

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

For the souls of our fellow believers in Christ as we await the consolation of our Catholic Faith, the salvation of our souls.

Pastor Julian Harris

Between Our Lord's last appearance as a child of twelve at the Jerusalem Temple and His first appearance at the River Jordan as a candidate for John's Baptism lies a shadow. His teenaged and early adult years are hidden from sight. We know only this from the Fifth Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary:

Then He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

(Matthew 2:51-52)

Inspired by The Holy Spirit to raise our families to survive and prosper in the New Millennium, His Holiness Pope Saint John Paul II proposed an addition to the traditional form of the Rosary in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, The Rosary of the Virgin Mary (2002):

Moving on from the infancy and the hidden life in Nazareth to the public life of Jesus, our contemplation brings us to those mysteries which may be called in a special way "mysteries of light."

Today we know them as *The Luminous Mysteries* of the Holy Rosary of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. And by meditating on these mysteries, we contemplate with

Mary the face of Christ and ponder the events of His life as we look upon the faces of our children and wonder what they will become and how will we get there as a family.

As a prayer for peace, the Rosary is also, and always has been, *a prayer of and for the family*. At one time this prayer was particularly dear to Christian families, and it certainly brought them closer together. It is important not to lose this precious inheritance. We need to return to the practice of family prayer and prayer for families, continuing to use the Rosary...

***The family that prays together stays together.* The Holy Rosary, by age-old tradition, has shown itself particularly effective as a prayer which brings the family together. Individual family members, in turning their eyes towards Jesus, also regain the ability to look one another in the eye, to communicate, to show solidarity, to forgive one another and to see their covenant of love renewed in the Spirit of God.**

Many of the problems facing contemporary families, especially in economically developed societies, result from their increasing difficulty in communicating. Families seldom manage to come together, and the rare occasions when they do are often taken up with watching television...

The family that recites the Rosary together reproduces something of the atmosphere of the household of Nazareth: its members place Jesus at the centre, they share his joys and sorrows, they place their needs and their plans in his hands, they draw from him the hope and the strength to go on.

It is also beautiful and fruitful to entrust to this prayer *the growth and development of children*. Does the Rosary not follow the life of Christ, from his conception

to his death, and then to his Resurrection and his glory?
Parents are finding it ever more difficult to follow the lives of their children as they grow to maturity. In a society of advanced technology, of mass communications and globalization, everything has become hurried, and the cultural distance between generations is growing ever greater. The most diverse messages and the most unpredictable experiences rapidly make their way into the lives of children and adolescents, and parents can become quite anxious about the dangers their children face. At times parents suffer acute disappointment at the failure of their children to resist the seductions of the drug culture, the lure of an unbridled hedonism, the temptation to violence, and the manifold expressions of meaninglessness and despair.

RECITATION OF THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

Make the *Sign of the Cross* saying “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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. He will come again in glory 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.**

Say 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.**

Say *three time the Hail Mary*:

**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. – **3 times.****

Say 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 First Luminous Mystery
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

**And John the Baptist began to proclaim: “After me will
come One more powerful than I, the straps of whose
sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I
baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the
Holy Spirit. (Mark 1:7)**

At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?”

“Let it be so now,” Jesus replied. “It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way.” Then John permitted Him. As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. Suddenly the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!”

(Matthew 3:13-16)

John considered himself unworthy to untie Jesus’ shoes, but Our Lord would surpass him in humility as He would wash the feet of the Apostles. John’s greatness, and ours, consists in the fact that to him was given the privilege of running before the Lord and announcing: **Christ has come!**

John used the cleansing of a water baptism as a symbol of the washing away of sins. John had been baptized in the Jordan as a token of repentance, but he knew that his baptism did not regenerate or quicken the dead soul. That is why he said: **Christ will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire. (Matthew 3:12)**

When we meet Jesus in the Baptism, in the Holy Communion, in all of the Sacraments of His True Presence, there is awakened in us the deepest and most reverent humility. We feel the need of a Redeemer. How can the Redeemer Himself feel the need of cleansing and redemption, He who has no sin or shame? The purpose of His Baptism, the necessity and the urgency that He submit Himself to John’s Baptism is the same as the

purpose of His Nativity—to identify Himself, to unite Himself physically, spiritually, totally in Heart, Soul and Strength with sinful human beings like you and me. God with man, Creator united with His creatures, Grace and original sin embrace in that combat stupendous, and we rise:

We were buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

And again:

**For as He became man in order to undergo temptation, so also was He the Word that He might be glorified; the Word remaining quiescent, that He might be capable of being tempted, dishonored, crucified, and of suffering death, but the human nature being swallowed up in it the divine, when it conquered, and endured without yielding, and performed acts of kindness, and rose again, and was received up into heaven.
(St. Irenaeus, Against Heresies II:19,3)**

He took away our ruin, He gave us His glory; He became like us so that by faith and the power of the Holy Spirit, we might become like Him. As the Fathers said:

**God became man so that man might become god.
(St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation 54:3)**

OUR FATHER...

