Joyful Mystery Meditations

Meditations on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary are traditionally prayed on Mondays, Thursdays, and Sundays during Advent and Christmastide. Some pray the Joyful Mysteries every day during Advent and Christmastide as a devotion. These mysteries of Joy focus on the God of the universe Who in a sense “empties Himself” of His divinity and is made man in all humility (Php 2:7-8) incarnate of the ever Virgin Mary, Who sanctifies from the Womb of Mary, and Who teaches His parents at His finding in the temple and then humbly submits to them.


On Meditation

Meditation is a deeper and more efficacious form of prayer than vocal, and according to various Saints and Doctors of the Church such as St Alphonsus Liguori and St Theresa of Avila, meditative prayer is necessary for one’s spiritual life and even eternal salvation. The purpose as with all prayer is to elevate the heart and mind to God. Therefore, when in meditation if one’s mind and heart are particularly found to be directed to God in charity or contemplation, the soul should remain there as long as God permits. St Louis de Montfort among many other Saints recommend praying slowly and intently for a tremendous spiritual benefit. For the first Saturday devotion, in fact, a fifteen minute meditation on just one mystery is typically recommended to fulfill the requirement.

The following individual meditations contain enough depth to be dwelt upon for an entire decade. They may also be read with one meditation for each Ave or stopped and meditated upon further when one is found to be compelling. The linked Scriptures are also available for additional insights into the mystery, and the sacred images provide a direction and window into the divine life.

The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

Primum Mysterium Gaudiosum: Annuntiatio

Spiritual Fruit: Humility | Docility to the Will of God

Mathew 1:18; Luke 1:26-38
O God, Who didst will that Thy Word should take flesh, at the message of an Angel, in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, grant to Thy suppliant people, that we who believe her to be truly the Mother of God, may be helped by her intercession with Thee. (Collect for Annunciation)
Spiritus Sancti superveniet in te, et virtus altissimi omnibrath tibi.

Ecce Angel Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.
From the moment of her Immaculate Conception, God prepared Mary to be the mother of the Incarnate Word.

2. The Angel Gabriel is sent by God to the Virgin named Mary, which means “Star of the Sea,” the one through whom would bring forth the Light of the world. [1]

3. The Angel Gabriel brings from heaven a message of the greatest of divine graces granted to any creature: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.”

4. She is called blessed among women just as Jael and Judith were similarly
praised as precursors, yet in a far more excellent way for she excels them and all virgins a thousand times in blessings, gifts, and graces. [2]

5. The Angel says to her: “Fear not...thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son and thou shalt call his name Jesus,” which means salvation—the name to which every knee shall bow. “And of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

6. “Blessed art thou among women, for thou hast brought forth life...The mother of our race brought punishment into the world; the mother of our Lord brought salvation to the world. Eve was the originator of sin, Mary of merit.” [3]

7. Mary asks how this can be since she has made a vow of perpetual virginity, thereby showing her preference and great love for chastity to the angelic tidings. [4]

8. The Angel explains, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee,” to cover thee as with a veil, and the “Holy of Holies” within thy womb shall be called the Son of God.

9. The host of heaven awaits in silence. Mary then answers with all modesty and humility of heart and mind in her fiat: “Behold the handmaid [servant] of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy word.”

10. From that very moment in her was conceived the Savior and Redeemer of the world. “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

The Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation

Secundum Mysterium Gaudiosum: Visitatio

Spiritual Fruit: Charity towards Neighbor | Fraternal Charity
Works of Mercy: Visit the sick, Comfort the Afflicted

Luke 1:39-56

Bestow upon Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the gift of Thy heavenly grace: that as the childbirth of the Blessed Virgin was the beginning of our salvation, so the solemn feast of her visitation may bring us an increase of peace. (Collect for Visitation)
1. Mary’s cousin Elizabeth who was barren in her old age conceives a son named John who is prophesied to “be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb.”

