



ROSARY REFLECTIONS



Catholic
in Recovery

INTRODUCTION

Catholic in Recovery (CIR) began in 2015 with the mission to unite individuals and families seeking freedom from the darkness of addiction through integrating the sacramental life of the Catholic Church with 12-step recovery principles. The first CIR group started meeting in San Diego, CA in 2017, launching a fellowship that is now active in nearly 50 parishes across the United States and reaches around 400 people weekly across the world via virtual meetings.

To keep the topic of each CIR meeting rooted in Scripture, recovery principles, and liturgical themes, we began writing and using a weekly meeting reflection based off the Sunday Mass readings. These have been helpful to provide subtle insight into the overlap between the Twelve Steps and traditions of the Catholic Church. As our fellowship has grown, we are recognizing new ways to encourage hope and healing with the support of men and women who make up the Catholic in Recovery community.

Catholic in Recovery Mysteries of the Rosary Reflections is the combined effort of 9 Catholic in Recovery members who share their experience, strength, and hope based on each mystery of the rosary. Contributors bring their own unique experience with a variety of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments.

This reflection book is meant to offer an aid to maintaining conscious contact with God through reciting and meditating on all 20 mysteries of the rosary. You might refer to it during your own personal prayer time, exploring the questions provided each day while lifting your heart to God and/or journaling your responses. If you participate in a Catholic in Recovery meeting, your group may use the reflections in addition to or instead of the weekly meeting reflection based on the Sunday Mass readings.

We pray that this daily reflection book can be of value to you along your journey.

Scott Weeman

Founder, Catholic in Recovery



**THE
JOYFUL
MYSTERIES**



**THE
LUMINOUS
MYSTERIES**



**THE
SORROWFUL
MYSTERIES**



**THE
GLORIOUS
MYSTERIES**

“The Annunciation” by Bartolomé Esteban Perez Murillo (1655–1660) | “Institution of the Eucharist” by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665) | “Christ on the Cross” by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834–1890) | “Coronation of the Virgin” by Diego Velázquez (1599–1660)



THE 1ST JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Annunciation

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... 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"... Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (LUKE 1:26-38)

Not too long ago, some friends and I committed to praying the rosary together on a daily conference call. I did not have much knowledge of the twenty mysteries, much less the spiritual fruit that each mystery offers. I was immediately intrigued by the fruit of humility from meditating on "The Annunciation." I would have guessed it would have been obedience or fear of the Lord. I knew this event to be a popular scene depicted in religious art and the basis of The Angelus prayer, which some pray three times a day. But until then I had not meditated on this mystery's magnitude. I came to understand Mary's humility stems from her sole focus on God's will: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

She did this through awareness, understanding, and action—the hallmarks of discernment. Eve failed to discern the identity and aim of the serpent and God's will, separating humanity from divinity. Eve was focused on the fleshy pleasure of the created and how it might appease her own will, similar to the bondage of addictions and/or unhealthy attachments. Mary was focused instead on God and appeasing His will. Christ becoming a man involved Mary's willing cooperation in undoing the web of sin that Eve introduced. In a similar way, to undo the web of our addictions and/or unhealthy attachments, we must give our "fiat" to God and allow the Holy Spirit to "overshadow" us. Let us ask for Mary's help to gaze at the Lord with prayerful attention and be filled with wonderment and awe for His great love for all of us. | **REFLECTION BY STEPHANIE N.**

— Reflection Questions —

- How are you being called to let the Holy Spirit "overshadow" you in your recovery?
- Are you in danger of giving your "yes" to the serpent of addiction and self-will? What can you do today to combat such a temptation with God's grace?



THE 2ND JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Visitation

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."

(LUKE 1:39-45)

What a wonderful mystery we have been given. Our Blessed Mother, after being visited by the angel Gabriel, sets out to visit her pregnant cousin Elizabeth overjoyed about her own "good news" growing in her womb. Mary likely knew how thrilled Elizabeth was to be pregnant as well since it wasn't until Elizabeth was advanced in age that she was blessed with a child (similar to Sara, the wife of Abraham). And then Gabriel's promise is confirmed when Mary sees Elizabeth and the baby within Elizabeth jumps for joy sensing the presence of our precious Lord inside Mary!

