

# LET US PRAY WITH MARY

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*Meditations of the Mysteries of the Rosary in light of Pope Francis's catechesis on the passion for evangelization, his Homily for Sunday of the Word of God 2023, and his message for World Mission Day 2023.*

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***“Hearts on fire, feet on the move***

***(cf. Lk 24:13–35)***



## Let us begin: Mary walks with us

This year, the theme for World Mission Day is taken from the evangelical context of the disciples of Emmaus. In his message, the Holy Father immediately makes sure of explaining and commenting the attitude of these two witnesses with **'hearts on fire, feet on the move,'** who are overwhelmed with their emotions and worries before Christ joins them. A parallel is drawn between the disciples and us, the missionary disciples of today, sunk in a context riddled with different crisis: wars, misery, economic crisis, and the urgent need for an effective missionary cooperation. The Word of God, in all its contours, is therefore the main solution that the Holy Father suggests and the point of reference of all his teachings and message in relation to the mission, which merges well with the actual synodal process experienced by the Church. Unlike the two brothers who didn't have any bearings on the road before being accompanied by the Lord, and although their hearts were on fire in his presence, we are accompanied by someone who intercedes for us, prays for us and helps us discern on many 'half-light' paths of the missionary process: The Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary accompanies us in our mission and helps us to quickly discover Christ as he joins us on our path. As we realize this, let us reinforce our devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and let us meditate with Pope Francis, the Rosary for Missionary Month.

***'Our Lady of the Way, Mother of Christ's missionary disciples and Queen of Missions, pray for us!'* (Pope Francis)**

## JOYFUL MYSTERIES

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### **First Mystery: The Annunciation**

*'The Word is for everyone, the Word calls everyone to conversion, the Word makes us heralds.'* (Pope Francis, Homily for Sunday of the Word of God 2023). In the mystery of the Annunciation, the Angel announces the word to Mary; by saying 'yes,' she adheres to conversion and to the mission of the annunciation, which will go on during the visit to Elizabeth. Furthermore, in light of World Mission Day's theme **'Hearts on fire, feet on the move,'** doesn't the final conversation between the Angel and Mary illustrate that her heart was burning as much as the disciples of Emmaus'? Let us pray so that the call of the annunciation may always be answered through conversion and zeal, by following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### **Second Mystery: *The Visitation***

The obvious and common point of this mystery, in the context of mission, is 'the Church which goes forth.' 'How to go forth?' should interest us more, as the Holy-Father insisted, by distinguishing mission and proselytism. Mary's visit to Elizabeth teaches us everything: Mary doesn't visit Elizabeth thinking about herself, but rather about Elizabeth who is pregnant. She doesn't publicize the fact of being the Emmanuel's Mother, Elizabeth notices it by herself. Mary praises God through the 'Magnificat.' A good example of going forth is to put God and others first rather than ourselves through mission. Let us pray so that we can receive that grace.

### **Third Mystery: *The Nativity***

The Holy-Father's prayer is that the missionary disciples' reward lies in the Joy of proclaiming the Good News, by being aware of the sorrows and difficulties they might encounter in their different contexts, especially in the places that are struck by poverty, misery and wars. Meditating Jesus' birth in a stable should comfort us and renew our zeal. Jesus as 'model of the annunciation' shows himself in poverty since his birth. May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for us to that end.

### **Fourth Mystery: *The Presentation in the Temple***

The best-known fruit of this mystery is the purity of body and mind. In mission's language, it is a matter of exemplary nature: Jesus is a model for the missionary disciples, who should be themselves, an example in the world and for the world. In Pope Francis' catechesis on passion and evangelization (2), he invites us to experience intimacy with Jesus, the Good Shepherd (Jn 10), without whom we can do nothing (Jn 15:5), let alone be exemplary shepherds. Let us develop an intimate relationship with Jesus through prayer, so that we can be good examples in the world and for the world.

