

*On October 16th, 2002 Pope John Paul II introduced a set of 5 new mysteries to be meditated upon, as we pray the rosary. These “luminous mysteries” or “mysteries of light” focus on some of the most significant public actions of Jesus prior to his suffering, death and resurrection, revealing who he is and what he was about. In promulgating these new mysteries, the Pope asked that we pray especially for peace in a world faced with violence, war, and terrorism and for the integrity of the family. The introduction of these new mysteries provides a good occasion for us to take a look at all the mysteries of the rosary, as well as a suggested way to pray the rosary in the context of personal or family prayer.*

## Praying the Rosary:



The Joyful, Sorrowful,  
Glorious, and New  
Luminous Mysteries

## When to Pray the Rosary

The rosary can be prayed in many times and places. Pope John Paul II singled out family times, where families can be united around the praying of the rosary. Other excellent times are when we are taking walks or driving cars. Instead of putting on the radio or MP3 player or CD out of habit, pray a rosary.

The rosary is an excellent personal and family devotion rather than a liturgical prayer. In other words, it is not part of the Mass and not the way the Church invites us to pray when we gather as a community of faith in liturgy. For that we have the Eucharist or morning and evening prayer. However, the rosary is a chance to spend time in more contemplative prayer, being drawn deeper into a relationship with Jesus Christ and with the communion of saints, which pre-eminently includes Mary

For those who pray the rosary throughout the week, Pope John Paul II suggested the following breakdown: Joyful mysteries: Monday and Saturday; Sorrowful mysteries: Tuesday and Friday; Glorious mysteries: Wednesday and Sunday; Luminous mysteries: Thursday.

## How to Pray the Rosary

Pope John Paul II gave his own detailed suggestions for one way to pray the rosary:

### **Opening:**

The Creed (which is customary in the United States) or the words of Psalm 70 (“O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me”), which is customary in other areas, followed by the “Our Father”, 3 “Hail Marys” and the “Glory Be”.

### **Each Mystery:**

Announce each mystery, perhaps having an icon or picture available to contemplate its meaning. Include a biblical foundation by proclaiming and meditating on the related biblical passage. *At that point pause for a significant moment of silence.* Don’t launch right into the other prayers. Think about the Scripture, about the mystery being prayed, about how God might be inviting you to connect it to your life.

Pray the “Our Father,” 10 “Hail Marys,” and the “Glory Be”.

Then end that mystery (also called a “decade” of the rosary, coming from the Greek word for “ten”, because of the 10 Hail Marys prayed) with a short concluding prayer, which varies by custom. The Pope suggested that it would be good to conclude each mystery with a prayer which connects that particular mystery to our own lives.

**Concluding the Rosary:** (usually after finishing one of the 5 sets of mysteries)

A prayer for the intention of the pope, not for his own sake, but to unite our prayer to embrace the needs of the entire Church, represented by the pope’s own prayer intentions.

## The Twenty Mysteries of the Rosary

*We will first look at the traditional sets of mysteries (joyful, sorrowful, and glorious) and then introduce the new luminous mysteries. In terms of reflecting on the life of Jesus, the new luminous mysteries fit more appropriately after the joyful mysteries and before the sorrowful mysteries.*

### **Joyful Mysteries**

(Monday and Saturday)

*The joyful mysteries connect us to both Mary and to her son Jesus from the time of his conception to his early childhood years.*

#### **I. The Annunciation**

(Mary learns and accepts that she will be the Mother of our Savior.)

*Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary: “Rejoice, O highly favored daughter! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.” Mary was deeply troubled by the angel’s words, and wondered what the greeting meant...”Do not fear, Mary. You have found favor with God. You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus.” (Luke 1:28-31.)*



By Paolo de Matteis,  
1712

Quiet Meditation: Life can change in an instant, sometimes with good news, sometimes very difficult news. Are we ready and able to say “yes” to God, no matter what life throws us this day?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: God of surprises, gracious Father, help us to rest secure in your love so that no matter what this day brings, we may peacefully and joyfully reflect your goodness to others. Amen.



By Jacques Daret, c.1434

## **2. The Visitation**

(Mary visits Elizabeth and proclaims God’s greatness.)

*Elizabeth cried out in a loud voice: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb....Blest is she who trusted that the Lord’s words to her would be fulfilled.” (Luke 1:42-45)*

Quiet Meditation: Blessings and sorrows are meant to be shared with family and community. Who do we turn to in times of joy and times of sadness? Who is there to support us? Let us give God thanks for such people.

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: You send into our lives, Lord, men and women of love and care, wisdom and faith. Help us to share with them the blessings of our lives and turn to them in times of need. May we never doubt that you are at work in and through them. Amen.