As recovering people of God, we can certainly learn from this joyful mystery. Mary's service to Elizabeth is an example of how we are called to appreciate, serve, and love our family and friends. It invites us to let go of our selfishness, allow Jesus to grow in the womb of our hearts, and ask God for the humility to visit and love the people in our lives—even when it is difficult. When we do so, our loved ones can come to see, just like Elizabeth, the Son of God dwelling inside us and proclaim the goodness of the Lord. | **REFLECTION BY MARCIA G.**

— Reflection Questions —

- What family members or friends can you offer up to the Lord as you meditate on this mystery?
- Is there a family member or friend you feel called to call or visit? How might you reveal to this person the living Christ within the "womb of your heart"?



THE 3RD JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Nativity

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. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” (LUKE 2: 6-12)

Why did the birth of Jesus take place in a dark and cold stable? Would God really have allowed His son to be brought into this world in such harsh conditions, exposed to the elements and surrounded by barn animals? And how did Joseph and Mary react to such strange and difficult circumstances? Were they filled with fear, tempted toward resentment and anger? While many of us may have been in their situation, by trusting in God there would have been no room in their hearts for such things. Instead, with faith deepened by love they trusted that they were chosen to fulfill the Lord’s plan of salvation, even if they didn’t quite understand it at the time. Their hearts must have burst with joy the moment Mary gave birth to the child who is “Messiah and Lord!”

Take a moment and ponder the similarities of this mystery to those of us seeking recovery. Our “God consciousness” breaks through the darkness of sin, allowing light to expose our need to become free from our addictions and/or unhealthy attachments—just like Jesus who breaks into this world of darkness at His birth. We then humble ourselves by walking through the doors of recovery. We know we must surrender and become rigorously honest with ourselves, others, and God to stay sober. We learn to rely on others in recovery as they become living testimonies to its principles and generous bearers of the Twelve Steps. We abandon our old selves and are clothed in the spirit and body of Christ, living our faith and being continually renewed by the sacraments. In doing so, we allow Christ to be born in the manger of our spirits so that he may be “Messiah and Lord” over our entire lives. | REFLECTION BY KATHY B.

— Reflection Questions —

- How does your life reflect that you have let Christ be born in the manger of your spirit?
- How do you share the living “Messiah and Lord” with others in recovery? How might you be called to do so today?



THE 4TH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Presentation

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. 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, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” (LUKE 2:25-32)

In keeping with Jewish tradition and law, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus, their first-born male child, to the temple so they could present Him as an offering to God. This act of presenting Jesus along with two turtle doves was a prefiguration of baptism through which we now all enter the Church. They offered Jesus to God, much like we are offered to God through our baptism.

As we enter recovery for our addictions, compulsions, and/or unhealthy attachments, we are also born into a new life of healing and sobriety. As critical as this first step is—our initial “yes” to recovery—we are encouraged to regularly present our whole being to God as we journey in recovery. *Alcoholics Anonymous* states, “What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” For us Catholics, that also means remaining in a state of grace with active participation in the sacraments, particularly the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, which both reinforce our recovery and spiritual development.

Whether we came into recovery already Catholic or have entered the Church since embarking on our recovery journey, we are often called upon to publicly reaffirm our baptismal vows to renounce Satan and all his works as well as surrender ourselves to the triune God. While we do this from time to time during the liturgy of the Mass, we can also do this on our own to begin each day—as a way of maintaining conscious contact with the Lord. So, let us renew our baptismal vows today to help us in our recovery journey as we meditate on the mystery of “The Presentation.” | REFLECTION BY KEVIN S.

— Reflection Questions —

- How have you “presented” yourself to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on a regular basis as part of your recovery?
- Are there certain areas of your life that you are not “presenting” as an offering to the Lord? What might be keeping you from doing so?



THE 5TH JOYFUL MYSTERY

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was 12 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... After 3 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. (LUKE 2:41-50)

The Holy Family had the regular tradition of traveling to Jerusalem every year for the Passover celebration. In prior years, Jesus likely stayed within earshot of Mary or Joseph. But this year, perhaps as Mary and Joseph were focused on the significance of the Passover season with their close friends and family, they lost track of Jesus. Realizing Jesus was not with them, they immediately turned all of their attention to finding their missing son. Panic-stricken, they must have experienced tremendous relief and joy when they finally found Him in the temple at Jerusalem.

How easy it is for us to press on with our own lives, traveling the courses we have set without consciously maintaining a close connection with Jesus. As we drift, complacency can set in until we are jarred by a realization that we have "lost" Jesus in our lives. And if this doesn't change, we can easily fall back into our addictions and/or unhealthy attachments. Yet, by returning to Jesus, like Mary and Joseph, we can once again experience that wonderful sense of relief and joy.

