indicated in the Benedictionale, Rosary beads can be blessed publicly, on occasions such as a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine, a feast of Our Lady, especially that of the Holy Rosary, and at the end of the month of October.

Blessing of the Rosary beads

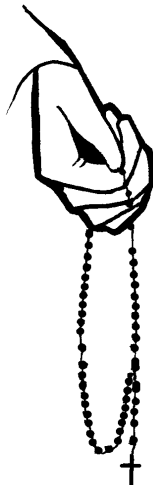
Blessed be our God and Father,
who has given us the mysteries of his Son
to be pondered with devotion and celebrated with faith.
May he grant us, his faithful people,
that by praying the rosary
we may, with Mary the Mother of Jesus,
seek to keep his joys, lights, sorrows, and glories
in our minds and hearts.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.

Or:

May this Rosary and the one who uses it be blessed,
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
R/. Amen.

No prayer is more meritorious for the soul and more glorious for Jesus and Mary than a well recited Rosary.

Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort



The communal celebration of the Holy Rosary

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

17. ... When the recitation of the Rosary combines all the elements needed for an effective meditation, especially in its communal celebration in parishes and shrines, it can present a significant catechetical opportunity which pastors should use to advantage. ... Today we are facing new challenges. Why should we not once more have recourse to the Rosary, with the same faith as those who have gone before us? The Rosary retains all its power and continues to be a valuable pastoral resource for every good evangeliser.

In some occasions (feast days of Our Lady) or periods of the year (month of May or October) it is advisable to make a communal celebration, a kind of solemn celebration of the Word of God with the Rosary, and to spend some time for a longer moment of prayer. The exposition of an image of the blessed virgin Mary (statue or icon), the participation of different ministers or liturgical actors, the solemn announcement of the mysteries, the proclamation of the Word of God, the presidential prayers, some songs after each mystery, the chanting of the Marian invocation or the Litany, etc. will make a different recitation of the Rosary. People will enjoy this form of prayer and will change the usual repetitive form of the Rosary. Each one of these forms will help the Christian people to honour the blessed Mother of God.

The prayers of the Holy Rosary

Rosary opening

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

37. At present, in different parts of the Church, there are many ways to introduce the Rosary. In some places, it is customary to begin with the opening words of Psalm 70: "O God, come to my aid; O Lord, make haste to help me", as if to nourish in those who are praying a humble awareness of their own insufficiency. In other places, the Rosary begins with the recitation of the Creed, as if to make the profession of faith the basis of the contemplative journey about to be undertaken. These and similar customs, to the extent that they prepare the mind for contemplation, are all equally legitimate...

P/. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R/. Amen.

Or: (Ps 70):

P/. O God, come to my [our] aid!

R/. O Lord, make haste to help me [us].

Or: The Apostle's Creed:

P/. I believe in God, the Father almighty,

A/. Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church,
the Communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Our Father

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

32. After listening to the word and focusing on the mystery, it is natural for the mind to be lifted up towards the Father. In each of his mysteries, Jesus always leads us to the Father, for as he rests in the Father's bosom (cf. Jn 1:18) he is continually turned towards him. He wants us to share in his intimacy with the Father, so that we can say with him: "Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). By virtue of his relationship to the Father he makes us brothers and sisters of himself and of one another, communicating to us the Spirit which is both his and the Father's. Acting as a kind of foundation for the Christological and Marian meditation which unfolds in the repetition of the Hail Mary, the Our Father makes meditation upon the mystery, even when carried out in solitude, an ecclesial experience.

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Hail Mary

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

33. This is the most substantial element in the Rosary and also the one which makes it a Marian prayer par excellence. Yet when the Hail Mary is properly understood, we come to see clearly that its Marian character is not opposed to its Christological character, but that it actually emphasizes and increases it. The first part of the Hail Mary, drawn from the words spoken to Mary by the Angel Gabriel and by Saint Elizabeth, is a contemplation in adoration of the mystery accomplished in the Virgin of Nazareth. These words express, so to speak, the wonder of heaven and earth; they could be said to give us a glimpse of God's own wonderment as he contemplates his "masterpiece" – the Incarnation of the Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary. If we recall how, in the Book of Genesis, God "saw all that he had made" (Gen 1:31), we can find here an echo of that "pathos with which God, at the dawn of creation, looked upon the work of his hands".⁽³⁶⁾ The repetition of the Hail Mary in the Rosary gives us a share in God's own wonder and pleasure: in jubilant amazement we acknowledge the greatest miracle of history. Mary's prophecy here finds its fulfilment: "Henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48). The centre of gravity in the Hail Mary, the hinge as it were which joins its two parts, is the name of Jesus. Sometimes, in hurried recitation, this centre of gravity can be overlooked, and with it the connection to the mystery of Christ being contemplated.

