



## BISHOP'S MONTHLY REFLECTION

### Jubilee Year of Hope

and the **ROSARY**

Reflecting on Hope within the Mysteries of the Rosary

#### THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

The Annunciation

Hope comes into this fallen world through the *fiat* - the "yes" - of the Virgin Mary. God who is Hope takes on flesh in the Incarnation of the Son of God through the power, the "overshadowing," of the Holy Spirit. The womb of Mary becomes the dwelling place of God. The True Presence dwelling within her - she - the Ark of the New Covenant!

The Visitation

Mary sets off on pilgrimage to witness the promise that has been fulfilled to Elizabeth and Zachariah. Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, carries within her womb the Hope of the world - the Messiah - who visits his faithful. The visit, the encounter, among the unborn- Jesus and John - signs of hope for the future. With the presence and sanctity of unborn life, there is a future of hopeful possibilities for the world.

The Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem

Hope is born into the world. The Infant Jesus redeems humanity and the cosmos. He brings hope to the hopeless. Restoration to a fallen world.

The Presentation of Jesus

Mary and Joseph, accompanied by Hope - Incarnate, journey as Pilgrims of Hope to Jerusalem to faithfully fulfill the Law as they present Jesus to God at the Temple. The True Presence of Hope returns to the Temple site in Jerusalem. Jesus, *the* Temple, is presented to Simeon and Anna. The long-awaited Promise to Israel is fulfilled in their encounter with the child, Jesus and his parents. Promises made; promises kept - our hope!

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Hope lost; Hope found. Desolation/Consolation. Hope is never truly lost. It is ever-present. We only need to search it out. By backtracking, searching, and retracing our steps on our path of faith, we can encounter the hope we have lost.

#### THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

The Agony in the Garden

Can we find hope in times of dread? In times of unanticipated, unavoidable suffering? Suffering in isolation? Lacking consolation & support of loved ones? In the midst of denial & betrayal? Well, Jesus did! Because he

courageously accepted the will of the Father and faced the agony of his impending suffering, he can assist us, empower us, to do the same when we are faced with agonizing life situations. Accepting and fulfilling God's will, will result in hope!

### The Scourging at the Pillar

Through the cruel and barbaric scourging of Jesus, we are made whole: "By his stripes, we are healed!" The hope of being healed of our sins by means of the patient suffering of the Son of God, the Innocent One, gives us hope. Through his perseverance, we have the hope of pardon & forgiveness of our sins.

### The Crowning of Thorns

Only the unconditional love of God has the power to transform the humiliation of mockery and suffering expressed in the coronation of the Messiah, with a crown of thorns. This sacrilege can surround and pierce the darkened minds of humanity with hope. By taking on "the mind of Christ," we can - hopefully - face the humiliations of life.

### Jesus Carries his Cross

How can the spectacle of shame of carrying a cross in public reflect hope for us? The carrying of the cross will result in the Resurrection! Our hope! But what happens along the way of the cross, the pilgrimage to Calvary, is filled with hopeful encounters between Jesus and particular individuals along the "way of sorrows."

Jesus accepts and embraces his cross for our sake - hope of redemption!

Jesus encounters and is encouraged by his Mother Mary - Our Lady of Sorrows and of Hope.

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross. Simon gives Jesus hope by assisting him with his burden.

Veronica is moved to act with love, compassion and courage for the sake of Jesus. She teaches us how we can be instruments of hope, "pilgrims of hope" on the way. By offering acts of kindness, we can encourage and give others hope to continue on their way of life's journey.

Jesus encounters the women of Jerusalem and in the midst of his suffering he offers repentance and hope to them and their children in his prophesying the fall of Jerusalem and her inhabitants.

Throughout the Way of the Cross, Jesus, in the midst of his three falls, continues to rise and move forward and persevere on his way to Mount Calvary. He teaches us through perseverance, hope is possible, no matter how difficult and discouraging the way may be in one's life. He sustains us to be steadfast!

### The Crucifixion

Jesus is crucified- the ultimate dread-end scenario. The end of the story! The shattering of the long-awaited promise to Israel. Total abandonment. The darkest moment in human history! "Game over!" But God does not abandon us, nor does he fail to fulfill his promises, nor does he annul his covenant with us. He is a God of Hope! Even through the disaster of the Passion and Death of the Son of God on a cross, we have assurance that we are redeemed, saved and fully restored to our rightful relationship with God through the glorious Resurrection of Jesus! His Love conquers all that had separated us from him - sin and death.

Through his death on the cross, we have been given hope. The Cross is our sign of victory, our sign of "jubilee," of Hope! For the sinner, the Cross is the Door that opens to Hope for those who are hopelessly immersed in their sins.

## THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

### The Resurrection

“Who will roll the stone away for us?” Yes, the stone and the sealed entrance to the tomb of Jesus. The “obstacle!” Sinfulness is the obstacle that prevents us from “crossing the threshold” out of the tomb - the door, the exit, opening up to a glorious jubilee of Risen Life! The power of the Lord of Life removes, shatters, the obstacle that stands between life and death. The Resurrection “seals the deal!” Hope for the world! - Hope for the human race! Easter Sunday = Hope

### The Ascension

The Ascension of Jesus points to the future - our future - Heaven - Eternal Life with God. He goes ahead of us in order “to prepare a place for us” - our future home - a new, a glorified existence. In the meantime, Jesus sends us out. He commissions us as “pilgrims of hope” to *evangelize*! We are to minister by sharing the Good News of the Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and promised Return of Jesus to a world that has lost hope and are estranged from God. The Ascension of the Lord = Hope for the future!

