



**OUR LADY OF CHINA  
ROSARY PRAYER**

## How to Pray the Rosary

The Rosary is a Scripture-based prayer. It begins with the *Apostles' Creed*, which summarizes the great mysteries of the Catholic faith. The *Our Father*, which introduces each mystery, is from the Gospels. The first part of the *Hail Mary* is the angel's words announcing Christ's birth and Elizabeth's greeting to Mary. St. Pius V officially added the second part of the *Hail Mary*. The Mysteries of the Rosary center on the events of Christ's life. There are four sets of Mysteries: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and—added by Saint John Paul II in 2002—the Luminous.

### The prayers of the Rosary

The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. The Rosary can be said privately or with a group.

The **Five Joyful Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Mondays, Saturdays, and, during the season of Advent, on Sundays:

- 1 The Annunciation
- 2 The Visitation
- 3 The Nativity
- 4 The Presentation in the Temple
- 5 The Finding in the Temple

The **Five Sorrowful Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Tuesdays, Fridays, and, during the season of Lent, on Sundays:

- 1 The Agony in the Garden
- 2 The Scourging at the Pillar
- 3 The Crowning with Thorns
- 4 The Carrying of the Cross
- 5 The Crucifixion and Death

The **Five Glorious Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and, outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on Sundays:

- 1 The Resurrection
- 2 The Ascension
- 3 The Descent of the Holy Spirit
- 4 The Assumption
- 5 The Coronation of Mary

The **Five Luminous Mysteries** are traditionally prayed on Thursdays:

- 1 The Baptism of Jesus
- 2 The Wedding at Cana
- 3 Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God
- 4 The Transfiguration
- 5 The Eucharist



## Praying the Rosary

Familiarize yourself and/or your group with the prayers of the rosary.

- 1 Make the Sign of the Cross.
- 2 Holding the Crucifix, say the *Apostles' Creed*.
- 3 On the first bead, say an *Our Father*.
- 4 Say one *Hail Mary* on each of the next three beads.
- 5 Say the *Glory Be*
- 6 For each of the five decades, announce the Mystery (perhaps followed by a brief reading from Scripture) then say the *Our Father*.
- 7 While fingering each of the ten beads of the decade, next say ten *Hail Marys* while meditating on the Mystery. Then say a *Glory Be*.
- 8 (After finishing each decade, some say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima: *O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy.*)
- 9 After saying the five decades, say the *Hail, Holy Queen*, followed by this dialogue and prayer:

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

*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 while meditating on 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.*

## Prayers of the Rosary

### The 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 life everlasting.  
Amen.

### The Our Father

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

### **The Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;  
blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

### **The Glory Be (The Doxology)**

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

### **The Hail Holy Queen (The Salve Regina)**

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,  
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.  
To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve;  
to you we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.  
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,  
your eyes of mercy toward us;  
and after this, our exile,  
show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.



***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO THE FAITHFUL FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2020***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this “family” aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020  
Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist*

*Pope Francis*

## *First Prayer*

O Mary,  
You shine continuously on our journey  
as a sign of salvation and hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who, at the foot of the cross,  
were united with Jesus' suffering,  
and persevered in your faith.

“Protectress of the Roman people”,  
you know our needs,  
and we know that you will provide,  
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,  
joy and celebration may return  
after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father  
and to do what Jesus tells us.  
For he took upon himself our suffering,  
and burdened himself with our sorrows  
to bring us, through the cross,  
to the joy of the Resurrection.  
Amen.

We fly to your protection,  
O Holy Mother of God;  
Do not despise our petitions  
in our necessities,  
but deliver us always  
from every danger,  
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.