Yet it is precisely the emphasis given to the name of Jesus and to his mystery that is the sign of a meaningful and fruitful recitation of the Rosary. Pope Paul VI drew attention, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*, to the custom in certain regions of highlighting the name of Christ by the addition of a clause referring to the mystery being contemplated.⁽³²⁾ This is a praiseworthy custom, especially during public recitation. It gives forceful expression to our faith in Christ, directed to the different moments of the Redeemer's life. It is at once a profession of faith and an aid in concentrating our meditation, since it facilitates the process of assimilation to the mystery of Christ inherent in the repetition of the Hail Mary. When we repeat the name of Jesus – the only name given to us by which we may hope for salvation (cf. Acts 4:12) – in close association with the name of his Blessed Mother, almost as if it were done at her suggestion, we set out on a path of assimilation meant to help us enter more deeply into the life of Christ. From Mary's uniquely privileged relationship with Christ, which makes her the Mother of God, *Theotókos*, derives the forcefulness of the appeal we make to her in the second half of the prayer, as we entrust to her maternal intercession our lives and the hour of our death.

A/. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you:
blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our death.
Amen.

Glory be

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

34. Trinitarian doxology is the goal of all Christian contemplation. For Christ is the way that leads us to the Father in the Spirit. If we travel this way to the end, we repeatedly encounter the mystery of the three divine Persons, to whom all praise, worship and thanksgiving are due. It is important that the Gloria, the high-point of contemplation, be given due prominence in the Rosary. In public recitation it could be sung, as a way of giving proper emphasis to the essentially Trinitarian structure of all Christian prayer. To the extent that meditation on the mystery is attentive and profound, and to the extent that it is enlivened – from one Hail Mary to another – by love for Christ and for Mary, the glorification of the Trinity at the end of each decade, far from being a perfunctory conclusion, takes on its proper contemplative tone, raising the mind as it were to the heights of heaven and enabling us in some way to relive the experience of Tabor, a foretaste of the contemplation yet to come: “It is good for us to be here!” (Lk 9:33).

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and now shall be, world without end.
Amen.

O my Jesus

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

35. In current practice, the Trinitarian doxology is followed by a brief concluding prayer which varies according to local custom. Without in any way diminishing the value of such invocations, it is worthwhile to note that the contemplation of the mysteries could better express their full spiritual fruitfulness if an effort were made to conclude each mystery with a prayer for the fruits specific to that particular mystery. In this way the Rosary would better express its connection with the Christian life. One fine liturgical prayer suggests as much, inviting us to pray that, by meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary, we may come to “imitate what they contain and obtain what they

promise". Such a final prayer could take on a legitimate variety of forms, as indeed it already does. In this way the Rosary can be better adapted to different spiritual traditions and different Christian communities. It is to be hoped, then, that appropriate formulas will be widely circulated, after due pastoral discernment and possibly after experimental use in centres and shrines particularly devoted to the Rosary, so that the People of God may benefit from an abundance of authentic spiritual riches and find nourishment for their personal contemplation.

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, preserve us from the fire of Hell, and bring all souls to Heaven, especially those who most need your mercy.

Hail Holy Queen

from the Apostolic Letter ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE:

37. ... The Rosary is then ended with a prayer for the intentions of the Pope, as if to expand the vision of the one praying to embrace all the needs of the Church. It is precisely in order to encourage this ecclesial dimension of the Rosary that the Church has seen fit to grant indulgences to those who recite it with the required dispositions.

If prayed in this way, the Rosary truly becomes a spiritual itinerary in which Mary acts as Mother, Teacher and Guide, sustaining the faithful by her powerful intercession. Is it any wonder, then, that the soul feels the need, after saying this prayer and experiencing so profoundly the motherhood of Mary, to burst forth in praise of the Blessed Virgin, either in that splendid prayer the Salve Regina or in the Litany of Loreto? This is the crowning moment of an inner journey which has brought the faithful into living contact with the mystery of Christ and his Blessed Mother.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy;
hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope!
To you do we cry, poor children of Eve;
to you do we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy towards us;
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, o loving,
o sweet virgin Mary!

The Angel's Prayer at Fatima (spring 1916)

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I beg pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You.

Sub Tuum Presidium

We fly to your patronage,
O holy Mother of God;
despise not our petitions in our necessities,
but deliver us always from all dangers,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, sancta Dei Genetrix; nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus, sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper, Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.

Memorare

Remember, O most blessed Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your aid or sought your intercession, was left unaided.

Filled, therefore, with confidence in your goodness, I fly to you, Virgin of virgins, my mother.

To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me.

Amen.

A Marian song for the Pascal Time

O Queen of Heaven, rejoice now, Alleluia.

Rejoice for He to Whom you once gave birth, Alleluia,

Is now risen, as he foretold, Alleluia.

