



Praying the Rosary With
the Stories of Immigrants:

The Sorrowful Mysteries



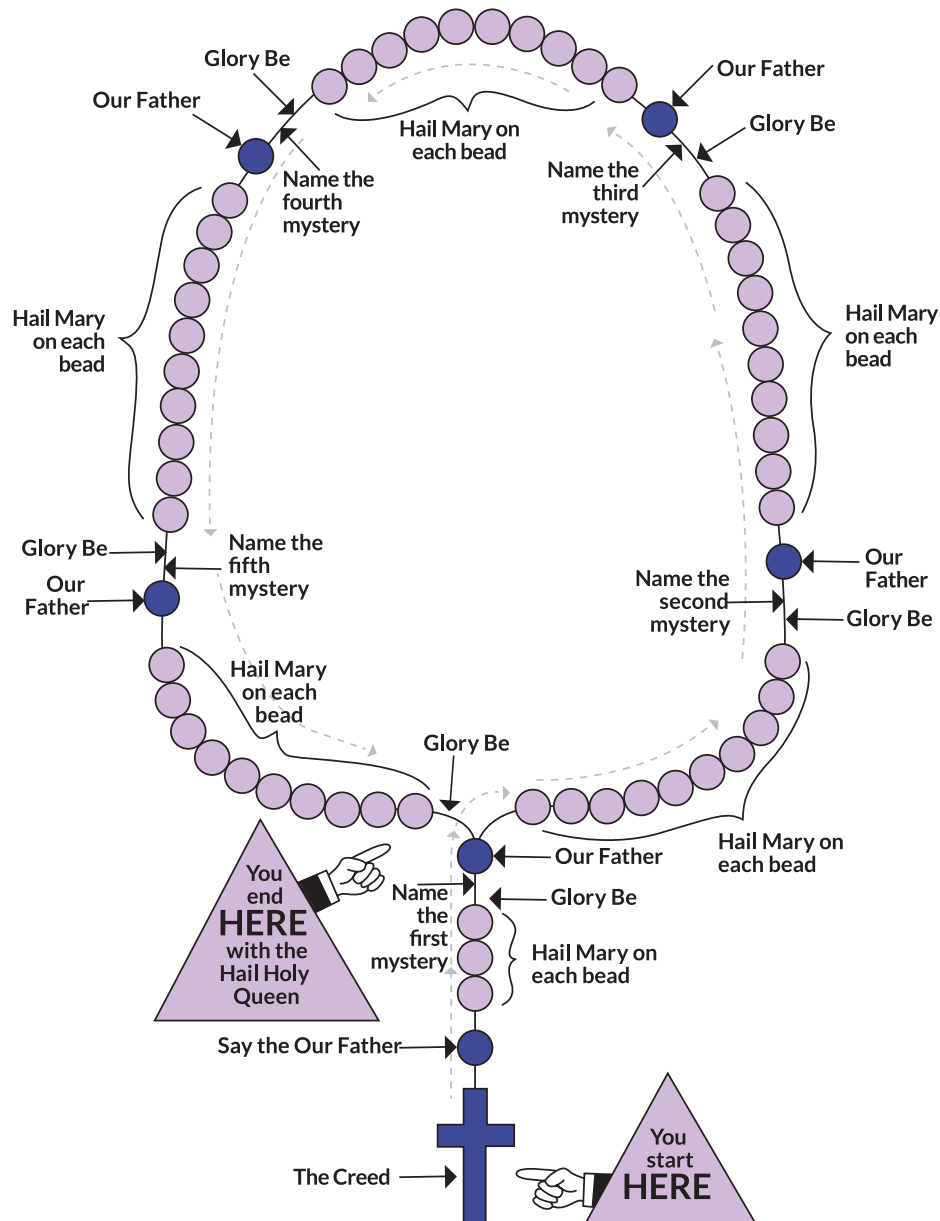
Introduction

The rosary is a classic Catholic prayer that guides meditation on the mysteries surrounding Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. In praying the rosary, we ask for our Mother Mary's intercession with Jesus, her son, bringing to her the burdens and hopes on our minds as we pray.

Immigrants often come to the United States fleeing economic distress or violence, and once they arrive, they are at the mercy of an unjust system which causes many of them great anxiety and uncertainty. In this prayer resource, we invite you to focus on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary, featuring the mysteries of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. As we pray we will offer our prayers and solidarity with immigrants and refugees across the United States who have faced hardship and received the help of one of the organizations in the CLINIC network.

We know that Christ's suffering is ongoing in the suffering of his people, and especially those who are poor and vulnerable. We pray that in the light and peace of the resurrection we can continue to work for justice for our immigrant brothers and sisters, who bear the image of God regardless of their immigration status.