Our relationship with Jesus and indeed our recovery only remains strong if we actively foster and nurture them. If we feel that we're losing or have lost that connection to Jesus, all we have to do is "return to the temple" to find Him. We can return to the Mass and the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, our parish faith community, and regular prayer. And once we do, as Step 12 encourages us to do, we can share Christ's presence in our lives as a message of hope to others. | REFLECTION BY KEVIN S.

— Reflection Questions —

- Have you remained in the presence of Jesus when it comes to your recovery? If not, how might you "return to the temple" to find Jesus today?
- Are there individuals in your life you feel called to encourage to find or return to Jesus so that they too may experience joy and peace?



THE 1ST LUMINOUS MYSTERY

The Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (MATTHEW 3:13-17)

The baptism of Jesus is a significant example for all Christians for committing our life to Christ. Through baptism, we are renewed in our faith, receive our purpose, and begin our path toward salvation. If we stay focused on our faith and God’s calling through our baptism, we find more fulfillment in life. Sometimes we can take our faith for granted and allow other things in life to become more important. We start trying to satisfy ourselves, filling our “God-shaped hole” with worldly things such as money, power, alcohol, drugs, or some other addictive substance or behavior only to find that these are never enough. However, if we renew our faith in our Lord regularly and foster a conscious contact with God, we can keep God at the forefront of our lives and allow Him to satisfy our deepest desires.

Through our recovery, we are given a second chance. Similar to our baptism, we are renewed, freed from our addictions and/or unhealthy attachments, and equipped to serve God and others. With God’s grace, we have the chance to start over and rewrite our story with God—not ourselves—as the author. And we can invite Jesus into our lives and allow Him to guide our thoughts and attitudes as one of His beloved children with whom our Father is well pleased. | REFLECTION BY JANA I.

— Reflection Questions —

- Do you currently have regular conscious contact with God? If not, what can you do today to begin and maintain this and reclaim your identity as a beloved son or daughter of God?
- How can you better allow God the Father to inspire your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors by recalling the gift of your baptism?



THE 2ND LUMINOUS MYSTERY

The Wedding Feast at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine... Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him. (JOHN 2:1-11)

Jesus, His disciples, and His mother are at a joyful celebration, a wedding. An embarrassing moment for the host arises, and our Blessed Mother, being a typical mother, is concerned. She wants to help, but even more so, she wants her son to help since she knows He can do all things. Jesus has an unexpected reaction: “How does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” This isn’t a typical response from Jesus. Was He possibly trying to put off the start of His ministry to delay His mother’s pain of witnessing His suffering and death? Of course, as a faithful son, He obeys His mother and so begins His ministry of miracles, healing, and preaching. Mary knows He will honor her request, saying to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.”

When we were struggling with our addictions, compulsions, and/or unhealthy attachments, did we have someone in our lives, like Mary, who could turn to our Lord and request His help on our behalf? We might have had someone in our lives who wanted us to mend our ways and find healing even if we weren’t ready to. We may have hesitated, not yet wanting to enter the difficult path of recovery. Unlike the Lord, who is perfectly obedient, many of us likely didn’t listen to this concerned person—it might have taken us a long time to accept our need to surrender. But once we did we realized that our Lord is indeed supporting us always. And that He will continue to do so as long as we heed our Blessed Mother’s advice: “Do whatever He tells you.” | REFLECTION BY

JEFF R.

— Reflection Questions —

- Was there someone in your life concerned about you and your addiction, compulsion, and/or unhealthy attachment before you entered recovery? Reflecting back on this relationship, how does it reveal God’s love for you and deepen your appreciation for that love?
- How has our Blessed Mother brought you closer to her son, Jesus?



THE 3RD LUMINOUS MYSTERY

The Proclamation of the Kingdom

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” (MARK 1:14-15)

Pope Emeritus Benedict writes in his book *Jesus of Nazareth, Volume I* that the phrase, “Kingdom of God” occurs 122 times in the New Testament. 99 of these are found in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And 90 of those 99 come directly from the mouth of Jesus. So, what is the Kingdom of God? It is not a geographical dominion. Rather, it is the Lord Himself. In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of His presence before the people when He refers to the Kingdom of God being at hand. In other words, we can experience this kingdom when we encounter Jesus. This is a kingdom that resides in our own hearts. As the Church Father Origen writes, “those who pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God pray without any doubt for the Kingdom of God that they contain in themselves, and they pray that this kingdom might bear fruit and attain its fullness.”