## **3. The Nativity**

(Mary gives birth to Jesus in Bethlehem.)

*The shepherds went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.... Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. (Luke 2:16-19)*



By Rogier Van der Weyden

Quiet Meditation: Life is God's gift to us. Who or what are the gifts which God is inviting us to contemplate in our hearts today?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: What wondrous love, God of all, to allow yourself to be permanently united to the reality and fate of humanity through Jesus your Son's birth and life. Hold us close to your heart, Lord. We need you. Amen.

#### 4. *The Presentation*

(Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the Temple on the day of Mary's purification.)

*Simeon took the child Jesus in his arms and blessed God in these words: "Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace; you have fulfilled your word. For my eyes have witnessed your saving deed displayed for all the peoples to see: a revealing light to the Gentiles, the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:28-32)*

Quiet Meditation: Have we presented all that we are, all that we own, all our children and relationships to God? Do we thank God each day for what God has done for us?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: We give you thanks, O God, for each blessing in our life, especially the blessing of those we love. Help us to never limit their growth in faith and love. Make them a light so that others may see your goodness in them. Amen.



Orthodox icon, c. 1731

#### 5. *Finding of Jesus in the Temple*

(Jesus is lost by Mary and Joseph and found back in Jerusalem,

in the Temple.)

*When his parents saw him they were astonished, and his mother said to him: “Son, why have you done this to us? You see that your father and I have been searching for you in sorrow.” Jesus said to them: “Why did you search for me? Did you not know I had to be in my Father’s house?”* (Luke 2:48-49)



By William H. Hunt, 1860

**Quiet Meditation:** Whom do we take for granted? In what or in whom is God inviting us to find joy this day?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

**Closing Prayer:** God of mystery, life is never as we plan. But with your grace, it can always be as you plan for us. Help us to respond to life’s mysteries with faith and fortitude, so that we might respond in joy and not in fear. Amen.

**Concluding Prayer to Rosary:** (for the intention of the Pope, see prayer on back page of booklet)

## **The Sorrowful Mysteries**

**(Tuesday and Friday)**

*The sorrowful mysteries focus on Jesus’ trials, cross, and death. They allow us to recognize the real sufferings in our own lives and unite them in faith to Jesus’ suffering.*

### **1. *The Agony in the Garden***

(Jesus undergoes his inner trial in Gethsemane.)

*Jesus advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer. “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Still, let it be as you would have it, not as I.”*(Matt. 26:39; cf. Luke 22:42)

**Quiet Meditation:** What burdens and responsibilities seem too

much for us at times? Have we prayed as Jesus, asking the Father to let it pass? Have we acknowledged that we want it as God would want it, not as we would have it?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Steadfast and loving Father, so much in life carries with it burdens, extra responsibilities, even at times suffering and pain. Help us be strong in facing such things in our life. Help us to surrender them to you. Amen.



By Carl Heinrich Bloch,  
c. 1870

## 2. *The Scourging*

(Pilate has the soldiers whip Jesus.)

*Pilate first had Jesus scourged, then he handed him over to be crucified.* (Matt. 27:26; cf. Mark 15:15; John 19.1)



By Peter Paul Rubens

Quiet Meditation: What words and actions of others have hurt us deeply, even though we should not have been subjected to them? Where do we find the inner strength to carry on, to forgive and not be broken?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Lord, give us courage in the face of life's cruelties and uncertainties. Keep us steadfast in faith. Amen.

## 3. *The Crowning with Thorns*

(Soldiers place a crown of thorns on Jesus' head, mocking him.)

*The soldiers now led Jesus away into the hall known as the praetorium. At the same time they assembled the whole cohort. They dressed him in royal purple, then wove a crown of thorns*



By El Greco, 1580

and put it on him, and began to salute him. “All hail! King of the Jews!” (Mark 15:16-17; cf. Matt.27:27-31; John 19:2)

Quiet Meditation: What are the difficult or very negative situations in our lives right now? How can we maintain our dignity, even in the midst of others who wish us ill?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: God of infinite majesty, help us to see your goodness and glory so that anything we suffer for the sake of the gospel can be worn as a crown of glory. Amen.

#### 4. *Carrying the Cross*

(Jesus carries the cross beam to Calvary)

*Jesus was led away and carrying the cross by himself, went out to what is called the Place of the Skull.”* (John 19:16-17; cf. Luke 23:26; Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21)

Quiet Meditation: What crosses in life are we being asked to carry right now? What crosses are true crosses (we didn't cause them and there is nothing we can do to stop that cross right now in our life)? Are there any crosses that we think we need to carry but God is saying to let them go?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Lord of life and love, help us to discern which crosses we need to carry which ones we take on that are not necessary. Give us the strength to shoulder those true crosses with faith and hope. Amen.

