

Review Article

The Five Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary – A Review Based on the Biblical Backgrounds

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Abstract - This article is about the Catholic beliefs on the Rosary prayers. The Rosary prayers are not mere repetitions of recitation or formulation of the words, as often misinterpreted. The mystery of the Rosary begins with Jesus and circles back to Jesus. There are twenty mysteries in the Rosary prayers, which are categorized into four-mystery groups: the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries. In this article, we limit our discussion to the biblical background review of the five joyful mysteries of the Rosary prayers.

Keywords - Annunciation, Finding of Jesus in the Temple, Joyful, Mystery, Presentation of Our Lord, Rosary, The Birth of Christ, Visitation.

1. Introduction

According to the Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae [1–2], the Rosary prayers are grouped into four series of mysteries and ordered in the following sequence (J-L-S-G): the Joyful (J), Luminous or light (L), Sorrowful (S), and Glorious (G). Each of the four series, as mentioned earlier above, contains five mysteries that make up the Rosary of twenty mysteries (i.e., significant events or moments in the life of Jesus and Mary). Each such group (series) of Rosary takes about 20 min/day to pray [3].

As previously mentioned in the abstract section, in this article, we limit our discussion to the five joyful mysteries of the Rosary prayers. Different prayer traditions exist, such as Benedictine, Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan, Ignatian, Marian [4], etc. Saint Pope John Paul II (JP2), at the end of his life, left us a beautiful document called: The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, paragraph 1, which stated, “The Rosary, though Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer. With the Rosary, the Christian people sit at the school of Mary and are led to face Christ and to experience the depths of his love” [1–2].

We organized the sections as follows. In Section 2, we unpack the five joyful mysteries both textually and visually, using the Biblical background as textual evidence and paintings/pictures as visual illustration. In Section 3, we conclude the discussion.

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2. The Five Joyful Mysteries

There are five joyful mysteries in the Rosary prayers. They are as follows. First, the Annunciation. The second is the Visitation. The third is the Birth of Christ. Forth is the Presentation of Our Lord. Fifth and final is the Finding of Jesus in the temple. As we pray over the decades, we also meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary, which are deeply rooted in the Bible and Christian Tradition. We can learn valuable lessons from the lives of Jesus and Mary through these mysteries of the Rosary.

Traditionally, Catholics reflect on specific mysteries each day of the week – particularly, the joyful mysteries are traditionally recited and meditated every Monday and Saturday.

2.1. The Annunciation

Fr. Vincenz Heereeman [5], a priest of the Legionaries of Christ, studied and unpacked the incredibly rich Old Testament (OT) background behind the first mystery of the Rosary prayer, “The Annunciation,” besides the scene that is written in the Gospel of Luke, as follows.

To pray the Rosary, we can say, to contemplate Christ, with the eyes of Mary. When we read the gospel, and with the Church Traditions, we receive in its entire entity the deposit of faith. We hear the proclamation of faith with the Apostle. In that Words, Christ is there, present, and revealed to us, the Father. Protestant-minded question asked why not directly from Bible, and directly pray to God. The answer, with the Rosary, only the second generations can do, that is, seek out the eyewitnesses to tell us what they saw. The



eyewitnesses of Mary are unique because her eyes are unique.

The oldest image icon of Mary in Rome, *Advocata Nostra*, is at the Dominican Sisters Convent on Via Trionfale on Monte Mario named “Monastero de Santo de Rosario,” meaning “Monastery of the Holy Rosary.” The most ancient icon of the Blessed Mother is shown in the left panel of Figure 1. Now look at her eyes; these are not the eyes of a 16-year-old. These are the eyes of the Blessed Mother at the end of her journey; she’s ready to go, to be with Christ; these eyes had seen the life journey of Christ; as a Baby Christ, as a child playing in the back of her patio, Christ preaching, Christ suffering, and Christ at His Glory. That is why Mary’s eyes are so special.



Fig. 1 The Monastery of the Holy Rosary, the most ancient icon of Mary, the Blessed Mother (left); the ancient “Angelus” prayer (right)

In the Words of St. John Paul II (JP2), *ibid*, 11, [1–2], “Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: “She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19; cf 2:51) [6]. The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her son’s side. In a way, those memories were to be the ‘rosary’ she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.” When we pray Rosary, we look into these eyes, and through them, we look into the heart of Mary, and she explains Christ to us. She teaches us about Christ in the “Annunciation,” and we learn ourselves from Mary. In the scene painted in the Gospel of Luke, the essence of such scene is captured in the ancient prayer of the “Angelus” (see Figure 1, right panel). As we pray it, the scene, as if into words, comes into life; God comes to her life, knocking on the door of her life through an angel, asking if she would be willing to cooperate in his plan of the salvation of the whole world, then she stepping into uncertainty, becoming into what she could not even grasp. Then the angel leads from what is captured in Luke into the Gospel of John. In Luke, we have the narrative icon to contemplate.

