

# Peaceful Heart

R O S A R Y



*"Let not your heart be troubled. Be not afraid."* —JOHN 14:27



# LOVE

## ✠ Reflection ✠

Almighty God who formed the universe, created the Sun and the Moon, and hung every star in the sky loves each of us like his own children.

*“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”* (1 John 3:1) In fact, *“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son”* (John 3:16), Jesus Christ, who at the Last Supper commands *“That you love one another as I have loved you”* (John 13:34). But what is love? Saint Thomas Aquinas, who called the Lord’s Prayer *“the most perfect of prayers,”* instructs us that love means to will the good of the other. Perhaps then, the most important word in the Lord’s Prayer is the very first. *“The ‘Our’ at the beginning of the Lord’s Prayer... excludes no one. If we are to say it truthfully, our divisions and oppositions have to be overcome”* (Catechism 2792).

Our goal on earth is to commit our lives to God’s work—that is, to reflect God’s love to one another—so as to spend eternity with him in Heaven. Beware, Satan is the enemy of the whole human race. He hates the Church, because it is designed to gather humankind to Christ. With this truth in mind, we realize *“to will the good of the other”* means not that we must feign earthly affection toward those we dislike. Rather, we are called to extend Christ’s love and friendship so that we may defend our brothers and sisters from the clutches of the evil one. Therefore, if you find it difficult to love another purely for their sake, then try loving them out of recognition that to do so is to confound the will of the Devil, he who is determined to scatter and divide God’s children. Jesus affirms to us, *“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”* (John 15:13).

“Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.”

MATTHEW 6:9

The  
FIRST  
Mystery

✠ Inspiration ✠

**SAINT MAXIMILIAN MARIA KOLBE** was born Raymund Kolbe on January 8, 1894, in the Kingdom of Poland, then part of the Russian Empire. In 1910 he was given the religious name Maximilian as a novitiate, and in 1917 founded the *Militia Immaculata*, devoting his life to promoting total consecration to Mary. Ordained a priest the next year he soon began publishing *Knights of the Immaculata*, a monthly magazine which grew to a circulation of one million. In February 1941, Kolbe was arrested by the German Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz as prisoner 16670. To deter escapes from the camp, the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) deputy camp commander picked 10 men to be starved to death in an underground bunker. When one of the selected men cried out, “My wife! My children!”, Kolbe volunteered to take his place. Inside the bunker, Kolbe led the other nine prisoners in prayer, and was the last alive after two weeks of starvation and dehydration. He was finally put to death by his Nazi captors with an injection of carbolic acid. His remains were cremated on August 15, 1941, a day after he died and the feast day of the Assumption of Mary. The man spared by Kolbe’s sacrifice lived to witness his canonization as a guest of Pope John Paul II on October 10, 1982. Maximilian Maria Kolbe is the patron saint of drug addicts, prisoners, families, and the pro-life movement. His feast day is August 14.

“A single act of love makes the soul return to life.”

—SAINT MAXIMILIAN MARIA KOLBE



# HOPE

## ✠ Reflection ✠

The word discernment is derived from the Latin word meaning “to separate.” To discern God’s will is to separate what we want from what God wants. Each of us has a specific vocation—a calling—ordained by God from all eternity. Therefore, the greatest thing to hope for in life is not that we get what we want; rather, that we align our life to God’s will. *“Hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man”* (Catechism 1818). Stop for a moment, however, and imagine a world without hope. In Dante’s *Inferno*, the inscription above the gates of Hell reads *“Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.”* Is there anything more terrifying than the thought of spending eternity without hope, forever separated from God?

God, as our loving and merciful father, wills our good, and everything falls within his providence. When we hope and pray for what God wants—that is, when we hope to receive what we already have—then peace and harmony ensue because we are aligned with our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. *“I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me”* (John 6:38). To discern God’s will, begin with your state in life now—that is, start where you are, not where you aren’t—and ask yourself, *“Is what I am doing now giving greater glory to Jesus?”* Examine your gifts, talents, and desires, and recognize when God wants to inspire us to do something, he puts within us a strong passion to do it. Finally, when you realize lasting peace with regard to a chosen path, it is a clear sign that God is leading you safely home.

*“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.”*

MATTHEW 6:10

The  
SECOND  
Mystery

✝ Inspiration ✝

**SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA** was born Caterina di Benincasa on March 25, 1347, in Siena, Italy. Catherine felt a strong calling to religious life. At age 16 she held a strict fast and cut off her beautiful long hair as a protest against her parents' wishes that she attract a husband. Instead, her devout yet feisty personality attracted many followers to her ministry to serve the poor, sick, and imprisoned of Siena. She spoke her mind directly and unambiguously. Her exhortations to Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome are credited with bringing an end of the Avignon Papacy, a conflict between the papacy and the French crown resulting in an absence of the Holy Father from Rome for 67 years. *“Respond to the Holy Spirit who is calling you! I tell you: Come! Come! Come! Don't wait for time because time isn't waiting for you.”* Catherine died in Rome at age 33, after suffering a stroke due to illness and extreme fasting. A mystic, Saint Catherine of Siena is one of only four female Doctors of the Church. She is also the patroness of Italy and Europe, of people ridiculed for their faith, of miscarriages, sexual temptation, and nurses. Her feast day is April 29.