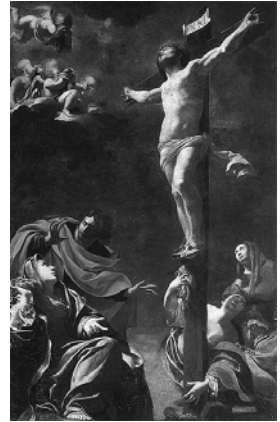


By Hieronymus Bosch,  
c. 1515

## 5. ***Crucifixion and Death***

(Jesus is nailed to the cross and dies on the cross)

*When they came to Golgotha, they crucified him there and the criminals as well, one at his right and one at his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." They divided his garments, rolling dice for them. (Luke 23:33-34; cf. Matt.27:33, Mark 15:22, John 19:32)*



By Simon Vouet

Quiet Meditation: What do we need to nail to Jesus' cross and let go of? Where is God asking us to trust that through death new life might come? Who do we need to forgive?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: God of life, though death changes everything, help us to be people of resurrection faith who trust that through death comes new life. Give us the courage to face our own death, when necessary. Help us to let go of anything that is causing us harm. Amen.

Concluding Prayer to Rosary: (for the intention of the Pope, see prayer on back page of booklet)

## **The Glorious Mysteries** (Wednesday and Sunday)

*The glorious mysteries all relate in some way to Jesus' resurrection. God is a God of life who gets the final word. We are included in that word through the gift of the Spirit. And Mary is a model and promise of that resurrected life for us.*

### 1. ***The Resurrection***

(God raises Jesus his Son from the dead on Easter Sunday.)

*On the first day of the week, at dawn, the women came to the*

tomb bringing the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled back from the tomb; but when they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus... "Why do you search for the Living One among the dead? He is not here; he has been raised up." (Luke 24:1-6; cf. Matt.28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; John 20:1-18)



By Noel Coypel, 1700

Quiet Meditation: What attitudes and behaviors have we hung on to far too long? Where is God asking us to seek signs of life rather than focus on the negative or signs of death?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Resurrected Lord, we know that we can share in your resurrection by remaining faithful to the gospel and the life of faith you give us. Help us to be people of resurrection faith, always seeking you at work in our lives today. Amen.

## 2. *The Ascension*

(Jesus is taken “up into heaven”).

*Then Jesus led them out near Bethany, and with hands upraised, blessed them. As he blessed them, he left them, and was taken up into heaven. (Luke 24:51; cf. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11)*

Quiet Meditation: How are we today called to be the blessing of the risen Lord to others? Where is God asking us to be the presence of the risen Jesus? Where do we need to let go of overly narrow understandings of God and let God work “outside the box” in our lives?



By Garofalo, c. 1515

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, you invite us to experience both your presence and your absence in our lives. May we rejoice always in the blessing of your presence but never forget that your ascension means that we must be that living blessing of your presence to others. Amen.

### 3. *The Sending of the Holy Spirit*

(On Pentecost the disciples receive the Holy Spirit and are emboldened to go forth and preach.)

*When the day of Pentecost came it found them gathered in one place. Suddenly from up in the sky there came a noise like a strong, driving wind which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues as of fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit.* (Acts 2: 1-4; cf. John 20:22-23)



By Duccio di Buoninsegna

Quiet Meditation: Where is the Spirit of God stirring in us right now and urging us to act, change, respond?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Come Holy Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love. Make us bold in proclaiming your love to all the world. Amen.

### 4. *The Assumption*

(Mary is “taken” to heaven, completely sharing in the resurrected life.)

*But as it is, Christ is now raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Death came through a human being; hence the resurrection of the dead comes through a human being also. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life again, but each one in proper order.”* (1 Corin-

thians 15:20-23)

Quiet Meditation: Even though the Assumption of Mary is not mentioned in the New Testament, what does it mean that the reality of resurrection is already being experienced not just by Jesus but by Mary as well (and perhaps many others)? What do we hope for at death? How does that help us live a deeper and fuller life now?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: God of creation, you desire that all creation share one day in the glorious freedom of the sons and daughters of God. In Jesus we taste the first fruits of that desire. In Mary's assumption we taste even closer our own hope that we might share in the fullness of resurrection, even as death claims our mortal bodies. Amen.



By Titian  
1516-1518

### 5. *Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven*

(Mary is pre-eminent in the communion of saints, ready to intercede for our good.)

*A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (Revelations 12:1)*



Quiet Meditation: What images come to mind when you hear the phrase “the communion of saints?” In your prayer do you include Mary and the saints as intercessors for your needs?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, we place before you all our needs this week. We ask Mary, your mother, to intercede for us in our times of

need. Amen.

