

# The First Luminous Mystery ~ The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River



*Our Father Who art in Heaven...*

This painting of Jesus' Baptism comes from Korea. It feels like morning with the mist on the Jordan River. There is a little breeze making the riverside grass bend. Musical angels fill the sky and heaven has opened sending us the Light of Knowledge. What's that? *The Knowledge of how beautiful God is in Jesus Christ.*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Jesus was baptized by John, who lived in the desert so there would be nothing to distract him from the thoughts of God. When John came out to the people his message was, "*Turn, turn to Jesus ~ God is doing great work in him.*"

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

God had made us and all the creatures to show his beauty and light. But somewhere along the way human beings chose to go without God. This choice brought sadness into the world's story. But God came to find us and bring us back to himself. He began by taking back the water when Jesus stepped down into the river.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

There was a crowd at the riverbank where John is baptizing. Even though Jesus is God, he is one of us and there is nothing to show he is different. The people had come to answer John's call to turn to God. Imagine being in that crowd! And I will give myself to God from my heart in some new way now as I offer this prayer.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Sometimes children play games turning round and around. But the *real* turning that human beings have to do is not a game but an inside turning from anger, hatred and selfishness to mercy and compassion. *Mercy* is doing good for others. *Compassion* is feeling deeply with people in their needs.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



Because the water belongs to God - the ice, snow, clouds, mist and fog, rain, streams, ponds, rivers and oceans - we must care for it, and all the plants and animals that live there.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Big word: Baptism is a *lustration* ~ a holy bath that makes us inwardly bright, radiant and new. Baptism announces, *I am God's child*. I even share God's wonderful energies.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Sad to say, but the Jordan River is not a very clean river; it is muddy, polluted and full of slow moving twists and turns. Life is like that some times - difficult with wrong choices and sin along the way. But how wonderful ~ *this is where Jesus joins us in love!*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

When Jesus came up out of the water the heavens opened and a voice was heard that said, "This is my pleasing Son." And the Spirit appeared like a dove. God is one, but God has an inner life of family and friendship. *We call this the Holy Trinity.*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



At Baptism I was soaked and flooded with the life of the Holy Trinity. There is room for everyone and everything in God's circle of life and love: a baby just born, the animals that live deep in the forest, the flowers that grow in the desert where no one sees.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

*Glory be to the Father...*

## The Second Luminous Mystery ~ The Wedding At Cana



*Our Father Who art in Heaven...*

This wedding miracle is called a *Luminous Mystery*. Luminous means *showing light*. We need light for our bodies to grow but also light to become excellent people *inside*. This is called *virtue*. Let's ask Jesus to give us virtues, like: obedience, humility, love, patience, self-control, peace, generosity and energy for God!

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Jesus and Mary were invited to a wedding in the little village of Cana. God is sending this message to us: *Even though the world is tired and people sometimes do terrible things, I love that world, like a husband loves his new bride.*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Wine isn't just a drink for parties in Jesus' time, but a sign of God's heart-to-heart agreement with us: *I will be your God and you will be my people*. Now Jesus makes a huge amount of wine - he's the *new* place where we find the heart of God!

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Mary is the first to notice that the wedding has run out of wine. She has a Mother's heart - always on the lookout for upset, trouble or sadness. *Let us go to her!*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

In the Bible wine is also a sign of astonishment. *Astonishment* means something is startling, surprising, even shocking. Isn't it astonishing that in Jesus, God has come to be with us in our world to share God's light and to love us so?

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Wine is made from grapes and grapes grow on vines. And every year the farmer has to cut back the vines so new leaves and grapes can grow. Sometimes we have to be kind of cut back before new growing can happen in us. *Oh Jesus, cut back the moodiness in me so it is easier for people to live with me!*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



But when the grape vines are cut back one drop of water (like a tear) appears at the end of the branch. God knows all about the tears of the world. Truly, God has joined us in our world of tears and promises that we are not alone. *Jesus, dry our tears and lift up our heads!*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

When Mary told Jesus that the wine was gone, Jesus said, "*Let's mind our own business, my hour has not yet come.*" He knows that if he performs a miracle some people will turn against him and say, "*Who does he think he is, doing God's work?*" But Mary seems to know something about God's secret and she tells the waiters, "*Do what Jesus tells you.*"

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Sometimes when people feel sick and weak they are *dehydrated*, but they don't know it. They think the problem is something else. Their bodies are running out of liquid. The world is thirsty and dehydrated for love and peace, dehydrated for truth and understanding. *Jesus can take away this inner thirst ~ Oh, let us listen to him!*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