### **Fifth Mystery: *The Finding in the Temple***

Jesus's parents were looking for him on their way back to Jerusalem. They found him in the Temple, the place where the Word of God was proclaimed and taught. When his parents asked him why he did such a thing, he replied that he should be about his Father's business: thus, Jesus, the Word of God, makes it his priority. The Pope teaches us in this sense, in parallel with the disciples of Emmaus, that the knowledge of the Holy Scripture is necessary to know and proclaim Christ. Let us pray so that the Love for the Word of God enliven us and for the promotion of every work of evangelization.

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# LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

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## **First Mystery: *The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan***

Jesus baptism highlights his last recommendation for the mission: ‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28:19). In his fifth catechesis on the *Passion for Evangelization*, the Holy Father teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the real protagonist of that mission. In that sense and considering that baptism makes the call and the proclamation concrete, there is no question of discriminating and judging the dignity or the apparent integrity of those that Christ calls to baptism. As the Pope teaches us in his first catechesis, which talks about the vocation of Matthew, the disciple, and that baptism and proclamation are for everyone, let us pray for the discernment of missionary vocations so that they aim the ‘essence of mankind’ that needs to be saved rather than the ‘words’ that condemn and discriminate mankind.

## **Second Mystery: *The Wedding Feast at Cana***

‘The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.’ (*Evangelii gaudium*, № 1) The presence of Jesus in the wedding feast at Cana transforms it: we begin with an idyllic setting between the newlyweds, then to an encounter of love and overjoy between the One who brings joy and the men and women who need it and long for it. For every missionary disciple, mission is therefore a permanent wedding feast. May the Lord grant us to be the first to experience this joy that he asks us to bring to the world each day.

## **Third Mystery: *Jesus’s Proclamation of the Coming of the Kingdom of God***

The fourth catechesis on the *Passion for Evangelization* focus on Pope Francis questions: ‘why proclaim? What to proclaim? How to proclaim?’ To proclaim because we have received freely, and the beauty of that gratuitous gift cannot we kept to ourselves. This proclamation tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and merciful. We must proclaim through a testimony which involves everything: the mind, the heart, the hands, the thought, the affection, and the work.” These are simple notions that heal our extremism (such as activism and spiritualism) within the mission. May the Lord help us.

## **Fourth Mystery: *The Transfiguration***

The missionary disciple’s smile brightens his face just as Christ’s face on the mountain and this changes everything within the mission; because this smile takes part in the testimony of what the Pope calls “the language of affection.” This is an expression of welcome, joy and love. Let us pray so that the “missionary conversion” that the Holy Father aims and promotes for the whole Church might be reached.

**Fifth Mystery: *The Institution of the Eucharist***

“The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission” (Ap. Exhort. *Sacramentum caritatis*, N<sup>o</sup> 84). In the wake of his predecessor Benedict XVI writings, Pope Francis urges the missionary disciples to lovingly devote themselves to communion with Christ through the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament so that they may become “mystics in action.” Thus, our prayer is also the same one as the disciples of Emmaus: “Stay with us, Lord!”

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## SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

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**First Mystery: *The Agony in the Garden***

“Reach out” within the mission, following Christ’s steps who “enlarges the boundaries” within the proclamation (cf. Pope Francis, Homily for Sunday of the Word of God 2023), also requires and firstly, to reach out our own limits: the ones of being afraid to make sacrifices and the difficulties of the mission. Let us pray like Jesus when we are faced with the demands of the mission and let us say: “Still, not my will but yours be done.” (Lk 22: 42 b)

**Second Mystery: *The Scourging at the Pillar***

When he makes himself a master instead of a humble servant and a disciple in mission, the missionary disciple is encouraged to realize that Christ suffered and was beaten. “Recognize his presence, make room for his Word, and you will change your outlook on life,” says Pope Francis. Thus, these words can resonate within the heart of the disciple in mission: “Recognize his presence, make room for Christ’s sufferings and you will change your outlook on your mission.” May the Blessed Virgin Mary, witness of Christ’s sufferings, intercede for us.

**Third Mystery: *The Crowning With Thorns***

“In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.” (Jn 4:33) Let us pray with Pope Francis for all the missionary disciples to whom he pays tribute in his message for World Mission Day 2023, for their generosity and their sacrifices known by Christ of whom they become closer each day. The crown with thorns in the sight of men is for them, crown of glory in the sight of God.