## *Second Prayer*

“We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God”. In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust. Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health. Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus. Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity. Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

## **Meditation on the mysteries of the rosary**

*(by Giovanni omi)*

Whenever I find myself praying the rosary, the thought inevitably goes to some memory of the past: the first visits to the church attached to my mother's skirt, while the women prayed before mass; the month of May at the elementary school run by the nuns, and all of us wearing shorts lined up like little soldiers, singing our "Ave Maria" in front of the statue of Mary adorned with flowers; the years of the seminary among the Latin, Greek and philosophy books and the half hour of prayer before dinner; and the different summers in Lourdes as a volunteer, there under the grotto while we accompanied the sick for the liturgies, or late at night when in the quiet and silence, the heart had desires of total donation, mixed with doubts about a future still to be deciphered in detail; the missionary vocation outlined in the daily and community comings and goings in that "avenue of the rosary" during the novitiate, an experience common to many Oblates now scattered everywhere.

Each mystery seems to have its own particular flavor and it would be interesting to draw up a sort of classification according to the tastes of each one; I was taken and fascinated by the mystery of the Visitation, it was like a sort of icon of my bellicose missionary spirit of wanting to go further, then life would teach me that there are no isolated mysteries, there is only one mystery that life proposes again as in stages in a human journey, which in the eyes of faith can be read as a pilgrimage of faith.

"How much I would have liked to be a priest to preach about the Blessed Virgin", so Therese of Lisieux confessed, and I, who am already a priest, what could I then desire to be... perhaps a pope?! Certainly it is not an easy thing to be head of the Church, spread throughout the earth and with so many challenges, I am well aware of it... my "pious" desire to be pope would be to be able to give a new title to Mary. So I imagine myself at my first speech in St. Peter's Square, with the expectation of so many people about the new Pope and his first words; "Brothers and Sisters..... I have always wanted to be pope one day, and here I am... from now on in our prayers and invocations to Mary, we will use a new title, one that says

everything about her faith... the title is "Elder Sister"..." Then returned to the sacred rooms, I would prepare my speech for my resignation; mission accomplished!

How many times have we risked considering Mary too high up, far from our living on earth, with her ways made up of momentum and enthusiasm, slowdowns and falls, and then resuming the journey. The evangelical presentation of Mary, a girl from Nazareth who is visited by God, who gets up in turn to visit and thus begins a pilgrimage of faith that takes her under the Cross, is a paradigm of faith for our own paths. She has preceded us, she is our model, and now she accompanies us, supporting our steps, like an elder sister.

## Mysteries of joy

### *1) Annunciation*



Everything begins in a surprising way; heaven through the angel descends to earth and not by chance, it is a long cultivated project, it is a God who adjusts his aim before shooting his arrow of love. As in concentric circles; a city of Galilee, Nazareth, to a virgin, betrothed, and here is the name: Mary. But the arrow, taking the sign, also changes her name, it is now the "full of grace". This new name says not only the identity of the woman, but it reveals something of God himself. "And He chose us before the creation of the world, to be holy and immaculate in His presence forever". Like Mary, therefore, we too are surprised, a dizzying vocation that leaves us fearful and perplexed. Let the Spirit that at the first creation hovered over the waters, make us to be reborn and so to continue our journey of sanctification.

Mary, humble handmaid of the Lord, make us capable of listening deeply to God's will for a project that goes beyond our limited dreams and makes us capable of dreaming the very dream of God.

## 2) Visitation



Mystery of lived charity, Mary visited by the angel, she too "flies" in haste. "It is the love of Christ that drives us," said Paul the Apostle. A sort of domino effect, first the divine initiative to come down from heaven and visit us, and then Mary rising and ready to "climb" from Judea to Judea in the encounter with Elizabeth. It is as if she anticipates somehow her Son in that well known ascent from Galilee to Jerusalem during his public ministry. The encounter of two women "visited" by the grace of God who makes them mothers in a wonderful way, an encounter between two children that anticipates their mission to lead us back to the Father. In the visitation one gives and receives at the same time, there is an exchange that enriches and fills everyone with joy, it is a mutual exchange of lived love. Elizabeth supported by Mary's care and attention, and Mary instead verified in her belief (blessed are you who believed in the fulfillment of the promise) and in being a mother. This is the miracle of charity in action, it is in giving that one receives, and in going with seeds to scatter that one returns with hands filled with harvest. Mary gives with generosity and receives with gratitude, so now her feet are dancing while the words are transformed into a song of praise "my soul gives thanks to the Lord".