Pray for us to the Father, Alleluia.

Say the Rosary every day...

Pray, pray a lot and offer sacrifices for sinners...

I'm Our Lady of the Rosary.

Only I will be able to help you.

...In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph.

Our Lady at Fatima

a History of the Rosary

Since the Rosary is composed, principally and in substance, of the prayer of Christ and the Angelic Salutation, that is, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, it was without doubt the first prayer and the principal devotion of the faithful and has been in use all through the centuries, from the time of the apostles and disciples down to the present.

It was only in the year 1214, however, that the Church received the Rosary in its present form and according to the method we use today. It was given to the Church by St. Dominic, who had received it from the Blessed Virgin as a means of converting the Albigensians and other sinners.

I will tell you the story of how he received it, which is found in the very well-known book *De Dignitate Psalterii*, by Blessed Alan de la Roche. Saint Dominic, seeing that the gravity of people's sins was hindering the conversion of the Albigensians, withdrew into a forest near Toulouse, where he prayed continuously for three days and three nights. During this time he did nothing but weep and do harsh penances

in order to appease the anger of God. He used his discipline so much that his body was lacerated, and finally he fell into a coma.

At this point our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by three angels, and she said, *"Dear Dominic, do you know which weapon the Blessed Trinity wants to use to reform the world?"* *"Oh, my Lady,"* answered Saint Dominic, *"you know far better than I do, because next to your Son Jesus Christ you have always been the chief instrument of our salvation."* Then our Lady replied, *"I want you to know that, in this kind of warfare, the principal weapon has always been the Angelic Psalter, which is the foundation-stone of the New Testament. Therefore, if you want to reach these hardened souls and win them over to God, preach my Psalter."* So he arose, comforted, and burning with zeal for the conversion of the people in that district, he made straight for the cathedral. At once unseen angels rang the bells to gather the people together, and Saint Dominic began to preach.

At the very beginning of his sermon, an appalling storm broke out, the earth shook, the sun was darkened, and there was so much thunder and lightning that all were very much afraid. Even greater was their fear when, looking at a picture of our Lady exposed in a prominent place, they saw her raise her arms to heaven three times to call down God's vengeance upon them if they failed to be converted, to amend their lives, and seek the protection of the holy Mother of God. God wished, by means of these supernatural phenomena, to spread the new devotion of the holy Rosary and to make it more widely known. At last, at the prayer of Saint Dominic, the storm came to an end, and he went on preaching. So fervently and compellingly did he explain the importance and value of the Rosary that almost all the people of Toulouse embraced it and renounced their false beliefs. In a very short time a great improvement was seen in the town; people began leading Christian lives and gave up their former bad habits.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, instructed by the Blessed Virgin as well as by his own experience, Saint Dominic preached the Rosary for the rest of his life. He preached it by his example as well as by his sermons, in cities and in country places, to people of high station and low, before scholars and the uneducated, to Catholics and to heretics. The Rosary, which he said every day, was his preparation for every sermon and his little tryst with our Lady immediately after preaching.

One day he had to preach at Notre Dame in Paris, and it happened to be the feast of St. John the Evangelist. He was in a little chapel behind the high altar prayerfully preparing his sermon by saying the Rosary, as he always did, when our Lady appeared to him and said: *"Dominic, even though what you have planned to say may be very good, I am bringing you a much better sermon."* Saint Dominic took in his hands the book our Lady proffered, read the sermon carefully and, when he had understood it and meditated on it, he gave thanks to her. When the time came, he went up into the pulpit and, in spite of the feast day, made no mention of Saint John other than to say that he had been found worthy to be the guardian of the Queen of Heaven. The congregation was made up of theologians and other eminent people, who were used to hearing unusual and polished discourses; but Saint Dominic told them that it was not his desire to give them a learned discourse, wise in the eyes of the world, but that he would speak in the simplicity of the Holy Spirit and with his forcefulness. So he began preaching the Rosary and explained the Hail Mary word

by word as he would to a group of children, and used the very simple illustrations which were in the book given him by our Lady.

Blessed Alan, according to Carthagenia, mentioned several other occasions when our Lord and our Lady appeared to Saint Dominic to urge him and inspire him to preach the Rosary more and more in order to wipe out sin and convert sinners and heretics. In another passage Carthagenia says, *"Blessed Alan said our Lady revealed to him that, after she had appeared to Saint Dominic, her blessed Son appeared to him and said, 'Dominic, I rejoice to see that you are not relying on your own wisdom and that, rather than seek the empty praise of men, you are working with great humility for the salvation of souls. 'But many priests want to preach thunderously against the worst kinds of sin at the very outset, failing to realize that before a sick person is given bitter medicine, he needs to be prepared by being put into the right frame of mind to really benefit by it. 'That is why, before doing anything else, priests should try to kindle a love of prayer in people's hearts and especially a love of my Angelic Psalter. If only they would all start saying it and would really persevere, God in his mercy could hardly refuse to give them his grace. So I want you to preach my Rosary.'"*

All things, even the holiest, are subject to change, especially when they are dependent on man's free will. It is hardly to be wondered at, then, that the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary only retained its first fervour for a century after it was instituted by Saint Dominic. After this it was like a thing buried and forgotten. Doubtless, too, the wicked scheming and jealousy of the devil were largely responsible for getting people to neglect the Rosary, and thus block the flow of God's grace which it had drawn upon the world.

