

# Reflections on The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

By Father Obinna Ifeanya CSSp





# The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

## Introduction

The National Catholic Broadcasting Council (NCBC) offers the faithful the Daily TV Mass which is broadcast across Canada and around the world each day. In addition to the Daily TV Mass, the NCBC, through the kindness of our donors, produces the yearly National Catholic Mission which is televised during Holy Week and is available on an ongoing basis on the NCBC website - [www.dailytvmass.com](http://www.dailytvmass.com).

This guide is based on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary Mission. To watch this National Catholic Mission or any of the past Missions please visit [www.dailytvmass.com/yearly-mission](http://www.dailytvmass.com/yearly-mission)

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# How to use this Guide

Fr. Obinna Ifeanyi, CSSp., is our guide through the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. Fr. Obinna is a member of the Spiritan Province of TransCanada and is a teacher in the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

This booklet can be used on its own or along with the NCBC's Holy Week Reflection program which is available on the Daily TV Mass YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/dailymass](http://www.youtube.com/dailymass)) or our home page ([www.dailymass.com](http://www.dailymass.com))

The video reflection of the Sorrowful Mysteries is a 30-minute meditation that includes a quote from St. Louis de Montfort, the reading of the relevant scripture passage for each mystery, a reflection from Fr. Obinna and the prayers of the Rosary.

To use this guide with your Rosary, we invite you to pray the Our Father, a Hail Mary (or a full decade), a Glory Be and conclude each mystery with the prayer requested by the blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima, which begins, "Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins."

If you are new to the Rosary, there is more information at the end of the book.

# The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

St. Louis de Montfort's life is inseparable from his efforts to promote genuine devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church. St. Louis shared with us that "when people say the Rosary together it is far more formidable to the devil than one said privately."

Let us now begin our journey through Christ's passion with the opening prayers of the Rosary.



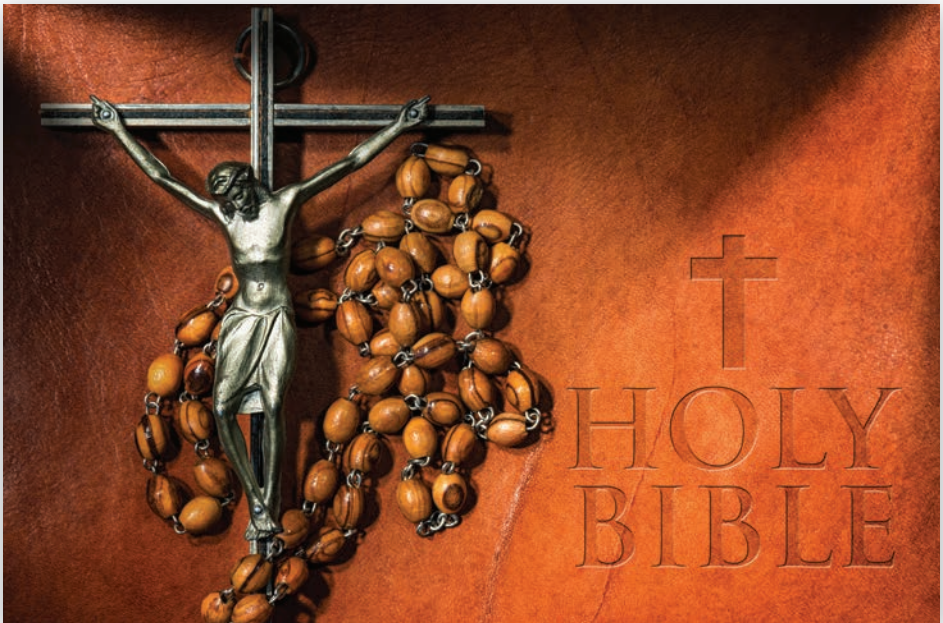
## Opening Prayers:

**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.

**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.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among 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.

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 Agony in the Garden



Pray the Rosary slowly...

*"To imitate Jesus more perfectly in his agony you could say your rosary more slowly... so that what was said of our Lord when he was in his agony of prayer may be said of you: he prayed all the longer."*

St. Louis de Montfort



# The Agony in the Garden

*He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."*

Mark 14:33-36 NRSV



## REFLECTION

The meaning of words can change over time. One example is the word “agony”.

Today, agony means sufferings of all kinds, physical and mental.

Before the 17th century, it meant something quite different. Agony was used to describe “a place of contest – a place of battle”, which originates from the Greek word agōn.