Yet, the Kingdom of God is also present in and through the Church, which will come to fullness at the end of history. And our sincere repentance is the inaugural key to enter into this kingdom. When we turn to God with contrite hearts for having turned away from Him—for having given into sin, unhealthy attachments, addictive behaviors, and/or letting our self-will run riot—we gain entrance into this kingdom of the Lord’s presence in our lives. In fact, this is what we do every Ash Wednesday when we respond to the call to “repent and believe in the Gospel.” By receiving ashes and admitting our lack before God and others, we take that first of many steps toward allowing the Kingdom of God to dwell within us.

Only Jesus can give us freedom from the bondage of sin and addiction. Christ has come so that we “will know the truth, and the truth will set [us] free” (John 8:32). Like a physician explaining to us the cause of our illness, the Lord reveals our sin, calling us to repent and be healed! This mystery of sin and healing is connected. Let us cry out to the Lord with a contrite heart so that we may gain entrance into His kingdom of healing, mercy, and love. Let us cry out: free us from our sins, addictions, and unhealthy attachments! Heal our souls! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done! | REFLECTION BY STEPHANIE N.

— Reflection Questions —

- What do you cling to that prevents you from loving God and choosing His kingdom? What can you do today to take one step closer to entering this kingdom with a contrite heart?
- What are your strategies for keeping the Kingdom of God at the center of your recovery and spiritual life?



THE 4TH LUMINOUS MYSTERY

The Transfiguration

[Jesus] took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem... Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." (LUKE 9:28-35)

We can be thankful to St. Pope John Paul II who gave us the Luminous Mysteries, including the mystery of "The Transfiguration." This event is recorded in all the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). We read of Jesus taking Peter, James, and John to a high mountain to pray. Jesus often departed to mountaintops to pray, similar to Abraham and Moses. Scripture reveals that Moses and Elijah appeared at the right and left of Jesus, and He converses with them. Peter in his exuberance then suggests that they erect three tents to give them honor: one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

Dear St. Peter, simple and open soul that he was, wanted to hold onto this vision of heaven—to this "dazzling white" image of the transfigured Jesus. St. Thomas Aquinas suggests that Jesus was probably giving His select apostles, those who were walking an arduous path with Him, a glimpse of their glorious futures. Like St. Peter, though, I too would desperately like to honor and capture the blissful feeling that only heaven can give and hold onto it. In fact, I have also wanted to capture and hold onto the pleasurable feelings that can come with alcohol, drugs, and unhealthy attachments. Who doesn't want to keep hold of feeling good? But we know that "letting go" is necessary for 12-step recovery since we know the good feelings that come from addictions and/or unhealthy attachments never last and come at a great and destructive cost to us and others. Therefore, we learn to let go. We learn to live in the present, looking forward to the future without regretting or "holding onto" the past. It is what we pray for with the Serenity Prayer: "Father, give us the courage to change what must be altered, the serenity to accept what cannot be helped and the insight to know the one from the other." Ultimately, we are called to let go of everything that gets in the way of our recovery and relationship with God, even if they feel good and, instead, listen to our Father's beloved son, Jesus. | REFLECTION BY MARCIA G.

— Reflection Questions —

- What unhealthy attachment is Jesus inviting you to let go of today?
- Imagine a vision of heaven and Jesus, "dazzling white." What do you hear the Lord saying to you?



THE 5TH LUMINOUS MYSTERY

The Institution of the Eucharist

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.” Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

(MATTHEW 26:26-30)

In recovery, we are filled with thankfulness that God has literally saved our lives by rescuing us from the depths of our addiction and/or unhealthy attachment. We start to receive the blessings of sobriety, recognize God’s gifts in everything, gain the humility to accept them, and experience the grace to say “thank you.” This is a radical shift in perception, the “attitude of gratitude” that is spoken of in recovery circles. And it is this “Eucharistic attitude” of praise and thanksgiving that we are called by St. Pope John Paul II to bring to the Mass.

The Eucharist can have special meaning to those in recovery. We understand that the true gift of sobriety from which all others flow is the gift of God himself. We understand the value of this gift to the point that we are even able to say we are grateful for our addictions—because it was through our addiction and recovery that we received this blessing. And what is the Eucharist, except the greatest gift of all, Jesus Himself? What an amazing thing it is to be able to offer our greatest “thank you” when we receive the Eucharist—when we receive Jesus Himself.