In the Gospel of John, we have something like a spiritual X-Ray. John asked what was happening behind the fact of human history. John summarized, “...and the Words became flesh and dwelt among us,” which was prayed in the Ancient Angelus prayer as depicted in Figure 1, right panel. To unpack the first element, the word “dwell” in English came from the Greek word ‘skene’ (Figure 2, left panel), meaning a dwelling place in a boat; to dwell. St. John doesn’t use the words when they first come to mind. But translate it into Hebrew words: ‘ohel moed’ (Figure 2, right panel), which meant tent of meeting. Two names for one reality. The desert sanctuary of Israel is in the book of Exodus.

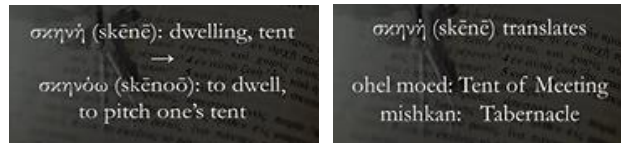


Fig. 2 The Greek word ‘skene’ (left panel); the Hebrew words ‘ohel moed’ (right panel)

The book of Exodus contains 40 chapters. Only the first 15 chapters concern the part of leaving Egypt; 3 parts remain on the road; the remaining chapters are camp at the foot of Mount Sinai, the giving of 10 commandments, the giving of the building of the tabernacle; the lamp, the priest garment, anointing oil, etc. The book of Exodus [6–7] is not only lengthy but the Tabernacle story was repeated twice (Exodus 40:34–38; Exodus 29:43–46), as depicted in the left (Exodus 40:34–38) and middle (Exodus 29:43–46) panels of Figure 3. There are 2 important lessons as the ancient authors are perfectly capable of summarizing, but if there are repeated twice, that’s because it was judged most important. The first important lesson is that the text shows a deep love for the tabernacle. It touched and transformed into the perspective of holy eyes to contemplate His house (Ps 84:1–2) [6–7]. The second important lesson is that Exodus ends with the tabernacle's completion as the climax, “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” (Exodus 40:34–38) [6–7]. The book of Exodus is about God gaining people to Himself by resting them out of slavery and offering them freedom. This freedom comes through obedience to the laws He gave them so. He might live in them and travel with them towards the Promised Land.

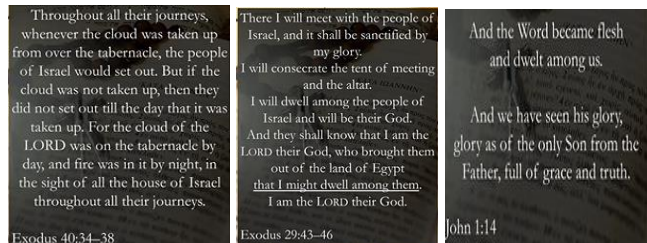


Fig. 3 The Tabernacle the Lord might dwell (left & middle); “the Word ‘dwell’ in Mary as the tabernacle who is ‘full of grace’ ” (right).

There are Dessert Tabernacle and Temple in Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed, and the Israelites went into exile (which was why the book was called Exodus). In the book of Exodus, Moses asked God to show His Glory (Exodus 33: 18-20). Next, we go back to St. John’s super-condensed word at the Annunciation (John 1:14), “And the Word become flesh and live among us.” In St. John’s carefully chosen terminology, he chose the ‘Word,’ in light of theology, the ‘Temple’ in the Exodus. God dwells among His people, literally in the boundary of the earth. And we have seen the Glory of God in the Flesh, His Flesh; while Moses has not been able to have the privilege to see it – for God saved us from the slavery, in Baptism, into freedom, and journeying upon us, to the Promised Land. We note that in the OT, the tent is a symbol of the Body of Christ (Exodus 40:35); while the parallel verse in the New Testament (NT), ‘the power of the Highest will overshadow you (Luke 1:35), as portrayed in the left and middle panels of Figure 4.

