

Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, from Pope Francis

The first Joyful mystery, The Annunciation

Pope Francis, Homily 20 Dec 2018 at Santa Marta (edited)

The Annunciation tells us the decisive moment in history, the most revolutionary. It is a turbulent situation, everything changes, history turns upside down. And when at Christmas or on the day of the Annunciation we profess the faith to say this mystery, we kneel down. It is the moment that everything changes, everything, from the root. We speak of the root of Jesse, "from which a shoot will be born". God lowers Himself, God enters history and does so in His original style: a surprise. The God of surprises surprises us (again).

The second Joyful mystery, The Visitation

Pope Francis, Homily 31 May 2019, Cathedral Bucharest, Romania (section, edited)

Mary encounters Elizabeth, a woman already advanced in years. But Elizabeth, though older, is the one who speaks of the future and, "filled with the Holy Spirit", prophesies in words that foreshadow the last of the Gospel beatitudes: "Blessed are those who believe" (cf. Jn 20:29). Remarkably, the younger woman goes to meet the older one, seeking her roots, while the older woman is reborn and prophetically foretells the future of the younger one. Here, young and old meet, embrace and awaken the best of each. It is a miracle brought about by the culture of encounter, where no one is discarded or pigeonholed, but all are sought out, because all are needed to reveal the Lord's face. They are not afraid to walk together, and when this happens, God appears and works wonders in his people. The Holy Spirit impels us to go out from ourselves, from all that hems us in, from the things to which we cling. The Spirit teaches us to look beyond appearances and enables us to speak well of others – to bless them. This is the culture of encounter; it urges us as Christians to experience the miraculous motherhood of the Church, as she seeks out, protects and gathers her children. In the Church, when different rites meet, when the most important thing is not one's own affiliation, group or ethnicity, but the People that together praises God, then great things take place. Again, let us state it emphatically: Blessed are those who believe (cf. Jn 20:29) and who have the courage to foster encounter and communion.

The third Joyful mystery, The Birth of Jesus

Pope Francis, Homily 24 Dec 2018, St Peter's Basilica (section)

The location of Jesus' birth marks a turning point in the course of history.

Bethlehem means "house of bread", and that Mary laid Jesus in a manger. It is as if He wanted to say: 'Here I am, as your food.'

Jesus gives us His very self, teaching us to live our lives in a new way: "not by devouring and hoarding, but by sharing and giving." We feed on Jesus, the bread of life, and are reborn in love, breaking the vicious cycle of grasping and greed.

In Scripture, humanity's original sin was to take and eat a forbidden food. Mankind became greedy and voracious. Even today, a few people often eat splendid meals while a great many others go without even enough bread to survive.

Standing before the manger, we understand that the food of life is not material riches but love, not gluttony but charity, not ostentation but simplicity.

Jesus knows we need to be fed daily, so He offered Himself every day of His life. Today too, on the altar, He becomes bread broken for us; He knocks at our door, to enter and eat with us.

If we welcome God into our hearts and allow Him to dwell there, history changes. For once Jesus dwells in our heart, the centre of life is no longer my ravenous and selfish ego, but the One who is born and lives for love.

The fourth Joyful mystery, The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Pope Francis, Angelus, 2 Feb 2020, St Peter's Square (section, edited)

Mary and Joseph are heading for Jerusalem; for his part, Simeon, moved by the Spirit, goes to the temple, while Anna serves God day and night non-stop. In this way, the four protagonists of the Gospel passage show us that Christian life requires dynamism and requires a willingness to walk, letting ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. Immobilism does not suit the Christian witness and the mission of the Church. The world needs Christians who let themselves be moved, who do not tire of walking the streets of life, to bring to everyone the comforting word of Jesus.

Mary and Joseph "were amazed at the things that were said about Jesus" (v. 33). Amazement is an explicit reaction also of the old Simeon, who in the Child Jesus sees with his eyes the salvation brought by God on behalf of His people: this is the salvation that he has been waiting for, for years. And the same goes for Anna, who "also began to praise God" (v. 38) and to go and point out Jesus to the people. This is the holy amazement that realizes there is something good before her. Something holy which is to be brought to everyone, so that they may all see Jesus. These believers are enveloped in amazement, because they have allowed themselves to be captured and involved by the events that took place before their eyes. The ability to marvel at the things around us promotes religious experience and makes the encounter with the Lord fruitful. On the contrary, the inability to be amazed makes us indifferent and widens the distance between the path of faith and everyday life.

The fifth Joyful mystery, The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Pope Francis, Angelus, 30 Dec 2018, St Peter's Square (edited)

The Holy Family of Nazareth – Jesus, Mary, and Joseph – were united by an intense love and animated by great confidence in God.

In the Holy Family astonishment never failed. To feel astonishment, is the opposite of taking everything for granted... It means opening ourselves to others. This attitude, is important for "healing compromised relationships" and curing "the open wounds within the family."

The anxiety felt by Mary and Joseph shows the centrality of Jesus in the Holy Family. And so, we see why the family of Nazareth is holy: because it was centred on Jesus; all the attention and care of Joseph revolved around Him.

The anxiety felt by Mary and Joseph when Jesus was lost for three days should also be our anxiety when we are far from Jesus; when we forget Jesus, going without prayer, without reading the Gospel for several days. Mary and Joseph, found Jesus in the Temple; and we too, should seek Jesus in the house of God – and especially in the liturgy, where we have the living experience of Jesus, in His Word and in the Eucharist, from which we receive the strength to face the difficulties of each day.

Let us all pray for all the families of the world, especially those that, for various reasons, are lacking in peace and harmony and entrust them to the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

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