Give us Mary the ability to leave the little we own and in the encounter with the many poor, make us capable of welcoming what they offer us and therefore capable of gratitude.

### 3) *The birth of Jesus*



"We have been given a son", the long promise that had passed on through the centuries and now finally this child, whom the mother's care takes in swaddling clothes and places in a manger. Luke's insistence on this detail invites us to sharpen our gaze and grasp something of the mystery of a child, who is the Son of Man. A gaze capable of wonder like the shepherds, awakened in their night; gazes of faith of those who come from afar following a star, and capable of faith they bend their knees before the new King; many other gazes during his years spent on earth, incredulity, doubts and questions and in the end we are back to the initial scene: this time wrapped in a sheet and laid in a tomb.

Mary "woman of the first glance", give us eyes of wonder capable of looking deeply, even when the light is not enough and doubts accompany us; eyes of faith in believing that as you are "Virgin Mother, daughter of your Son" we too discover ourselves "children in the Son".

#### *4) Presentation to the temple*



"They took the child to Jerusalem to offer him to the Lord"; not only a couple of pigeons or turtledove as an offering of the poor, it is the presentation and offering of everything they have, it is the oblation of their son. Mary makes this offering not just once, it is like a beginning that continues and unfolds throughout her life. The old Simeon finally sees the long-awaited salvation and in taking the child in his arms, he welcomes the offering made by the two pilgrims who went up to the Temple. The gift is then presented and welcomed, in Simeon's tired eyes that now light up, because this child is "light to illuminate the people".

May Mary make us capable of giving what is dear to us, may the sword of the Word made flesh in you also make our life a pure oblation "not sacrifice and offering, but a body you have given me: here I come to do your will".



## 5) *Finding of Jesus in the temple*



A few years later again in Jerusalem; we see that the children learn from their parents and follow in their footsteps, so Jesus goes up several times to the holy city, learns the way, the streets, gets lost in its alleys ... so then one day He will decide himself, in following the will of the Father that He "must go up" to Jerusalem. Once again we will lose sight of him and when, on the third day, we too, like Mary the Mother and Mary Magdalene, will be anguished in his search, and it will be He who will manifest Himself by calling us by name. Words of reproach from the mother to the son, which reveal her love and care, passion and dedication. The path that goes up to Jerusalem, but above all, Mary's pilgrimage of faith; between ups and downs, where the bewilderment not only physical of the Son, but also his own bewilderment and misunderstanding shared with Joseph, finds its place.

Mary teaches us your way of "keeping" in our hearts which will slowly lead us to grasp the plan of a God that goes beyond our plans.

## Mysteries of light

### *1) The Baptism of Jesus*



The mystery of a God who descends from heaven and becomes one of us, here is the Son of God immersed in the waters of the Jordan, a further step to say of his "immersion" in our human condition. A true Son of his people Israel, he retraces the fundamental stages of their history which becomes the history of Salvation. He too, like Israel is "called from Egypt" and now crossing the waters no longer of the Red Sea but those of the Jordan; the wonder of the Baptist expressed even more in that opening of the heavens, where a new revelation tells him of his identity "you are my Son, the Beloved, in you I am well pleased". This revelation that becomes for Jesus a further impetus in the Spirit to travel the many paths of us men and women, and to live their impulses and enthusiasm, mixed with doubts and refusals until the full revelation that we too are children in the Son.

Mary, you who are the mother of Jesus and our mother, sustain our uncertain steps and remind us of our being "beloved children", always called to come out of our Egypt and live a life no longer of servants, but of children capable of listening over and over again to the words that the Father continually whispers to us.