**The Second Luminous Mystery
THE WEDDING IN CANA**

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and His disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to Him, "They have no more wine."

"Woman, why does this concern us?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."

Now six stone water jars had been set there for the Jewish rites of purification. Each could hold from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water."

So they filled them to the brim.

"Now draw some out," He said, "and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not know where it was from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone serves the fine wine first, and then the cheap wine after the guests are drunk. But you have saved the fine wine until now!"

Jesus performed this, the first of His signs, at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. (John 2:1-11)

In the Holy Bible every warning of coming suffering and sorrow is accompanied by a flash of the joy and the glory of Resurrection that waits on the other side of the shame and the tomb:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:2-3)

The shadow of suffering falls upon Christ at His first miracle which took place in the village of Cana at a wedding, the occasion of much joy and celebration. As the Star shown in the form of the Cross above his Birth, so now the blood red wine that will flow from his pierced and ruined body is foretold in the cup of blessing and cheer raised to the future happiness of these newlyweds.

Christ will be the Bridegroom; His Church would be the bride. He has left His Father God; He has emptied Himself of all that it means to be God, and being born in the likeness of man, has entered into the form of a slave bound to the flesh. He does not fear to us—the Church—to be His Spouse—to become one flesh with Her, to unite Himself with Her, to lay down His life for Her, to render Her humanity capable of divinity.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a glorious church, without stain or wrinkle or any such blemish, but holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

And we who are members of His Body, the Church, are washed clean in the water and blood that gushes forth from the pierced side of Christ Crucified. The moment

of His greatest agony and death, it the occasion of our highest joy and eternal life.

Mary, His Blessed Mother, was present and set the clock in motion, the timer running down to the rendezvous with the Cross. She is the instrument of His first miracle. Hers is not a merely personal request as another member of the wedding party, a spectator's thirst for another cup: **They have no wine left. (John 2:3) No, Mary is already a mediatrix, the intercessor for her kinfolk, the embodiment of all the hopes and fears of ancient and future times; hers is the voice and pleading for all of us who are seeking the fullness of joy:**

**Then Mary said:
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!
For He has looked with favor on the humble state of His
servant. From now on all generations will call me
blessed. (Luke 1:46-48)**

OUR FATHER...

**The Third Luminous Mystery
THE CALL TO CONVERSION**

**Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Your loving devotion;
according to Your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me clean of my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.**

**Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones You have crushed rejoice.**

**Hide Your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Your presence;
take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
and sustain me with a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
and sinners will return to You.
(Psalm 51:1-13)**

The Bible says that God is close to broken hearts. Hard hearts broken and made soft by Christ for people. Broken things are precious. We break the Bread of Life and then we share it. As often as we eat His Body that is broken for us, we are made stronger. In eating we proclaim the Death of the Lord, because we share in the depth of our Lord and His broken life...and He in ours. When you feel broken, when it seems that your life is being squandered and poured out on the ground as if it were nothing, say this:

For I am being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but to all who crave His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Wounded hands give tender blessings. Broken Hearts are crushed, yes they are, but are capable of the most profound love: forgiving all things, suffering all things, accepting all things, especially one's own brokenness.

Crushed grapes like flower petals give off the most heavenly bouquet. A broken man on the side of the road became the means to a Samaritan's salvation. We call him good, because a broken down man with a broken heart pulled him. This is why broken things like broken hearts are so precious to God? Because it is the only way that Our Savior can get into our hearts, and you and me into His.

**The LORD is near to the brokenhearted;
He saves the contrite in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)**

**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and a contrite heart,
O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51:17)**

Jesus says: The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor in spirit. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised and bowed down. (Luke 4:18)

God is not the author of your heartbreak. It is a sad and hard truth, but heartbreak is a part of life in this fallen world. It's not a bad world; it's full of grace, but it's also full of heartbreak. From the beginning, it is there. Adam tilled the soil, and the sun burned him and the weeds resisted him. Eve's love for her husband created life in her, and pain in order to give birth to Cain and then to Abel. And those children became rivals, then enemies, then victims. Their children became heartbreaks. Only those you love can break your heart.

There is no human condition more alluring and ennobling, more capable of moving you to the deepest and most profound emotions, than a broken heart. It is not only a physical condition; it's a condition of spiritual exhaustion. Broken-heartedness comes from the experience of disappointment—with yourself, with life, with the ultimate tragedy when you stand before the bier of a loved one: your mother or father, sister, brother, child. God says that broken-heartedness is a fact of life. You cannot escape it and you should not try to repress it—it will only make you cynical and mean. We must say to men and women that failure is as much a fact of life as success; disappointment as fulfillment and Good Friday is as much a fact of life as Easter. At the moment of your greatest weakest and vulnerability, Jesus comes not to hurt you or to take advantage of you, but to heal you and help you on your feet to stand up amid the storms, inside and outside, and experience the peace that only God can give in Christ. You see, it is alright to fall on your knees before the Crucifix; it's holy ground, the Blood of Christ and the tears of broken hearted people like you water the ground and produce a golden faith, tried in the crucible of pain, yes, but capable enduring unto eternal life.