How to Pray the Rosary



1. On the crucifix (cross), make the sign of the cross and then pray the Apostles' Creed.
2. On the next large bead, say the Our Father.
3. On the following three small beads, pray three Hail Marys.
4. On the chain, pray The Glory Be.
5. On the large bead, meditate on the first mystery and pray the Our Father.
6. Skip the centerpiece medallion, and on the ten beads after that, pray a Hail Mary on each bead; on the chain, pray a Glory Be. Although a decade is 10, these 12 prayers form a decade of the rosary. Many Catholics add the Fatima Prayer after the Glory Be and before the next Our Father.
7. Repeat Steps 5 and 6 four more times to finish the next four decades.
8. At the end of your Rosary, say the Hail Holy Queen.

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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; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from there He shall 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.

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.

Hail Mary: Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

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

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

Fatima Prayer (Optional): Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy.



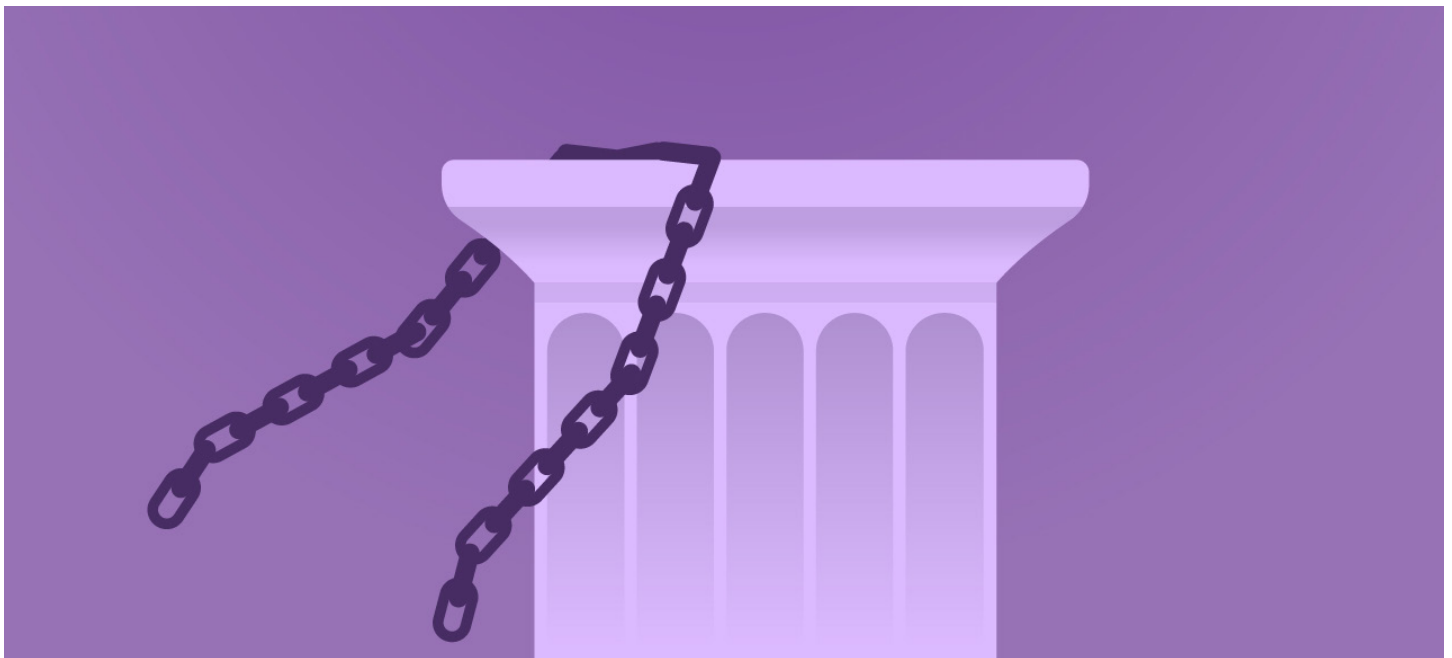
The First Sorrowful Mystery: The Agony in the Garden

Scriptural Reference: “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and watch with me” (Matthew 26:38).

Immigrant Story: Jean, a Haitian national, has been living in the United States for nearly two decades and working as a nurse. Almost ten years ago, he married a U.S. citizen who petitioned for him in hopes of helping him adjust his immigration status to permanent residence, but his application was denied twice, leaving his family in limbo and burdened by anxiety. When the federal government announced a six-month reduction in Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti, the situation became even more critical. Fearing what the future might hold, Jean and his wife turned to Catholic Legal Services (CLS) of Miami for help. CLS was able to help him reapply and successfully gain permanent lawful status. However, many Haitians in Jean’s situation are still facing deportation back to a nation with a failed economy and lethal gang violence as the future of TPS hangs in the balance.

