The Rosary with Meditations from the Writings of St. John Paul II
Sorrowful Mysteries

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader:

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.

All:

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.

Leader: Let us pray for an increase in the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Leader & All:

Our Father….

Hail Mary….(3x)

Glory Be…

Reader:

The First Sorrowful Mystery: The Agony in the Garden

"He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.' "

We read in the Letter to the Hebrews: "In the days when he was in the flesh, (Christ) offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to God, who was able to save him from death" (Heb 5:7). These words have special application to the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prayed: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by" (Mt 26:39–42). The author of the Letter to the Hebrews immediately adds that Christ "was heard because of his reverence" (Heb 5:7). Yes he was heard. He had said, "not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26:39). And so it came to pass. The agony of Christ was, and still is, the mystery of his obedience to the Father. *At Gethsemane. On Calvary*. "Son though he was," the text continues, "he learned obedience from what he suffered" (Heb 5:8). This includes Christ's obedience even unto death — the perfect sacrifice of Redemption. "And when perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Ibid. 5:9).

Leader & All:

Our Father…

Hail Mary…(10x)

Glory Be…

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

Reader:

The Second Sorrowful Mystery: The Scourging at the Pillar

"Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged."

For many people the scourging of the Lord became the decisive reason for their determination to break the bonds of sin, the reason for mortifying the concupiscence of the flesh, for turning their desires towards the noble and the holy. "I treat my body sternly and keep it under control" (1 Cor 9:27) wrote St. Paul, and many others have said the same thing and stressed it by their behavior. "The flesh has desires that run counter to those of the spirit" (Gal 5:17). "If you live according to the flesh you will die; but if through the spirit you put to death the impulses of the body you will live" (Rom 8:13).

Leader & All:

Our Father…

Hail Mary…(10x)

Glory Be…

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

Reader:

The Third Sorrowful Mystery: The Crowning with Thorns

"Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'"

The torture inflicted on the Savior's head was a terrible one. It is an unforgettable torture, this one chosen by the soldiers for their mockery of the king of the Jews. The crown of thorns on the head of the condemned man whom Pilate had been unable to save from the crowd (cf. Mt 27:11–26) was particularly significant. Pilate had him brought out for the crowd to see in just that condition, crowned with thorns; he showed them all his humiliation and said: "Here is the man" (Jn 19:5). … Precisely. All the kingliness of man, all man's dignity — which Jesus came to express and renew — are here summed up in him. Now it is well known that this is a kingliness that is frequently overpowered, hurled to the ground and thrust deep into the mud. It is also well-known that this is a dignity that is subjected to many kinds of humiliation. We are reminded by the second Vatican Council … that Jesus came in order to reveal the kingliness of man. And here, visible to the whole of humanity, stands Jesus crowned with thorns! The price paid for dignity is the blood of the Son of God!

Leader & All:

Our Father…

Hail Mary…(10x)

Glory Be…

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

Reader:

The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery: Jesus Carries His Cross

"A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him."

The cross. The instrument of a shameful death. It was not lawful to condemn a Roman citizen to death by crucifixion: it was too humiliating. The moment that Jesus of Nazareth took up the Cross in order to carry it to Calvary marked a turning-point in the history of the cross. The symbol of a shameful death, reserved for the lowest classes, the cross *becomes a key*. From now on, with the help of this key, man will open the door of the deepest mystery of God.

Through Christ's acceptance of the Cross, the instrument of his own self-emptying, men will come to know that *God is love*. Love without limits: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). This truth about God was revealed in the Cross. Could it not have been revealed in some other way? Perhaps. But God chose the Cross. The Father chose the Cross for his Son, and his Son shouldered it, carried it to Mount Calvary and on it offered his life. "In the Cross there is suffering, in the Cross there is salvation, in the Cross there is a lesson of love. O God, he who once has understood you, desires nothing else, seeks nothing else" (Polish Lenten hymn). The Cross is the sign of a love without limits!

Leader & All:

Our Father…

Hail Mary…(10x)

Glory Be…

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

Reader:

The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: The Crucifixion

"Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'; and when he had said this he breathed his last."

Why are the Cross and the Crucified One the doorway to eternal life? Because in him — Christ crucified — is manifested to the full the love of God for the world, for man. In … conversation with Nicodemus, Christ says: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved" (Jn 3:16–17). The salvific lifting up of the Son of God on the Cross has its eternal source in love. This is the love of the Father that sends the Son; he gives his Son for the salvation of the world. And at the same time it is the love of the Son who does not "judge" the world, but gives himself for the love of the Father and for the salvation of the world. Giving himself to the Father through the Sacrifice of the Cross, he gives himself at the same time to the world: to each person and to the whole of humanity. The Cross contains in itself the mystery of salvation, because, in the Cross, Love is lifted up. This is the lifting up of Love to the supreme point in the history of the world: in the Cross Love is lifted up and the Cross is at the same time lifted up through Love. And from the height of the Cross, love comes down to us. Yes: "The Cross is the most profound condescension of God to man. … The Cross is like a touch of eternal love upon the most painful wounds of man's existence" (*Dives in Misericordia*, 8).

Leader & All:

Our Father…

Hail Mary…(10x)

Glory Be…

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

Leader & All:

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 valley 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.

Leader: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader:

Let us now join in offering one of the prayers provided by Pope Francis for completing the Rosary during this month of special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

"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.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

The meditations for each decade of this Rosary, drawn from the homilies and writings of St. John Paul II, are taken from the book Praying the Rosary with St. John Paul II, by Gretchen R. Crowe (OSV Press, 2019) and used with the author's permission.