In Latin, the word for agony is “agora” which refers to a market-place or public square.

Therefore, the first sorrowful mystery, the “agony” of Jesus in the Garden ties together three ideas:

First, “Agony” as a place of contest.

Jesus’ struggle reminds us that life is a battleground between the forces of good and evil. Jesus’ love for humanity was repaid with betrayal, abandonment, rejection, and ingratitude. At the same time, Jesus’

conversation with the Father calls our attention to the stamina we need for life's journey, which comes to us through PRAYER.

Second, **"Agony" as a public square.**

Observing Jesus in the garden is a reminder that the Christian life is a public witness to Christian values and virtues exemplified in the life of Jesus. Sometimes, these values may be in total conflict with the morals of our society.

Third, **"Agony" as suffering.**

The pain and anguish of Jesus in the Garden reveal the salvific necessity of suffering. Here, suffering implies the "training" required for a competition or contest. The Mount of Olives is Jesus' training ground before the contest ahead of him, which is his passion and death.

Suffering is a part of human existence, and we often have our share of suffering in our lives, big or small.

As we join Jesus in the Garden, we witness that it is okay to ask God to take our sufferings away, but in doing so, we must leave the window of God's will always open.

The first sorrowful mystery challenges us to ask these questions:

- How prepared are we for the battle of life?
- How often do we accept the will of God even if it is contrary to our own desires?
- And, like the apostles, are we willing to accompany our friends on their journey, and do we fall asleep at the crucial moments of that journey?

**Join us as we pray:**

**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.

**Hail Mary**, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among 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.

**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.

**Oh my Jesus**, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy. Amen.

## THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY

### The Scourging at the Pillar



Pray the Rosary well...

*“When the Holy Rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer.”*

St. Louis de Montfort

# The Scourging at the Pillar

*Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.*

Mark 15:12-15 NRSV



## REFLECTION

In our world, the idea of human dignity is precious.

St. Pope John Paul II taught us that, *“There is no dignity when the human dimension is eliminated from the person”*.

Also, John Paul II reminds us that *“Our dignity is not rooted in our temporal existence, but in where we come from and where we are called to go.”*

In the Second Sorrowful Mystery, Jesus, the humble, innocent and voiceless son of God reminds us of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 13:13-16) who was also unjustly beaten and imprisoned in the Old Testament.

When Jesus was scourged at the Pillar, he experienced the elimination of his human dimension. Jesus was cruelly and dishonorably tied to a stake, beaten, spat upon, mocked and ridiculed.



It was a barbaric act intended to humiliate him, but for the sake of our redemption, he did not defend himself or reach out in anger at his torturers. Instead, Jesus humbled himself to share in our suffering and to share in our humanity.

Catholic Social Teaching calls on each of us to protect the most vulnerable, to stand in solidarity with others, and to protect the rights and dignity of all people. We are also called to stand with those who suffer modern day versions of scourging in the forms of abuse, unjust punishment, humiliation, fear, and with those who are voiceless.

**Join us as we pray:**

**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.

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**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.

**Oh my Jesus**, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy. Amen.

## The Crowning with Thorns



Pray the Rosary through the hands of Mary...

*"By this devotion we give to Jesus all we can possibly give him, and in the most perfect manner, that is, through Mary's hands."*

St. Louis de Montfort

# The Crowning with Thorns

*Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"*

John 19:1-5 NRSV



## REFLECTION

Pilate's exclamation "**Behold the man!**" pointing to the flogged and beaten Jesus is the climax of John's presentation of Christ's humanness. Jesus is truly the Word made flesh.

The third sorrowful mystery speaks to Jesus' identity as he goes into battle.

Jesus went into the fight (that was his passion) as a king, which is symbolized by the "Crowning with Thorns". In ancient times, a leader joined his army in battle, unlike today where they often sit miles away in their heavily guarded headquarters.

The crown worn on Jesus' head symbolizes his victory in the battle, even though it was intended as mockery by his executioners. Jesus wearing a crown and dressed in purple is a sign of an earthly king whose duty was to suffer to protect his people.

Jesus standing next to Pilate, in full view of the assembly of people, speaks to how the moral ground is shifting beneath Pilate's feet.

Jesus shows all of us that the one they call king, and who was crowned with thorns and dressed in purple is there to suffer for the people. Truly, Jesus is the King of the Jews and the King of the world.

