



## **Mysteries of the Rosary in a Time of Pandemic:** *The Healing Mysteries*

*As the entire world suffers under the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rosary is an especially consoling prayer. Both by reflecting on the mysteries of Christ's life and imploring the intercession of Mary, his mother and ours, we draw close to those who are suffering and dying, find the courage to persevere by trusting in the Lord's healing presence among us, and call on the maternal care of Mary to sustain us in our time of need.*

*The following Mysteries are found in Mark's Gospel, the first Gospel to be written and where we find these healing stories of Jesus in their most original form. Have your own Bible at hand, opened to Mark, and prayerfully read the cited passage as you begin each Mystery. A brief meditation follows, then the praying of the beads. Each decade ends with a simple prayer.*

*These Mysteries are offered as a personal devotion that might enrich our praying of the Rosary during this time. These Healing Mysteries would ordinarily be prayed on Saturdays, but may be prayed on any day that seems appropriate.*

### **✦ The Apostles' Creed**

#### **○ The Lord's Prayer**

#### **◎◎◎ Three Hail Mary's:**

*--For Faith, that we might trust that the Lord walks with us always.*

*--For Hope, that we might see beyond the darkness and know God's grace conquers even death itself.*

*--For Charity, that we might seek the good of others especially the vulnerable and frail among us.*

**❖ Glory be...**

### **The First Healing Mystery: Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law**

#### **Mark 1: 29-34**

As we seek to stay safe in our homes with our closest family members, the placement of this story within Peter's own home especially resonates with us. This domestic scene involving a dear family member who is gravely ill speaks to us in our present moment, reminding us that our homes too are

places of great love and healing. Our care for one another is Jesus' own healing grace here and now *made flesh* amid the pots and pans, the beds and blankets, the cheery chatter when all is well and the precious silence when one among us is ill.

As we pray this first decade of the Rosary, let us call to mind and heart each of our family members and dearest friends, especially those who are most vulnerable, and ask the Lord to take them by the hand and lift them up in health and peace.

○ ***The Lord's Prayer***

◎◎◎◎◎◎◎◎◎◎ ***Ten Hail Mary's***

❖ ***Glory be...***

*Let us pray:*

Lord, bless our homes and be close to our families. Heal us when we are ill and when well, help us to serve one another with love. We pray in Jesus' name.

**The Second Healing Mystery: *Jesus Heals the Leper***

**Mark 1: 40-45**

In Jesus' time, as in most of human history, few diseases were considered more contagious than that of leprosy, what we now call Hansen's Disease. In those times, nothing was known of how the disease was spread, but it's contagious character made it a fearsome threat to everyone. Thus at even the first sign of a lesion, the victims were isolated from family and community. In this, they lost everything that was valuable in life: their radical "social distancing" was a harsh and terrible reality done for the sake of the community's greater good. Even worse, in those times, such diseases were often seen as punishment for sinfulness. The affliction was seen as a sign of moral turpitude.

There are two great moments in this story: the leprous man coming to Jesus and kneeling before Jesus in trust and faith: "If you wish, you can make me clean!" And the second is Jesus' response to his appeal: he breaks all the rules and actually touches the leper even as he whispers to him, "Of course, I will it! Be clean!"

As we pray this second decade, let us approach the Lord and kneel before him, echoing the Leprous Man's prayer: "If you will it, Lord, heal us! If you will it, Lord, heal our world! And let us let us feel the Lord 's hand rest upon us and let us savor the words he whispers to us now: "Of course I will it. Be healed!"

○ *The Lord's Prayer*

⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ *Ten Hail Mary's*

❖ *Glory be...*

*Let us pray:*

*Heal us Lord, and with your touch relieve us of all anxiety, selfishness, and rancor so that we might be well in body and spirit. In Jesus name, we pray.*

**The Third Healing Mystery: *The Healing of the Possessed Son***

**Mark 9: 14-29**

With the help of all that science and medicine have taught us, it is easy for us *now* to presume that this boy's ailment is probably the disease of epilepsy rather than that of an afflicting demon. It may be so, but what is important for Jesus *then* is that this boy and his father are suffering greatly. The son's affliction manifests an unholy darkness among us and within us. This "demon" seems to have a will of its own; it targets, assails, and afflicts with crazed abandon, not unlike today's virus. We know its an unloving thing, but it feels to us as if it were a new kind of "demon" holding within a dark will of its own, a desire to bring harm, an interior logic designed to kill the innocent and vulnerable.