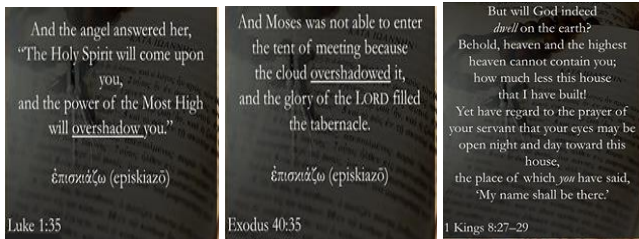


Fig. 4 The parallelism of ‘overshadow’ in both OT and NT (left and middle panels); OT ‘Temple Theology’ to understand Mary who becomes the ‘Temple Container’ (right panel)

The climax of Exodus is in the following verse, “And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud overshadowed it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle” (Exodus 40:35). Hence, we use the Temple Theology in the OT (1 King 8:27–29) to understand Mary who becomes the ‘Temple Container’ in the NT. We cannot understand the mystery of the incarnation if we tone death to the OT. Therefore, in the NT, we learned the “Annunciation” that God comes to us, becomes Flesh, and Dwell among us. But through His life, preaching, death, suffering, and resurrection, we might see His Glory, only from the Son; and we learned from the Son, His Grace, and Truth. And we will also learn from Mary to become the tent (‘skene’) and tabernacle (‘mishkan’). And we may become “A Temple of the Living God” – A Holy of the Holiest. Glory from the Son from His Father, Full of Grace and Truth.

2.2. The Visitation

In the second joyful mystery of the Rosary prayer, we meditate on Mary, who is revealed as the New Ark of the Covenant, who comes to visit us in our own home, just as she visited her cousin Elizabeth to bring us Jesus and with Him the fullness of the Holy Spirit (HS).

“The Visitation” of Mary to her cousin, Elizabeth, is recorded in the Luke Gospel (Luke 1:39-56, ESV) of the Bible [8] – as explained below by a Catholic biblical scholar from Germany, Dr. Nina-Sophie Heereman [9], who is reading the ESV [8] version of the Bible when unpacking this second mystery of the 5-joyful mysteries of the Rosary.

In the OT (see Figures 2 and 3), the Bible is discussed in “Dwelling of God’s Spirit.” In the NT, Mary (“the Spouse of the HS”) is inseparable; as soon as she is filled with the HS, she “arose/rising,” just like the same word used for the ‘rising’ of Christ from the dead. It is to indicate that the “movement/walking” of a person [Mary/any of you] fully in the Divine Will, with haze into a hail county to a town ‘Judah’ [means: Tribe of Judah, people of God], goes up to ‘Jerusalem’ [place of Dwelling of God’s People, the Promised Land] (Luke 1:39-44), and she entered the House of Zachariah (Luke 1:40). That is what happened with a person who is filled with the HS. As Jesus said in John 14:23 (anyone who loves Me will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our dwelling with him), Mary embraced the invitation: “be it done unto me according to Thy Words.” As soon as she said that, the HS dwells in her, full of HS.

St. Paul (2 Cor 5:14) said, ‘Caritas Christy Urgemost’ – the love of Christ urges (inspires) us. Who is the ‘love of Christ’? According to St. Paul (Roman 5:5), no one else but the HS. We saw what happened to Mary was exactly what happened to the Apostles when they received the HS. The Apostles or Disciples [Church] were locked up in the ‘Upper Room’ due to fear, but after the HS dwelled in them, they could do the mission: evangelism to the world. So, what happened to Mary, will happen to the entire Church through the Apostles. Likewise, when Mary enters Elizabeth’s house while greeting Mary, Elizabeth is also filled with HS, so the spirit is spelled to Elizabeth via Mary’s words. Every word Mary speaks has the same effect God said to her and became filled with the HS. The HS fell to everyone who listens to God’s Words. Mary passed the HS on to Elizabeth. Enough for Mary to say ‘Shalom’ and enough to spell on Elizabeth and then Elizabeth’s baby, John the Baptist, leaping on his mother’s womb. There is a word that John the Baptist is free from the original sin at the moment Mary greeted Elizabeth, and such enables him to become the best man of the bridegroom, in angulation of the bridegroom’s wedding. Elizabeth understands the mystery of Mary and the Child in her womb (Luke 1:43): “why is it granted to me that the Mother of the Lord shouldst come to me?” [that Messiah will come as a Baby Child, God Himself]. Hence, when we say the Rosary, we greet the same Mary who visited Elizabeth. Mary visits, come, presence and the HS spills to us, and in the meditation of the mystery of the Rosary, will also be brought to the understanding of Jesus, gift of the HS, and is given to us,

when we meant and meditated the Rosary through the eyes of His Mother.

In the OT (2 Samuel 6:9), equivalent to King David regarding the “Arch of the Covenant,” the Divine presence in the throne is to dwell. The “Arch of the Covenant” is moveable. The Lord, on the throne, rode into welfare when conquering the Promised Land. Hence, when God fights the enemy, Mary is the mercy seed, the ‘Immaculate Heart of Mary,’ who crushed the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:17). God made Mary be His ‘throne’ for all eternity, He ‘dwells’ in our hearts and He fights the enemy from our hearts. Before she becomes the icon of the Church, it is from the heart of the Church that God overcomes the kingdom of Satan.

