

# Some Suggested Meditations on the Mysteries of the Rosary

Rev. Peter J. Pacini, C.S.C.

## The Joyful Mysteries

### 1. The Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary

Mary's initial response to the angel's announcement is fear and confusion, for she does not realize how richly the Lord has already blessed her in preparation for this day, nor does she understand what more the Lord is now promising to do with her cooperation. Imagine the immense joy that Mary must have felt once all of this was explained to her by the angel and she was able to give her full consent to God's plan. Think of a time when the Lord presented you with a burden that turned into a great blessing and source of joy.

### 2. The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth

Elizabeth proclaims Mary "blessed" because she is carrying the Savior of the world and because she believed that God's promise to her would be fulfilled. But Mary, in her "Magnificat," says that she rejoices in God because he has looked upon her in her lowliness and has done great things for her. Mary's joy is a result of her humility and her gratitude for undeserved blessings. Reflect on a blessing that you have received by God's grace, without any merit on your part. Share in Mary's joy and gratitude.

### 3. The Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea

The birth of a child always brings great joy to the child's family and those who are close to them, but the birth of Jesus is a source of joy for the whole human family. By becoming one with us, Jesus made it possible for us to be one with God. As you recall Jesus' entry into our world, ponder your own future "birth" into the heavenly world that he inhabits now.

### 4. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Simeon and Anna both waited a very long time to see the Messiah. Neither of them knew when the Lord would fulfill his promise of a Savior or how God's Anointed One would appear to them. It is unlikely that either of them expected their sign to be a poor couple carrying a newborn child. Fortunately, they waited patiently and trusted in the Lord, and they were ready to see the sign when it appeared. Ask the Lord for patience as you wait for him to answer your prayers and fulfill all his promises.

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

Imagine the immense joy of finding your lost child safe and sound after frantically searching for him for three days. Jesus shows no concern for his safety, for he is in "his Father's house," the Temple, which the Jews regarded as the principal sign of God's presence among them. Ponder some of the ways in which you experience God's presence. Feel the comfort and security of knowing that God is near.

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## The Luminous Mysteries

### 1. Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan

Immediately after Jesus had been baptized by John, the Father's voice was heard, revealing Jesus to be his beloved Son, with whom he was well pleased. At our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ, we too were claimed by God the Father and "adopted" as his own beloved children. As you ponder the voice from the cloud speaking to Jesus, consider how you experience the Father's love and his affirmation of your special relationship with him.

### 2. The Wedding at Cana

Turning water into wine was more than an impressive magic trick. It was a sign that Jesus was going to initiate a new covenant between God and his people, based not on obedience to a set of laws, but on faith in him and his sacrifice on the cross. Christ himself must be the focus of our devotion and the way that leads to our salvation. Hence, we should listen carefully to Mary's admonition to the servers at the wedding feast: "Do whatever he tells you." Consider how you experience Jesus as your guiding light and your source of hope.

### 3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom

Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God is at hand, and that we live in the midst of it all the time. Yet, the Kingdom is mysterious, impossible to define, and often hidden from our sight. From Jesus' numerous parables about the Kingdom, we can understand this term to refer to the presence and activity of God in the world and in our lives. We can perceive the Kingdom only with the eyes of faith. Recall a particular moment, whether you recognized it at the time or only in hindsight, when God seemed to take an active role in your life.

### 4. The Transfiguration

On the mountaintop, for just a brief moment, Peter, James and John saw Jesus for who he really is. They already knew him as a companion and teacher, but they had not yet experienced him as the Lord of Glory. Consider how you see Jesus as both the Divine Son of God and an intimate companion on your life's journey.

### 5. The Institution of the Eucharist

By his passion and death on the cross, Christ opened the way to salvation for all of us. In the celebration of the Eucharist, he allows us to participate, again and again, in his sacrifice and its fruits. We draw strength from him and receive the spiritual nourishment that we need to walk our journey of faith. Recall a moment when you felt especially close to Jesus during the Eucharistic Prayer or after receiving Holy Communion.

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## The Sorrowful Mysteries

### 1. The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Jesus suffers emotional agony because of two very strong urges pulling him in opposite directions. He chooses to reject his natural urge for self-preservation in order to fulfill his even stronger desire to do the Father's will. Ponder a time when you have sacrificed your self-interest for the sake of someone else, confident that you made the right choice.

### 2. The Scourging of Jesus at the Pillar

After consciously offering up his life in the Garden, before his arrest, Jesus has to reaffirm that decision with every excruciating blow from the torturers' whips. Recall a time when you failed to follow through on a commitment because the circumstances seemed too difficult to bear. Ask the Lord's pardon for your weakness.

### 3. The Crowning of Jesus with Thorns

The crown of thorns is placed on Jesus' head to mock and humiliate him, as well as to inflict even more physical pain. Yet, that crude symbol ironically becomes a sign of the regal dignity that Jesus displays even in death. Ponder a time when you felt your own dignity reaffirmed by God, even in the midst of failure or humiliation.

### 4. The Carrying of the Cross

By carrying the instrument of his own execution, Jesus demonstrates that he is voluntarily giving up his life; it is not being taken from him against his will. Ponder some of the crosses that you have had to bear in your lifetime. Which ones have you carried with self-pity, and which ones with grace and dignity?

### 5. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

To all the eyewitnesses who see Jesus die on the cross, it appears that his life has ended in failure. Yet, he has just accomplished the saving mission for which he was sent into the world. This is the great paradox of the Paschal Mystery. God can transform any failure into victory and any loss into gain. Ponder a loss or failure that you have experienced which surprisingly became an occasion of grace for you or for someone close to you.

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## The Glorious Mysteries

### 1. The Resurrection of Jesus

Crucifixion was supposed to be the end of Jesus' life and ministry. His enemies thought that they were finally rid of him and his influence. Instead, he was raised up to new life, a life which he promised to share with all of us who believe in him. Imagine seeing the Risen Jesus in the flesh, just days after mourning his seemingly tragic death.

### 2. The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven

After rising from the dead, Jesus did not remain long on this earth. He handed over his mission to his disciples and to the Church which they would establish. Then he ascended to heaven, after first promising always to remain with them in spirit. Consider how you experience the Risen and Ascended Christ in prayer, yet also experience his continuing presence in the Church and its people.

### 3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, as Jesus had promised. Its impact, both on the disciples themselves and on the Jewish pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem at that time, was immense and spectacular. However, the most important effect of the Holy Spirit that day was that it enabled all the believers from many nations, languages and cultures to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed to them at the same time. The Holy Spirit still has that power to bring people together and draw them to Christ. Ponder how you experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

### 4. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven

All of us must die. All of us who believe in Jesus and his promise of salvation hope to rise up to heaven. For Mary, that hope was realized immediately, at the very moment of her death. Her Assumption into heaven was a special gift, befitting her special dignity as the Mother of God. Yet, it is also a sign for us who also look forward to heaven as our eternal home. Where she has gone, all of us hope to follow. Imagine the joy of Mary's reunion with her Son in heaven. Consider that you will one day get to join them in that eternal embrace of love.

### 5. The Coronation of Our Lady in Heaven

We honor Mary as the Queen of Heaven, but we also appeal to her as "Our Lady" and "Our Blessed Mother." Though she shares in the glory of her Son, she is not far from us. In fact, she is uniquely positioned to intercede for us with her Son. Ponder her closeness to Jesus and to us as you plead for her prayers on our behalf.