

Holy Rosary – Reflections for the year of Preparation
for Consecration of the Diocese of Metuchen to Jesus through Our Lady of Guadalupe
The Joyful Mysteries - Prayerfully prepared by Pam DiMartile

“May the consecration of our diocese to Mary, our Mother, be a vehicle for deepening our friendship with her Son, and a catalyst for evangelization” Bishop Checchio

This is a special year in the diocese of Metuchen. Bishop Checchio is inviting us to spiritually prepare for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He is calling upon Our Lady of Guadalupe and asking for her intercession so that we might be people truly on fire with God’s love. As you pray and meditate with these reflections about the joyful mysteries of the holy Rosary, may the Blessed Mother draw you closer to Jesus and inspire you to share your Catholic faith with others.

Begin in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Pray the Apostles’ Creed, then the “Our Father”

Pray these intentions for the first three “Hail Mary”-s:

For **Faith**, especially for those who doubt the truth of the Gospel.

For Renewed **Hope**, so we can experience again the joy of being a child of God.

For a deepening of **Charity**, so we grow to love others the way Jesus does.

The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-37)

The Angel Gabriel was sent from God to speak with the Virgin Mary. He greeted her, “Hail full of grace the Lord is with you!” The angel tells her that the Holy Spirit will come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. She will bear a child who will be called holy, the Son of God. He will be great. The Lord God will give him the throne of his Father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. *For with God, nothing will be impossible.* And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.”

The Spanish conquered the Aztec nation in 1521. Not soon after, missionaries arrived from Spain and began evangelizing the people. After toiling for a decade, the Bishop-elect was ready to give up. They were having trouble winning souls for the Lord. The missionaries didn’t understand the language or the culture of the natives. The Spanish government was corrupt and mistreated the local people. At one point the Bishop-elect wrote a letter to the Charles V, the King of Spain, telling him, “If God does not provide a remedy from His Hand, the land is about to be completely lost”ⁱⁱ

As we sit in the pews, year after year, and watch Mass attendance decline, we too may be tempted to despair like the Bishop-elect of Mexico. God did not abandon His people then, and He won’t abandon us now. We pray that the Lord will revive our diocese through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and pour out graces on our friends and family who are far from the Catholic faith, to draw them back to the heart of Jesus, back to the Catholic Church. *Nothing will be impossible for God.*

Pause for a moment and think about a loved one who’s far from the Lord. Offer this decade of the rosary for them.

Song: “Heart of Worship”

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1WYHvGn6fQZRAmbD5TG51j?si=IO61mbk8RZy8lUI504xdzq>

Pray the first decade of the Rosary.

The Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation (Luke 1:39-56)

As soon as the Blessed Virgin Mary learned that her elderly cousin Elizabeth was six months pregnant, she quickly went to visit her. The journey from Nazareth to the hill country of Judah was not an easy trip. It's around 90 miles. If Our Lady walked, it could have been a 4- or 5-day journey through dangerous territory. And remember, she was in the first trimester of her pregnancy – a time when many women feel ill. At the prompting of the angel, she set aside her personal concerns and helped her cousin.

In 1531 when the Blessed Mother appeared to Juan Diego, he was 57-years old. He would have been considered by most people an old man, past his prime. Yet, this ordinary Catholic person was chosen by the Blessed Virgin Mary for an important job. She asked Juan Diego to speak to the Bishop and tell him to build a Catholic Church on the hill where they were talking. Then she said, "Now, my dearest son, you have heard my breath, my word; go, do what you are responsible for doing."ⁱⁱⁱ

Saint Juan Diego's response, like the Blessed Mother's, was instant. He didn't hesitate to fulfill Our Lady's request. We pray too, that we would not hesitate in serving the Lord, no matter what challenges are placed before us. Give us eyes to see Your will, Lord, and the strength of heart to be faithful to the mission to share the Gospel message with the people in our daily lives.

Song: Give Me Your Eyes

<https://open.spotify.com/track/7HQn99HBIBHWkZfTMR8Kki?si=m0VxwdrQTTi4BidLefhUgQ>

Pause for a moment, then pray the second decade of the Rosary.

The Third Joyful Mystery: The Birth of the Child Jesus (Luke 2:8-20)

The angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds in the field. He said to them, "Be not afraid; for I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." The shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem and to see for themselves. When they arrived, they shared the angel's message about the child Jesus. Then, they returned, "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told to them."

As a result of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Juan Diego's obedience, within 15 years, **nine million people converted to the Catholic faith!**^{iv} It happened not because of the efforts of the priests and missionaries, but because the people came and saw the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It spoke to their hearts. They saw the message of the Gospel in the signs and symbols contained in the holy image. They experienced for themselves the good news that inspired great joy for everyone. Then, they invited others to come and see too. This is the simple process of evangelization. It is how the Catholic faith spread in 1531 and it is how the Catholic faith will spread today - if we step out in faith like the shepherds did, like Saint Juan Diego did. We are called to share the great joy of God's merciful love, which we have seen and experienced in our lives, with others.

The time is ripe for renewal. Lord, we ask you to reveal Yourself to us so that we too may joyfully experience anew your loving mercy in our lives. We are sinners Lord, and we need You. Thank you for never abandoning us. Inspire us, Saint Juan Diego, to launch out as you did, to be good disciples of Jesus, faithful sons and daughters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, people truly on fire with God's love for others.

We also pray for those who are far from God, those who have neglected their Catholic roots, or rejected the Gospel. Lord, stir up a holy curiosity about Jesus and the Catholic faith in these souls. Draw to You, Lord, those who would come and see. Especially those for whom we now pray...