Pope Francis reminds us that a true leader is a “shepherd living with the smell of the sheep”. This is the challenge for each of us in our various roles of ‘leading’ and ‘shepherding’ others. So, whether at home, at work, in our parish, in the community or as a politician, we must constantly ask ourselves how do we remain close to, and in defense of, those we shepherd?

**Join us as we pray:**

**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.

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**Oh my Jesus**, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy. Amen.

## THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

### The Carrying of the Cross



Pray the Rosary to reach Jesus...

*"[When we establish a] sound devotion to our Blessed Lady, it is only in order to establish devotion to our Lord more perfectly, by providing a smooth but certain way of reaching Jesus Christ."*

St. Louis de Montfort



# The Carrying of the Cross

*After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.*

Matthew 27:31-32 NRSV



## REFLECTION

The “carrying of the cross” combines two realities of the Roman era: a procession to war and a procession to celebrate victory returning from a battlefield. If Jesus went into battle (agōn) as a King, his weapon was the wood of the cross.

The journey to Calvary, with Jesus carrying his cross, is the journey into the battle of virtue against vice – a battle to topple sin and death and a duel between life and death (mors et vita duello).

Veronica wiped the face of Jesus along the way and Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his cross. The road to Calvary was not a lonely journey for Jesus, but it was painful.

The journey and the battles of life unfold in different shapes and dimensions for each of us. Our ‘crosses’ might come as persecution, abandonment by loved ones, unjust suffering accompanied by insults and humiliation.

In the midst of all these, there is also the consolation that often comes from unusual and mysterious places, represented in the life of Jesus by the woman, Veronica and the stranger, Simon.

It is often said, “If you want to know how much someone loves you – see how much they are prepared to suffer for and with you.”

We meet the face of Jesus on our journey every day. Let us not miss the opportunity to become the Veronicas or the Simons that lessen the burden of the crosses carried by those we meet along the way.

**Join us as we pray:**

**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.

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**Oh my Jesus**, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy. Amen.

## The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus



Pray the Rosary to connect with our God.

*“The miraculous way in which the devotion to the holy Rosary was established is something of a parallel to the way in which God gave his law to the world on Mount Sinai, and it obviously proves its value and importance.”*

St. Louis de Montfort

# The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

*When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." ...*

*One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

*It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.*

Luke 23:33-34,39-43 NRSV



## REFLECTION

The crucifixion of Jesus changed the meaning of death. "Crucifixion" was the death sentence handed out by the Romans to criminals and nobodies of the day.

The innocent sufferers of today and the prisoners of conscience have their hero in Jesus. On the cross, Jesus shows his solidarity with the nobodies through his death.

The crucifixion and death of Jesus is the final battleground, the victory of God over human power and authority. Even though Jesus died on that cross, evil and death do not have the last word because God will raise him on the third day.

As Christians who have been baptized into the death of Jesus, we are called to embrace the victory of life, which comes from the death of Jesus.

His death is an act of total commitment. Jesus places his life into the hands of God.



There may be no other lower point for a human being than to die alone or to feel tortured or abandoned by his or her God.

When we enter into the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus, we realize we are not alone.

One of my seminary professors often said that because of Jesus' Calvary experience, "no one can accuse God of being an outsider, distant, far away from our life".

Just as Jesus gave his life to redeem us, we must commit ourselves to making sure that our lives benefit others, and that evil, in whatever form it presents itself, does not have the last word.

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus may be the final Sorrowful Mystery, but it is not the end of the story.

Just before he dies, Jesus looks at the Good Thief on the Cross and says, "Today, you will be with me in Paradise". The word "Paradise"

is a Persian word used to describe a “garden”  
– a place of beauty, peace, and joy.

Jesus, in his pain and anguish, shows the  
criminal and us that God is full of mercy.  
If this criminal is given the gift of paradise;  
then the gift of paradise is available to us as  
well.



**Join us as we pray:**

**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.

**Hail Mary**, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among 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.

**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.

**Oh my Jesus**, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy. Amen

## Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy

Our life,  
our sweetness,  
and our hope.

To Thee do  
we cry, poor  
banished  
children of  
Eve. To thee  
do we send  
up our sighs,  
mourning

and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then,  
most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy  
towards 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.