We in recovery are called to put ourselves in a position to receive God’s blessings each and every day. We do this practically by attending recovery meetings, working the steps with a sponsor, and praying and attending Mass regularly. As we receive God’s blessings, He fills our cup and we overflow with His divine love. What we receive freely, we can freely give. By receiving the gift of sobriety, we can then help others find sobriety. Similarly, when we receive Jesus who gives Himself freely to us, we can freely give Jesus to those in our lives. And when we do so, we discover we are living with a Eucharistic spirit of gratitude. We are, as Pope Frances says, making our “whole life a Eucharist.” | **REFLECTION BY ANN A.**

— Reflection Questions —

- St. Pope John Paul II called Mary a true “woman of the Eucharist.” How can Mary’s example of humility and gratitude increase your faith and understanding of the great gift her son offers us in the Eucharist?
- What do you have a hard time saying “thank you” for? What do you think is in the way, and how can you be thankful for those things that seem to be at odds with what you desire?



THE 1ST SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Agony in the Garden

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.” He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.” (MARK 14:32-36)

Jesus, having celebrated the last supper with His disciples, is now in the garden, praying. He knows what lies ahead. He knows about the horrible torture and death that He is about to undergo. His own friends will abandon him. He will be all alone, facing just about every trial and tribulation known to mankind. He asks our heavenly Father if it is possible to get a reprieve, a “pass,” on this suffering. But Jesus is obedient to the Father, surrendering to His will. Jesus gives us the perfect example of how the Father wants us to live our lives each and every day—with a willingness to surrender to God’s will no matter what.

When we were in the midst of our addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments, wanting to break free, we too may have felt all alone. We may have felt abandoned by our friends and loved ones. We may have experienced the fear of not knowing what was to come of our lives. Maybe we feared drinking from the bitter “cup” of surrendering our will to God set before us. We may have been looking for a “pass,” an easier way out. Yet, by surrendering to the Father’s will, as our Savior did, we found a better way of life. We died to our addictions and unhealthy attachments so that we could be resurrected with Christ on the path of recovery. Our heavenly Father knew what was best for us, willing only good things for His children. And by continuing to surrender to God’s will daily we remain focused on His goodness, mercy, and love, which continually sustains us in recovery. | REFLECTION BY JEFF. R.

— Reflection Questions —

- How has surrendering to the Father’s will helped you in your recovery journey?
- How has fear kept you from surrendering to the Father’s will? How might the Father be asking you to trust Him in the midst of your fear today?



THE 2ND SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Scourging at the Pillar

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. (JOHN 19:1)

After Jesus was taken through the kangaroo court of the Sanhedrin, He was delivered to Pontius Pilate who condemned Him to death on a cross. Yet, before Jesus was crucified, He was disrobed, bound to a pillar, and scourged repeatedly with a multi-tailed whip imbedded with sharp, shrapnel-like objects. Each lash drew blood, ripping the skin, muscle, and other tissues on His back, sides, and legs.

We may feel we have taken our own scourgings from our many destructive indulgences related to our addictions, compulsions, and/or unhealthy attachments. We may have even been hospitalized or incarcerated as a consequence of our submission to our addictive behaviors. Still, these are nothing like the physical torture Jesus soberly and willingly endured for our salvation. While the consequences we suffered for our behaviors were the direct result of our harmful choices, Jesus' suffering during His scourging was a necessary part of His salvific plan for us.

As we meditate on this mystery, let us consider the love that Jesus so generously displayed as He took each and every one of those lashes. Let us consider how He endured each undeserved wound as a sinless sacrifice so that we could have forgiveness for our sins—our harmful scourgings against others, ourselves, and God—as well as freedom from addictions, compulsions, and/or unhealthy attachments. | REFLECTION BY KEVIN S.

— Reflection Questions —

- *As you meditate on our Lord's horrible and painful scourging, how does this inspire your gratitude for the mercy and grace Jesus offers you through His suffering and death?*
- *Do you have any sins or shortcomings you need to expose to the suffering love Jesus offers you? Are you being invited to encounter Jesus' merciful love through the Sacrament of Reconciliation?*



THE 3RD SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crowning with Thorns

And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, "Behold, the man!" (JOHN 19:2-5)

Jesus' suffering, both physical and mental, is unimaginable. Despite this dark place of torment, Jesus continued to trust in God's plan for Him. Jesus must have felt so alone during His Passion and yet He remained surrendered to God's will. In that surrender, Jesus gained access to unimaginable strength, comfort, and peace. Likewise, we too can feel alone in the midst of life's sufferings. And we can be tempted to control our difficult situations and emotions by turning to alcohol, drugs, or another addiction to find solace. However, if we can pause and truly surrender to God's will, He will provide us with comfort and peace in our suffering. We are reminded in the fifth chapter of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "God, could and would if he were sought." Have we truly surrendered to His will today?

