A Rosary for Vulnerable Migrant Populations

JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS

we are one family under God

Introduction

In this moment of extreme uncertainty and isolation, we turn to our faith and to Mary for strength, compassion and solidarity. Mary, as the mother of our Savior defends the vulnerable. This is particularly important as we struggle with sudden, external threats, like COVID-19.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States, in their pastoral letter Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity, invite us to enter into the mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ. As St. Paul teaches in his first letter to the Corinthians, the mystery is that we are made part of that Body through our Baptism. By learning to celebrate our individual differences while embracing our union with others, we grow not only in our understanding of Jesus, but in the knowledge of our own true selves.

Such knowledge flies in the face of a culture that promotes fear and "othering" of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In their pastoral letter, the Bishops challenge us to embrace our sisters and brothers through four calls: conversion, communion, solidarity, and evangelization. We invite you to pray the rosary with us for vulnerable people on the move.

How to Pray the Rosary

The Rosary is a Scripture-based prayer. It begins with the Apostles' Creed, which summarizes the great mysteries of the Catholic faith. The Our Father, which introduces each mystery, is from the Gospels. The first part of the Hail Mary is the angel's words announcing Christ's birth and Elizabeth's greeting to Mary. St. Pius V officially added the second part of the Hail Mary. The Mysteries of the Rosary center on the events of Christ's life. There are four sets of Mysteries: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and—added by Saint John Paul II in 2002—the Luminous.

The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. The Rosary can be said privately or with a group.

The Five Joyful Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Mondays, Saturdays, and, during the season of Advent, on Sundays:
The Annunciation
The Visitation
The Nativity
The Presentation in the Temple
The Finding in the Temple

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Tuesdays, Fridays, and, during the season of Lent, on Sundays:
The Agony in the Garden
The Scourging at the Pillar
The Crowning with Thorns
The Carrying of the Cross
The Crucifixion and Death

The Five Glorious Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and, outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on Sundays:
The Resurrection
The Ascension
The Descent of the Holy Spirit
The Assumption
The Coronation of Mary

The Five Luminous Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Thursdays:
The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan
The Wedding Feast at Cana
Jesus' Proclamation of the Coming of the Kingdom of God
The Transfiguration
The Institution of the Eucharist

Praying the Rosary

Familiarize yourself and/or your group with the prayers of the rosary.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross.
2. Holding the Crucifix, say the Apostles' Creed.
3. On the first bead, say an Our Father.
4. Say one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads.
5. Say the Glory Be
6. For each of the five decades, announce the Mystery (perhaps followed by a brief reading from Scripture) then say the Our Father.
7. While fingering each of the ten beads of the decade, next say ten Hail Marys while meditating on the Mystery. Then say a Glory Be. (After finishing each decade, some say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima: O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy.)
8. After saying the five decades, say the Hail, Holy Queen, followed by this dialogue and prayer:

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Let us pray: O God, whose Only Begotten Son,
by his life, Death, and Resurrection,
has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life,
grant, we beseech thee,
that while meditating on these mysteries
of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
we may imitate what they contain
and obtain what they promise,
through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

(A prayer to St. Joseph may also follow.) Conclude the Rosary with the Sign of the Cross.

Prayers of the Rosary

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;
blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

The Glory Be (The Doxology)

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.

The Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen

The Hail Holy Queen (The Salve Regina)

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve;
to you we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation—Luke 1:29-32

"Do not be afraid," the Angel Gabriel told Mary. When we are confronted with change in our lives, it is hard not to be afraid. For the immigrant and refugee, change may require leaving behind family, friends, and home. When we make room in our lives to welcome newcomers, we change as well. We pray for the grace of love, which casts out all fear.

The Visitation—Luke 1:39-45

During her pregnancy, Mary was a woman on the move, goingto visit her cousin Elizabeth in the hill country.Today, millions of women—often pregnant or with young children—are forced to flee their homelands. We pray for the grace of hospitality, to welcome them into our country and our homes as Elizabeth welcomed Mary.

The Nativity—Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 2:13-15

Jesus was born a migrant. Bethlehem had no room, no welcome for the outsiders, so Jesus was born in a stable. The wrath of King Herod turned Jesus and his family into refugees. Today, migrants and refugees are still forced from their homes by poverty, war, disaster, or oppression. We pray for the grace of charity, to offer them comfort and consolation.