### **Fourth Mystery: *The Carrying of the Cross***

Once again, here are some credible words by the Holy Father: “The Lord is greater than all our problems, above all if we encounter them in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. For in the end, this mission is his and we are nothing more than his humble co-workers, ‘useless servants’”. Can we still claim that the crosses of the mission are ours? No! Everything belongs to the Master. The Master is the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear missionary disciples do not be afraid and move forward! Move forward! Keep your feet moving! O, Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of the missionary disciples, walk with us.

### **Fifth Mystery: *The Crucifixion and Death***

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 11:46). These words by Jesus have made death and Christian sleep, a rest in God. Although the feet are moving, every mission validly includes a time of resting in God, who takes care of renewing our strength or make us discover the resurrection following the example of Christ. After the weight of the day and the actions of the missionary disciple, the Lord takes care of the rest. In an audience with the priests, Pope Francis suggests the best way to rest in God: “Always spend a minute in presence of the Blessed Sacrament before going to bed” May the Blessed Virgin Mary always helps us to make of our rest, a rest in God.

***“Our Lady of the Way, Mother of Christ’s missionary disciples and Queen of Missions, pray for us!” (Pope Francis)***

## GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

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### **First Mystery: *The Resurrection***

The resurrection: The Victory! How can we know if our mission is successful? Never like an end, but always with the enthusiasm and faith of starting over, even better, of a continuity, because a mission calls another one. “Hearts on fire, feet on the go,” the joy of success fills us with enthusiasm and continuously pushes us far away. May the Blessed Virgin Mary grant us to discover in our successes the victory of Christ over death, and therefore, the strength to move forward and to continue with faith and a renewed missionary zeal.

### **Second Mystery: *The Ascension***

The Ascension of the Lord is above all an elevation movement, which plunges the disciples, with the Angel’s message, into the hope of Christ’s coming and the sending out

in mission. The elevation of Christ also elevates the disciples in hope and transforms them into missionaries, just as much as his presence on the road. That is why we can repeat Pope Francis call in his message for World Mission Day: So let us always be willing to let ourselves be accompanied by the Risen Lord [...] May he make our hearts burn within us; may he enlighten and transform us, so that we can proclaim his mystery of salvation [...]

### **Third Mystery: *The Descent of the Holy Spirit***

Pope Francis teaches us that “the Spirit sheds light on the path of the Church, always.” It is this Spirit that makes possible cooperation within the mission. In this time when the whole Church is in a synodal process, let us pray so that missionary cooperation becomes effectively concrete, and for the “right path” of the Pontifical Mission Societies, which are tools for spiritual and missionary cooperation.

### **Fourth Mystery: *The Assumption***

“I go forth with simplicity! This is how one should proclaim: by showing Jesus rather than talking about Jesus” (Pope Francis, fourth catechesis). These words seem far from the glorious life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and yet, let us see clearly in Mary a model with a double sense: in the first one, the simplicity of the Virgin that knew how to guide her from her “fiat” until the Cenacle with the apostles. In the second one, the Blessed Virgin Mary who lived by showing her Son rather than talking about him (cf. Jn 2, the Wedding Feast at Cana); consequently, the Assumption is not only Mary’s reward as the mother of God; she also becomes a reward for the first witness of our Hope and model of simplicity through the proclamation. O, Mary, make us similar to you through your simplicity and help us reject the complexities of mundanity

### **Fifth Mystery: *The Coronation of Mary***

Why do you struggle in seeking points of references and spiritual auxiliaries and even humans? Why do you struggle to chase after vain worldly glories at the expense of everything? Remember that at the end of the day, the Blessed Virgin Mary experienced everything and obtained everything that is beautiful and great until her assumption in heaven; and the Church cannot move forward without the humble virgin Mary. And also every missionary disciple with a heart on fire.

Let us pray with Pope Francis:

***“Our Lady of the Way, Mother of Christ’s missionary disciples and Queen of Missions, pray for us!” (repeat three times)***

With the collaboration of Gérald Fabrice Endaména, a seminarian from Cameroon.