There is parallelism between the OT and NT. The analogy in the OT is the two loaves of the ‘Ten Commandments, the rod of Aaron as the symbol of Priesthoods, and the manna as the ‘Bread.’ The NT (Mary) analogy is that we have the ‘Word of God Incarnate’, Jesus as the High Priest, and the ‘Eucharist’ (Jesus). In Luke Gospel, Mary remains with Elizabeth for 3 months, which is exactly parallel to the ‘Arch of Covenant,’ which remained in the house of Obed-Edom for 3 months before the arch was taken up to Jerusalem. Likewise, the visionary of St. John (Revelation 11:19), God’s Temple was opened, and he saw the ‘Arch of Covenant’ within the temple, and there was lightning, thunder, etc. Who is the ‘Arch of the Covenant? The woman in the sky (Mary) with the 12 stars.

People who don’t understand asked why not directly go to Jesus? Why go through Mary? They don’t understand that Jesus is within Mary (because Mary is the ‘Tabernacle’ or the ‘Arch of the Covenant,’ i.e., ‘Mishkan’). When you come to Mary, you unveiling to Jesus Christ and encounter the ‘Mercy Seat’ of her, and from that ‘Mercy Seat,’ forgiveness come to us; and on the ‘Mercy Seat,’ our sins are destroyed. The same as when Simeon said to Mary, “that a sword will pierce your heart,” and that’s exactly what will happen to us when our sins are destroyed on the cross. Our sins are daggered with destroying Christ on her heart’s ‘Mercy Seat.’ And therefore, with Christ, they two together will refuge our sins. Mary is also called the ‘Refuge of our Sins.’ Nothing but God’s forgiveness in her; hence, no judgment. That is the reason why, when reciting the Rosary. We should wonder in our heart [proper attitude]: “who am I, that the Mother of the Lord shouldst come to me?” (Luke 1:43). In other words, out of 7-Billions people on earth right now, “why should I be allowed to visit and ask Mary to pray, intercede, and serve on our behalf for our sins to Jesus?” When we focus entirely on the mystery of Rosary and the mystery of that Child [Jesus] she bears, we receive the same HS that Mary experienced and received, whom she so desired to pass on to us to know her son better and to

serve Him more, and to pass-on to others and to go-out for His discipleship, and to serve our brothers and sisters.

2.3. *The Birth of Christ*

Via Dauphinais [10] discussion, we approach the third joyful mystery of the Rosary prayer through the witness of Luke, Matthew, and John. Paying attention to the titles of Jesus, we will see what they say about our need for a redeemer and how redemption brings us into a new relationship with our Creator. We will also consider Chesterton’s suggestion to examine the characters of the shepherds, the wise men, and king Herod and see how they each offer an examination of conscience of sorts for us. Finally, we will follow Saint Pope John Paul II’s (JP2) guidance to contemplate the face of Christ through the eyes of Mary. As such, we are invited to discover that the joy of the birth of Christ reaches into every moment of our lives, even the ones filled with darkness and fears. Like Mary, we might hold the sleeping infant Jesus in our arms. God is with us.

Archbishop Fulton John Sheen [11] once told us that Christmas is all we need to know. All religions told the story of how to reach God. Only in Judaism and Christianity is the order reversed, not men searching for God, but God reaching mankind. In the JP2 Apostolic Letter, the “Rosarium Virginis Mariae,” the Rosary of the Virgin Mary [12], JP2 said, “With the Rosary, the Christians people sit at the school of Mary and contemplate the beauty of the face of Christ and to experience the depth of His Love.” Hence, we are contemplating Christ and experiencing His love, i.e., praying with our heads, hearts, minds, and emotions. Seeing the face of Christ by His birth and being moved by His great love for us. To do so, look at the biblical story of the “Birth of Christ.” The Gospel of Matthew told us the “Birth of Christ” took that way, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Do we truly believe Jesus came this way? At a certain time in Bethlehem, during the Roman empire. Joseph dreamed and didn’t hesitate to take Mary, which would fulfill what Isaiah prophesied: a virgin will give birth to a son, etc. Joseph said no words; he just woke up and obeyed what God told him in his dreams (first dream in Matthew 1:18-25; second in Matthew 2:13-23; third in Matthew 2:19-20).