## 2) *The Wedding at Cana*



"A glass of wine is never refused", I remember this words as a refrain when as a child I observed the harvest and the wine served to overcome tiredness and refresh hearts. An essential element on the table together with bread, homemade wine which was then followed all the way from the cultivated vine, to the tasty bunches reddened by the sun, the harvest and then the pressing and the long wait for the must to mature for a good wine to be enjoyed thoroughly; a symbol of familiarity and celebration. In that of Cana of Galilee the expectation that the vine, symbol of the people of Israel, would bear fruit and therefore "wine that as a river would come down from the hills" clashes with the lack of it. It is the shrewd eyes of the Mother of Jesus who discreetly informs her son, and it is her heart as a woman capable of accepting the words that invite her to take a leap in faith. Full faith that is expressed in her words to the servants "Do whatever he tells you". Water is transformed into wine, through the words of Jesus and his mother, and in the obedient making of the servants.

Mary makes us attentive, eyes that know how to grasp the need of those around us, a solicitude that becomes solicitous in presenting everything to the Lord who comes as a bridegroom, and we servants obedient to His Word "whatever word" it may be. The wine must not be missing!

### 3) *The proclamation of the Kingdom*



The Gospel of Mark presents us with a Jesus who always seems to be in a hurry, "and immediately" returns as a continuous refrain that accompanies words and deeds as he moves through the villages of Galilee. A haste motivated by the time now fulfilled, the long waiting for the fulfillment of the words of the prophets finds in Jesus the expectation of the people. His first words say a situation that is given in fact "time accomplished and Kingdom near", it is up to us to accept the invitation, the indicative way becomes imperative "convert and believe in the Gospel". It is not our moral commitment that has the primacy in the economy of salvation; it is Jesus who makes himself gospel in his proclamation of salvation, the initiative is of God who had spoken many times in ancient times and now speaks to us in his own Son, a living Word.

Mary you who have been attentive to the Word, in your being listening and waiting for its fulfillment "let your word be done in me", make in us a listening heart. And when the Word proclaimed does not seem to find concreteness in our lives, then teach us the art of guarding/meditating so that our expectation may become prayer "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"



#### 4) *The Transfiguration*



Still a memory of childhood when following the Tour of Italy, many champions at the start in their immaculate uniforms and riding their bikes; starting together as a team. Crossing the peninsula many stages, and then the climbs up the mountains that made the difference, sweaty and short of breath, and almost always alone. The enthusiasm of the beginnings in that of Galilee, when a glance and a word "follow me" had been like fire on a barrel of gunpowder. Immediately, leaving behind affections and things, fascinated, in love, ready for a long journey of which the destination escaped. Now the ascent to Jerusalem wears out heart and limbs, the first announcement of passion, doubts and perplexities, legs that become heavy. And here then Jesus works as a team to lead them to the top of the mountain, where He will be confirmed "this is my beloved son" and the disciples reconfirmed in the need to keep listening: "listen to him".

Mary our elder sister you who have experienced the difficulties of the journey of faith, support us when doubts assail us and the climb becomes impassable, remind us that it is only in that "Shemha/Listen" that we will also experience our own Transfiguration.

## 5) *The Eucharist*



How many representations of the so-called Last Supper, from the most famous ones that attract crowds of tourists to the simplest but no less evocative ones. The synoptic gospels re-propose the details in a different way and sometimes with different accents, but basically it remains the surprise of a body that becomes bread and wine, food that feeds our hunger and thirst for Him. But it seems to be the Gospel of John that presents us with a fundamental interpretation; a Supper that can be called the last only because it is preceded by many other gestures that say the underlying reality: an original and continuous love. "Having loved his people who were in the world, He loved them to the end" A gift, therefore, last but not final, a full expression of a life of dedication and giving, after having given what one has, all that remains is to give what one is: a Eucharistic life, therefore, his own self. And so the many multiplications of bread, the only sign presented in all the Gospels, are Eucharistic. The dynamics of the whole gift in those four verbs which are like the refrain of a life spent in "taking, thanking, breaking, sharing".