Reflection: Jesus’ suffering in the garden - his anticipation of severe pain - mirrors the emotional agony experienced by migrants who, in desperation, flee their homes. Their sorrow is compounded by fear of the unknown, as they face an uncertain future and separation from their loved ones.

Prayer: “Lord, grant all refugees and migrants the strength to face the unknown with courage and trust in your love amid all hardship.”



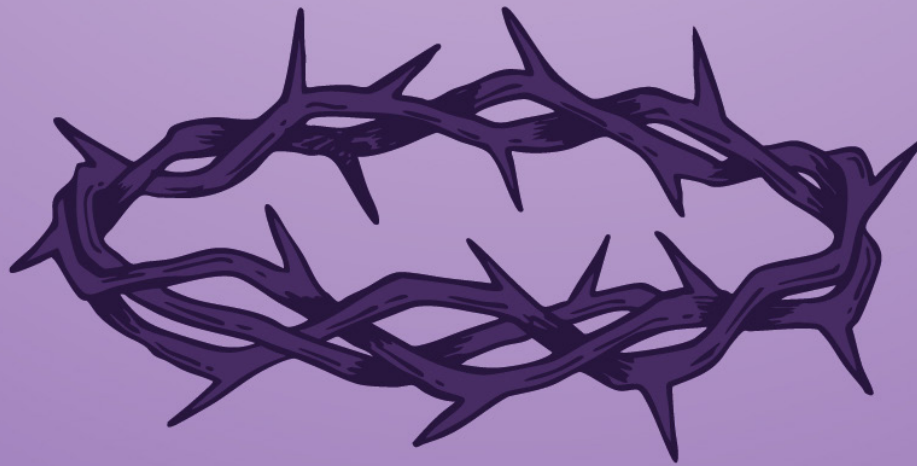
The Second Sorrowful Mystery: The Scourging at the Pillar

Scriptural Reference: “Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged”
(John 19:1).

Immigrant Story: Yemi, a young man from Nigeria, was the victim of a brutal human trafficking scheme that brought him to the United States and forced him - by torture and murder of his family members back home - to perform illegal acts, landing him in U.S. prisons and ultimately in immigration detention. He experienced terrible abuse in prison by guards and other inmates. Yemi faced deportation back to Nigeria, where he knew he would be targeted again by his traffickers, until he received help from a pro bono lawyer at a CLINIC Affiliate organization in North Carolina who was able to help him get a special visa for survivors of human trafficking. He now lives in North Carolina, working as a mechanic and recovering from his traumatic past. He prays that he will be able to get permanent lawful status to remain safely here in the United States.

Reflection: The brutal scourging of Jesus is ongoing in the physical and emotional abuse faced by many migrants during their journey. Immigrants, especially those like Yemi who are detained, often experience mistreatment at the hands of authorities, and some face violence simply because of their status.

Prayer: “Jesus, help all immigrants who face torture and abuse. May they find healing and peace through your love.”



The Third Sorrowful Mystery: The Crowning of Thorns

Scriptural Reference: “They clothed him in a purple cloak, and weaving a crown of thorns, they placed it on him” (Mark 15:17).

Immigrant Story: The Perez family have lived in the United States for many years as hardworking, law-abiding residents. They wanted to become U.S. citizens but faced many obstacles, including that they are deaf. They sought help from Catholic Charities of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California, having experienced serious challenges while navigating their immigration process before. With the help of the Perez’s youngest daughter, Julia, who is also deaf and an American Sign Language interpreter, the Catholic Charities team was able to ease their fears about the naturalization process and walk them through it. The Perez parents are now studying for their citizenship exams, and they are hopeful that they can become full members of the society which they call home and in which they have raised their daughters.

Reflection: The humiliation that Jesus endured is echoed in the stigmatization and discrimination many immigrants face. Treated as “outsiders,” they are sometimes made to feel extremely unwelcome through rhetoric and policies which provide no options for legal status or stability. Immigrants who face additional challenges like disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Prayer: “Lord, protect all immigrants from dehumanizing treatment, especially the most vulnerable. May they always feel seen and valued as your children.”



The Forth Sorrowful Mystery: The Carrying of the Cross

Scriptural Reference: “Jesus took up his cross and went out to the place of the Skull (John 19:17).”

