



Catholic Diocese of Richmond
1820 Bicentennial 2020

BICENTENNIAL ROSARY OF THE DIOCESE OF RICHMOND

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

This Rosary was originally prayed during the pilgrimage of the Diocese of Richmond to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC on October 12, 2019, in preparation for the bicentennial jubilee.

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INTRODUCTION

(Leader)

The Rosary, as Pope St. John Paul II explained, is based on Mary’s personal experience:

Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word...
 The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her...
 In a way those memories were to be the “rosary”
 which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life. ...
 They inspire her maternal concern for the pilgrim Church,
 in which she continues to relate her personal account of the Gospel.
Mary constantly sets before the faithful the “mysteries” of her Son,
 with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries
 will release all their saving power.
 In the recitation of the Rosary,
 the Christian community enters into contact with the memories
 and the contemplative gaze of Mary.¹

So, the Rosary poignantly expresses Mary’s closeness—her communion—with Christ.

This, too, is what we seek as a Church.

The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary are normally prayed on Saturdays and Mondays. They can also be prayed on other days, especially during Advent and Christmas.²

The Joyful Mysteries occupy a special place in the Rosary.

Historically, at first only the Annunciation was recalled as sets of Hail Marys were recited within early forms of the Rosary.

Later, other mysteries were added.

The Joyful Mysteries refer to the events surrounding the Incarnation:

¹ Pope St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Most Holy Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Marie* (2002), no. 11.

² Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (2001), no. 200; Pope St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Most Holy Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Marie* (2002), no. 38.

God's coming among us in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Joyful Mysteries focus on the infancy and early years of Christ's life.

But these events already point to the reason why God sent his Son into the world: to suffer, die, and be raised for the forgiveness of our sins.³

So, the joy we ponder is sober—
it is tinged with sadness—
as it often is in our lives.

Today we meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary
in light of our bicentennial history as a diocese (1820–2020).

Here we can glimpse the work of God in the life of our local Church
over the course of centuries,
which encourages us to deepen our relationship with God
and our commitment to the Church.

³ Pope St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Most Holy Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Marie* (2002), no. 20.

Sign of the Cross

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.

Our Father

Hail Mary (3x)

THE FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY

(Leader)

The First Joyful Mystery: the Annunciation

(Participant 1)

In the sixth month,
the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David,
and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, he said,

“Hail, favored one!

The Lord is with you.”

But she was greatly troubled at what was said
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her,

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

But Mary said to the angel,

“How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?”

And the angel said to her in reply,

“The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High
will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,

has also conceived a son in her old age,

and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God.”

Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word.”

Then the angel departed from her (Luke 1:26–38).

(Participant 2)

On September 10, 1570,
eight Jesuit missionaries from Spain,
led by Father Juan Baptista de Segura,
and a boy, Alonso de Olmos, disembarked near the future site of Williamsburg.

Native Americans of the Chiskiack tribe,
led by Don Luis de Velasco,
an indigenous guide who betrayed the priests and religious brothers,
killed these men between February 4 and 9, 1571.

The first announcement of the Gospel in the territory that became Virginia
was also the supreme witness to the Good News: martyrdom.

The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary was a joyful event
because it heralded the coming of a Savior,
but at first it left Mary feeling afraid and bewildered.

Despite the startling news from the angel,
Mary responded generously to God
and became an exemplar of faith:
“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word.”

Following the example of Mary,
and grateful for the witness of the Jesuit Martyrs of Virginia,
we seek to bear witness to the Gospel by all that we say and do.

(Leader)

Our Father...

Hail Mary... (x10)

Glory Be...

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of Hell
and lead all souls to Heaven,
especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

THE SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY

(Leader)

The Second Joyful Mystery: the Visitation

(Participant 1)

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Luke 1:39–45).

(Participant 2)

An outbreak of yellow fever devastated Norfolk and Portsmouth in the summer of 1855, claiming three thousand lives.

Two priests, Father Matthew O’Keefe (1828–1906) in Norfolk and Father Francis Devlin (1813–1855) in Portsmouth, courageously alleviated the sufferings of both Catholic and Protestant victims.