While we all suffer and have our crosses to carry, we also all experience joy and hope in our lives. During good times, instead of over celebrating like times in the past when we may have given into our addictions, we can reflect on the truth that "there is no high like the Most High" and celebrate with God by our side. During times of suffering, we can consider whether we have truly surrendered to God's will and ask for His strength to help us endure as Jesus did during His Passion. We can recall that even though the soldiers "struck [Jesus] repeatedly," He remained faithful to the Father. In doing so, we too can remain faithful to our heavenly Father during our sufferings. We can remember that we have access to the graces necessary to weather anything we encounter in our lives when we trust in God. All we must do is remain steadfast and continue to seek Him. | REFLECTION BY JANA I.

— Reflection Questions —

- *Have you truly surrendered your will over to God? Have you done this once or have you made this a continual act in your life?*
- *Have you asked for God's help and direction in prayer to weather both the "good" and "bad" that today brings with a spirit of peace?*



THE 4TH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Carrying of the Cross

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (JOHN 19:17)

Golgotha was traditionally the designated place outside of the city to crucify criminals, and the journey there would have been roughly half a mile on one of the busiest streets in Jerusalem. I often pray the rosary using the practice of Lectio Divina. As with any serious attempt to progress in our spiritual life, Lectio Divina requires deliberate patience. It begins with the attentive, slow, and repetitive recitation of a short passage from Scripture (like the one above). This is followed by an effort to understand and apply it to our own lives, speaking with God about it, and allowing ourselves to become absorbed into the very words and presence of God. When I use the practice of Lectio Divina for the above verse, I see the crowds surrounding Jesus on the street as He carries the cross. Jesus, who has suffered severe mental and physical agony in the garden, a brutal scourging, and a humiliating crowning of thorns, is now forced to carry the center beam of the cross weighing around roughly fifty pounds on His beaten and bleeding shoulders.

How can we offer our own crosses of addictions and sinfulness to Jesus? How can we let go of the dopamine rush and pleasure that comes from our addiction or unhealthy attachment that always ends in shame and destruction? Our disordered passions, unhealthy attachments, and sinful urges are transformed when we unite our frail natures with our suffering Lord and our broken hearts Mother Mary who journeys with us in our life. Just as Jesus was patient in His suffering unto death on a cross, we too are called to be patient in our own suffering through the aid of grace. As we suffer, we can look to Christ carrying His cross and meditate on His faithfulness during a grueling journey toward death out of redemptive love for each one of us. | REFLECTION BY AARON W.

— Reflection Questions —

- *In what ways are you called to offer up the suffering of your addiction and/or unhealthy attachment as a cross to endure with faithfulness? How can you accept your suffering as a joyful opportunity to imitate our precious Lord?*
- *How are you called today to help carry the crosses of others in your life with love, faithfulness, and patience?*



THE 5TH SORROWFUL MYSTERY

The Crucifixion

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst," There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished," And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. (JOHN 19:25-30)

Those who followed the Lord to His cross and ultimate death show us what it means to be Jesus' disciple. Even in His last hour, Jesus is thinking of us: handing over His mother as a wonderful gift to the Church. In this act of love, Mary becomes a powerful intercessor who watches over us and covers us with grace. God's love is magnified in the suffering of His son as He takes our sins in exchange for His mercy. And Jesus' thirst is satiated when He hands over His spirit, leaving us with an everlasting remembrance of His body and blood through the holy Eucharist. Through that miraculous sacrament, we too will never hunger or thirst. As we meditate upon this mystery, let us remember that He died so that we may have life and have it abundantly.