Mary you who gave birth for us to your Son in Bet-lehem (house of bread) by offering him to the shepherds' gaze, to the veneration of the Magi, then offered him to the Temple and then left to give him to the world, support our offering made of things and even more than all of ourselves; make our lives Eucharistic, we who have been "chosen-loved-broken-donated".

## Mysteries of sorrow

### *1) Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*



The Jerusalem situated on the mountain, blazing with light, the mountain indicated by the prophet as the goal of all the Gentiles, the beloved bride, the place where God touches the earth, so for every one of the people of Israel, and even more so for Jesus who in his "passing by doing good" never loses sight of the place where to go up. His is a "long march" towards the holy city, trying to bring along his disciples with great determination, and yet this love is not reciprocated, it is not welcomed here. Here he is, therefore, prostrated in a continuous "struggle" between human and divine will, a true agony; He who found his food in God's will, finds himself experiencing loneliness, fear and anguish. And it is in this suffering and living the night of the spirit that he finds in himself his identity as Son, just as at the beginning of his ministry a voice from heaven called him "beloved son" now it is he who looks to heaven and says his filial abandonment "Abba, Father".

Mary accompany us on our journey among our impulses and convictions, supporting our perplexities, loved and comforted in the same struggle, let us always discover in a new way our being children of predilection.



## *2) Scourging to the column*



The "glory to God in the high heavens" had perhaps allowed us to consider once again a God living in heaven, omnipotent and exalted and who knows even isolated in his being. In his communication with men he has always used mediators, angels who in our imagination are characterized by wings, thus referring to heaven, capable of flying for their mission of proclaiming salvation, but then when the mission is accomplished they return to heaven. A sort of home visit on earth, but with residence in heaven. What, then, is a child of man by comparison? (Psalm 8) and yet ... Here is the wonder, the amazement that accompanies our experience of faith, Jesus Son of God, Son of Man who not only descends but enters deeply into our human experience, embraces all its dimensions up to that of suffering. Pilate in his dialogue with Jesus handed over to his judgment, glimpses the mystery of a King whose kingdom is not from down here, and on the other hand he prefers an evildoer. A king stripped of his royal and heavenly prerogatives and delivered into the hands of men; the Mediator between heaven and earth becomes High Priest "who has crossed the heavens and knows how to pity our infirmities.

May Mary who in the passion of your Son lived your own passion, your gaze as a mother who welcomed those limbs now scourged, be our own gaze, capable of recognizing in the sufferings of humanity, a dignity to be welcomed and guarded.

### *3) Crowning of thorns*



"Of glory and honor you have crowned him, you have placed everything under his feet", these regal attributes that we have always reserved for God, are referred to us men who, despite our smallness, are elevated to royal dignity and guardians of creation. This liturgy of our investiture is due to the "dispossession" of the King; "here is the man" a sort of affront and mockery that says the depth of the love of sharing for our humanity. The suffering God is the tangible sign of a love that has always been and remains forever. The mockery of the crowning of thorns says in backlight the descending into our midst of him who dwells in the heavens, and fixing his dwelling in our own flesh, "he is not ashamed to call us brothers". Pilate delivers him to the crowd, he is delivered into our own hands, while he as King and Priest offers us and entrusts us to the Father. An exchange that remains forever, because it is made with the authority of one who offers himself and suffer for each one of us.

Mary, who in the handing over of Jesus to the crowd, live the profound drama of a Son who is taken away from the Mother, accompany us in our personal sufferings and make us capable of making an offering that is a participation in Christ's own suffering.

