



A DEVOTIONAL MANUAL

THE JOY OF HASTE AND WAITING

*Reflections on the Joyful
Mysteries of the Rosary*

ST MARYS CF10

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INTRODUCTION

The pressures of life and work,
the business of rushing around,
immersed as we are in a world
which demands things immediately,
can provide much stress and strain
and unrealistic expectations.

Likewise, we can often find it difficult
to be still at times,
and we can settle uneasily
with a sense of guilt for apparently doing nothing.

The five Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary
have much to speak into our need
for both haste and waiting.

From the Angel's message to Mary
in her backwater home
to her journey into the hill country,
from the birth of Jesus,
placed in a borrowed crib,
to the big city delights of the Temple,
where we meet Jesus
as a six-week-old baby
and then as a twelve-year-old child,
on the cusp of his teenage years.

These reflections were prepared for a morning's October Devotions at ST MARYS CF10. Reproduced here, each Joyful Mystery of the Rosary begins with the Scriptural basis for our meditation, and is accompanied by an image from St Mary's Church. You'll also find the prayers of the rosary at the end of the reflections.



THE ANNUNCIATION

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

(Luke 1:26-28)

Across the country
there's a shortage in social housing.
Politicians make promises
but private investment often takes precedence,
which means that those with little money
have little hope of having their own place to call home
and are left on an increasingly growing waiting list.

The home of Mary in Nazareth
would be almost unrecognisable
from those we build in Britain today.
Nestled into rock
with a brick extension butting out,
and shared common facilities,
it was a place she called home,
A place she shared with others,
welcomed others.
Perhaps, at times,
despite such overcrowded conditions,
she could be alone and quite at home there.

Maybe it was one of those quieter days
when Mary's alertness to God was deepened,
as she experienced a memorable encounter,
a time of change.

Today, we have Luke's written witness,
an insight into Mary's life that day,
a peek through the keyhole,
a glimpse into her heart.

A few weeks ago,
there was a photograph on someone's Social Media feed,
featuring the image of Our Lady of Walsingham
in the Roman Catholic Shrine's Slipper Chapel,

asking people not to touch the image,
for the statue was alarmed.
Mary was alarmed.

Meanwhile, back in Nazareth,
we know that Mary had questions for the angel.
She grappled with the message,
her whole life shaken,
the angel reassuring her,
“Do not be afraid.”

Mary has learned to be at home with God,
and to welcome him not just into her home
but into the whole of her life,
into her heart.

In the Orthodox Tradition of the Annunciation
the encounter is more drawn out,
given more depth.
It begins as she draws water from the well,
So easily could she be distracted,
and yet she senses God’s presence
even in the midst of everyday jobs.
In her arms she carries water.
In her heart she carries Christ
back to her home.
Yes, she is alert to God
in walking and stillness,
in work and play,
in rising and resting.

Through those moments of attentiveness to God
in her work and in her busyness,
she herself becomes a home for Christ.
For nine months,

the whole of her being becomes aware
of the presence of God,
kicking and moving and growing within her.

And what of our home?
Maybe our own home is too full,
too busy at times,
or maybe it feels empty,
lonely, too still, too silent.
For some, home may be
uncomfortable,
full of tension and frayed relationships,
filled with memories, too much to take,
not homely at all.

"Do not be afraid,"
the Angel said to Mary.

And what of the house of the church
with its altar shaped heart and a tabernacle full of treasure?
In the Eucharist, Christ comes to dwell with us,
feeding us and filling our lives with his love.

Perhaps we too are on a Waiting List.
Waiting for things to happen,
anxious to see things move on,
have things change for us,
for others.
Wanting something different,
Something new.
Something to change.
Waiting on God,
learning the art of being attentive to him,
being at home with him,
as he comes to make his home with us.



THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

(Luke 1:39-45, NRSV)

Today, funerals are often characterised by music,
favourite tracks are chosen,
or music that expresses something
that mourners can't put into words,
a lyrical memory,
a soundtrack of a life.

Hymns are often chosen from a popular few,
sometimes pulled from their childhood,
School Assemblies and Sunday School times -
perhaps the last time they sang a hymn,
apart from on the rugby stand on International Day

As Mary makes haste
her mind races too
Every step turning the same thought
over and over again,
as her journey gains momentum.

For Mary, the haste isn't frantic,
although there is an eagerness to reach her destination.
She is single minded, full of purpose:
to visit Elizabeth in her need,
to seek the company of someone who will understand,
who knows what it means to have her life turned around.

She delves into words and songs
that have filled her life,
and lined her faith.
One resonates with her now,
the song of Hannah,
whose voice gives praise to God
for the gift of a child,
long awaited.

She makes those words her own,
so that when she arrives in the hill country
they naturally take to her lips
as she praises God
in 'Magnificat' proportions.

Elizabeth, for some time now,
has been secluded, isolated.
As life grows within her,
she hides herself away.
We can only imagine why.
A time of hiddenness
keeping herself for God,
coming to terms with the miracle within.