Immigrant Story: Marianne, a single mother living in Washington, had a pending asylum case when she suddenly received an email from the government advising her to leave the country immediately. She did not know what to do or what the email meant for her pending legal case. With anxiety in her heart, Marianne turned to St. James Immigrant Assistance in Seattle for help. There, she received a listening ear and help finding legal advice, as well as funds to support housing stability while she continues her immigration process. She is one of many immigrants facing uncertainty amid rapid policy changes and heightened immigration enforcement. Through a generous outpouring of support from the parish, St. James Immigrant Assistance is working to respond to the needs of the individuals and families arriving at their doors, including through emergency rent assistance, donated phones, groceries and diapers, and providing accurate information to help with immigrants’ safety planning and decision-making.

Reflection: On top of the typical burdens of life, immigrants carry the great anxiety of not knowing what their future holds in terms of their immigration journey, especially those who fear returning to their home country. This stress weighs heavily on them, like Jesus carrying the cross. With each step, they bear the weight of possible family separation, loss of livelihood, and the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

Prayer: “Jesus, walk alongside all those carrying heavy burdens. May they feel your presence in their struggle and find hope in the journey.”



The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

Scriptural Reference: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”
(Luke 23:46).

Immigrant Story: Amara came to the United States from West Africa on a student visa. While in the United States, she gave birth to a child with special needs. She feared returning to her country, where danger had increased and where there were few resources to help her child, but she lacked a permanent legal option to stay. One day, she was detained by ICE and faced terrible abuse in detention. She was deported back to her country of origin, away from her child. With the help of CLINIC and pro bono lawyers she eventually returned to the United States and is seeking permanent options so that she never has to face separation from her family again.

Reflection: In facing deportation, many immigrants experience the “death” of their life and dreams here in the United States, especially those who are separated from family, community, and livelihood. Other deported immigrants face the threat of death in renewed persecution by gangs or other life-threatening conditions. Jesus’ death on the cross reminds us that he is near to us in our suffering and in our own deaths, literal and figurative. And we remember that death does not have the final word, for Jesus’ death is what leads to his resurrection and our eternal life with him.

Prayer: “Jesus, give comfort to all those who suffer deportation and loss. Grant them the peace of knowing your nearness in all they suffer and the hope of resurrection and ultimate justice in your Kingdom.”

Questions and Answers on Catholic Social Teaching Regarding Immigration

1. What does the Church teach about the dignity of immigrants?

Answer: Catholic social teaching [emphasizes](#) that every human being has inherent dignity, regardless of nationality, immigration status, or race. The Church calls for the respectful treatment of all migrants and refugees, recognizing their right to migrate in search of safety and security and their inherent worth as created in the image and likeness of God.

2. What does Catholic teaching say about immigration policy, or how society should treat immigrants?

Answer: According to the Catechism and magisterial teaching, “prosperous nations” are obligated to welcome migrants in search of safety and stability to the extent they are able. Nations have the right to protect their borders and enforce their laws, but in doing so migrants must always be treated with charity and respect. Migrants in turn have a duty to respect the receiving nation’s culture and laws.

In the development of immigration policy, family unity and concern for the vulnerable must be prioritized. Authorities must use their judgement to apply laws fairly and humanely. Deportation, detention, and other enforcement efforts should be carried out in a limited, targeted, and humane manner with due consideration of family unity, community ties, and humanitarian concerns. While the Church encourages the use of lawful pathways to migration, it is understood that migrants fleeing violence or danger may need to cross borders without authorization, and that mercy should be extended.

3. Why is welcoming refugees and immigrants important in Catholic teaching?

Answer: Scripture calls us to welcome the stranger and treat others with compassion. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus says, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” The Church teaches that Christians must welcome immigrants and refugees as if they were Christ, offering care, protection, and hospitality. That is why Catholic migration ministries treat immigrants as individuals made in God’s image, providing for their basic human needs regardless of their immigration status.

4. How should Catholics respond to policies that harm immigrants?

Answer: Catholics are called to advocate for justice and fairness. This includes standing up for the rights of immigrants and refugees, challenging unjust policies, and supporting efforts to reform systems that marginalize vulnerable populations. The Church encourages peaceful advocacy for a just and compassionate response to immigration. This includes policies that promote family unity, protect the right to seek safety for those fleeing harm, and increase opportunities for legal migration.

5. What can individuals do to help immigrants and refugees?

Answer: Individuals can volunteer with local immigrant support organizations, donate to refugee resettlement programs, and raise awareness about the plight of migrants. Catholics are encouraged to pray for immigrants, offer shelter and support, and actively work to eliminate prejudice and injustice in their communities.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, Help us to keep walking, together with our migrant brothers and sisters, toward the eternal dwelling you have prepared for us. Open our eyes and our hearts so that every encounter with those in need becomes an encounter with Jesus, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

— Pope Francis



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