2. Mary embarks on a long journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth so that she may announce the conception of the Word, cleanse St John, congratulate her kinswoman, and give example of humility and charity for all to follow. [5]

3. Mary enters the house of Zachary and greets Elizabeth with the words “Peace be to thee.” The voice of the Virgin was as the voice of God Incarnate in her. [6]

4. At the sound of Mary’s salutation to Elizabeth, John the Baptist is immediately sanctified in his mother’s womb, cleansed from original sin, and filled with the spirit of prophecy. [7]

5. Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghost exclaims in a loud voice: “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”

6. Continuing in great humility and reverence, “How have I deserved that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” This greeting is a prefiguring of Mary’s title as Mater Dei, Mother of God. [8]

7. “For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped with joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.” [9*]

8. Mary replies in her famous Magnificat, which throughout the course of the centuries her children will repeat with her in praise to God. “My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”

9. “Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” These words are a prediction of that honor that the Church in all ages will pay to the blessed Virgin.

10. Mary remains with Elizabeth for about three months serving her until the birth of John the Baptist.

The Third Joyful Mystery: The Nativity of Our Lord
Tertium Mysterium Gaudiosum: Nativitas

Spiritual Fruit: Detachment | Poverty of Spirit
Works of Mercy: Feed the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, harbor the harborless

Luke 2:6-19; 1 Corinthians 15:45-48

Grant us, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that we on whom the new light of Thine Incarnate Word is poured, may show forth in our works that brightness, which now doth illuminate our minds by faith. (Collect for Nativity)
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus.
1. In obedience to the decree of Caesar, Mary and Joseph travel three days journey from Galilee to Bethlehem, “The House of Bread,” to be enrolled because Joseph was of the house of David.

2. The days are accomplished that Mary should deliver her Son, but there is no room for them in the inn. The world remains either bitterly opposed to Christ as Herod or indifferent as the innkeepers.

3. At midnight in the piercing cold, Mary gives birth to the Lord Jesus in a cave. [10] “The first man was of the earth, earthly: the second man, from heaven”
4. The Blessed Mother is preserved from the punishment of original sin and so experiences no labor pains in childbirth. Her virginity and womb remains intact, “as the rays of the sun penetrate glass.” [11]

5. The Blessed Virgin is more mother and more connected to Jesus than any mother to her child, for all other children have both a father and a mother, whereas Christ received all of his human substance solely from his mother Mary. [12]

6. Mary wraps the Infant in swaddling clothes and lays Him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals, symbolizing that Our Lord will one day become Food in the holy Eucharist.

7. The King of the universe enters the world in extreme poverty, His body placed on itchy straw, between two brute beasts, in the manger, as a model for all to live in complete detachment from the things in the world.

8. That night an angel announces to shepherds, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...For, this day, is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”

9. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.”

10. The shepherds go in haste and find Mary, Joseph, and the Babe. In reverential fear and awe, they come and adore the Infant, their King, Creator, and God.

The Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Presentation
Quartum Mysterium Gaudiosum: Presentatio

Spiritual Fruit: Obedience | Purity
Work of Mercy: Ransom the captive


O GOD, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary hast bestowed upon mankind the rewards of eternal salvation: grant, we beseech Thee, that we may experience her intercession for us, through whom we have been made worthy to receive the Author of Life, Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord. (Collect for Circumcision)
In obedience to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph take the Infant Jesus to the temple to be presented to the Lord.

As written in the law, every first born male shall be dedicated as holy to
the Lord — this on account of the firstborn of the Hebrews being granted immunity by God when the angel struck the firstborn of the Egyptians.

3. Mary and Joseph also redeem their offered Son according to the law with five shekels, which are said to represent the five wounds of Christ with which He redeems the human race. [13]

4. In accordance with the law, for the purification, they offer a pair of turtledoves in sacrifice, the offering of the poorer classes, since the Holy Family always lived in poverty.

