

Vocation Rosary



The Joyful Mysteries

There's a word used in theology that means God's will as it unfolds in salvation history. That word is economy, which has a different meaning in a secular context. I bring this up because I want to argue that vocation is, essentially, finding one's place within the economy. This definition gives vocation a much broader context than is commonly understood. For example, when we pray for vocations, we think of priests, nuns, and brothers. However, if when we pray for vocations, we are praying that all people find their place in the economy, then our prayer is more perfect because when someone finds their calling, their true vocation, they are truly happy because they are fulfilled. So, then, let us look at the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary and see how living out one's vocation in conformity with the economy can accomplish great things and bring true, lasting joy into our hearts.

First Joyful Mystery - The Annunciation

The mystery of the Annunciation illustrates the "call and response" element to vocation. Vocation is an invitation by God that mandates a response. Here, the Lord has asked Mary to be the mother of His son. Few callings are so clear-cut. As we pray this mystery, let us imagine ourselves in the room with Mary. Gabriel has just asked Our Lady to carry the God-Man within her. Imagine the tension in the room, indeed all of creation, as we await the answer. Our Lady agrees within a very short span of time. Let us pray that Christians everywhere be more attentive to God's call and that they follow Mary's example and answer with their own "fiat."

Second Joyful Mystery - The Visitation

Some people find their calling very early in life, others very late. This mystery illustrates both. Here is the aged Elizabeth who, after so many years, is finally doing what she was meant to - being a witness to God by motherhood. But here too is the unborn Baptist. Even before the birth of the Christ-child, even before his own birth, John proclaims the coming of the Messiah. This mystery is also full of the joy of finding one's place in the economy. Witness Elizabeth's joyful greeting, John's joyful leaps, and most spectacularly, Mary's joyful song of the Magnificat. As we pray this mystery, let us once more put ourselves in the room with Mary, Elizabeth, and their unborn children. See the tears of joy sparkle on their faces, smiles wide, and their voices lilting with happiness at the presence of God among them. Let us pray that all Christians seek God and find the joy that comes from following the Lord.

Third Joyful Mystery - The Nativity

Vocation is not without difficulty. Here, let us look to Joseph, guardian of the Madonna and the Son of God. The journey from Nazareth in northern Israel to Bethlehem in the south with a woman who was eight months pregnant could neither have been easy or comfortable, then to find that the only place available for Mary to bear her child is in a stable. Joseph's struggle is just beginning. Imagine him mucking out the barn and finding clean hay upon which to rest his foster-son, and the pain that God's only Son had to sleep on hay, not down. The flight to Egypt would soon present difficulties for the beleaguered Joseph. Yet, even in the midst of what any of us would consider a disaster, Joseph is calm. His fortitude is rewarded by the visit of the shepherds and the adoration of the Magi. Let us pray that all who struggle in their vocation do so with peace and fortitude, and that God reward them with His grace.

Fourth Joyful Mystery - The Presentation in the Temple

Through the joy and challenges of vocation, it is good to keep in mind the goal. Simeon lived his life and fulfilled his vocation so well that the Holy Spirit promised him that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Messiah. Simeon's reward is what awaits us all. Fulfillment of our vocation, our cooperation with, and in, the economy will result in our eternal reward - to see God and be happy with him forever.

Fifth Joyful Mystery - The Finding in the Temple

Vocation demands action. Jesus knew his vocation and went to work at it. However, vocation requires maturity, something he was lacking at this point. The time would come when Our Lord had to leave his mother and when she had to send forth her divine son. Undoubtedly, this was a difficult event for both mother and son, however necessary. Yet, without action, no vocation can be fulfilled, and if not fulfilled, there will be no joy, no growth, and no reward. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God to bless and prosper our actions that cooperate with his economy.

The Luminous Mysteries

Vocation is finding one's place within God's plan as it unfolds in salvation history, or more simply put, the economy. The Luminous mysteries focus on the public ministry of Our Lord up to the Last Supper. From them, we can glean what we need to do once we find our place in the economy. Therefore, for this next half-hour or so, let us put ourselves in the company of the apostles as they receive their education from the Master.

First Luminous Mystery - The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan

The scene on the banks of the Jordan was likely a busy one. John, knee-deep in the water, fed on a diet of honey and grasshoppers, wearing only a camel skin for clothing, and filled with a fiery zeal, cut an imposing figure, intensity rolling off him in waves. As John plunged people into the Jordan, Jesus arrives and asks for baptism. When Jesus emerges from the water, the Father Himself proclaims that this is His beloved Son, listen to him, and the Holy Spirit, moonlighting as a dove, descends upon him. The lesson for us here is two-fold. On the one hand, we have a very explicit command from the Father to listen to the Son. On the other, we have Jesus, who demands baptism before he begins his ministry. Jesus' desire for baptism tells us that we need to rely on the graces and gifts of our own baptism before we set out on our own vocation. As we pray this decade, let us ask God to make us more attentive to Jesus and to help us put His graces to good use.