The Gospel of Matthew and Luke reiterates (Matthew 1:21-22; Luke 1:31), “And she will bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for it is he who shall save his people from their sins.” It was the consistent plan all along. About 700 years before Jesus would enter this world as a baby, Isaiah spoke of His coming (Isaiah 53:5; John 1:10). The Name of Jesus (Yahwe saves; God saves), and Emmanuel (God is with us), Yahwe – a Name and a Title. There are two main messages here. First, the removal of our sins; and second, [after being freed from sins], we will be

capable of loving freely and properly, loving our neighbours for God's sake, not for our sake.

Mere moral uprightness will never be enough to make us happy – the master of the human mind, C. S. Lewis [13], said that the hole in our hearts could only be fulfilled or satisfied with God. In his confession, St. Augustine consistently said, “You have made us into Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests with You.” Therefore, we are to live a holy or pure life and also to be restored into the Promised/Holy Land [the “New Jerusalem” as promised in the Book of Revelation], into a full restoration of the Glory of the Eden where we can walk without shame and with God whom we are not afraid anymore. In this world, cultures, and history, our efforts to fix things and ourselves and one another are utter failures. God has declared that our efforts are hopeless, that God has to enter our lives to rescue us. The next question is whether we can genuinely admit we cannot fix it on our own and surrender, accept, and let Him become the Lord of our lives. Archbishop Fulton Sheen, at one of his Christmas sermons, said: “Throughout history, many children/infants have become kings but only in Christmas had the King become an infant.” Our path of happiness must trial the same path as Christ: through humility – we must become a little child, recognizing our powerlessness, and incompetent-ness, our genuine incompetence, to do the one thing necessary: to find true happiness, we must become people who can dwell in God and whom God can dwell-on. Hence, because of the gift of Christmas, we can turn ourselves to God as a small infant in the arm of Mary and Joseph, giving up our false pretensions and illusions of our ego, the world we wish to create, instead let God be reborn in us. The Church not only reads Matthew/Luke but also reads the beginning of the Gospel of John, the ‘beginning of the Word’. John teaches us that by the power of God, we are children of God, not of the will of humans; but God. In the Early Church, St. Augustine and Athanasius said, “the son of God become the son of man so that sons of men may become sons of God.” Therefore, there are two key points here. First key point (2 Peter 1:4), Peter said that in Christ we become shares in the Divine Nature; no longer children who steal identity like prodigal son; but instead, we have the power to become the children of God; power that human effort or power can never achieve, but God has given the power to us. The second key point is that God dwells within us. We have become God's glory (John 1:14). He dwelt or tabernacled amongst us.

Next, how much do we desperately long for beauty, Truth, and goodness? Occasionally, the birth of a child/grandchild, nature, etc. But only found for substitutes, all the way knowing they are all ultimately empty or vanity within substitutes, as the Book of Ecclesiastes said, everything is utterly meaningless. C.S. Lewis, in his sermon “The Way to Glory” [14], wrote, “Our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak; we are half-hearted

creatures fooling about drinks and sex and ambitions while infinite joys are offered to us like an ignorant child who wants to go making a mud pie in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea.” So, why not listen to St. John of the Cross at the ‘Birth of Christ’? And the glory is not found at any of this world (1 John 2:16) but the glory that is only found in the Creator. The world is simply meant as an icon to illustrate the beauty of God. Therefore, our human purpose is 1) to become children of God and 2) to encounter the beauty of the splendour of the glory of the Word/Son of the Father.

Now, we turn to the Gospel of Luke to describe the ‘Birth of Christ.’ Joseph took Mary to ‘Bethlehem’ [meaning, ‘House of Bread’]; Baby Jesus laid on a ‘manger’ [a feeding of an animal]. Hence, Jesus will become ‘food’ for the world and be at the cross to feed us Sacramentally as the ‘Bread of Life.’ This same Jesus was born on the ‘feeding of an animal’ at the ‘House of Bread’ and laid at the place [manger] for feeding the world. Notice the poverty of the scene; there is no place for them in the end. In that poor place of an animal was the place and the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the ‘Sermon of the Mount or the ‘Beatitudes’ (Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20), Jesus said blessed are those who are poor in the spirit, for there is the Kingdom of Heaven. Notice that Mary and Joseph had the Poverty of Spirit. First, the ‘Poverty of Spirit’ is the first blessing of the Beatitudes – admitting that we cannot be happy out of what the world can offer. Second, notice also that the ‘Material Poverty,’ as well. A King was born in a manger, a place for an animal. Christ and Christ alone matter. Not the world, our achievements, our richness, perhaps not even our poverty. Next is the ‘Shepherd Scene,’ where the angel announced. Christ, the Lord, the anointed one, will save us from our sins. They returned and glorified/praised God. The Gospel of John glorifies God. Hence, when we pray this third mystery of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, look at the face of Christ, imitate what the shepherds did, what the wise men did, and take time to return to glorify God.