Father O’Keefe was infected twice and survived; Father Devlin died from the pestilence.

These heroic acts of charity, and others like them, lessened anti-Catholic bigotry in the region.

The Virgin Mary had just received the news that she would bear the Son of God.

The angel had also just told Mary that Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her pregnancy.

Instead of focusing on herself, Mary went to assist her cousin Elizabeth.

Mary’s awareness of Elizabeth’s condition, and her desire to be of help, was the occasion for her bringing Christ to another person.

Inspired by Mary’s example, which holy men and women have emulated throughout the history of our diocese, we seek to make Jesus Christ present in the world by caring for people in need.

(Leader)

Our Father...

Hail Mary... (x10)

Glory Be...

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of Hell
and lead all souls to Heaven,
especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

THE THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY

(Leader)

The Third Joyful Mystery: the Nativity

(Participant 1)

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.
When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,
but before they lived together,
she was found with child through the holy Spirit.
Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,
yet unwilling to expose her to shame,
decided to divorce her quietly.
Such was his intention when, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,
“Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.
For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.
She will bear a son
and you are to name him Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins.”
All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:
“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means “God is with us” (Matthew 1:18–23).

(Participant 2)

Pope Pius VII established the Diocese of Richmond on July 11, 1820.

The birth of our local Church took place under difficult circumstances: a schism or formal division among believers had arisen in Norfolk over the question of the ownership of Church property and the authority to appoint pastors.

Furthermore, the small communities of Catholics in Virginia were far flung and mostly poor.

These were the challenges that Patrick Kelly faced when he came from Ireland as the first bishop of Richmond.

The Norfolk Schism eventually died of its own accord, but then Bishop Kelly had to open a school in order to support himself.

He returned to Ireland after just a year and half in Virginia, having never reached Richmond.

The diocese was then placed under the administration of the archbishop of Baltimore for the next nineteen years (1822–1841).

When Christ was born, God entered the world and fully embraced our human nature.

Jesus associated himself with all aspects of humanity, except for sin.

Christ came into the world to lead us to God.

Life has never been easy:
neither for our forebears,
nor for ourselves,
nor even for the Son of God.

But we rejoice because God accompanies us,
he rescues us from sin and death,
and he enables us to share in his life and love.

Knowing that we are never alone banishes our fear and hesitation,
emboldening us to live supremely for God
in all of the circumstances of daily life.

(Leader)

Our Father...

Hail Mary... (x10)

Glory Be...

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of Hell
and lead all souls to Heaven,
especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

THE FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

(Leader)

The Fourth Joyful Mystery: the Presentation in the Temple

(Participant 1)

When the days were completed for their purification
according to the law of Moses,
they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord...
Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.
This man was righteous and devout,
awaiting the consolation of Israel...
He came in the Spirit into the temple;
and when the parents brought in the child Jesus
to perform the custom of the law in regard to him,
he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:
“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace,
according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and glory for your people Israel.”
...Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,
“Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be contradicted
(and you yourself a sword will pierce)
so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”
(Luke 2:22, 25, 27–32, 34–35).

(Participant 2)

February 7, 1920:

Francis J. Parater III (1897–1920), a seminarian of the Diocese of Richmond studying at the North American College in Rome, dies unexpectedly at the age of twenty-two.

Frank had led a devout life in his native Richmond since childhood.

He was also well-rounded, having become involved in scouting and attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.

After his death, a classmate discovered a testament in which Frank Parater professed his great love for God and the Church:

I have offered everything I have—everything—
for the conversion of the non-Catholics of Virginia.
This is what I live for, and, should I die, what I die for.
...Since I was a child I have wanted to die for the love of God
and for my fellowman.
I do not know whether I shall ever receive such a grace;
but if I do live, it will be for the same end.
Every act of my life here is offered for God,
that the Church may spread and prosper in Virginia.

The dedication of the Christ Child in the Jerusalem Temple brought joy and consolation to Simeon.

But Simeon also prophesied that difficulties and struggles lay ahead for the Son of God, for his Mother, and, in a sense, for all Christian disciples.

Our dedication to God brings us joy, fulfillment, and purpose.

These consolations help us to live out our commitment to the Lord amid hardships, fatigue, and illness.

