

Praying the Holy Rosary through the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help

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The Holy Rosary is a simple yet a very profound way of allowing oneself to be in communion with God. The mysteries invite us to contemplate on the Word of God. The Rosary can be a prayer of an individual or the whole community. Even if it is silently prayed individually, every person who prays it, is in some way united, integrated and interconnected with all the children of God and with the whole of creation.

As we enter the month of October, the month of the Rosary, we present you a Rosary which invites us to meditate on the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. It seems appropriate in this Jubilee Year of the Icon to make this creative connection. The five meditations are derived from five dimensions and aspects of the Icon.

After the Salve Regina, there is a litany of petitions which expresses our need for God's intervention and Mary's intercession. Mary, our Mother of Perpetual

Help walks with us and prays with us. We invite you to pray this Rosary with its unique meditations – in communities and with the people we accompany and serve.

The author, Sr. Maria Victoria V. Flores MPS, born in the Philippines, is a member of the General Council of the Missionaries of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. She also serves on her Congregational Commission for the 150th Anniversary of the Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help. Inspired by the message of love and communion that the Icon transmits, she composed this Perpetual Help Rosary as a gift of love to the Mother of the Redeemer and the Redeemed. The praying of this Rosary invites all the children of such a faithful and ever-loving Mother to deepen and strengthen their relationship with Christ, the Perpetual Help and Mary, His and our Mother as they contemplate the beloved Icon.

PERPETUAL HELP ROSARY – Sr Maria Victoria Flores MPS

Introduction:

This Icon is indeed a window to the Divine. Meditating on the Icon is to open our hearts to the experience of God. All are welcome to this experience – so simple and yet so deep. No one needs to feel excluded, alienated or rejected. Neither those who feel unworthy to come before God because of their sin. Not even those of other faith traditions or religions. A welcoming Mother and a gentle Child extend their loving compassion in whatever situation we may find ourselves in.

Through this Perpetual Help Rosary divided into five Mysteries, we focus on different sections of the Icon. By doing so, we draw on the richness of God speaking to us, to our lives, through this 'Painted Word'. More than embracing this Icon, let us allow the Icon to embrace us. Through Mary and Jesus, let us allow ourselves to be strengthened by the enveloping experience of communion with the God of Love.

First Mystery: Our human heart longs for God (Ps. 42; Mt. 19:16-30)

In the lives of most people, there is always some kind of empty space that needs to be filled, some pain that needs healing, a feeling of despair that cries for hope, a reality which seeks justice, encouragement, peace, reconciliation, love... Each person finds himself/herself in front of a Mother who lovingly calls out to Her beloved child.

As we meditate on this first mystery, we recognize ourselves as an active part of the whole Icon and allow the life in it to touch our very heart, our mind and soul. We begin a spiritual journey where we enter into the depth of ourselves.

We look deeply into ourselves and ask these questions: How am I? How do I feel? How is my life? Where am I going and where is my life directed to? What do I have/possess and what do I do with it? What do I really need in my life? How is my personal relationship with God? How do I allow God to actually fill that emptiness in me?

1 "Our Father", 10 "Hail Marys," 1 "Glory be to the Father."

Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, we trust in You.

Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

Second Mystery: God send His angels (Luke 22:40-43).

God always wants us to be in union with Him that we may truly find happiness and meaning in our life. God respects the free will that He gives us. But He also helps us know what is best for each one of us by sending us His angels. In the Icon, we find the Archangels Gabriel and Michael announcing to Jesus His Father's message. At the same time, the Archangels reassure Him of God's constant presence, protection and guidance.

In this second mystery, we thank God for giving us angels as another expression of His great love for us. We also thank the Lord for the presence of angels in our life through the different persons who are sent or come to us.

They help us recognize God's will, experience God's protection and guide us in our journey. We thank God for both the invisible and the visible angels in our life.

We pray that we, too, may serve as angels to other people as we make God present in and through our words and deeds. This is best experienced when they desire to seek and do His holy will. (Luke 2:14; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; John 20:12; Matthew 18:10; Matthew 24:31; Matthew 13:49; Mark 13:32; Luke 20:34; Acts 12:7-11)

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Third Mystery: Mary, Mother of the Redeemer and the Redeemed

(Lk.1:26-38; Jn.2:1-6; Jn. 19:25-27)

In this mystery, we allow ourselves to receive the loving, comforting and yet captivating gaze of Mary. At a young age, Mary said a deep and personal "Yes" to God in the Annunciation. She lived it all her life. For this full and openhearted response to God's plan, she became the Mother of the Redeemer.

Mary was ever conscious of God's presence. She pondered on God's saving action and treasured everything in her heart. Mary, as Mother, lovingly welcomed and embraced us as her children when Jesus said to His beloved disciple: "Here is your mother" and to her: "Here is your son". Here we are, her children. She is our Mother...She is the Mother of the Redeemed.

As we contemplate her in this icon, let us ask for the grace to be always open to attentively listen to the Word of her Son. Mary, our Mother, teach us to continually open our heart to the call of the Father, to the action of the Holy Spirit and to the Word of Jesus. Help us to always learn from you, our Mother, that we may also always respond to God: "Be it done unto me according to Your Word".

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Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

Fourth Mystery: Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, our Perpetual Help (Lk. 4:18-19)

We come to the very center of this Icon on which we meditate: Jesus! It is on Him that the angels are focused. It is to Him that Mary's protective embrace is centered, that even as she looks at us, it is with the intention of making us aware of Her Son, our Lord and Redeemer. He is the only One who can give meaning to our life, the true Perpetual Help...for this reason we address her in this icon: Mother of Perpetual Help.

