

Meditations on the Rosary

For Parish Renewal

By Fr. James Mallon

In 1999, St. Pope John Paul II declared Our Lady of Guadalupe as the Patroness of the New Evangelization. John Paul said that through her intercession, the new evangelization in America would “yield a splendid flowering of Christian life.” She is, therefore, the Star of the New Evangelization.

For decades now, our popes have been calling parishes to be dedicated to the mission of Jesus Christ and live out the call of the New Evangelization. This means nothing less than becoming a community of missionary disciples:



Disciples who are on mission so that **OUR PARISH CEASES TO BE ABOUT US**, but about those we are called to reach through evangelization and the works of mercy to those on the periphery.



A REAL WELCOMING COMMUNITY and not just a gathering of strangers.



Disciples who have **ENCOUNTERED JESUS** and are **COMMITTED** to becoming like him.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Monday and Saturday

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

Wednesday and Sunday

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

Tuesday and Friday

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

Thursday

In the Catholic Tradition, the Communion of Saints does not just mean the present community of the baptized here and now, but refers to all who have gone before us and are “in Christ.” They are models, teachers and intercessors. Our Blessed Mother is the primordial model of what it means to follow Jesus. She is the one who teaches us to “do whatever he tells you,” (John 2:5) and she is the intercessor par excellence.

For this reason, we seek her intercession for the missionary renewal of our parishes by the frequent praying of the Mysteries of the Rosary. I offer these reflections as a guide as we pray the rosary for the sake of renewal and future of our parishes.

This guide to praying the rosary will invite you to meditate on the particular aspects of the lives of Jesus and Mary and to pray for a specific grace for the renewal of your parish. As you pray each “Hail Mary” prayer, the invitation is to move beyond the mere recitation of the words and allow our minds and hearts to reflect on the particular “mystery” and intention.



How to pray the Rosary

1. Begin on the Cross with the Apostles' Creed, followed by the *Our Father*, 3 *Hail Mary's*, and the *Glory Be* on the next 5 beads.
2. At the beginning of **each mystery** (large beads), read the meditation followed by 1 *Our Father*.
3. On each of the subsequent smaller beads, pray the *Hail Mary*. After 10 *Hail Mary's*, pray the *Glory Be* and the *Fatima Prayer*.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the rest of the mysteries.
5. After praying the *Fatima Prayer* at the end of the 5th mystery, pray the *Hail Holy Queen*, *Final Prayer*, and the *Prayer for Parish Renewal*.



Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father almighty creator of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from there he will come 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, 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, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners, Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

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

Fatima Prayer: O my Jesus, forgive us of our sins. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls into heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy. Amen.

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our hope. To thee we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then most gracious advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us, the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us O Holy Mother of God, That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

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

JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Monday and Saturday

1. THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD TO MARY

The angel Gabriel appears to Mary and invites her to play a pivotal role in the unfolding of Salvation History. Mary responds “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38).

In this mystery let us reflect on Mary’s “Yes” to the Lord and ask for the grace, as parishioners and as a parish, to give the Lord an unconditional “yes,” so that his salvation can unfold in our midst.

2. THE VISITATION OF MARY TO ELIZABETH

Mary undertakes a journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth. This journey leads to her unborn child leaping for joy: “For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.” (Luke 1:44).

In this mystery let us reflect on the journey we are called to undertake as a parish and ask for the grace to persevere in going where the Lord is calling us. Let us also pray for the spiritual gift of Joy to pervade all that we do.

3. THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is born in simplicity and in the midst of the ordinary people of his day. The shepherds were told by the angel, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10). In this mystery, let us reflect on the fact that Jesus desires to be born in our parish

which means that he is to be born in our own hearts. Let us pray for the grace to not be afraid of what this will mean and that the renewal of our parish will bring great joy to all who encounter us.

4. THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

Mary and Joseph dedicate the newborn Jesus to the Lord. “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.” (Luke 2:22)

In this mystery let us reflect that our entire parish is not ours and that it belongs to the Lord and is dedicated for his purpose and his mission. Let us ask for the grace to offer all that our parish is for his mission. Let us ask for the grace to truly sacrifice our own preferences for the sake of the mission.

5. FINDING JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

When Jesus was twelve years-old he visited Jerusalem and became separated from his family. Mary and Joseph found him teaching in the temple. When they found him Jesus told them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49).

In this mystery let us pray for the grace to be single minded about our purpose as a parish: to be a parish that is focused on making missionary disciples. Pray that our parish may become a centre of evangelization where people come into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and enter into the life of the Church.

When finished, go to page 8 for the *Prayer for Parish Renewal*

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

Tuesday and Friday

1. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Jesus' passion begins as he consents to the sacrifice that is being asked of him. "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

In this mystery let us pray for the grace to transform our prayer life from asking God to do our will, to giving consent to God to do his will in and through us, as individuals and as a parish, even if this means sacrifice.

2. THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

Jesus was brutally whipped by the Roman soldiers as a prelude to his crucifixion. "So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified." (Mark 15:15)

This torture was so terrible that some prisoners would actually die in the process. In this mystery let us ask for the grace to endure whatever hardship we must for the sake of the renewal of our parish. Let us ask the Lord for the courage and endurance we will need to see the grace of his salvation shine forth from our parish community.

3. JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS

The soldiers "clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mark 15:17- 18). Think of the humility of Jesus. The King of Kings wears thorns for a crown.