The saintly example of Frank Parater encourages us to place God at the center of our lives, and to wholeheartedly love the Church, which is God's family.

(Leader)

Our Father...

Hail Mary... (x10)

Glory Be...

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of Hell
and lead all souls to Heaven,
especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

THE FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY

(Leader)

The Fifth Joyful Mystery: the Finding of the Boy Jesus in the Temple

(Participant 1)

Each year
his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover,
and when he was twelve years old,
they went up according to festival custom.
After they had completed its days, as they were returning,
the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem,
but his parents did not know it.
Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day
and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances,
but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.
After three days
they found him in the temple,
sitting in the midst of the teachers,
listening to them and asking them questions,
and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.
When his parents saw him, they were astonished,
and his mother said to him,
“Son, why have you done this to us?
Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.”
And he said to them,
“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 said to them.
He went down with them and came to Nazareth,
and was obedient to them;
and his mother kept all these things in her heart.
And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor
before God and man (Luke 2:41–52).

(Participant 2)

When the Civil War began (1861–1865), John McGill, the third bishop of Richmond (1850–1872), was unable to visit or even govern parts of our diocese.

Consequently, members of the Redemptorist religious order from Annapolis, Maryland began providing spiritual care to Union soldiers stationed at Fort Monroe in Hampton.

Among the priests who celebrated Mass, heard confessions, and cared for the sick was Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos [**SAY-LOES**] (1819–1867), a missionary from present-day Germany, who ministered at the installation for a brief time beginning in December 1862.

Father Seelos [**SAY-LOES**] described his experience in Virginia in a letter to his brother:

I got a call to go to Fortress Monroe—
 you have probably often read about it in the papers during this unholy war—
 to give spiritual help
 to the unfortunate soldiers in the hospital there.
 ...All were moved to tears,
 and often the words were repeated
 that the appreciative soldiers addressed to me in gratitude:
 “God bless you!”
 ...I was richly repaid by the fine attitude of the soldiers,
 most of whom had not been to confession for three or four years.
 For many it was even longer...
 And so you see... that my stay there was very much needed.

Mary and Joseph frantically searched for their Son,
 and when they found him,
 they did not understand why he had remained behind in Jerusalem,
 despite his explanation.

For his part,
the boy Jesus felt compelled to be in the Temple,
engaged in both learning and teaching.

Perhaps he wished to remain there longer,
but he returned with his parents to Nazareth
out of obedience to them.

Often enough,
we do not understand why things happen:
whether they are large-scale events like war and suffering in the world,
or smaller-scale events
such as difficulties in our own life.

The example of the Boy Jesus,
and that of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos [SAY-LOES],
teach us to carry out the will of God
by doing what is in front of us,
the things we know are right—
even when they are hard,
and even when we do not fully grasp their significance.

(Leader)

Our Father...

Hail Mary... (x10)

Glory Be...

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of Hell
and lead all souls to Heaven,
especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

CONCLUSION

(Leader)

The motto of our diocesan bicentennial
is an exhortation from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians:
“Shine like stars in the world,
as you hold fast to the word of life” (2:14–15).

The Virgin Mary shines brightly with the holiness of God;
she carried the word of life within her,
and she clung to that same word
as the first and perfect Christian disciple.

Within the Church,
Mary is the star of the highest magnitude
because of her outstanding faith and charity.⁴

In these ways, she exemplifies the Church,
which is meant to be, like her,
both virgin and mother.

The Church is a virgin
in the sense of being totally dedicated to God;
the Church is a mother
in the sense of generating supernatural life in her members
through the preaching of the Word of God
and the celebration of the sacraments.⁵

This is the mission of the Church:
to put people in touch—in communion—with God.

For centuries,
the Church has invoked Mary as *stella maris*:
the Star of the Sea.

⁴ Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (1964), no. 53.

⁵ Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (1964), no. 64.

Mary shines all the way from heaven,
guiding us along the pilgrim way to our homeland.⁶

Hail, Holy Queen (*Salve Regina*)

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, O 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.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Concluding 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 while meditating on 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.

Sign of the Cross

⁶ Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (1964), no. 68.