On the contrary, King Herod saw such ‘Birth of Christ’ as a threat, a brutal force. He killed all male children who were two and under 2-year-old in Bethlehem. What about the Joy of Mary and Joseph, the Angel, the Shepherds, and the Wisemen? Has darkness or evil had the last words? No, but the saving that Jesus will bring will not eliminate the evil and sufferings of this world. Instead, he chose to enter our sufferings and evil. Christ will not be spared for death, eventually having it fall into himself in the ‘Passion and Cross.’ Chesterton [15] commented, “The Uniqueness of Christmas, in a way, the uniqueness of Christianity can be found in these different characters; in the Shepherds, we see the uniqueness of myth seekers; those who look for God through revelations, religions and expect to find Him in a

Temple; and the wise men are the Truth Seekers, those who seek God through philosophies and reasons and expect to find Him by studying the words; are those who will inherit the Power Seekers. Those who seek false God and their power, domination, and control [king Herod pathway].” That’s when looking outside. Hence, we should look inside: where the shepherds, the Wisemen, and the angel are within us. Don’t be apart from the true story. Let God tells us the true story of our lives, through “The Incarnation,” that we are created as the children of God, and He gave us the power to be His children. Turn with the wise men to Christ, to learn the Truth of human beings, men and women, God; not to change nor manipulate the world according to our desire; but to God’s will. We should negate the deceitful events on how often we are irritated or frustrated when things don’t go our way. We learn from the ‘Birth of Christ’ to put our wishes and desires and embrace what God has given us like a child. Like Mary and Joseph, they may not like God’s will, yet they embraced the plan and what God gave them. After all, the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) encountered all the holy trials and hardships and travelled to Egypt for many years. Analog to His disciples when on their boat, Jesus was sleeping while the disciples were scared of the storms; in our lives, there are storms of grief, sadness, failures, crashing, etc., and very scary times; perhaps go back to infant Jesus, to sleep in our arms, knowing, everything else may fall apart, but Christ alone, will last. Therefore, let us imitate and ask Mary to place the infant Jesus in our arms, not only to love us but to call us to love Him; and in that, may we find the ability or power to rejoice with great joy.

2.4. The Presentation of Our Lord

Huizenga [16] discussed the fourth Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary. As praying Catholics are familiar with the ‘Presentation of Our Lord’ in the temple, most understand that the event is Mary’s offering her divine son up to God in some general way. However, as St. Luke tells it in his gospel, the story is much more, rich with allusions to the OT and longstanding Jewish practices of Mary’s day. Understanding those allusions and their connections to the Holy Family’s Israelite/Jewish heritage delivers rich dividends in our prayer, devotion, and service. We see Mary and her radical act in the following discussion as a model and inspiration for us today.

There is an OT background to the NT story of Mary presenting Jesus to God. Many people have an OT misperception of God who is rough and angry; versus God in the NT is loving and kind. But the same God (the Holy Trinity) is in both OT and NT. While the OT points forward to the new, the NT clarifies what is in the OT. In other words, shadow and promises versus reality and fulfillment. For consistency, every event in the NT is informed by the OT, by parallelism. In Jesus’ time, the only Bible was the OT. The NT was written by His Apostles, through the lens

of the new, after the resurrection. The Bible’s patterns are set by words and by deeds. For example, mostly the OT books of Genesis to Deuteronomy talks about: 1) Moral Law such as divorce [consistent with NT parallelism of Matthew 19], 2) Sacrificial Law via grains offering and animal offering, and 3) Dietary Law to separate the Jewish from other nations, or else end up with pagans neighbouring nations’ way of unholy living. However, once Jesus came, salvation was offered to every nation (i.e., to the Gentiles), and the Dietary Law got away from Christian Mission. Christianity is fundamentally Jewish Tradition. The Holy Family was Jewish. The [Catholic] Church kept continuity with Jewish Traditions, for instance, emulating temples, wearing vessels, tabernacles, etc. The Luke Gospel opened with Jewish Traditions: Zachariah and Mary came to the temple. Luke sees so much continuity between Israelites, Jewish, Temple, and Catholicism. For example, in the NT, Zachariah was called to ‘John the Baptist,’ although Elizabeth was barren, while in the parallel OT, Abraham was called to Isaac although Sarah was barren. Hence, these are the Two Holy Families: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the OT; Elizabeth, Zachariah, and John the Baptist in NT. Jesus-Mary-Joseph (JMJ) is the Third Holy Family in many ways. In Christian Traditions, Isaac pointed to Jesus while Sarah pointed to Mary. Saint John Chrysostom [17–18] pointed out in Luke Chapter 2:21-24 as below. Isaac (Genesis 22) was born under miraculous circumstances; Jesus was born under miraculous events (Matthew 1:18–23; Luke 1:26–38).