The disciples were unable to liberate the boy; so his father, almost certainly with tears in his eyes and a heart filled with fear, responds to Jesus' probing question as to his trust with the powerful words: "I do believe; help my unbelief." Like the disciples, we, too, feel ourselves unable to free our world of this modern plague. Even as we kneel before the Lord, knowing well the feebleness of our trust in God, we too pray with the father: "We do believe. Help our unbelief." And as Jesus healed the boy, restoring him to the loving arms of his father, so he now lays his hand upon us and restores us in peace.

As we pray this decade, let us entrust our world, our church, our families into the gracious hands of Jesus.

○ *The Lord's Prayer*

⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ *Ten Hail Mary's*

❖ *Glory be...*

*Let us pray:*

*Free us, O Lord, from every evil, every darkness, every power that is not of you. Strengthen us so that we might place our faith fully in you . Help us in our lack of faith. Touch us, Lord, and free us from every evil. In Jesus' name we pray.*

**The Fourth Healing Mystery: *Jesus Feeds the Many***

**Mark 6:30-34**

At first thought, this might not seem like a “healing” story, but hunger, too, is a way of being “not well.” Many of us especially feel hunger during this time because we have had to forgo feasting at the Lord’s Table in the Eucharist. We hunger for Jesus’ Body and we thirst for his Blood. We feel in our deepest spirits the physical “non-communion” from our sisters and brothers in faith with whom we worship.

We are assured in this story that Jesus nevertheless feeds us. He knows our hunger and in so many ways continues to offer us the bread of life and cup of salvation even now...most especially now. *How?* By inviting us to take up the command he gave to his first disciples: “Take what little you have, share it and I will do the rest.” In the sharing, God’s love is made manifest and as our neighbors are fed, so are we.

As we pray this decade, we call to mind the faces of our fellow parishioners with whom we have so often shared the Bread of Life at Mass and whom we now especially miss during these days.

○ *The Lord's Prayer*

⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ *Ten Hail Mary's*

❖ *Glory be...*

*Let us pray:*

*Lord, bless all who hunger for the bread of life. In this time of fasting from the Eucharist, help us to be generous in giving of the little we have so that others might live. We ask this in Jesus' name.*

### **The Fifth Healing Mystery: *Jesus Calms the Storm***

**Mark 4: 35-41:** As Pope Francis has reminded us in his *Urbi et Orbi* homily on this passage, the fear of the disciples in their storm is much like our own fear and anxiety in these present times. They accuse Jesus of not caring about them even as they call on him to save them. Jesus rebukes them for not trusting in his love for them even as he rebukes the wind and calms the sea. In our praying of this decade of the Rosary, let us pray for deep trust in the Lord's care for us and his power to calm the storms of anxiety and fear in our own hearts and so bring us healing calm to our anxious spirits.

As we pray the final the decade of this Rosary, let us make Pope Francis' affirmation of faith our own:

"We have an anchor; by his cross have we been saved!

"We have a rudder: by his cross have we been saved!

"We have a hope: by his cross we have ben healed and embraced so that nothing and no-one can separate us from his redeeming love!"

#### **○ *The Lord's Prayer***

○○○○○○○○○○ *Ten Hail Mary's*

❖ *Glory be...*

*Let us pray:*

Lord, you are our anchor; by your cross have we been saved!

Lord, you are our rudder: by your cross have we been saved!

Lord, you are our hope: by your cross we have ben healed and embraced so that nothing and no-one can separate us from your redeeming love!"

#### **Optional Final Prayer to Mary:**

*(The Salve Regina / Hail, Holy Queen might also be prayed here.)*

Mary, Mother of God and Mother to all who follow your Son, Jesus.

Draw close to us now in your maternal love, for as you loved your Son, so we know you love us. In this present moment when illness abounds, we implore your intercession and that of the apostles, martyrs, and all the saints, so that healing and peace might gain their victory through the immense goodness found in your Son's heart.

Let your kindly gaze fall upon us so that we might never slip into quarrelsomeness, self-preoccupation, unnecessary anxiety, or the fear that displaces deep faith.

As you loved Jesus and bore him into a dangerous world, so stand with us now as we also strive to love Jesus and so bear his healing grace into our own world with its many afflictions and dangers in these times.

Amen.

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

*That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.*

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*Composed by Father Kevin A. Codd, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Spokane, Washington.*

*Feel free to share.*