Thus, in 1349 God punished the whole of Europe with the most terrible plague that had ever been known. Starting in the east, it spread throughout Italy, Germany, France, Poland and Hungary, bringing desolation wherever it went, for out of a hundred men hardly one lived to tell the tale. Big cities, towns, villages and monasteries were almost completely deserted during the three years that the epidemic lasted. This scourge of God was quickly followed by two others, the heresy of the Flagellants and a tragic schism in 1376.

Later on, when these trials were over, thanks to the mercy of God, our Lady told Blessed Alan to revive the former Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. Blessed Alan was one of the Dominican Fathers at the monastery at Dinan, in Brittany. He was an eminent theologian and a famous preacher. Our Lady chose him because, since the Confraternity had originally been started in that province, it was fitting that a Dominican from the same province should have the honour of re-establishing it. Blessed Alan began this great work in 1460, after a special warning from our Lord. This is how he received that urgent message, as he himself tells it:

One day when he was offering Mass, our Lord, who wished to spur him on to preach the holy Rosary, spoke to him in the Sacred Host. *"How can you crucify me again so soon?"* Jesus said. *"What did you say, Lord?"* asked Blessed Alan, horrified. *"You crucified me once before by your sins,"* answered Jesus, *"and I would willingly be crucified again rather than have my Father offended by the sins you used to commit. You are crucifying me again now because you have all the learning and understanding that you need to preach my Mother's Rosary, and you are not doing it. If you only did that, you could teach many souls the right path and lead them away from sin. But you are not doing it, and so you yourself are guilty of the sins that they*

commit.” This terrible reproach made Blessed Alan solemnly resolve to preach the Rosary unceasingly.

Our Lady also said to him one day to inspire him to preach the Rosary more and more, *“You were a great sinner in your youth, but I obtained the grace of your conversion from my Son. Had such a thing been possible, I would have liked to have gone through all kinds of suffering to save you, because converted sinners are a glory to me. And I would have done that also to make you worthy of preaching my Rosary far and wide.”*

Saint Dominic appeared to Blessed Alan as well and told him of the great results of his ministry: he had preached the Rosary unceasingly, his sermons had borne great fruit and many people had been converted during his missions. He said to Blessed Alan, *“See what wonderful results I have had through preaching the Rosary. You and all who love our Lady ought to do the same so that, by means of this holy practice of the Rosary, you may draw all people to the real science of the virtues.”* Briefly, then, this is the history of how Saint Dominic established the holy Rosary and of how Blessed Alan de la Roche restored it.

From the time Saint Dominic established the devotion to the holy Rosary up to the time when Blessed Alan de la Roche re-established it in 1460, it has always been called the Psalter of Jesus and Mary. This is because it has the same number of Hail Marys as there are psalms in the Book of the Psalms of David. Since simple and uneducated people are not able to say the Psalms of David, the Rosary is held to be just as fruitful for them as David’s Psalter is for others.

Ever since Blessed Alan de la Roche re-established this devotion, the voice of the people, which is the voice of God, gave it the name of the Rosary, which means *“crown of roses.”* That is to say that every time people say the Rosary devoutly they place on the heads of Jesus and Mary 153 white roses and sixteen red roses. Being heavenly flowers, these roses will never fade or lose their beauty. Our Lady has approved and confirmed this name of the Rosary; she has revealed to several people that each time they say a Hail Mary they are giving her a beautiful rose, and that each complete Rosary makes her a crown of roses. So the complete Rosary is a large crown of roses and each chaplet of five decades is a little wreath of flowers or a little crown of heavenly roses which we place on the heads of Jesus and Mary. The rose is the queen of flowers, and so the Rosary is the rose of devotions and the most important one.

The complete Rosary is composed of twenty decades. It is divided into four distinct parts, which may be said separately at different times of the day, the five Joyful Mysteries, the five Luminous Mysteries, the five Sorrowful Mysteries, the five Glorious Mysteries.

If you say only five decades a day, it is customary to say the Joyful Mysteries on Monday and Saturday, the Luminous Mysteries on Thursday, the Sorrowful Mysteries on Tuesday and Friday, the Glorious Mysteries on Wednesday and Sunday.

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