



Pastoral Letter on the Rosary

Do you sometimes catch yourself wondering what God is really like, or what God thinks of you? Well, God has answered both those questions in a statement that was bold and striking, yet intimate and very human. That statement was the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Contemplating him, we come to know what God is like, and how much we mean to God.

This is what we do when we pray the Rosary. It leads us to want to thank and adore God. It also inspires in us a kind of deep reassurance that transforms, uplifts and enables us to live faithful lives.

It also makes us want to join in God's own love for the world. We become channels of God's love for the world. When we interact with the events depicted in the gospel, our lives are drawn into them, and we "put on the mind of Christ".

As well as proclaiming 2003 as a year of dedication to the Rosary, Pope John Paul II has asked us to pray the Rosary especially for peace in the Middle East.

Your bishops wish to echo the Pope's call, and we ask you to use this method of prayer as a way of praying in union with all those Christians, not just Catholics, who nurture their prayer life from the scriptures.

For New Zealand Catholics, praying the Rosary also links with the Pope's earlier request to us (1998) that we open our lives to more contemplative ways of praying.

The 20 individual mysteries of the Rosary break the "mystery" of Christ up into individual moments, or mysteries. This makes it easier for us to contemplate and enter into each mystery, without losing a sense of their unity.



We wish to make some very practical suggestions about praying the Rosary. We recommend that:

- a time and place be chosen that are conducive to unhurried, reflective praying;
- the rosary is preferably prayed with others;
- each "mystery" be introduced by reading a corresponding passage in the gospels (see below);
- a painting or icon is used that depicts each mystery;
- there is a pause after each reading and before commencing the decade for a moment's silent preparation;
- the Our Father is prayed with that sense of intimacy with the Father that Jesus wanted to share with you;
- the Glory Be is prayed with with a sense of adoring the Holy Trinity;
- after the Glory Be, a prayer is made for the fruits specific to that particular mystery (see below).

We recommend the following weekly pattern suggested by the Pope:

- Monday the joyful mysteries
- Tuesday the sorrowful mysteries
- Wednesday the glorious mysteries
- Thursday the mysteries of light
- Friday the sorrowful mysteries
- Saturday the joyful mysteries
- Sunday the glorious mysteries

but you are free to vary that pattern.



We suggest the following scripture passages for each mystery, and the following graces to be prayed for at the end of each decade:

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation

Read Luke 1, 26-38

Pray for an openness to accepting God's will.

The Visitation

Read Luke 1, 39-56

Pray for a spirit of welcome for each new human life entering the world, and support for parents and families.

The Nativity

Read Luke 2, 1-14

Pray for a spirit of hospitality, especially towards the world's poor, the homeless and refugees.

The Presentation

Read Luke 2, 22-35

Pray for a sense of God's presence, and the unfolding of God's purposes, in the events of history, and for reverence for the aged.

The Finding in the Temple

Read Luke 2, 41-50

Pray for children and youth, and for the grace to discern God's purpose for their lives.



The Mysteries of Light

The Baptism of Jesus

Read Matthew 3, 13-17

Pray for the grace to live our baptism/confirmation as a call to holiness and a call to mission.

Jesus being revealed at the Wedding in Cana

Read John 2, 1-12.

Pray for the grace to do "whatever he tells you", and for those entering marriage.

Jesus' Preaching of the Reign of God

Read Luke 4 16-22.

Pray for the grace to live lives that witness to the reign of God.

Jesus' Transfiguration

Read Matthew 17, 1-8.

Pray for the grace to be "like mirrors reflecting the glory of the Lord... transfigured into the same image..." (2 Corinthians 3, 18).

The Last Supper and Institution of the Eucharist

Read John 13, 1-17.

Pray for the grace to live out in our daily lives the mystery of being "the body given up" and "the blood poured out" for others.



The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden

Read Matthew 26, 36-46

*Pray for those who experience anxiety, fear and loneliness,
and for the wisdom and courage we need to support them.*

The Scourging at the Pillar

Read Mark 15, 6-15

Pray for the victims of injustice.

The Crowning with Thorns

Read John 19, 1-7

*Pray for patience and perseverance before the mysteries of
evil and suffering.*

The Carrying of the Cross

Read Luke 23, 26-32

*Pray for the courage to be faithful, and the grace to
associate our own crosses with Christ's redemptive suffering.*

The Crucifixion

Read Luke 23, 33-46

*Pray for the grace that hurt and alienated people need in
order to forgive and to reconcile.*



The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection

Read Mark 16, 1-7

Pray for lives that witness to Jesus' saving power, and for "eyes" to recognise Him (faith).

The Ascension

Read Acts 1, 6-11

Pray for the gift of hope and a sense of Jesus' having gone on ahead "to prepare a place for us".

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Read Acts 2, 1-13

Pray for the constant renewal of the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit, and for vocations to priesthood and religious life.

The Assumption

Read 1 Corinthians 15, 51-57

Pray for a sense of the holiness of the human person - body, mind and spirit.

Mary Queen of Heaven

Read Revelation 7, 9-12

Pray for a sense of Mary's exercising her role as our mother (John 19, 27).

Finally, our prayer for all of you is that this renewed interaction between your own lives and the life of Christ will bring you abundant blessings. And we ask you to pray for us.

Leonard A Boyle
Denis G Browne
Peter J Cullinane
John J Cunneen
Max Takuiria Mariu SM
Cardinal Thomas Williams
Owen J Dolan
Patrick J Dunn
Robin W Leamy
John A Dew