C.S. Lewis said that humility does not mean thin-

king less of yourself but thinking of yourself less. In this mystery let us ask for the grace of true humility, thinking of ourselves less, as we labour to see our parish come to life.

4. JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

"After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him." (Mark 15:20)

Jesus, not uttering a word, carries his own cross to Golgotha. Pope Francis said "I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self preservation." (EG 27) In this mystery let us ask for the grace to endure whatever small or large inconveniences may come our way through such a process of change. Let us pray for the grace to refrain from complaining or being negative because we are inconvenienced.

5. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Jesus gives himself up to death for the sake of our salvation. He embraced death so that all would have life. He was broken so that others would be made whole. St. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal 2:19-20)

In this mystery let us pray for the grace to be crucified with him, to allow him to put to death in us, as a parish, what needs to die and to break what needs to be broken so that we and others may have new life and be made whole. Let us pray for the grace to truly live a life of faith in the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

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LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

Thursday

1. THE BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN

As Jesus begins a new chapter in his life he is baptized by John. St. Luke tells us that “when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”” (Luke 3:21-22)

Jesus begins his public ministry with an affirmation of his identity as a beloved son. In this mystery let us ask for the grace to be missionary because it is our very identity and a loving response to the God who has first loved us.

2. THE WEDDING AT CANA

Mary tells the servants to “Do whatever he tells you.” (John 2:5) They act in obedience to the word of Jesus and water is transformed into the finest of wines.

In this mystery let us pray for the grace to truly be obedient to the Lord in all that he is asking of us, so that our parish may be transformed in wonderful and unexpected ways, so that the glory of Jesus will be revealed, and many people come to believe in him.

3. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM

“Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news’” (Mark 1:14-15). In this mystery, let us pray that our parish may be a

place where the Kingdom of God is made manifest to the people in our community by our preaching, by the manner of our lives and by signs and wonders. Let us pray that hearts may be touched and that many will repent and believe the good news.

4. THE TRANSFIGURATION

Jesus allows his disciples to experience his glory as the divine Son of God to help them endure the pain and scandal of the cross.

“Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.” (Luke 9:28-29). In this mystery let us pray that our parishioners may truly have “mountaintop experiences” of God revealed in Jesus Christ and that these experiences may help us navigate the difficult and painful moments that come with parish renewal.

5. THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

On the night before he died for our sins, Jesus becomes the new Passover Lamb, the true Lamb of God. In this liturgical action he gives himself Sacramentally to his disciples and he commands his first believers to do the same.

“Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19) In this mystery let us pray that the celebrations of the Eucharist that take place within our parish may be vibrant, reverent, joyful and welcoming, that they may truly be experienced as the source and the summit of our Christian lives.

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

Wednesday and Sunday

1. THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Jesus rises from the dead and, in doing so, he restores life, not as before but to an entirely new level. St Paul; writes, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Rom 6:5)

In this mystery let us pray that the miracle of the resurrection will take place in the midst of our parish. That as we unite ourselves to a death like his, we may truly experience his resurrection and see a new parish born with greater life and vibrancy than ever before.

2. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS INTO HEAVEN

St. Matthew gives us the final words of Jesus before he ascends into heaven: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Mat 28:19)

This final mandate of Jesus to the Church is known as The Great Commission. At the heart of what Jesus calls us to do is to "make disciples" who will worship, celebrate the Sacraments and put into action all that he taught us. In this mystery let us pray that our parish may place making and equipping of disciples at the heart of all that we do.

3. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT PENTECOST

The Church is born not at Christmas, or Holy Thursday or Good Friday or even Easter Sunday, but at Pentecost. The Church is born when the Holy Spirit comes in power. The Church will be reborn when the Holy Spirit comes in power. Our parish will be reborn when the Spirit comes in power. This is our hope and, as St. Paul says, "hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." (Romans 5:5)

In this mystery let us pray for a new Pentecost within our parish so that all our parishioners will have a profound and life-altering experience of the Holy Spirit, and our parish be empowered for mission.

4. THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY INTO HEAVEN

At the moment of death our Blessed Mother experiences what is promised to all believers though the resurrection of the body. The book of Revelation describes a great sign that appears in the heavens: "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." (Rev. 12:1) This is exactly what is represented in the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe found on the Tilma of St. Juan Diego.

In this mystery let us seek the intercession of Our Blessed Mother under her title of the Lady of Guadalupe. Let us pray for the grace to remember that everything in this life is passing, that nothing will last except the fruit of a relationship with her Son, Jesus Christ.

5. THE CROWNING OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER AS QUEEN OF HEAVEN

"The queen stands at your right hand arrayed in gold." (Psalm 45:9) Jesus honours his mother. She is the first disciple of her son, the first to experience the grace and new life that comes from her son, and she is the first of all intercessors.

In this mystery let us ask Our Blessed Mother to intercede for the missionary renewal of our parish, that she may pray for the grace for us to be faithful to the mission of her Son and help countless others experience the new life that is found in him.

AT THE END OF EACH ROSARY, WE INVITE YOU TO PRAY THE FOLLOWING PRAYER:

PRAYER FOR PARISH RENEWAL

Father, thank You that You are always doing a new thing. Give us eyes to see Your infinite goodness at work and to co-operate with You as You renew the Church.

Jesus, we thank You for creating paths in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Accompany us on this journey of renewing our own parishes.

Holy Spirit, ignite in us a passion for making disciples and help us to bear fruit that will last.

Amen