### The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Hoping, waiting and praying for the Advocate. The Promised Gift to be sent from God the Father and God the Son. The Gift that is Hope, Itself - the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete! The Life-Spirit, the Life-Breath, that is God who empowers, enlightens, guides and protects and assists us through his Gifts and Fruits. All of this enables us to grow in holiness and become more Christ-like! The Descent of the Holy Spirit “renews the face of the earth” with Hope!

### The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

She, conceived without sin, the Immaculate Conception, the Blessed Virgin, is a model of hope for us. She, Our Lady of the Rosary, leads us to her Son who is the Hope of the world. What she now experiences in Heaven, we await - our future hope - the glorification of our body and soul! Our hope, and God’s desire for us, is to be with him eternally. His intention, all along, was not to have the grave, the tomb, to be our final resting place. Our Lady, the New Eve, is the first to be granted such a grace!

### The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

As Our Lady takes her seat at the right hand of her Son, Jesus. She is acknowledged and honored as the Queen Mother. The “Great Lady” of Israel (Gebirah). She is crowned and reigns as Queen of Heaven and Earth. She is Queen of the Kingdom of Hope. She intercedes for us to her Son, Christ the King. Her powerful prayer for humanity is unlimited due to the glorification of her body and soul through the power of the Blessed Trinity. She is truly Our Lady of Hope, Our Mother of Hope, the Queen of Heaven and Earth!

“Mary is God’s plan of salvation. She is the new mother of all who live, the ark of the new covenant, the royal mother of the Messiah. Since the Annunciation, Mary’s task was to give birth to Christ, to nourish and protect him as he grew into a man. Likewise, since the crucifixion, Mary’s task is to give spiritual birth to Christians, to nurture, guard, and guide them into the full stature of Christ. The royal mother of the Messiah is the queen of heaven on earth.” (Mary - Royal Mother of the Messiah - Stephen J. Binz)

## THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

### The Baptism of the Lord at the River Jordan

Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan identifies him as the Lamb of God, the Messiah. John baptism prepares Jesus for the Father’s mission with the Holy Spirit sending him out into the desert, the wilderness, to be tested, tempted, by Satan. Of course, the Son of God had no need to receive a baptism of repentance, but he wanted to unify himself to our human reality.

The Baptism we received is different. We were baptized, immersed, in the hope that is found in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. We were buried in the waters, dying to sin and death and rising out of the waters of death to New Life - Risen Life in Christ! Without this “dying and rising” - the Paschal Mystery - there is no hope for us. Being baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit initiates us into the Body of Christ, the Church. Within the Church, that Jesus established, there we will be spiritually protected and nourished, thus, growing in holiness. Within the Barque of Peter, there is Hope! Salvation! Thanks be to God for the living waters of the Sacrament of Hope - Baptism!

#### The Miracle at the Wedding Feast of Cana

A wedding feast without wine? A hope filled celebration is interrupted by a hopeless situation - “They have no wine!” What an embarrassment! What a disaster for the hosts, not to mention the bride and groom! Through the bidding, the intercession, of the Mother of Jesus, there is hope. She informs Jesus of the situation and asks him to do something about it and his response is: “My hour has not yet come.” But, because she has initiated this request, Jesus performs the first of his “signs” as the Messiah. Mary, the Queen Mother, and intercessor of the people, approaches her Son, the King. She, then, instructs - “Do whatever he tells you.” The result- Jesus’ first miracle - water into wine - an abundance of the choicest of all wines! Mary’s intercession brings hope to what could have been a hopeless and socially devastating situation.

#### The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

There are two kingdoms: the Kingdom of this World and the Kingdom of God. One is limited - the other - unlimited in what it can offer. One driven by falsehoods, the other, grounded in Truth! One will lead to an eternal dead-end. The other, to eternal life! So, we are mandated by the Lord to proclaim the Good News of this Kingdom of Life and Love. A Kingdom, a civilization, that upholds a culture of life vs.. a culture of death. The Kingdom Jesus offers us is a kingdom filled with the hope of a future and life with him. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Hope!

#### The Transfiguration

Jesus reveals his divinity to his Apostles in order to prepare and strengthen them for what is coming - his Passion and Death. This “showing” is to give them hope for the future when things will appear to them to be hopeless. Jesus, in his transfiguration, converses with Moses and Elijah about his future impending suffering, death and resurrection as the Messiah. The point of the Transfiguration is this: No matter how dark and disappointing life may become, we, like the Apostles, need to hold on to hope, no matter what! Hope, the power to spiritually *transfigure*” us!

#### The Institution of the Eucharist

The New Covenant in his Body and Blood - the Eucharist! Jesus institutes the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper. He wants to assure us that he will sustain and nourish us in this unique way. He took on flesh, was incarnated in the womb of the Virgin Mary and was born of her. For that reason, she is truly Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady of the Eucharist! Jesus instituted the Eucharist in order to give us the hope that he will remain with us until the end of the world! At the celebration of every Mass we are assured of this as we remember: “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!” The Holy Eucharist is our Hope!

#### CLOSING PRAYER

With confidence, let us pray to the Father, who willed that the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary, should surpass all creatures in heaven and on earth:

Look upon the Mother of your Son and hear our prayer.

We are grateful to you,

Father of mercy, for you  
gave us Mary to be our  
Mother and our model,  
through her intercession cleanse, our hearts.

You inspired Mary to be  
attentive to your word  
and faithful in your  
service, through her intercession  
give us the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

You strengthen Mary  
at the foot of the cross  
and filled her with joy at  
the resurrection of your Son,  
through her intercession relieve our  
distress and strengthen our *hope*.

Look upon the Mother of  
your Son, Our Lady of Hope, and hear our  
prayer. Amen. (Intercessions - Liturgy of the Hours)

A handwritten signature in black ink, preceded by a small cross symbol. The signature appears to read "Bishop J. Cotta".

Bishop Cotta