OUR FATHER...

**The Fourth Luminous Mystery
THE TRANSFIGURATION**

After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There He was transfigured

before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared before them, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will put up three shelters—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell face down in terror.

Then Jesus came over and touched them. “Get up,” He said. “Do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Do not tell anyone about this vision until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

(Matthew 17:1-9)

Important events take place on mountaintops, on high places above the world—in some sense, out of the world—where we can see clearly without the obscurity of the fog of life and the world’s pollution. Our Lord went up to the mountain to preach: **Blessed are the poor in Spirit, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven** (Matthew 5:3) They are mine, and I am theirs. Our Lord went up the mountain that His True and Divine Nature might be revealed to Peter, James, John and through them to you—you who have longed to see what the Apostles saw, but have not seen it but know it by the light of Faith:

We were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is My

Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16b-18)

Our Lord went up Mount Calvary to offer Himself in death so as He hung upon the Cross we might behold His glory which is God’s love on full display high above the world, but in the world, so that all might be drawn into Him and believe like the pagan soldiers who were there beneath the Cross to hear the Voice of Jesus crying out as He surrendered His Spirit: **The centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.” (Matthew 27:54):**

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:14-16)

In human beings, our bodies are a kind of cage of the soul. In Christ, His Body was the Temple of God. In the Garden of Eden, we know that man and woman were naked but not ashamed. This is because the glory of their souls before sin shone through the body and became a kind of raiment. Here on Transfiguration Hill, Christ’s Divinity shone through humanity. It was His true nature, and it took great restraint on His part to hide the Truth that was in Him, lest people make Him a prophet, a priest or a king; He’s none of these and all of these: He is God:

When the people saw the signs that Jesus had performed, they began to say, “Truly this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

Then Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and make Him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by Himself. (John 6:14-15)

Naked and ashamed before the searching eyes of man, Jesus Christ Crucified finally lets go of His flesh and His Human Soul so that God’s Glory is fully revealed at the moment of His saving death.

OUR FATHER...

**The Fifth Luminous Mystery
THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST**

**The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?**

**The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
whom shall I dread?**

**One thing I have asked of the LORD;
this is what I desire:**

**to dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,**

**to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and seek Him in His temple.**

5For in the day of trouble

He will hide me in His shelter;

He will conceal me under the cover of His tent;

He will set me high upon a rock.

**6Then my head will be held high
above my enemies around me.**

**At His tabernacle I will offer sacrifices with shouts of
joy;**

**I will sing and make music to the LORD.
(Psalm 27:1, 4-6)**

Some things in life are too beautiful to be forgotten, just as something in death is too beautiful, too cherished and too essential for life to be forgotten. Leaving nothing to chance, to the faulty recollection or prejudices of men, Our Lord Himself instituted the precise Memorial of His own death. He did this on the night of The Last Supper. He instituted His Memorial not because he would die and be buried, but because He would live again after the Resurrection. His Memorial fulfills all of the Law and the Prophets. He would be a Lamb sacrificed, to commemorate some ideological, political or social liberation, but Spiritual Freedom in a New Covenant between God and humanity ratified and sealed for all time in His Blood:

According to the law, in fact, nearly everything must be purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness...Just as man is appointed to die once, and after that to face judgment, so also Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await Him.

(Hebrews 9:22, 27-28)

Christ was born to die for sinners. It is for this reason that He came. And I count myself among that number, even the worst of them. As I gaze upon Him in the Sanctuary, hidden there beneath the Bread, caged in the Tabernacle made by human hands, high and lifted up on the Cross, I see Him gazing down at me with mercy, for I know what I do, and yet, He loves me. Such a love, such a perfect patience He has for me, is reason for all to

**come: All you who are world-weary and heavy laden,
come; all who are bone-tired, come and find rest for
your sin-sick soul. Come from the silence so long and so
deep, speak those words so sweet: Come unto me,
Come:**

**Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,
Make me a child again just for tonight!
Jesus, come back from the echoless shore,
Take me again to Your heart as of yore.
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads from my hair;**

**I am so weary of toil and tears, of dust and decay, weary
of flinging my soul away, weary of sowing for others to
reap, tired of the hollow, the base, the cheap, --Rock me
to sleep, Jesus, Rock me to sleep.**

(Paraphrase of Elizabeth Akers Allen, *Rock Me to Sleep*)

OUR FATHER...

Closing Prayers

Hail Holy Queen

**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.

Make the *Sign of the Cross*.