Mary was young and healthy; Sarah was old and outside childbearing status. Sarah paved the way for Mary. The Jewish Tradition was: 8 days for the temple, another 33 days for woman purifications, and a total of 40 days. So, Mary went to the temple for purification. In Judaism Tradition, ritual purifications and uncleanness are not sinful. You are ritually impure not necessarily because of sins; for example, bury the dead, you could get their impurity, and then you have to wait until a certain time to go back to make offering sacrifice at the temple; washing and then back to virtue period. The idea that is operating here, God does not have a body in the OT; but we human beings have bodies. Those bodily things make us, unlike God. You have to be pure in the synagogue or temple. Simply because of the bodily things, you can be impure, not sinning, but because we have a body, we can ceremonially be impure/unclean. For example, it is not sinful to bear children. Therefore, such rituals bring back purity to the stage of proper rituals. “The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple” is a mother’s task for a newborn baby, starting back in Exodus and Egypt. People often wonder why, being the sinless Virgin Mary, she has to do such rituals for unclean/impure? Analog to Jesus, who set an example for His Baptism (although He is sinless), both Jesus and Mary are just following what the Jewish Traditions did to set good examples.

Next, what will become the Holy Land, the Canaan, on this road (Exodus 13)? We are told by the Lord that every man who is the first born (opens the womb) is consecrated to the Lord. Human first born (Exodus 13:12–13) shall be redeemed by animal sacrifice, not human sacrifice. Abraham obeyed God without questions. Likewise, in Genesis 22, the Principle of Redemption for Firstborn Human Male, every Jewish woman, including Mary, would know that in the OT, it is surrendering (as if) they are sacrificing their firstborn son to the Lord. In the NT (Luke 2:34–35), Simeon said that the sword should pierce her heart, and Mary already did that by offering and presenting the Lord to the temple, making good of such promise back to the ‘The Presentation of Our Lord’ and experiencing the Rosary. Mary participated in that. God understood the sacrifice of a firstborn child to offer up their firstborn son. While Mary understood that, the question for us is whether we are faithful enough to offer our children to God; whether we would let them go for a martyr or prevent them; whether we teach and allow them to pick up their cross and follow Jesus or not.

2.5. *The Finding of Jesus in the Temple*

Fr. Gregory Pine [19] guided the meditation of this fifth Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary – the ‘Finding of Jesus in the Temple’ (Luke 2), as follows. While such ‘Gospel of Infancy’ [of Lord Jesus] has only existed in Matthew 1–2 and Luke 1–2, this fifth Joyful Mystery (the finding of Jesus in the temple) is an ‘Isolated Mystery.’ This means the finding of Jesus was when He was about 12-year-old, and then nothing else was recorded until Jesus aged 30. The fascinating points are: 1) Jesus showed concern for the poor (Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:17-26; Luke 16:19-31) and 2) testimony of woman (the Blessed Mother). These two points rely on witnesses’ contemporary life. Both Matthew and Luke said blessed are those poor in spirit. Hence, there is something about the characteristic of the poor.

Reading the Gospel Luke (Luke 2), age 12 is Jesus’ recorded age between age 8-day and 30 years. As Mary and Joseph live in Jewish culture (where we know that within tribes there are clans and within clans, there is father’s house/family), they go up to Jerusalem at the feast of Passover, where the Passover Tradition (Exodus 12–13) are associated with the angel of plague and death. Jesus’ parents did not know He stayed in Jerusalem and remained where He ought to be (Lk 2:49), while we know that Lord Jesus did not sin (against His earthly parents nor God the Heavenly Father). Since Jerusalem was on Mount Zion, they descended and re-ascended again. Liturgy or procession is going on here. In the First Movement, the object of the procession was the ‘Temple,’ while in the Second Movement, the object was ‘Lord Jesus’. An analogy after the wedding of Cana scene (John 2), He comes to cleanse His House at the Father’s Temple as a place to worship. Then (John 4), you worship on neither mountain; but you

will worship with ‘Spirit and Grace,’ and there will be the time that you will worship with ‘Grace and Truth.’