Mary enters her seclusion,
shares in her hiddenness,
Elizabeth is aware of God's presence,
within the womb of Mary.
Her own child too,
three months before his birth,
leaps for joy,
kicks and dances,
waiting for a song.

Sometimes, we move with purpose,
know what we must do.
We know who needs us
and whilst we may not always know
how that will flesh out,
we can enter the seclusion of others:
welcomed in, not with wise words
or quick and clever fixes,
like a long-awaited saviour
but simply to be alongside.

Companionship can create
its own miracles of healing
as we stand alongside,
take the knee,
share the flame of a vigil light,
talk the same talk,
sing songs of justice,
put the kettle on,
clap for carers,
listen to the same words,
over and over,
wait for the last breath.

Being useless in a useless situation
sometimes has its uses.

For Mary, in her haste,
also carries with her the presence of Christ,
and we, too, though so unlike her
are also so much like her,
called to welcome Christ
to carry him in our lives,
like cracked and broken vessels.

She sings the song of the hill country,
a song of praise to God.
Mary, in her littleness,
and in her haste and waiting,
has discovered the joy of living in God's presence.
The Magnificat is the soundtrack of her life.
It's a song we take to heart,
its lyrics are filled with love.
and maybe, just maybe,
the sound of it made John leap for joy again.



THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

(Luke 2:6-20, NRSV)

As early as October, Christmas stock
begins to line the shelves of supermarkets,
a taste of what's to come.
Soon we will be bombarded by adverts,
each competing with the other,
trying to create a Christmassy feel,
to endear us to their products.

No matter how early people's Christmas preparations begin,
there is often a sense of rushing around,
trying to squeeze too much in,
sometimes creating unrealistic expectations
and attending to last minute preparations.

For many, the afternoon of Christmas Day
is often spent slumped or sleeping in the armchair,
satiated by good food,
but also exhausted by all that has gone before.

In the Nativity narratives,
there is both a sense of haste and waiting.

Certainly, for Mary and Joseph,
we imagine there is a sense of urgency
to settle into a place
so that Mary can give birth in a place of safety.

Meanwhile, on the hills,
shepherds are working through the night
protecting their sheep from thieves
and from animals hungry for survival.
Perhaps the night-time shift
is more still,
and yet dangers abound all around.

The angelic messengers disturb their night-time watching.
They fill the sky with song and light,
sharing the news that a Saviour has been born.

The shepherd make haste,
so eager are they to see all that has happened.

Whether they left their sheep to the hills
and to the dangers of the dark,
or flocked into town with them at their heels
we can only imagine,
but, certainly, the eagerness that filled their lives,
meant they were in a rush.

Our faith can often create a sense of impatience,
and the pressures can build, at times,
to do this or that,
just to do something.
To be busy,
create projects,
prove our worth,
publicise and inflate the importance
of what we think we do.

The shepherds have a divine encounter,
a moment of revelation
which has disturbed their waking, working hours
through the night.
It was a moment they all shared,
a corporate experience,

Heaven bursts open,
and hymns of praise fill the air.
For a moment,
they are caught up in the worship of heaven

as the hills of Bethlehem
become a temple of praise.

And then the journey into town,
and into the temporary accommodation
of Mary and Joseph.

After seeing the child for themselves,
and after worshipping,
they become the first evangelists
eager to spread the word everywhere.

The word is out there.
No training, no courses,
no forms to fill in.
No policies or applications.
No annual reports or need for funding.
No strategies or away days.
No vision documents.

Just poor people, herding sheep,
unkept, unclean,
unseen upon the hills,
with an experience of God
and a desire to share it with others.



THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon;^[d] this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

(Luke 2: 25-32)

In the first couple of years as Youth Chaplain
we held an event in a certain church.
There were lots of young people
and everything seemed to go well.
There was a good atmosphere,
a sense of joy and fun
as young people worshipped and celebrated
and spent time together.

Afterwards, over a brown buffet of pasties and pastries,
one of the priests I spoke to said,
'That was really good.'
followed by,
'You're improving.'

Have you ever had a back handed compliment?
Some people are really skilled in them
whilst others have the inability to offer any praise
without tempering it with a criticism,
those who loved the word 'but!'

Mary was struck by the words of Simeon,
amazed by his prophetic prayer.
He said such beautiful
and profound things about her child.
He called Jesus, God's salvation
for all the people to see,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
to give glory to his people Israel.

"This child," he said,
"is destined for the fall and rise of many,
a sign that will be opposed
revealing the inner thoughts of many."

“And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

What a comedown.
What a sharp twist,
a backhanded compliment
if ever there was one,
as she is brought down to earth with a thud
after words which had raised her up.

Perhaps at that moment she was stuck to the spot
unable to know what to say,
what to do,
what to make of it all.

A sword will pierce her soul.
What moment of terror is coming her way?
Surely, she is not too hasty
to embrace a moment of heart ache
or heart break,
too quickly.