*“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the  
world on fire.”*

—SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA



# SUFFERING

## ✠ Reflection ✠

Hunger and thirst are among the most vital human instincts; the urge to eat and drink is the body's way of telling us that we need nourishment. And though we often take for granted these bodily pangs, we understand that we must eat and drink to sustain our lives. In the Gospels we see numerous examples of Jesus eating and drinking with his followers; he used the occasion to break bread as an opportunity to lead them deeper in discipleship, to further his ministry, to grow his church. To be sure, Jesus used the need for food and drink to reveal his eternal designs: *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world"* (John 6:51).

Communion is derived from the Latin word meaning "common." At the Last Supper—the very first Mass of his Church—Jesus gathered with his disciples around a table, broke bread, and said *"This is my body, which will be given for you"* (Luke 22:19). Within 24 hours, Jesus would be scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed through his hands and feet to a cross. Christ and the cross became one; our communion with Christ, therefore, requires communion with the cross. As members of the body of Christ we are called to receive the grace of Jesus by embracing our earthly suffering as he did—with thanksgiving, faith, humility, and love. *"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me"* (Matthew 16:24). In our suffering, Jesus Christ eternally satiates our hunger and forever quenches our thirst. Saint Paul proclaims, *"I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of his body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions"* (Colossians 1:24).



“Give us this day our daily bread.”

MATTHEW 6:11

The  
THIRD  
Mystery

✠ Inspiration ✠

**SAINT MARIA FAUSTINA KOWALSKA** was born Helena Kowalska on August 25, 1905, in Glogowiec, Poland. While attending a dance, 19-year-old Faustina had her first vision of Jesus suffering. Later that evening as she prayed in a nearby cathedral, he instructed her to leave for Warsaw immediately to join a convent. Rejected by several on account of her impoverished appearance, Faustina was finally accepted to the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. On February 22, 1931, she had a vision in which Jesus instructed her to document God’s plan of mercy for the world. Faustina kept detailed notes of her conversations with Jesus, later published as *The Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul*. She suffered from tuberculosis for many years and in 1938, at age 33, she died in Krakow. When Karol Wojtyla (now Saint John Paul II) became archbishop of that city in 1964, he advocated for Faustina’s diary, for the establishment of the Divine Mercy devotion, and for her beatification. As Pope he presided over her canonization on April 30, 2000. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is one of the most beloved and powerful prayers in the Church. “Jesus, I Trust in You.” Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska is the patron saint of mercy. Her feast day is October 5.

*“From the moment I came to love suffering, it ceased to be a suffering for me. Suffering is the daily food of my soul.”*  
(Diary 276)

—SAINT MARIA FAUSTINA KOWALSKA



# MERCY

## ✠ Reflection ✠

Satan is committed to dragging our souls and the souls of our loved ones to Hell for all eternity. He and his horde of demons lurk, using our own bad habits and prideful behaviors to ensnare us, not always with obvious traps but with false promises. *“The Devil was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies”* (John 8:44). Satan’s sinister aim is to facilitate, stimulate, and accelerate lies, resulting in disunion and accusation against one other, and ultimately, against God. And after we’ve fallen away from God, we are unable to correct our course, to disentangle ourselves, because we have no earthly power to do so. We’re trapped in the darkness, caught in the clutches of the evil one. *“Who then can be saved?”* (Matthew 19:25).

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ”* (Ephesians 2:4–5). In other words, it is by the grace of God we have been saved. The word sacrament is derived from the Latin word meaning “solemn oath.” *“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us”* (Catechism 1131). The sacrament of Confession is God’s solemn oath to us, that—through his Son, Jesus Christ, who by the blood of the cross took on the burden of all sin and all death—we can avail ourselves to God’s endless mercy, to be reconciled back to him for all eternity. *“Be merciful, even as your father is merciful; stop judging and you will not be judged; stop condemning and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven”* (Luke 6:36–37). Simply put, the sacraments do what they say because of God’s presence and power in them.



*“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”* MATTHEW 6:12

The  
FOURTH  
Mystery

✠ Inspiration ✠

**SAINT MARIA TERESA GORETTI** was born the third of seven children on October 16, 1890, in Corinaldo, Italy. Her father was a farmer who became so poor he was forced to give up his farm, move his wife and children, and work as a laborer for other farmers. There they shared a home with another family, which included a young man named Alessandro. Maria’s father died of malaria when she was nine years old, leaving her mother to struggle to care for her children by working in the fields. On July 5, 1902, Maria was at home sewing and caring for her younger sister when 20-year-old Alessandro, knowing she would be alone, returned to the house and made sexual advances toward her. When Maria refused to submit to him, Alessandro stabbed her 14 times in the throat, heart, and lungs. The following day, having forgiven Alessandro, Maria died of her wounds. Alessandro was sentenced to 30 years in prison. He remained unrepentant, until he had a vision one night of Maria gathering flowers and offering them to him. He changed his life, begged forgiveness of Maria’s mother, and became a lay brother in a Franciscan monastery where he died at age 88 with a picture of Maria by his bedside. Maria Teresa Goretti is the patron saint of chastity, rape victims, teenage girls, poverty, purity, and forgiveness. Her feast day is July 6.