The Presentation—Luke 2:22-38

Simeon and Anna created a welcoming community when the Holy Family came to the temple. They were rewarded with the recognition that they had seen God's Holy One. We are challenged to create welcoming communities in our own churches. We pray for the grace to recognize Jesus present in each immigrant and refugee.

The Finding in the Temple—Luke 2:41-50

How frantic Mary and Joseph must have been to discover that the child Jesus was missing, and how relieved they were to recover him. Many thousands of refugees today are "unaccompanied minors"—lost children with no parents to seek and reclaim them. We pray for the grace to find loving homes and families for them, as we would for Jesus himself.

The Luminous Mysteries

The Baptism in the Jordan—Mark 1:9-11

When John baptized Jesus, the heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and a heavenly voice proclaimed: "You are my beloved Son." Yet many still refused to recognize Jesus as the anointed one of God. Today, many still fail to recognize the signs of our Christ's presence in our immigrant sisters and brothers. We pray for the grace to open ourselves to welcome Christ.

The Wedding at Cana—John 2:1-12

Jesus initially resisted beginning his public ministry at Cana, saying, "My hour has not yet come." Yet in the face of need, he could not fail to respond. We too have many reasons why we do not have time to get involved in public issues such as immigration. In the face of our sister's and brother's need, however, how can we refuse? We ask for the grace to act on behalf of others when God calls us.

The Proclamation of the Kingdom—Matthew 5–7

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaimed a Kingdom that turns the world's traditional wisdom on end. In the Kingdom of God, it is the poor, the meek, the peacemakers, and the oppressed who are blessed, while the rich and powerful turn away sad. We pray for the grace to create this Peaceable Kingdom in our age, by welcoming the poor, oppressed migrants who turn to us seeking a home.

The Transfiguration—Luke 9:29-36

When the dazzling brilliance of the transfigured Jesus was revealed to the disciples, they saw not only a prefiguring of the Resurrection, but also the change they themselves would undergo when the received the fullness of the Spirit at Pentecost.

We pray for the grace of transformation—of ourselves and of our nation—into the welcoming Body of Christ.

The Institution of the Eucharist—Luke 24:19-27

Even as Jesus gave his own body and blood to the Apostles, they persisted in quarreling over who was the greatest. Christ's last instruction to them was that the greatest is the one who serves the lowliest. We ask for the grace to serve those who come among us as "aliens," unwelcome and spurned.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden—Mark 14:34-42

Part of Christ's suffering was that he endured it alone. The Apostles slumbered while his persecutors approached. Are we asleep as well? Do we recognize the injustice of current immigration policy? Do we speak on behalf of asylum seekers? We pray for the grace of solidarity with those who are denied welcome in our country.

The Scourging at the Pillar—John 19:1

Pilate used torture to try to force a confession from Jesus. Today, asylum seekers and torture victims who flee to the United States are often deported or imprisoned for failing to possess proper documents. We pray for forgiveness for our silence and the courage to speak out on their behalf.

The Crowning with Thorns—Matthew 27:27-30

Jesus' captors were not content with torture; they humiliated him, crowned him with thorns, and mocked him. Racism, prejudice, cruel stereotypes, and verbal abuse are the thorns that pierce many new migrants as they seek work, housing, and education for their children. We pray for compassion and for the grace to heal the wounds that divide us.

The Carrying of the Cross—Luke 23:26

The burden of the Cross was so great that without the help of Simon of Cyrene, Jesus would have been crushed by its weight. Often, refugees bear crushing guilt from having survived when their children, parents, and spouses died horribly. Who can endure this alone? We pray for the grace to be present to their suffering and help them carry their burden.

The Crucifixion—Mark 15:37

And with a loud cry, he breathed his last and died. Do the "illegal aliens" cry when they die of dehydration in the western desert, or drown in the Florida Straits, or suffocate in a cargo container? We pray for the grace to understand that no human is illegal, and that every life is sacred

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection—John 20:18

"I have seen the Lord!" With these words, Mary Magdalene answered the call to evangelize, to share the Gospel of new life with others. We are also called to share the Good News that Jesus is alive and among us today. Like Mary, however, at first we may not recognize him. We pray for the grace to recognize and proclaim the Body of Christ, alive in each person we meet.

The Ascension—Acts 1:11

"Why are you standing there looking at the sky?" the angels asked after Jesus was taken up. Why indeed do we stand waiting for Jesus to miraculously create a welcoming Kingdom? We are the ones who must seek the grace to change our hearts and our society. We are the ones who must create the welcoming community here on earth. We pray for the grace of conversion.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit—Acts 2:5-11

At Pentecost, people of every nation were in Jerusalem, yet each heard the Apostles' proclamation of the Spirit in their native tongues. Today we experience the same diversity of language and culture in our land. We pray for the grace of true communion: the appreciation of the richness and beauty that each tradition brings to God's table.