Sometimes, we don't really know how to move on.
Sometimes, we stand still,
don't know what direction to take,
or we do not have the courage or the ability
to make a decision
that could change the course of our life.
We are stunned by sudden news,
Broken by disaster,
try to respond, sometimes speechlessly,
to something that has happened
in the world,
in our lives.

It's not long, of course,

before the scene moves on
in this Divine drama.
Another figure emerges from the shadows,
A woman who also has waited.

At eighty-four,
she had waited for decades,
clinging to the Temple courts,
stuck to the spot,
with patience and prayer,
Night and day,
night and day.

Her darkness turned to light,
her loneliness illuminated by the presence of Jesus,
the brightness of salvation
Her waiting is over.
Our waiting is over.
Jesus has come
into our world,
into our lives,
into our hearts.



THE FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

(Luke 1:41-52)

‘One of the differences,” he said
“between my country and yours
is that, when you’re on a train,
travelling somewhere,
you don’t talk to each other!
In Uganda, we talk to people we’re travelling with!”

Jesus and Mary and Joseph are on a journey.
It’s a pilgrimage they make each year,
and they’re travelling with others.

Pilgrimage,
more often than not,
is made with others.
Even if we begin on our own,
we soon encounter travelling companions.
With them, we share the journey.
We are never on our own.
It makes the journey flow.

Pilgrimage, too,
is as much about the journey
as the destination.

As eager as we may be to get to the place to which we’re heading,
what happens along the way,
and on the way home,
is as important as all we experience
in a particular place of holiness.

The return journey that Mary and Joseph make
after they discover the absence of Jesus,
thinking he was somewhere safe
among their friends and family,
the people they share the journey with,

would, we imagine,
be a hasty one.
They rush, they run
a day's journey.
Their hearts race,
filled with fear.
Their worst nightmare.

Their three-day search
leads them to the Temple,
the last place they expect to find him,
which surprises Jesus.
Surely, they, of all people,
should have known
he'd be in his Father's house
doing his Father's work.

We treasure this moment in Holy Scripture.
These are the only words we get
of the boy Jesus.
The rest of his growing up years,
his Nazareth years,
is hidden from us.

He is allowed to grow up in hiddenness,
away from the public eye,
protected.

It's a far cry from the Twitter mad,
Facebook fad world
of putting ourselves out there,
telling our story,
having our say,
competing with other voices,
proving our worth.

In the workplace
we are often expected to account for our time
to explain what we've been doing
to work towards efficiency.
After all,
time is money.

Likewise, too,
in the church,
there is sometimes an expectation
to evaluate what we do
with surveys and questionnaires,
and annual reports,
and Ministerial Reviews,
competing with others,
proving our worth

But there is much to be said, too,
for hiddenness
at times.
It's a hiddenness
into which Jesus and Mary and Joseph
begin to enter,
as they make their final journey home.
It's a place to store up treasures,
which fills their hearts with love.

We too are drawn into Mary's life of meditation,
to value everything we experience,
to store up treasures in our heart,
to contemplate the Mystery of God in our midst,
to attend to Jesus.
In our haste and waiting.

THE PRAYERS OF THE ROSARY

SIGN OF THE CROSS

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

APOSTLES CREED (whilst holding the crucifix)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
he will come again 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 the life everlasting. Amen.

ON THE FIRST BEAD:

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.

ON THE NEXT THREE BEADS:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst
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.

ON THE FIFTH BEAD:

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

Call to mind the particular mystery, perhaps through a Scripture reading or verse. Each decade may also be offered for particular intentions, followed by:

ON THE FIRST 'CONNECTING' BEAD:

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.

ON EACH OF THE NEXT TEN BEADS:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst 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.

ON THE LAST 'CONNECTING' BEAD:

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

PRAYERS AT THE END OF THE ROSARY

SALVE REGINA

Hail! Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy;
Hail, 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 vale of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy towards us;
and after this our exile, show unto us the
Blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement! O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

O God, whose only-begotten Son,
by His life, death and resurrection,
has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life;
grant, we beseech thee, that,
meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary
of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
we may imitate what they contain
and obtain what they promise,
through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation (*Luke 1:26-38*)

The Visitation (*Luke 1:39-56*)

The Birth of Christ (*Luke 2:1-9*)

Presentation of the Lord (*Luke 2:22-39*)

The Finding in the Temple (*Lk 2:41-51*)

The Mysteries of Light

The Baptism of Jesus (*Mat. 3:1-17*)

Jesus at the Wedding in Cana (*Jn 2:1-12*)

Proclamation of the Kingdom (*Mk 1:15*)

The Transfiguration (*Lk 9:28-36*)

Institution of the Eucharist (*Mat 26ff*)

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden (*Lk 22:39-46*)

The Scourging (*Matthew 27:26*)

Crowning with Thorns (*Mat 27:29-30*)

Jesus carries his cross (*Luke 23:26-32*)

The Crucifixion (*Luke 23:33*)

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection (*Luke 24:1-8*)

The Ascension (*Luke 24:50-53*)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:1ff*)

The Assumption (*Revelation 3:21*)

The Crowning of Mary (*Rev 2:10/12:1*)



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