Second Luminous Mystery - The Wedding at Cana

The wedding at Cana is where Jesus manifests himself and works his first miracle. His performance of the miracle is, at least initially, involuntary. He tells his mother Mary that his time is not yet come. Nevertheless, she is persistent and gives the servants very sage advice, "Do whatever he tells you." We learn a great deal from this brief exchange. First is that we should rely on those who are more experienced in the spiritual life as we embark on our work within the economy. Mary's prodding of Jesus is basically spiritual direction. From time to time everyone needs an outsider to challenge or push us in order that we might grow. Mary's role as spiritual director can also be seen, although with a great deal of hindsight, in her admonition to the servants to "do whatever he tells you." Lastly, we can take from this mystery that Mary, as the mother of all Christians, should be looked to for help and advice, just as she was by that unknown wedding planner two millennia ago.

Third Luminous Mystery - The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

Throughout his three-year ministry, Our Lord proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God and the need for repentance. For all of us, regardless of what our particular vocation might be, the same imperative drives us. We need to make ourselves living examples of Jesus' love and message, proclaiming by our words and deeds both the need for repentance and the kingdom of God. However, we need to be and do more than proclaim repentance and the kingdom; we actually need to heed and live out the message. Proclaiming the kingdom is useless if we do not repent. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God for forgiveness of our sins and how we can change to avoid falling back into them, thus becoming more fitting heralds of the Gospel.

Fourth Luminous Mystery - The Transfiguration

On the summit of Mount Tabor, Peter, James, and John glimpsed Jesus in glory, and heard the voice of God proclaimed that Jesus is his beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. The Transfiguration is both a confirmation that Jesus is, in fact, the Son of God, and a foretaste of what is to come in the hereafter. As we pray this mystery, let us remember that the one whose work we do is the Lord, Him do we serve, and ask him to provide the grace necessary to persevere in his work so that we might be with him and the Father in heavenly glory forever.

Fifth Luminous Mystery - The Institution of the Eucharist

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave the Church a great gift, one that would sustain her for the duration of her pilgrimage on earth. The Eucharist is the very source of our life. Through it, innumerable graces are poured upon us to do the Lord's work, to sustain us, to bring us to eternal life. It is by our feeding at the Lord's table that we mark ourselves as members of his body and draw closer to him. The celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of all Christian worship. To live out our vocation requires that we eat the Lord's body and drink his blood. As we pray this mystery, let us thank God for giving this supreme gift to his Church and ask Him to help us appreciate it more and grow in devotion to it.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

Looking at the mysteries of the Rosary through the prism of vocation, we learn about the economy, that is, God's plan of salvation, and about finding one's place within the economy. Regardless of one's specific vocation, however, there are certain constants that mark the vocation of every Christian. The primary one is, of course, proclamation of the Word. Yet, merely to proclaim the Word isn't enough. What we need to do is to unite ourselves with the suffering and death of Jesus. In doing so, we make our work in the world more efficacious and fruitful. Let us turn, then, to the Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, which deal with the suffering and death of Our Lord, and see how to unite our vocation to that of the Master.

First Sorrowful Mystery - The Agony in the Garden

After the Last Supper, where he gave the Church the gift of his very self, Jesus retired to the Garden of Gethsemane with Peter, James, and John. Our Lord was troubled and aware that challenges were on the way, and he wanted to spend a quiet moment with his Father. Prayer. It is an essential element to all vocations. Whatever our personal path might be, we are sure to meet challenges on the way. We must not allow whatever difficulties we face to tear our gaze from God. We have to be like Jesus and make the time to talk to God, to express to him our doubts, but also to ultimately accept His will

and take comfort from His presence, strengthened for whatever lay ahead. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God to strengthen our brothers and sisters about to face a challenge as they carry out His will.

Second Sorrowful Mystery - The Scourging at the Pillar

In a stunningly craven political move, Pilate orders Jesus scourged, in the hope of placating a crowd who wanted nothing more than to see the legions march out of Judea, preferably at the point of Israelite swords. From time to time, as we go on about our lives, as we live out our vocations, we get the short end of the stick, or in the case of Our Lord, the hook end of the whip. When we meet setbacks or roadblocks on our vocational journey, we mustn't be like Jonah, cursing the dead plant, but like Jesus, who didn't open his mouth once. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God to give us the patience to deal with obstacles to our work with grace. But let us also unite our sufferings to his and remember that "by his stripes, we are healed."