Christ has redeemed us and will always be our Redeemer. He is Emmanuel, our God-with-us. His unconditional love for the weak, suffering and poor brought him opposition – for which he suffered his Passion and Death. Such was the depth of his love. But death did not have the last word. He rose again in glory to give us new life. This then is Jesus, the Redeemer, who is humble and yet ever steadfast in giving us His abundant redemption.

In contemplating this mystery, let us be fully drawn by the immense love of the Redeemer and let us experience the Perpetual Help of Mary.

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Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, we trust in You.
Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

Fifth Mystery: That we may be one! Living in communion with God and one another (Jn. 19:27; Acts 1:14; Jn.17:21; Lumen Gentium #63).

Communion! Isn't it so beautiful when there is full sharing and oneness? Isn't it wonderful, where despite diversity, we strive to live as one? In this part of the Icon, we see Jesus' hands clasp Mary's hand. It expresses the communion between the Mother and the Son. We see the total commitment of Mary to

Jesus and His mission. Here, we recall that Mary holds us also in her hands as her children while Jesus lovingly accepts the mission from His Father to redeem us.

Mary, in this Icon, says to us: "Do whatever He tells you". We also need to hear Jesus' words echoing in our hearts: "I am with you until the end of time". In this contemplation of the Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help, we are offered the experience of communion with the Redeemer, with the Mother of the Redeemer and with all the Redeemed in whatever situation each one of us may be.

In this decade, let us allow Jesus and His Mother to make us instruments of communion by generously and genuinely living to the full, the vocation we are called to, as Christians. Let us pray that we may truly live and spread in our midst – the peace, reconciliation, justice, joy and love that Jesus and Mary are radiating to us through this Icon of Communion.

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Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, we trust in You.

Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

Concluding Reflection

These 5 points of contemplation in this Perpetual Help Rosary, give a sense of a spiral that invites us to go deeper within ourselves. It invites us to take a journey to our heart where we can encounter the Lord and the gentle protection of Mary. By going deeper and opening our hearts to the Icon, we are offered an experience of communion with God.

The spiral dynamic of contemplating the Icon reminds us that every event and the whole of creation have a place in the plan of God. The circular shape that this dynamic presents, symbolizes that we are all one. And as one, we are called to build the Kingdom that Jesus inaugurated. It is a Kingdom, where at its very heart, we find the God who in and with His Love binds us together in Communion with all humanity and creation.

As we conclude this Rosary Prayer with the Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help, let us recall that in the history of this Icon, it was under the care of a merchant who was on a journey. We, ourselves, are all travelers/pilgrims ...each in a different way according to the kind of life which God has called us to. Sometimes, we make steady progress, sometimes we stumble with our struggles. For this, we need the Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help to be our companion in our life journey...because the journey within every heart and the journey towards full communion goes on and on...

Hail Holy Queen

Petitions To Our Mother Of Perpetual Help (adapted from www.baclaranovena.org)

Leader: Holy Mary

All: PRAY FOR US

Holy Virgin conceived without sin...

PRAY FOR US

Our Mother of Perpetual Help,

PRAY FOR US

That we may be filled with the Holy Spirit and become courageous witnesses of Christ's love for all.

...*LOVING MOTHER HELP US

That we may be more and more like our Divine Lord, as you were...*

That we may be meek and humble of heart like your Son, Jesus...*

That we may fear losing God's friendship forever by unrepented sin...*

That we may seek Christ's mercy and forgiveness constantly in the sacrament of Penance...*

That we may be aware of God speaking to us in the events of daily life...*

*LOVING MOTHER HELP US

That we may pray daily with love and trust, especially in moments of temptation...*

That we may realize the value of worshipping God together in the Eucharist...*

That we may grow in the love of Christ and neighbor by frequent Communion...*

That we may reverence our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit...*

That we may strive to be true Christians by our loving concern for others...*

That we may accept our responsibility in the community in the spirit of genuine service...*

That we may proclaim the dignity of work by doing our own work conscientiously...*

That we may share our talents with others for the good of the community...*

That we may forgive from our heart those who have wronged us...*

That we may see the evil of seeking our own interest at the expense of others...*

That married couples and families in difficulty may seek reconciliation and forgiveness...*

That those struggling with addictions of alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling may recognize their weakness and be open to the grace to break free...*

That we may work for the just distribution of this world's goods...*

That the voice of the poor and marginalized will not go unheard...*

That individuals and groups will resist the temptation to turn to violence and hatred...*

That we may be aware of our dependence on God in the midst of human achievements...*

That the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen Pope Francis, the Bishops, the clergy and all in leadership...*

That our civil and political leaders may work for a society that is just and avoids discrimination...*

That we may be blessed with an increase of priestly and religious vocations...*

That we may bring the knowledge of Christ to those who do not know Him...*

That the aged, sick and suffering may receive healing and comfort...*

That the migrants and refugees who leave their homeland due to oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war may be welcomed as true brothers and sisters with joy and generosity in the country where they live...*

That we may be ready at death to enter the home of our heavenly Father...*

That we may die at peace with Christ and our fellow men and women...*

That we may be comforted at the death of our dear ones by our hope in the risen Lord...*

That our departed brothers and sisters quickly share in your Son's resurrection...*

Leader: Pray for us O Holy Mother of God

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ

Let us pray:

O God who has willed that the Mother of Your only-begotten Son should offer us her Perpetual Help, grant us grace to call on her with confidence in all our necessities of soul and body, so that assisted through her protection and assistance, we may be brought to the everlasting vision of Your glory in heaven. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit descend upon us and remain with us forever. Amen.