# Holy Mary, Mother of God

Mary, Virgin and Mother, shows us what love is and whence it draws its origin and its constantly renewed power. To her we entrust the Church and her mission in the service of love:

Holy Mary, Mother of God, you have given the world its true light, Jesus, your Son - the Son of God. You abandoned yourself completely to God's call and this became a wellspring of the goodness which flows forth from him. Show us Jesus. Lead us to him. Teach us to know and love him, so that we too can become capable of true love and be fountains of living water in the midst of a thirsting world.

Pope Benedict XVI



## A Prayer to St. Joseph

Hail,  
Guardian of  
the Redeemer,  
Spouse of the  
Blessed Virgin  
Mary.

To you God  
entrusted his  
only Son;  
in you Mary  
placed her  
trust; with you  
Christ became  
man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself  
a father and guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,  
and defend us from every evil.  
Amen.





## Appendix 1: The Rosary

St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* reminds us that The Rosary is a contemplative prayer. The pontiff writes in section 12:

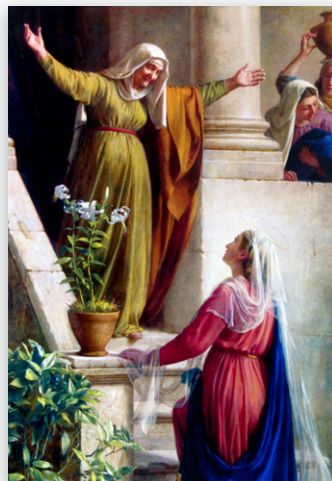
*The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without this contemplative dimension, it would lose its meaning, as Pope Paul VI clearly pointed out: "Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas, in violation of the admonition of Christ: 'In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words' (Mt 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are disclosed".*



The Rosary is made up of twenty “mysteries” (significant events or moments in the life of Jesus and Mary), which are grouped into four series.

### The Joyful Mysteries – prayed on Monday and Saturday

- The Annunciation
- The Visitation
- The Nativity
- The Presentation in the Temple
- The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple



### The Luminous Mysteries – prayed on Thursday

- The Baptism of Jesus
- The Wedding Feast at Cana
- The Proclamation of the Kingdom
- The Transfiguration
- The Institution of the Eucharist





## The Sorrowful Mysteries – prayed on Tuesday and Friday

- The Agony in the Garden
- The Scourging at the Pillar
- The Crowning with Thorns
- The Carrying of the Cross
- The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus



## The Glorious Mysteries – prayed on Wednesday and Sunday

- The Resurrection
- The Ascension
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- The Coronation of Mary

# 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.

## Praying the Rosary

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

- Make the Sign of the Cross
- Holding the Crucifix, say the Apostles' Creed
- On the first bead, say an Our Father
- Say one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads as we pray for: Faith, Hope, Charity
- Say the Glory Be

- For each of the five decades, announce the Mystery then say the Our Father
- While holding each of the ten beads of the decade, say the Hail Marys while meditating on the Mystery
- Conclude the decade by saying a Glory Be
- Upon the completion of 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.

After saying the five decades, say the Hail, Holy Queen.

Conclude the Rosary with the Sign of the Cross.

## Appendix 2: St. Louis de Montfort (31 January 1673 – 28 April 1716)



Montfort is known for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the practice of praying the Rosary. Montfort is considered one of the notable writers in the field of Mariology. His most notable works regarding Marian devotions are contained in *The Secret of the Rosary and True Devotion to Mary*.

*The Secret of the Rosary* is a small book written by St. Louis de Montfort which has sold over 5 million copies and is one of the top-ranking books on Marian theology.

St. John Paul II in ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE states, *“that it would be impossible to name all the many Saints who discovered in the Rosary a genuine path to growth in holiness. We need but mention Saint Louis de Montfort, the author of an excellent work on the [The Secret of the] Rosary.”*

The countless blessings of the Rosary according to St. Louis de Montfort:

1. Sinners obtain pardon;
2. Those who thirst are refreshed;
3. Those who are fettered are set free;
4. Those who weep find joy;
5. Those who are tempted find peace;
6. Those in need find help;
7. Religious are reformed;
8. The ignorant are instructed;
9. The living learn to resist spiritual decline;
- 10 The dead have their pains eased by suffrages.