The Assumption—Luke 1:46-55

Mary glorified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her savior, and God raised her up and exalted her. In her Assumption, the lowly are raised up, the hungry are fed, and mercy is bestowed on God's children. We pray for the grace to follow Mary's example by our tender care for the stranger in our midst.

The Coronation of Mary—Revelations 12:1-6

It is a radiant Mary, clothed in the sun and crowned with stars, who reigns as Queen of Heaven and battles the dragon who would destroy her child. As her children, we are called to battle the dragons of fear, prejudice, intolerance, and exclusion that separate us from our sisters and brothers. We pray for the grace of courageous, loving hearts.

The Daily Reflections

Monday: Child Migrants
The Joyful Mysteries

The Gospel calls us to help the most vulnerable people in our midst. Children are the most vulnerable of all. Dependent on others for food, shelter, and guidance, children often suffer the most in difficult times. In the midst of persecution, war, and other calamities, when families are forced to flee their homelands in search of safer places, parents and children can easily become separated, leaving the children alone. At other times, unaccompanied and undocumented children and teenagers try to make their way to the United States, some fleeing violence and gang recruitment, others with the hope of reuniting with family already in the United States, or in search of work to help support their families back home. In all cases, alone and without a parent or guardian to watch over them, migrant and refugee minors are left vulnerable to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse and exploitation. Our intention for today's Rosary is for child migrants that they may find refuge.

Tuesday: Refugees
The Sorrowful Mysteries

Refugees are individuals who have fled their countries of origin and who have a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion," as required by U.S. law. Refugees do not voluntarily migrate but instead are forced to do so out of immediate necessity – often in the context of civil unrest, armed conflict, human rights violations, or other violence. Most refugees are not resettled but often end up forced out of their homeland and into nearby nations. Their lives only become more perilous during those times in which countries of potential safe-haven close their doors, or in the face of rapidly spreading disease of the sort we currently face in COVID-19. Our intention for today's Rosary is for refugees that they may find safety.

Wednesday: Trafficking Victims
The Glorious Mysteries

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery exploiting human beings through force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. Some people are trafficked for prostitution, pornography, and other forms of sexual exploitation. Some are trafficked for forced labor in agriculture, sweat shops, and domestic servitude. Some people are exploited both for sex and labor. Through sexual slavery, the body becomes little more than an object to be exploited. For victims of forced labor, the body is made into a disposable machine, made to work long hours for little or no pay and for the profit of others. In both cases the person who is enslaved is treated as an object for another's benefit. The person's God-given human dignity is either ignored or forgotten. Our intention for today's Rosary is for those who are victims of human trafficking that they may find freedom and dignity.

Thursday: Migrant Families
The Luminous Mysteries

In certain regions of the world, threats of physical and psychological violence in war torn countries and the lack of viable societal security structures threaten undermine the stability of families. The violence and impunity coupled with the lack of economic opportunities confronting large segments of Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere place significant strain on families, often presenting them with a troubling choice. Some choose to stay together and remain in their home country, even amidst difficult conditions in which economic stresses wear on familial attachments and communal stability. Others are displaced within their own country, relocating to escape violence. Many families choose to leave their family and head elsewhere, with the hope of finding worthwhile employment, sending money home, or sending for their family at a later time. The lure of a better and safer life in the United States and in other developed countries promises opportunities, but at what cost? Separated families, broken relationships, and long-term uncertainty. Our intention for today's Rosary is for migrant families that they may find protection and prosperity.

Friday: Asylum Seekers
The Sorrowful Mysteries

Asylum seekers are individuals who have fled their countries of origin and who have a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion," as required by U.S. law. However, unlike refugees, these individuals have in many cases been forcibly forced out of their homes without certification as refugees. As such, asylum seekers, are accessing protection either within a country they have entered or accessing protection at the border of a country that they are attempting to enter. Many have traveled over difficult terrain and for many miles in search of haven. Some bring with them small children. Some come alone. Still others travel with extended family or friends who were forced to flee as well. Asylees are deserving of our protection and for the opportunity to start a new life in a place that is welcoming. Our intention for today's Rosary is for asylum seekers that they may find safe haven.

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