#### 4) *Ascent to Calvary*



"Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and he will show us his ways" and from there the ascents of all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to celebrate the Lord who had opened a way in the middle of the sea, who had led them by the hand through the desert, their Passover of liberation. So also for Jesus, a son of Israel, first carried in his mother's arms, then by Joseph's hand, that mysterious event when he was twelve years old and was found only after three days of anguished search, then when he left in the company of the twelve, his struggle to take them with him, words and signs and so many times to lead the group; he in the lead and his disciples in the difficulty of keeping pace towards Jerusalem on the mountain. Here he is now all alone loaded with the cross in his last and decisive stage, on the mountain the salvation offered to all the people; along the way, after the fall, a Cyrenean helps him to bear the weight of the wood, whose load seems to weaken the torn body of Jesus.

Mary you who have experienced the many ascents to Jerusalem, beginning with that first solicitude that led you as if you were flying in haste towards the mountain of Judea, sustain our heavy steps when the momentum weakens and our strength seems not to endure any longer. Make us persevering in the ascent and capable of being Cyreneans for all those, who with us laboriously advance on the pilgrimage of faith.

## 5) *Death on the cross*



The crucifixion with two others, and "Jesus in the midst", the Word made flesh, He who has pitched His tent in our midst, he whose name is Emmanuel "God with us, God in our midst". Now on the cross once again "in the midst", he remains with us in the depths of human experience when pain is the master. Pain of the body and also of the spirit, when the "emptying" is total, when the descending of the God who dwells in heaven is like a precipitate: he did not consider his being God a jealous treasure, he assumes our human condition as a servant, obedient until death on the cross. It is a progressive stripping that leaves no room for any foothold, to the point of experiencing being abandoned by the one who, as Father/Abba, had supported his mission and the very identity of the beloved Son. A cry that now seems to deny that ultimate and fundamental relationship. And it is precisely at the end of this dark night of the soul that he reveals himself to be King, shepherd who takes care of every flock (inscription in the three universal languages of the time, all invited to recognize him as such).

Mary you, who in the death of your Son, experienced your own loss of identity as a mother, and in the abyss of pain you saw it transformed into the "pain of childbirth" because in Jesus' last words you generated new children to the life of the spirit, make us a heart capable of listening. Listening to that will that generates new life "Behold your son; behold your Mother".

## Mysteries of glory

### *1) The Resurrection*



So many stories of the Resurrection, with different protagonists, starting with the women who go to the tomb as the last act of love towards Jesus, angels between empty tomb and bandages on the ground, becoming a companion along the road that descends from Jerusalem, preparing food for the disciples who have returned to the work of the past, the disenchantment and sadness that in the encounter with the Risen One are transformed into renewed enthusiasm and joy of the rediscovered community. Of particular tenderness is Mary's search for the beloved in the garden where the tomb is now empty. The tormenting tears of a lost love and the anxious search for the beloved of her broken heart; here is the close dialogue between sudden movements and glances at first sad and then radiant with a joy that the heart cannot contain, and hands that want to grasp and hold. The reference to that beginning of John's gospel where Jesus turns to look at the first disciples with a question that motivates their vocation "What are you looking for?"; now at the end of this pilgrimage, the turning back is of Mary, the disciple who crosses the eyes of the Risen One and listens again to a similar but now entirely personal question "Whom are you looking for". From what to whom you seek, the relationship is not to the things of God but to God Himself in Jesus.

Mary, you who have experienced the pain of the Good Friday, the expectation of Holy Saturday and the bursting joy of the Word that opens our tombs, give us perseverance on the journey of faith until the personal and unique encounter with the crucified and risen Christ, it will be this encounter that motivates our renewed impetus and desire to proclaim to the other disciples "We have seen the Lord".



## *2) Ascension to heaven*



Our life seems to be always in a continuous movement: places to visit, new experiences lived between journeys in search of novelty, various movements and consequently always enriched in this ascent and descent, going and returning. How many round trips have opened us up to the new, questioned, revealing the truth about ourselves and what we consider necessary. And this continuous coming and going brings us back to the essential, then the baggage becomes lighter and lighter in order to have more freedom of movement. Jesus on his journey to and from: heaven, earth, Galilee, Jerusalem following the Gospel story. Then the announcement through the women to return to Galilee "there they will see me". Here they are once again climbing the mountain, their ears attentive to welcome the Word that makes them missionaries without boundaries, their eyes fixed almost as if they wanted to hold back that Jesus who completes his journey back to the Father.

Mary, you who are now our mother, remind us of the words spoken by Jesus in his farewell "I'm going to prepare a place for you", let this be the conviction that accompanies our going across the borders, in the confident hope of completing our round trip back home.

### 3) *Descent of the Spirit*



We witness a story of the Spirit which unfolds throughout the entire biblical story, its continuous presence in human events which therefore become a story of salvation. Beginning with creation itself "where the spirit hovered over the waters", then that spirit blown into that molded clay which is every Adam, the men of God made strong by the anointing of the Spirit, the prophets and kings who are enabled in their mission. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He sent me to proclaim the good and beautiful word to the poor", and from then on it is the sign of a choice by God to entrust to the weak hands of men the divine plan of communion between heaven and earth. Jesus himself whose story on earth always says of his election and mission in the anointing of the Spirit, he is the Messiah announced and awaited. That liturgy in the synagogue of Nazareth at the beginning of his public ministry is a model for every other vocation and mission. Thus Mary in the action of the Spirit becomes a mother and comes as if impelled to go further, to overcome every possible fear and distance. Here she is now as an elder sister to gather the scattered and fearful disciples, gathered in constant prayer and trusting expectation. Here is the Creator Spirit who now recreates that first fruits of the Church in the cenacle, it is wind to dispel fears, it is fire to rekindle their hearts with a passion that is the same as God's.

Mary with your help and guidance, gather us together in a spirit of unity, so that our Babel of divisions and separations may transform us into men of communion and mission.



#### 4) *Assumption*



Our life seems to take place amidst continuous waiting, beginning with that of our mothers, for the many long months in that womb amidst cares, desires and dreams. Mary herself "woman of expectation": waiting for Joseph her husband and the surprise of another announcement; the dream of every young lady to set up home and become bride and mother, and the surprise of another motherhood; the childhood of her Son filled with events that surprise and her waiting in trying to grasp the hidden meaning; the leaving home for the Son's wanderings through the villages and cities of Galilee and the expectation, like any mother, of his return home for good; the definitive ascent to Jerusalem that takes him to the cross and her waiting as "the woman of Holy Saturday". Now Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us, somehow anticipating, in the assumption of the Mother, the vocation of every man "chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and immaculate before him in charity".

Once again Mary you are waiting for us, as a caring mother that we too, your children, may be close to you, to find ourselves at home at last; may your Assumption be a stimulus to persevere on our journey of faith.

## 5) *Mary Queen*



"Listen daughter, give attention and incline your ear, forget your father's house, the king will like your beauty", the words of a psalm that seems to prefigure Mary's vocation and mission itself. She the Daughter of Zion, who in her humility as a servant captures the gaze of God's grace, inundated with so much grace, listens, "she incline the ear" icon of a "Shemah" that is the vocation of all people. This divine preparation and human disposition in Mary now make her Queen "daughters of kings are among your favorites; on your right hand side the golden queen of Ofir". Her song of praise, which magnifies God's action and His mercy which extends from generation to generation, finds now fulfillment, because she is called blessed from generation to generation; "he has overthrown the mighty from their thrones and raised up the humble" so here is the Mother raised to the throne. She is "graced" by God in his plan of salvation for all of us, she is now joined to her Son in making grace, dispenser of graces, whose kingdom it is to serve.

Hail Queen, you who, in receiving the crown of grace, have crowned your dream of availability to God's will, make us more and more aware of our royal vocation. "Rooted and grounded in charity, we can understand with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height and depth and come to know the love of Christ."

Salve Regina, mother of mercy, our life and our sweetness, salve!