Song: With Every Act of Love

<https://open.spotify.com/track/3hSzCNU37Yfauxrdup4sxi?si=Oxxmp28AQWWz2IE7a9HM3Q>

Pause for a moment, then pray the third decade of the Rosary.

The Fourth Joyful Mystery: Jesus is Presented in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38)

Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus to the Temple to consecrate him to God. “The consecration of the first born was a sign that the whole people belonged to God. They belonged to God because God had delivered them from their slavery in Egypt. We now belong to God because Jesus has redeemed us from our slavery to sin and to Satan and has consecrated us to himself as his holy people.”^v

The Blessed Mother is inviting us, just like she invited the native Aztec people, into the family of God to take our rightful place as true sons and daughters, consecrated to the Lord. Our salvation is not a superficial gift. It was achieved through the total sacrifice of Christ. Because Jesus gave himself completely for us, we are fully, completely, uniquely restored to our heritage as sons and daughters of God.

Jesus died on the cross, not to just cover up, or make up for all our sins. He died on the cross so that we might have life again in Him. He is offering each of us the grace to be transformed deep inside our hearts. To become new people, full of God’s love and mercy for others. He wants to mend the wounds of our souls. He wants to give us peace and joy that boggles the human mind. He didn’t die so that things will just be okay, he died to restore each one of us to his family. It’s where we belong. Isn’t this good news? Don’t you want the people you love to receive these gifts too?

Come, let us follow Jesus Christ in a new, deeply personal way. Let’s not hold back anymore. Let’s give over everything to Him. Jesus, through the tender, loving, gentle hand of his holy mother Mary, will work it out if we open ourselves up to him. It can be a painful process, but it is the best thing we can do. The Lord offers you an invitation: Come; and enter the house that I have prepared for you. This is your family. This is where you belong. Come. This is the invitation of Christ, through the Blessed Mother. Jesus gave everything for you. Will you give everything for Him? Will you speak to others about God’s loving mercy, and like Juan Diego, help bring the lost back to God’s family?

Song: Thrive

<https://open.spotify.com/track/08shoW0qPqgMDnNQppWAQj?si=kOioqn4ETsKLodxmyTJuVQ>

Pause for a moment, then pray the fourth decade of the Rosary.

The Fifth Joyful Mystery: The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

The Holy Family went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. Both the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph didn’t realize that Jesus stayed behind. He was lost. After three days of searching, they found him in the temple. The Blessed Mother said, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.” And he said to them, “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” They didn’t understand; and the Blessed Mother, “kept all these things in her heart”.

How often we too cry out, “Why God? I don’t understand!” The Lord’s response is not intended to be harsh or cruel. He is inviting us to remember our priorities and trust Him. He’s offering us an invitation to turn to Him no matter what happens. The Blessed Mother understands our sufferings. She is a tender, compassionate mother who grieves when we grieve. She knows the answer to our pain and suffering and she wants to help us by inviting us to intimacy with her son, Jesus.

The Blessed Virgin Mary told Saint Juan Diego that she wanted “very much” for the Bishop and the people to build “my sacred little house” where she said she would show the Lord to them. For there, in the Catholic Church, Jesus would be truly present. And all the prayers and Masses offered would exalt Him. She spoke these words, “I will give Him to all people in all my personal love, Him that is my compassionate gaze, Him that is my help, Him that is my salvation.”^{vi} Why? “Because there (at my sacred little house) truly I will hear their cry, their sadness, in order to remedy, to cure all their various troubles, their miseries, their pains.”^{vii}

As Catholics, we have the most precious, wonderful gift in each of the tabernacles in our parishes – the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. He waits for us there every day, every moment...will you turn to him today? He is your rock. He is our rock, the foundation upon which the Catholic Church stands. Let's invite others to encounter the One who will cure all their sadness, troubles, miseries and pains.

Song: I Shall Not Be Shaken

<https://open.spotify.com/track/0wNw77NVpryyMLf6R8Reew?si=yGYKF6zkS8mm6l6XjEETIA>

Pause for a moment, then pray the fifth decade of the Rosary.

Pray the “Hail Holy Queen”

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

Pray the Diocesan prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe:

God our Loving Father, we lift up our hearts in gratitude for sending Our Virgin Mother of Guadalupe to set hearts on fire in the “New World” with the saving message of the Gospel.

She is our compassionate Mother and she desires to remedy our troubles, miseries and pain by bringing us into a saving friendship with her Son Jesus Christ.

We turn again with renewed confidence and outstretched arms to our Virgin Mother of Guadalupe to set our hearts on fire in our Diocese of Metuchen as we prepare to be consecrated to her maternal care.

Give to each one of us a desire to be a missionary disciple – so that the world may come to know the transformative love of Christ through us. Mother of the Americas and Star of the New Evangelization, Pray for us.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ⁱ Bishop James F. Checchio, “Bishop Checchio: ‘We must pray for Easter faith’”. *Catholic Spirit*, April 5, 2018, Upfront.

ⁱⁱ Carl Anderson, Msgr. Eduardo Chavez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe Mother of the Civilization of Love* (United States, Doubleday Religion, 2009), 71.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 174.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, 72.

^v Fr. Andrew Miles, OSB, *The Rosary for Intercession and Spiritual Victory* (United States, Dove Publications, 2011), 59.

^{vi} Carl Anderson, Msgr. Eduardo Chavez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe Mother of the Civilization of Love* (United States, Doubleday Religion, 2009), 173.

^{vii} *Ibid.*, 174.