

Joyful mysteries of the rosary for the care of creation

“Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world.”*(Laudato Si’, 241, Pope Francis)*

The rosary

We face many challenges in caring for our common home, yet we are called to hope and joy and so we offer these joyful mysteries to nourish our commitment to care for the earth.

Guided by Mary, mother of Jesus and mother of all, may we be open to let these mysteries penetrate deep within us and respond with reverence for all God’s creation.

Begin by making the Sign of the Cross and saying 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

Pray one Our Father on the single bead nearest the cross.

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.

Pray one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads for an increase in faith, hope, and charity.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed are 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.

On the next single bead, pray the Glory Be.

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

The Annunciation

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you."

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God."

Mary said, "You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her. *(Luke 1:26-38)*

"Let it happen to me as you have said." Mary's courageous 'yes' to what God asks of her changes everything. She listens deeply to God's messenger and responds generously. Through her openness to God's will, God becomes human in the person of Jesus.

It must have been daunting to Mary, a young unmarried woman from an obscure town in Galilee, but she was willing to take the risk and to move forward, trusting that God would be with her as she nurtured and protected this new life.

In our world today the need to protect life is apparent. The rich ecosystem of the Amazon rainforest is home to over three million species and 25 per cent of modern medicines have been derived from the plants of our planet's rainforests.

Yet all of this is being destroyed at an alarming rate. When Claudelice Silva dos Santos was a child in Brazil the forest covered much more of the land, but illegal logging and deforestation for cattle ranching have destroyed vast areas.

Claudelice's brother, José Claudio, and his wife Maria do Espirito Santo were murdered after years of standing up for their rights and trying to protect the land from deforestation. Despite receiving death threats, Claudelice strives to continue her brother's work.

"The Amazon is our life," she says, "Jose Claudio and Maria were brave. I have to be brave. We keep their memory alive by fighting for the forest."

We all need some of Claudelice's courage and determination as we face the challenge of the climate crisis. Like Mary we remember that "nothing will be impossible with God" and we trust that he is accompanying us with love in our efforts to protect our common home.

As we pray this mystery, the invitation is to listen deeply to God and pray that, moved by the Spirit, we will be able to say an emphatic 'yes' to the urgent call to care for the earth and all its inhabitants.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray a Hail Mary on each of the ten beads of the decade.

Pray the Glory Be. You may also want to add the Fatima invocation:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell and lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need of thy mercy.

The Visitation

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. He has used the power of his arm, he has routed the arrogant of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly. He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his faithful love, according to the promise he made to our ancestors -- of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever." (*Luke 1:39-55*)

Mary, carrying within her God's promised child, journeys "in haste" to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant in her old age. The encounter of the two women is full of wonder, celebration and grace.

"Blessed are you among women," exclaims Elizabeth, as the child in her womb leaps for joy. In response, Mary proclaims the justice and mercy of God, whose concern is for the poor and marginalised and whose kingdom turns the worldly order upside down.

As we pray this decade of the rosary, we ask that, with hearts open to encounter, we may make haste in our mission to care for all creation. Standing in solidarity with our global family, may we live out Mary's Magnificat today.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray a Hail Mary on the each of the ten beads of the decade.

Pray the Glory Be. You may also want to add the Fatima invocation.

Birth of Jesus

Now it happened that, while they were there, the time came for her to have her child and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the living-space.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds out in the fields keeping guard over their sheep during the watches of the night. An angel of the Lord stood over them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said,

“Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” (*Luke 2: 6-12*)

In this mystery we celebrate the birth of a baby. A vulnerable child, born into a poor and oppressed community with little power. A vulnerable child, who is God with us. The birth of Jesus reminds us of the goodness of all life. In choosing to dwell among us, God affirms the holiness of the earth and his glory shines through all creation.

We pray that the incarnation may inspire us to see God more clearly in all his gifts – the beauty of nature, the food we share, the water we drink and the air we breathe. With this recognition, may we also possess a renewed sense of the interconnectedness of all creation and our shared responsibility for its flourishing.

As we reflect on this mystery, we pray that we will be a people who stand in solidarity with all creation, with the hope and compassion embodied by Jesus.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray a Hail Mary on the each of the ten beads of the decade.

Pray the Glory Be. You may also want to add the Fatima invocation.

Presentation of Jesus

Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to the restoration of Israel and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord.

Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: “Now, Master, you are letting your servant go in peace as you promised; for my eyes have seen the salvation which you have made ready in the sight of the nations; a light of revelation for the gentiles and glory for your people Israel.”

As the child's father and mother were wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Look, he is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed – and a sword will pierce your soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.”

There was a prophetess, too, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple,

serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came up just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem. *(Luke 2:25-38)*

For most of us the global pandemic has made the past year a time of waiting. It can be hard to hold onto hope as we face challenges and find many of our expectations shattered.

In this mystery we contemplate Anna and Simeon, waiting patiently, with hope in their hearts, for many decades. We are reminded of all those who are suffering, all the marginalised people who yearn for God's reign of justice.

We think of the people of the Pacific Islands threatened in recent years by ever more frequent tropical storms, the indigenous people of the Amazon fighting to protect the rainforest, the people in Bangladesh struggling to farm due to rising sea levels.

When Mary and Joseph arrive at the Temple, bringing with them two birds – the offering of the poor – Anna and Simeon can see what many others have missed. In this seemingly ordinary, humble family they recognise the glory of God.

Even as he gives thanks for the life he has been able to see, Simeon realises that the child is “*destined to be a sign that is opposed*”. The life and message of Jesus challenges the values of domination, excess wealth and violence.

As we pray this decade, we seek to place our trust in God's promises. We ask that we too may be signs of contradiction, witnessing to a vision of global community where all people and all creation may flourish.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray a Hail Mary on the each of the ten beads of the decade.

Pray the Glory Be. You may also want to add the Fatima invocation.

Finding of the child Jesus

Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When the days of the feast were over and they set off home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it.

They assumed he was somewhere in the party, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

It happened that, three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, “My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.”

He replied, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?” But they did not understand what he meant. He went down with them then and

came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and with people. *(Luke 2:41-52)*

Jesus' first words in Luke's gospel make clear his growing sense of vocation: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" This is the only story we have of Jesus' youth and reminds us of the importance of listening to young people's voice and experience.

Nine-year-old Milagros lives in one of the most polluted districts of northern Lima in Peru. The area also has a unique ecosystem, part of a chain of hills, the Lomas de Primavera, known as Lima's "green lung". Milagros is a member of a school-run eco-brigade and has spent time learning about climate change, biodiversity and protecting the Lomas. She has been involved in a forestation project, as well as clearing an area at school to create a garden. Milagros says,

"Planting plants here in the Lomas is very important because the plants give us oxygen. And looking after the plants is very important, particularly if we are unwell – the plants can provide medicine."

As we contemplate this mystery, we pray that we may listen to the voices of young people. May we be prepared to question and dialogue with those in positions of authority and grow in wisdom as we accept God's call to care for our common home, the earth.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray a Hail Mary on the each of the ten beads of the decade.

Pray the Glory Be. You may also want to add the Fatima invocation.

We end our care of creation rosary with a final invocation to our blessed Virgin Mary, and ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom:

Mary, Mother of all creation,
pray for us, that our meditation on these mysteries
may guide us into new ways of seeing the world,
new ways of living with creation,
new ways of being global neighbours.
as we seek to build the Kingdom to which your Son calls us.
Amen.