Third Sorrowful Mystery - The Crowning with Thorns

Before he comes into his kingdom, the King of the Jews is made fun of, spat upon, slapped, and crowned with thorns by soldiers of Caesar's legions. Upon the pains of the garden and at the pillar, a new torment is cast. At the Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord tells us that we are blessed when we are made fun of or persecuted, or even killed, on account of him. When our work in the Lord is derided or made fun of, or belittled, it is Our Lord himself, through us, who is crowned with a new garland. So, as this decade progresses let us remember that Jesus suffered humiliation and derision as he worked out his vocation. Are we greater than he, that we should be spared humiliation on his account?

Fourth Sorrowful Mystery - Jesus Carries His Cross

Living out our vocations is not always easy. Consider Our Lord, bruised, whipped, beaten, and humiliated as he lugged the impossibly heavy cross out of Jerusalem, and up Calvary Hill. The cross is a torment, but it is also a necessary tool for salvation. Jesus tells us that we must take up our crosses and follow him. What are we waiting for? After all, in another passage, he tells us that his yoke is easy, his burden light. As we pray this mystery, let us resolve to once more take up our crosses, embracing them, and follow Jesus up Calvary to our salvation. The yoke is easy and the burden light because in his love, Jesus has already done the work.

Fifth Sorrowful Mystery - The Crucifixion

Jesus loved the world so much, that he gave his very life for us. He saw through, to the end of his life, his vocational journey. He put up with all the setbacks, the stumbles, the beatings, the insults, all of it, so that he might restore man's relationship with God. And we, after we have carried our cross, and united all our sufferings with those of Christ, then we must take those parts of ourselves which impede our relationship with God and

nail them to the cross, no matter how painful it may be, and so crucify ourselves, so that like Jesus, we too may rise to new life in God.

The Glorious Mysteries

Praying the Joyful, Luminous, and Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, we learned about vocation as one's place in the economy of salvation, how to find that place, and how to unite one's specific vocation to that of the Lord. Now, let us pray together the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, and as we do so, let us focus on the graces, the tools, if you will, God has given us to do His work.

First Glorious Mystery – The Resurrection

On the third day after Jesus was crucified, some women went to the place he was laid to anoint the body, when to their shock, they discovered the tomb open and empty. Their shock is quickly pushed aside, however, as they learn that the Lord is risen. This fact, this truth, is central to the Christian vocation. In rising from the dead, the Lord has broken the chains of sin and death that for so long, ruptured our relationship with God. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God to help us make the Resurrection the central point in our hearts so that whatever our specific vocation may be, we may proclaim by our words and actions "The Lord is risen!"

Second Glorious Mystery – The Ascension

After his resurrection, Jesus spent forty days with the apostles, teaching them to be heralds of the Gospel. After the forty days were over, the Lord ascended to heaven on a cloud, promising to send the Paraclete after him. Dumbstruck, the Eleven stared after him into the sky. Two angels appeared to them and told them that as Jesus left, he shall return. Strengthened by the angels' message, the Eleven, Mary, and the holy women devoted themselves to prayer. In the liturgy, we hear that "our desire to praise You is itself Your gift." As we pray this mystery, let us thank Almighty God for the gift of prayer itself, for it is in prayer that we commune with the Most High.

Third Glorious Mystery – The Descent of the Holy Spirit

The Apostles and Mary are in the Upper Room when it is filled with a rushing wind and tongues of fire descend on their heads, anointing them with the Holy Spirit. Filled with its power, they go out into the streets and proclaim the Gospel in all languages. Indeed, the people exclaim "We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travellers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God." The same Spirit that made the Apostles able to do this is active in

each of us by our Baptism and Confirmation. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God to renew in us the strength of the Holy Spirit so that we too may proclaim the Word with power.

Fourth Glorious Mystery – The Assumption of Mary

At the end of her life, Our Lady was taken body and soul, into heaven. This is a singular event. However, it does certainly affect the way we live out our vocations. In her Assumption, Mary was conformed more fully to her Son. This is meant for us as anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians. By giving us a public sign, God is making a promise that we too shall share her reward. As we pray this mystery, let us ask God to make us more like Mary, with our eyes fixed on the proper goal of our life, her son, Our Lord Jesus.

Fifth Glorious Mystery – The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In making Mary the Queen of Heaven and earth, God has made her a powerful intercessor for us before the heavenly throne. She has also been justly rewarded for her fidelity and love while on earth. She is for us both a model and a help. As we pray this mystery, let us thank God for the gift of so great a mother and ask Our Lady to lay our prayers at the feet of her son.

These meditations on each of the twenty mysteries of the Rosary were written by David C. Deston of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts.