

**Meditations for the joyful mysteries
of the Holy Rosary:
Excerpts from the encyclical of John Paul II
*Ecclesia de Eucharystia***

**The choice was made by
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**Meditations led by four people
B, D – women; P, W – men.**

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(Duration of meditations: about 16 min.)

Introduction to the Rosary

W **Beloved Jesus! In order to fulfill, as best as possible, the desire to imitate Mary in loving You, hidden in the Eucharist,** we read the teaching on this subject contained in the document¹ of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, issued with the approval of St. John Paul II in 2001. With humble submission, we read there the following sentence about the practice of sacramental communion on the five first Saturdays of the month: **(0:33)**

D **This pious practice should be seen as an opportunity to live intensely the paschal Mystery celebrated in the Holy Eucharist, as inspired by the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This pious practice should be seen as an opportunity to live intensely the paschal Mystery celebrated in the Holy Eucharist, as inspired by the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. **(0:19)****

P Therefore, in today's Rosary prayer, we will consider the Joyful Mysteries and, in them, the Eucharistic attitude of Mary. We will be helped by excerpts from the encyclical "On the Eucharist" of St. John Paul II. The Pope writes thus, "Mary's relationship with the Eucharist can be had, beginning with her interior disposition. Mary is a 'woman of the Eucharist' in her whole life. The Church, which looks to Mary as a model, is also called to imitate her in her relationship with this most holy mystery." (No. 53) "If the Eucharist is a mystery of faith which so greatly transcends our understanding as to call for sheer abandonment to the word of God, then there can be no one like Mary to act as our support and guide in acquiring this disposition." (No. 54) **(1:06)**

B In repeating what Christ did at the Last Supper in obedience to his command: "Do this in memory of me!", we also accept Mary's invitation to obey him without hesitation: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). With the same maternal concern which she showed at the wedding feast of Cana, Mary seems to say to us: "Do not waver; trust in the words of my Son. If he was able to change water into wine, he can also turn bread and wine into his body and blood, and through this mystery bestow on believers the living memorial of his passover, thus becoming the 'bread of life'". (No. 54) **(1:02)**

The First Mystery: The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

W 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

¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines*, Vatican City 2001, No. 174.

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) (1:58)

D St. John Paul II writes in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (No. 55) thus, “In a certain sense Mary lived her Eucharistic faith even before the institution of the Eucharist, by the very fact that she offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of God’s Word. The Eucharist, while commemorating the passion and resurrection, is also in continuity with the incarnation. At the Annunciation Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of his body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord’s body and blood. (0:58)

P As a result, there is a profound analogy between the Fiat which Mary said in reply to the angel, and the Amen which every believer says when receiving the body of the Lord. Mary was asked to believe that the One whom she conceived ‘through the Holy Spirit’ was ‘the Son of God’ (Luke 1:30–35). In continuity with the Virgin’s faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine.” (0:50)

The Second Mystery: The Visitation of St. Elizabeth by the Blessed Virgin Mary

B During those days 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.” And Mary said: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. (Luke 1:39–49) (1:30)

W St. John Paul II writes in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (No. 55) thus, “‘Blessed is she who believed’ (Luke 1:45). Mary also anticipated, in the mystery of the incarnation, the Church’s Eucharistic faith. When, at the Visitation, she bore in her womb the Word made flesh, she became in some way a ‘tabernacle’ – the first ‘tabernacle’ in history – in which the Son of God, still invisible to our human gaze, allowed himself to be adored by Elizabeth, radiating his light as it were through the eyes and the voice of Mary.” (0:49)

The Third Mystery: The Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem

D “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:1–7) (0:56)

P St. John Paul II writes in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (No. 55) thus, “And is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?” (0:27)

B Let us read these remarkable words again, “And is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?”(0:27)

**The Fourth Mystery:
the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem
by the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph**

W When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 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, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. (Luke 2:21–24) (0:43)

D St. John Paul II writes in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (No. 56) thus, “Mary, throughout her life at Christ’s side and not only on Calvary, made her own the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist. When she brought the child Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem ‘to present him to the Lord’ (Luke 2:22), she heard the aged Simeon announce that the child would be a ‘sign of contradiction’ and that a sword would also pierce her own heart (cf. Luke 2:34–35). The tragedy of her Son’s crucifixion was thus foretold, and in some sense Mary’s *Stabat Mater* at the foot of the Cross was foreshadowed. In her daily preparation for Calvary, Mary experienced a kind of ‘anticipated Eucharist’ – one might say a ‘spiritual communion’ – of desire and of oblation, which would culminate in her union with her Son in his passion, and then find expression after Easter by her partaking in the Eucharist which the Apostles celebrated as the memorial of that passion.” (1:28)

**The Fifth Mystery:
The Finding of Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem
by the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph**

P “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.” (Luke 2:41–47) (0:58)

B “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.” (Luke 2:48–50) (0:31)

W St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* does not write directly about the Eucharistic dimension of the Fifth Joyful Mystery, so let us consider a passage that shows Mary’s manner of participating in each Holy Mass. Let Mary’s attitude be a model for us here. The Pope writes thus in No. 56, “What must Mary have felt as she heard from the mouth of Peter, John, James and the other Apostles the words spoken at the Last Supper: “This is my body which is given for you” (Luke 22:19)? The body given up for us and made present under sacramental signs was the same body which she had conceived in her womb! **For Mary, receiving the Eucharist must have somehow meant welcoming once more into her womb that heart which had beat in unison with hers and reliving what she had experienced at the foot of the Cross.**” (1:21)