In recovery, we seek to live our life more abundantly in Christ as we die to self and learn to live more like Him. That is why we humbly ask God daily to direct our thinking and our actions. Why, with the guidance of others, we search within ourselves the causes and conditions of our addictions and unhealthy attachments and conduct a personal moral inventory. And why, after acknowledging the pain we have brought upon ourselves, others, and God, we take our shortcomings and sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. God's mercy flows from the cross during that sacrament, entering our hearts and cleaning us with His life-saving grace. And by receiving the Eucharist, that nourishment for our spiritual life, we no longer hunger or thirst as we recall the loving sacrifice of our Lord Jesus—He who was crucified and died so that we may be free of our addictions, unhealthy attachments, and sins and enjoy everlasting life with God the Father! | **REFLECTION BY KATHY B.**

— Reflection Questions —

- *Imagining yourself standing before the cross like John and Mary, what stirs within your heart as you look upon the crucified Lord?*
- *What sins or attachments might you be called to expose to Christ for healing? Might the Lord be inviting you to experience His mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?*



THE 1ST GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Resurrection

But at daybreak on the first day of the week, they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day.” (LUKE 24:1-7)

It must have been astonishing that Sunday morning. The nearby city would have been abuzz with gossip and wonder as the news spread that Jesus had risen from the dead; and yet hardly anyone would have truly realized that this would become the most extraordinary event of human history. Just a few days prior, the body of Jesus, broken and bloodied, had been laid to rest in a tomb. Now, Jesus accomplished what He foretold He would—He rose from the dead.

I often think about how recovery and resurrection are intricately linked. When we stop letting our passions, fears, and urges drive us, realize there is more to life than our next “high,” and seek and receive our Lord’s mercy and forgiveness we become transformed. Our recovery begins and resurrection becomes possible. We confront why we were afraid of the darkness in our soul, scared to search the depths of our being to discover who we are. We begin to discover ourselves—to quiet the noise of our hearts and fears—and let silence rule. Then, in our silence, we are able to hear the personal invitation from Christ to seek Him and discover that we too can be resurrected as a new, freed, and healed person united with Him in love.

The complete resurrection of love occurs when we heal, restore, and forgive others as we have been healed, restored, and forgiven by God, which is precisely what we set out to do as we work the Twelve Steps and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. | REFLECTION BY AARON W.

— Reflection Questions —

- *How have you accepted the invitation from our Lord to trust in His desire to resurrect you from the death of addiction, unhealthy attachments, and sin into new life with Him? What can you do today to accept the Lord’s invitation?*
- *In what ways has your recovery journey resembled resurrection into a new, freed, and healed person united with Christ?*



THE 2ND GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Ascension of the Lord

Then he led them [out] as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God. (LUKE 24:50-53)

The Synoptic Gospels and Book of Acts tell variations of Jesus' last directive to His disciples and consequent ascension into heaven (Acts 1:1-11, Mathew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-20, and Luke 24: 46-53). His ascension occurs 40 days after His resurrection, and 10 days before the Holy Spirit will descend upon the disciples (two events we meditate on as part of the "Glorious Mysteries). As we pray our rosary and meditate on the Second Glorious Mystery—"The Ascension of the Lord"—time seems to stand still as all that Jesus was, is, and ever shall be is clarified by His returning to His heavenly throne as the beloved and eternal Son of God.

As the disciples gathered at Bethany, Jesus told them to preach the Good News to all nations—to spread their testimonies and what they had personally experienced (something that we in recovery are called to do by sharing our experience, strength, and hope). Jesus taught His disciples according to His Father's command and was now calling them to follow in His footsteps. It is this same call that we experience today as members of recovery and Catholics. We can encounter many of Jesus' teachings through the Twelve Steps. In fact, Step 12—"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs"—finds common ground with Jesus' Great Commission before His ascension. As we ponder the words of the Lord before His ascension, we can turn back to living out Step 12 with newfound vigor, encouragement, and grace. | **REFLECTION BY FRANCES H.**

— Reflection Questions —

- Are there models from Scripture, or the angels and saints, that you can look to for inspiration as you live and work (or re-work) the steps?
- How might you put Jesus' Great Commission and Step 12 into practice today? How can you share the good news of God's grace?



THE 3RD GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (ACTS 2:1-4)

Many of us begin our journey sitting in the back of a recovery meeting room, avoiding human connection, even eye contact with others in the room. We are still in fear, shame, and confusion, making us reluctant to share and open up to others. Yet, as we listen to the sharing of others, we begin to realize our experiences—even our worst ones—might actually be our greatest gifts to ourselves and others. As we begin working the steps, and finally make it to Step 12, we become empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry the message of the good news of recovery. We realize that we too have an amazing story to tell about God who freed us through the Twelve Steps and transformed our lives. We gradually gain confidence in the new language of experience, strength, and hope, and joyfully find this new language can be understood by those who need our help the most. In other words, the Holy Spirit enables us to *proclaim* God's love to others.