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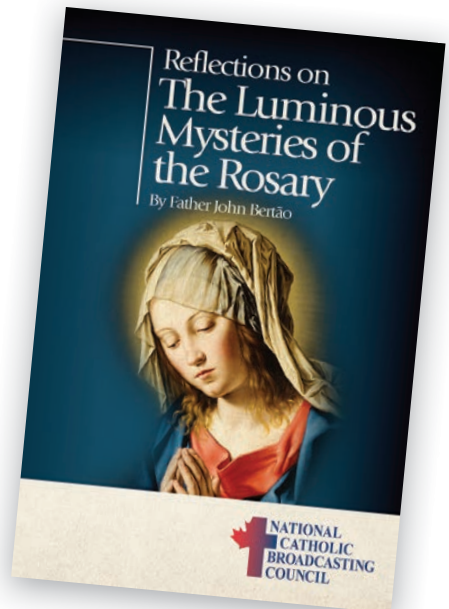
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Books for these Missions are available for purchase. For more information contact us at 1-888-383-6277.

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## Reflections on The Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary

Father John Bertão

Father John Bertão shares a reflection on the Luminous Mysteries. (Baptism of Christ, Wedding at Cana, Proclamation of the Kingdom, Transfiguration, Institution of the Eucharist). These newest of the Mysteries of the Rosary, established by St. Pope John Paul II in 2002, have been called “Mysteries of Light” and are messages of enlightenment and hope.



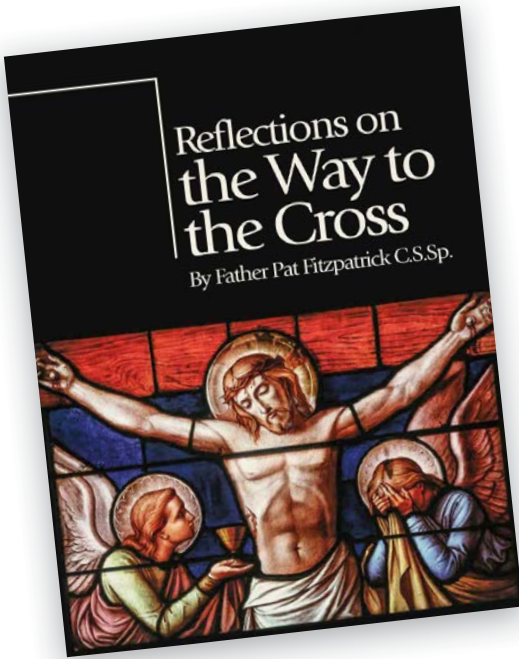
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# Reflections on the Way to the Cross

## Father Pat Fitzpatrick C.S.Sp.

We come face to face with Christ in those who suffer. Through these Stations of the Cross, we follow in Jesus' footsteps from Pilate's palace to Calvary. We mark ourselves with the sign

of the cross and walk with Fr. Pat Fitzpatrick on the way to the cross. This is not the traditional Way of the Cross, as it invites us to join with the faithful followers of Christ, especially his mother, and to enter into the passion and death of Jesus our Saviour.





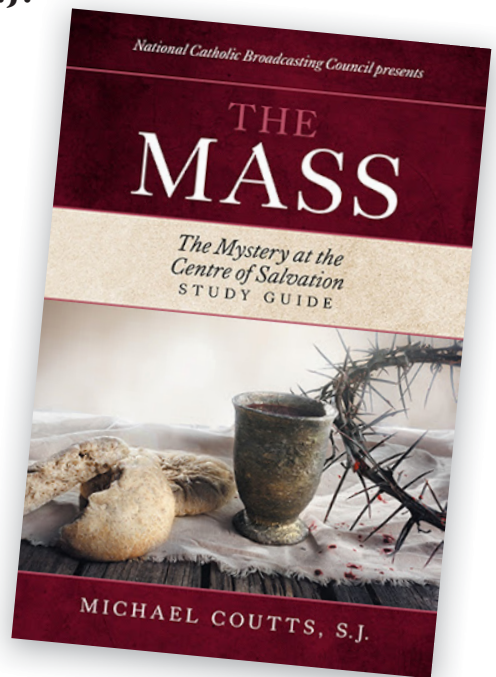
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# The Mass: The Mystery at the Centre of Salvation

Father Michael Coutts, S.J.

Pope Francis recently shared that:

“The Eucharistic Celebration is much more than a simple banquet: it is exactly the memorial of Jesus’ Pascal Sacrifice, the mystery at the centre of salvation... every time we celebrate this Sacrament we participate in the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.”



The Mission is divided into four talks:

Talk 1: An Invitation to the Lord’s Supper

Talk 2: Behold the Lamb of God

Talk 3: The Word of My Lord

Talk 4: The Gifts To and From God

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