*“I forgive Alessandro Serenelli, and I want him with me in heaven forever.”*

—SAINT MARIA TERESA GORETTI



# PEACE

## ✠ Reflection ✠

The lunar maria are large, dark plains on the Moon, formed by volcanic eruptions billions of years ago. They were dubbed *maria*—Latin for seas— by early astronomers who mistook them for actual bodies of water. The most famous of these lunar oceans is the *Mare Tranquillitatis*, or Sea of Tranquility, the site of the first manned Moon landing on July 20, 1969, by America’s Apollo 11 crew. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, understandably anxious before stepping onto the unknown surface of a distant world, administered the sacrament of Holy Communion to himself inside the lunar landing module. Moments later, having followed Neil Armstrong onto the surface of the Moon, Aldrin gazed out across the quiet Sea of Tranquility, and expressed his sensation of peace to all of humankind: “*Beautiful, beautiful. Magnificent desolation.*”

We live in a loud and restless world, surrounded by temptation, and forever faced with evil. God, however, is endless love, eternal truth, and everlasting beauty. He does not compel temptation; he does not cause evil. And though God permits evil—that is, God accepts the absence of good to manifest as suffering in our earthly lives—he at the same time equips us with the antidote for it; his Son, Jesus Christ. “*Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself*” (Matthew 6:27, 34). From our fallen, earthly perch, our eyes gaze toward the heavens and we are invited to abandon our fear and anxiety, to be peaceful and still, submitting to God’s great gathering force. And, like the Moon, to forever reflect the light of the Son. “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28).

*“And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.”*

MATTHEW 6:13

The  
FIFTH  
Mystery

✠ Inspiration ✠

**SAINT (PADRE) PIO OF PIETRELCINA** was born Francesco Forgione on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, Italy. By the time he was five years old he had made the decision to devote his life to God. He took the name Pio upon entering the novitiate of the Capuchin friars at age 15 and was ordained seven years later. A mystic, Padre Pio suffered with *stigmata*, the wounds of Christ, for much of his life. He was devoted to the Rosary (*“the weapon for these times”*) and urged weekly Confession which he likened to the regular dusting of a room. He had a gift for reading souls and he demanded that each person confessing to him be completely truthful, without excuses or insincerity. He spent the majority of his day in the Confessional with penitents who came from all over the world. One was a young Polish priest named Karol Wojtyla who made a pilgrimage to meet the famous confessor in 1947. Fifty-five years later, as Pope John Paul II, he presided over Padre Pio’s canonization before a crowd of 300,000 in Saint Peter’s Square. Padre Pio is the patron saint of civil defense volunteers, adolescents, and stress relief. His feast day is September 23.

*“Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayers.”*

—SAINT PADRE PIO OF PEITRELCINA

*“This is how you are to pray.”*

—MATTHEW 6:9

In this Rosary we meditate upon the prayer that Jesus taught us and open our hearts to God’s peace.

**We live in a loud and restless world.** According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the consequence of original sin is separation from God and a disposition to fix our gaze on the trappings of the ego, the Latin word for “I”. This manifests in a disordered and insatiable appetite for worldly treasures: wealth, power, honor, and pleasure. Calibrated to the self and steered by pride, our thoughts and actions toss us through life like a rudderless ship on a violent sea; the winds of a polluted and cacophonous culture make our disorientation even worse. The more we turn toward earthly things to seek refuge from the howling storms and the pounding waves, the farther off course we drift from God’s truth and love.

**God speaks to us in silence.** God, and God alone, provides the safe harbor we seek. In the words of Saint Augustine, *“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.”* But God cannot be found within the noise and restlessness of the ego. Rather, God works in peace and calm so that we may freely discern him. *“He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea “Quiet! Be still!”* (Mark 4:39). As Saint Teresa of Calcutta said, *“God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees and flowers and grass grow in silence. See the stars, moon, and the sun, how they move in silence. The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life.”*

**Discover God where he is.** Jesus Christ, eternal son of God the Father, suffered and died upon a cross so that we may reunite our everlasting souls to the truth, beauty, and love of our heavenly Father. Christ may be found in the Gospels. He may be found in Adoration. He may be found most powerfully in the sacraments of the Church. Jesus Christ may be found, too, in the silence of our hearts, where he longs to speak to us, to answer our prayers, to bring us his peace; where he calls us to align our lives to his. *“When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you”* (Matthew 6:6).

May the **Peaceful Heart Rosary** allow us, through our Blessed Mother Mary, to devote our lives to the peace, quiet, simplicity, and calm that only Jesus Christ can provide. And may we always reflect his love to one another through our thoughts, prayers, words, and deeds.