**Concluding Prayer to Rosary:** (for the intention of the Pope, see prayer on back page of booklet)

## **The Luminous Mysteries** (Thursday)

*The luminous mysteries focus on five moments of Jesus' public life, where he reveals something of who he is and what his ministry means.*

### **1. Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan River**

(Jesus experiences his special sonship to God at the start of his public life.)

*On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'* (Mark 1: 9-11. cf. Matthew 3: 13-17, Luke 3: 21-23, and John 1: 32-33)



By Francesco Albani,  
1600s

**Quiet Meditation:** What do you think it meant to Jesus to know that God had affirmed him as his “beloved Son”? When and where have we experienced God’s love, being God’s beloved sons and daughters? Is there anything in our life that keeps us from seeing ourselves as such?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

### **Closing Prayer:**

*God of Light, your Holy Spirit affirmed Jesus' special relationship with you, giving him the courage to accept his mission and ministry in life. Help us to remember our own baptismal calling, to live in the knowledge of being your beloved sons and daughters, always open to the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## 2. *The Wedding Feast of Cana*

(Jesus' first public sign, changing water into wine at Mary's request.)

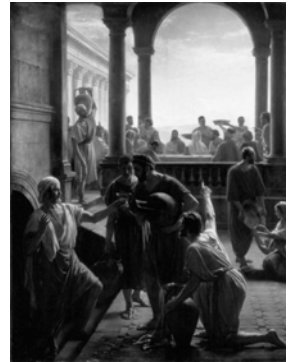
*When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servers, 'Do whatever he tells you.'* (John 2:1-11)

Quiet Meditation: Why do you think Jesus gave in to his mother's request, though he initially did not want to? Where in our life have we been confronted with surprises or things happening, which we did not anticipate, that became moments of God's grace?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer:

*God of unexpected grace, may the challenges and surprises of life open our eyes to the wonders of your grace at work. Amen.*



By Carl Heinrich Bloch,  
1870s

## 3. *Jesus Proclaims the Kingdom of God and Calls Us to Conversion*

*From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*

(Matthew 4:17, cf. Mark 1:15)

Quiet Meditation: What things draw us away from being the sons and daughters God wants? Who or what is God asking us to pay more attention to? Can we surrender our hearts to the Lord?



By Alexander Ivanov,  
c. 1850

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys,  
Glory Be

Closing Prayer:

*Lord Jesus, we are in need of your mercy and love. We give*

*all to you, including our hearts. Help us to live as your disciples, faithfully following you. Amen.*

#### **4. *The Transfiguration***

(The mystery of light par excellence. Jesus experiences the glory of his divine nature shining forth in and through him on the mountain.)

*Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.*



By Raphael, c. 1520

(Luke 9:28-36. cf. Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8)

Quiet Meditation: In the midst of the dark times, do we know and believe in our identity as God's beloved sons and daughters? In the midst of our comfort, are we willing to sacrifice all for the sake of the kingdom of God?

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer:

*You never abandon us, God, even when life seems difficult. But you do ask us to always act and live for the kingdom of God. When adversity occurs, give us the grace to show forth your glory and never doubt that we are your beloved sons and daughters. Amen.*

#### **5. *The Institution of the Eucharist***

(At the Last Supper Jesus offers his body and blood as food under the sign of bread and wine and testifies to his love for humanity, for whose salvation he will offer himself.)

*While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing,*

*broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of the many for the forgiveness of sins.'*

(Matthew 26:26-30. cf. Mark 14: 22-26, Luke 22: 14-23)

Quiet Meditation: When I come to Eucharist, what am I offering to God through Jesus? When I receive communion, how is God asking me to live it out for the sake of others? When I look upon the Eucharist, do I see Jesus' gift of his life to me and his invitation to be that gift to others?



By Tintoretto, 1594

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory Be

Closing Prayer:

*God of life, you gave us the Eucharist so that at all times and in all places, all that we are can be offered to you through your Son. May we who believe in the body and blood of Christ, receive humbly what we believe, and become what we receive. Amen.*

**Concluding Prayer to the Rosary, after each set of 5 mysteries:**

(for the intention of the Pope):

*God our Father we pray this rosary for the intention of peace in our world and an end to violence. We pray for our families, especially those experiencing turmoil. We unite our prayer with that of the Pope so that our prayer might include the needs of the whole Church and world. Amen.*

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Rev. David A. Buersmeyer, 7777 W. 28 Mile Rd. Washington MI 48094  
Phone: 586.781.9010 Fax: 586.781.7061