The Holy Spirit can nudge us toward small moments that break us out of isolation and into community. We soon find that allowing the Spirit to bear witness through us includes something as simple and humble as making coffee before a meeting, welcoming a newcomer by name with a smile, quietly listening to another share, and, of course, answering yes to a request to become a sponsor. As Louis Manafort wrote, “When the Holy Spirit finds Mary in a soul He flies to that soul.” Therefore, by joining our Blessed Mother in prayer in the “upper room” of recovery, we can ask her to help us welcome this flight of the Holy Spirit into our own souls, which can move us to proclaim the goodness of God. And we can recognize and allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit—just like the disciples at Pentecost—in all of our affairs. | REFLECTION BY ANN A.

— Reflection Questions —

- Do you regularly call upon the Holy Spirit throughout your day? How can you make this a regular practice?
- How do you feel called to allow the Holy Spirit to work through you today to express the good news of recovery to others?



THE 4TH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Assumption of Mary

[T]he Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. **(MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)**

The 4th Glorious Mystery encompasses the entirety of the rosary. We say with Gabriel, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you” (Luke 1:28). We echo Mary’s response in the Magnificat, acknowledging her blessedness and the fruit of her womb as the fulfillment of God’s promises. We join Elizabeth in the greeting, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb”. **(LUKE 1:42)**

Imagine being one of the disciples surrounding her deathbed. She had brought forth the Son of Man who was their teacher, guide, and companion for three years. They witnessed His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. They also realized the nurturing presence Mary became for the Church after Jesus on the cross instructed her, “Woman, behold, your son” (John 19:26). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that after Christ’s ascension, Mary’s prayers aided the beginning of the Church and that St. Augustine pointed out that she is “clearly the mother of the members of Christ.”

Before the disciples’ eyes, Mary’s body is taken up into heaven. Classic Byzantine iconography gives a representation of the event. The images are so powerful that even modern artists like Svitozar Nenyuk imitate the style. The idea of Jesus waiting with open arms to receive His mother is a beautiful image. We can imagine our deceased family members and friends being greeted by our Blessed Mother in this same way. By reciting the rosary, we can also experience Mary’s love as she invites us to reach out to her son. As people who have walked the path of addiction and found recovery, we have a deep need to feel the non-judgmental understanding of a mother’s love. As Catholics in recovery, we can be especially touched by this motherly love as we meditate on this mystery. | **REFLECTION BY FRANCES H.**

— Reflection Questions —

- In what ways does Mary’s love touch you as you meditate on this mystery? How can you carry Mary’s motherly love to others?
- How can you turn to Mary today for guidance and support in your life?



5TH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

The Coronation of Mary

Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, reigns with a mother's solicitude over the entire world, just as she is crowned in heavenly blessedness with the glory of a Queen. **(AD CAELI REGINAM)**

This royal dignity of the Blessed Mother is clearly indicated by those of us who refer to her as “Lady,” “Ruler,” and “Queen.” We have so many beautiful representations of Mary’s unique heavenly status. I often think of the prayer and song, “Hail, Holy Queen” and the antiphon, “Hail, Queen of the Heavens.” There is also Christian art, faithfully interpreting the sincere and freely expressed devotion of the faithful that portrays Mary as Queen and Empress seated upon a royal throne adorned with royal insignia, crowned with the royal diadem and surrounded by the host of angels and saints in heaven. She rules not only over nature and its powers but also over the machinations of Satan. Finally, in iconography, the royal dignity of the Blessed Mother is represented with works of high artistic value and beauty, such as one image of the divine Redeemer crowning His mother with a resplendent diadem.

In the early stages of my reboot and recovery from pornography addiction, during times of both triumph and crisis, I often recalled our Blessed Mother’s power given to her by Jesus. What a gift it is that we can offer prayers of petition and hymns of praise and veneration to the Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine King, who will respond to us by giving us hope, strength, and success on our recovery journey.

Mary should be called Queen, not only because she is the mother of God but also because God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of our salvation. Therefore, let us always remember to call upon our heavenly Queen’s aid to remain steadfast in our recovery as well as our life’s journey toward eternal life. | **REFLECTION BY AARON W.**

— Reflection Questions —

- *What in your life—your fears, needs, desires, or longings—can you hand over to our Blessed Mother, Queen of the Universe, for safe-keeping today?*
- *In what circumstances has Mary acted as your advocate? How have such instances strengthened your relationship with her son, Jesus?*