Here, Jesus is fixing the worship. Jesus is the ‘New Temple’ and manifests whole; after 3 days, they found Him on Temple. That is the kind of a ‘preview’ into how the Church will lose our Lord for 3 days, descending into hell, before His resurrection. That is how the Lord paced questions in the ‘Sacred page’ (NT) to us; He is in the habit of posing questions for us for appetite and desire to hold it fasten. He is in dialog and His zone. He comes to save, and part of it is to teach. In representing repentance (Roman 12:2), we are to be transformed by renewing our minds. Knowing Him is to nurture our love towards Him, habits of our mind [to know Him more] and our heart [to love Him more], progressively greater and greater in wisdom and charity, just like Jesus (Lk 2:52). The fact that Mary knows Him well, despite her thought of injustice or disobedient of Jesus as a 12-year-old boy (Lk 2:48), her response is openness and no doubt in her heart [i.e., I don’t understand unless He reveals to me], so He might fill it (Lk 2:51b) – unlike Zachariah, who doubted (Lk 1:18–20).

In John 2 [as a reference to Father’s House or Temple] and John 14 [as a reference to Heaven]; we saw it as applications in the Hebrew-Family system; in the end, the Lord abides in the communion of the ‘Father-Son-HS,’ and such communion fills His Sacred Humanity.

Jesus, the author of sanctification of sins, is invisibly the HS’s gift. And with that invisible sending comes that visible sending which we saw in the ‘Baptism,’ in ‘Transfigurations,’ in the ‘Upper Room,’ in the ‘Tongue of Pentecost.’ So, our Lord is about the ‘Saving Work’ and welcoming St. Joseph and St. Mary to participate in the ‘Saving Work.’ That’s why He must be in His Father’s House (Lk 2:49); He is very rational, and his parents in His acts were open to it; they did not doubt it. Until Joseph died and Mary accompanied Jesus to the cross, they both accomplished their purposes, in ‘knowing’ and in ‘loving’ Him and to ‘offer’ themselves in concert or communion with Him as a perfect-and-pleasing sacrifice of their earthly lives, just as the Lord came down to Nazareth. Humble down Himself (Philippians 2:7-9) to draw us to His Divine abundance. We saw those traits in His Nazareth life, and it was written that He was obedient to His earthly parents (Lk 2:51–52). Our Lord practices all the virtues: obedience, humility, etc., so to be an exemplar model to us. He practices and bestows on us richly. His mother kept treasured and pondered those in her heart (Lk 2:51b). Hence, since Jesus was 12-year-old, Our Lady has already geared 20 years ahead towards our Lord’s Passion-Death-and-Resurrection (at the age of 33-year). Her readiness is made into her passing days throughout her life; Our Lady is increasing in grace, exponentially and incredibly, as depicted in the left panel of Figure 1. Therefore, we must

model MJM. Lastly, Jesus increased in stature and wisdom. In favour of God and men (Lk 2:52). Throughout the entirety of His life, our Lord has demonstrated stature, wisdom, and grace, appropriate at each stage of His life; what's appropriate, what's fitting, what's meek and just to that stage, so that we can meet Him at such each stage and draw Him richly at His Grace, Virtue, Beatitudes, and Reality, which He bestowed through those Sacred Mysteries of the Rosary prayers.

Subsequently, as we approach those Sacred Mysteries, we should ask ourselves: how Lord Jesus Christ is saving me by revelations; how He is attracting me by His Grace; how my mind is being conformed into His revelation; how my heart is being conformed into His Gift of Himself. Moreover, when we approach each mystery, we ask: who are you, Lord, how are you saving, as we read this particular passage/mystery, in the coordination of others who have gone through it, in the canonical settings of the gospel, and we do so in the kind of repetitions, which was patterned into the relations which Our Lady would have entered into these mysteries. We continue to return to these mysteries in faith, hope, and love; we will never be disappointed, nor will our inquiry ever exhaust His Divine Abundance. Otherwise, we can go on to search for ages and ages, for the Dominican [20–21] often quoted St. Thomas Aquinas [22–26], who said, “The Word is Infinite Ocean of Substance [that is, God].”

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Therefore, the discussions here are for your journey of the Holy Rosary for Meditation and Contemplation, where such Contemplations will bring you to a richer context with the Lord's Salvation as the Lord mediates through the Holy Rosary.

3. Conclusion

This article reviewed and discussed the five joyful mysteries [27–28] in the Rosary prayers, which are traditionally recited and meditated on Mondays and Saturdays. The five joyful mysteries [27–28] are as follows. First, the Annunciation. The second is the Visitation. The third is the Birth of Christ. Forth is the Presentation of Our Lord. Fifth and final is the Finding of Jesus in the temple.

While praying or reciting the decades [27–28], we also meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary, which are deeply rooted in the Bible and Christian Tradition. By studying and meditating on such biblical background and Christian Tradition, we can learn valuable lessons from the lives of Jesus and Mary through these Rosary mysteries, which begin and end with Jesus Christ.

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