5. Although Jesus and Mary would not have been subject to the law of Moses being without sin, nevertheless, to teach obedience, they submit to it fully. “The knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience.” [14]

6. God reveals to a just and devout man Simeon that he will not see death until he sees the Messiah.

7. Simeon moved by the Spirit enters the temple and when the parents bring in the child, he receives Him blessing God.

8. Simeon then says the Nunc Dimittis, “Now Thou does dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy Salvation.”

9. Simeon blesses them and says to Mary His Mother, “Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted.”

10. Simeon prophesies to Mary’s sorrows, “and thy own soul a sword shall pierce,” speaking to her inward martyrdom she is to suffer with her Son. “The pains she escapes in childbirth she bears at the time of His Passion.” [15]

The Fifth Joyful Mystery: Finding Jesus in the Temple

Quintum Mysterium Gaudiosum: Inventio in Templo

Spiritual Fruit: Piety | Devotion to the duties of our state of life
Spiritual Work of Mercy: Counsel the Doubtful, Instruct the Ignorant

Luke 2:41-51

O LORD Jesus Christ, Who, being subject to Mary and Joseph, didst sanctify home life with ineffable virtues, grant that, with the aid of both, we may be taught by
the example of Thy Holy Family, and attain to eternal fellowship with them.
(Collect for the Feast of the Holy Family)
1. At the age of twelve, Jesus and His parents take their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the solemn feast of the Passover, which the Holy Family
keep for seven days. [16]
2. Jesus asks leave of His parents to spend time with kinsfolk and then quietly withdraws to the temple. Jesus remains in Jerusalem after Mary and Joseph depart in order to shed a ray of His wisdom and Divinity. [17]
3. After a day’s journey, His parents discover that Jesus is not with their kinsfolk and return to Jerusalem in order to find Him. [18*]
4. Mary’s heart is full of grief in one of her seven sorrows, as she and Joseph diligently search for Him for three long days. [19*]
5. On the third day, they rejoice to find Jesus in the Temple — for the place of God incarnate is in the Temple — there is He to be sought and there is He to be found.
6. He is found sitting in the midst of the doctors, asking them questions. All are astonished at His wisdom and answers.
7. Mary says to Him in wonder and reverence, “Son, why has Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.” [20*]
8. Jesus responds to them in instruction and consolation, “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business.” And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them.
9. Jesus goes down with them to Nazareth and is subject to them, demonstrating an example of profound humility and perfect obedience.
10. Mary keeps all these words pondering them in her Immaculate Heart.

Prayers of the Rosary in Latin

Prayers After the Rosary

Sorrowful Mystery Meditations

Glorious Mystery Meditations

End Notes:

[2] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[9*] Symbolically this “dancing” in the womb prefigures John’s own martyrdom, as the dancing of Herodias would be the means by which he would be beheaded. Cornelious Lapide, The Great Biblical Commentary, Gospel of St Luke Chapter 1, v. 44.
[17] Ibid, Chapter 2, v. 43.
[18*] Ibid. When people would come from the temple, the men would be in one company and the woman in a separate company, while the children went in either company indifferently so that Joseph through no fault of his believed him to be with his mother, and Mary through no fault of her own imagined him to be with Joseph. It has also been revealed to mystics that God the Father likewise darkened the intellect of their parents at this time in order to accomplish His design.
[19*] “Truly Miserable and Unhappy are those Souls which have Lost God. If Mary Wept the Absence of her Son for Three (3) Days, how should Sinners Weep, who have Lost Divine Grace, and to-whom God says: “You are not My People, and I will not be yours”. For this is the Effect-of Sin; it Separates the Soul, from God: “Your Iniquities have Divided-between you and your God”. ” (St Alphonsus Liguori, On the Dolors of Mary).
[20*] “By these Words, she had no Idea of Reproving Jesus, as Heretics Blasphemously Assert, but only meant to express to Him, the Grief proceeding from the Great Love she Bore Him, which she had Experienced during His Absence” (St Alphonsus Liguori, On the Dolors of Mary).

All other quotes may be found in the Scriptures cited after each mystery above.