The Bible tells us that *wine makes hearts glad*. And at the wedding Jesus made gallons and gallons of wine - a sign of himself. There are people who have all the *things* anyone could want, but no joy, while the poorest people in the world, the people who have nothing, do. Many of them will say, "*But we have each other and Jesus, God-of-Love in our hearts.*"

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

*Glory be to the Father...*

## The Third Luminous Mystery ~ Jesus Announces God's Kingdom



*Our Father Who Art in Heaven...*

Here Jesus is standing on the top of the little mountain. He is telling everyone about the Kingdom of God. But what is that? *Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* The Kingdom of God means that we would make God's desires happen the way angels do!

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Often in pictures of Jesus teaching there are only men nearby. But this picture has women very close to Jesus. In fact they seem to be paying much more attention to him than the men who are whispering and distracted. *Every person* is invited to help make God's dream for the world come true.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Jesus said, *"The time has come and the rule of God is near; repent, and believe this good news."* Jesus invites me to *turn* my life in the direction of making God's intentions real on earth. God's heart-changing nearness is *good news* for our world wherever it happens.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

When Jesus goes up the mountain to announce God's rule he tells us that the way to follow that rule is to love people - especially the people who others *don't* love. Sometimes these people are far away and at other times they are nearby.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



*"Announce the good news to all of creation,"* Jesus teaches that the wonderful news of God's rule is to protect all life. There are monks who when walking in the woods place their feet carefully so they don't step on ferns just starting to appear in the spring.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



Brother Christian was a monk who came from France to Algeria to live among Christians and Muslims who often have not lived together peacefully. He and six other monks shared their vegetables, money, medicine and gardening tools with Muslims and opened their home so Muslims would have a room to pray. Christian said, *"Let us build the Kingdom of God through friendship, trust and good deeds."*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

When an enemy came into the monastery carrying guns and demanding to talk to the brother in charge, Christian came out and said, "*I will only talk with you if we go outside the gate; there are no weapons allowed on this property.*" The Kingdom of God is peaceful.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Often people think that *winning* is the only thing that matters: winning the game, winning the contest, winning the *big* money. It's mean to hurt someone's feelings by calling him or her a *loser*. But the only way I'm a loser is if there is hate in my heart. In the Kingdom of God there is no room for hate.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

The Kingdom of God announces *justice*. Justice means what is best for *all* people, not just for *some*. An awful lot has to change in this world to make *that* part of God's rule happen. Some people just can't see it. They're afraid it will mean sharing which will leave them uncomfortable.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

In Japan there are monks who live on the top of a mountain. They never use chemicals to clean the kitchen or bathroom because they know that would ruin the water supply of the people who live at the *bottom* of the mountain. Setting up the Rule of God says *think about other people when making decisions*.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

*Glory be to the Father...*

## The Fourth Luminous Mystery ~ The Transfiguration



*Our Father Who art in heaven...*

Jesus had just given the apostles the troubling news that he would be rejected and have to suffer much. But Jesus won't let his friends stay in the sadness of that news. How kind Jesus is, he has a plan that will lift their hearts.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

And so Jesus went *up* Mount Tabor with Peter, James and John. In the Bible, whenever someone goes *up* a mountain it is a sign: *God is here*. That's why monks often live in mountain places - a reminder that God is what matters first and most.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

And then the the face of Jesus became as dazzling as the sun and his clothes as radiant as light. It is as if the door to Easter has been opened and the apostles look inside to the future. It is God's future plan of victory for Jesus, but also for us. The dying and rising of Jesus will win the contest.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

See the beautiful opening in the sky behind Jesus. It is the heavenly space that has opened up and from which the voice was heard, "*This is my beloved Son, **listen** to him.*" There is so much talking and so little listening. A Russian saying goes: *Where there are many words, sin cannot be avoided.*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



If the world *listened* to Jesus, there would be peace, people would have the food and clean water they need, all the children would be able to go to school, the plants and animals would have their forest or watery worlds given back to them. Someone might say, "*You're just a dreamer!*" Yes, God's dream!

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

The light is too much for the three apostles. They fall down before the illuminated Jesus. Peter tries to speak. James and John even have to cover their eyes before the brightness of Jesus showing God's light. The word for this shining is *deified*. We're all supposed to shine with something of God's light. Maybe we could begin with the warmth of our eyes and our smile.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



On the way down the mountain Jesus told Peter, James and John not to tell anyone about the bright vision until after Easter. He was thinking that the people wouldn't understand or that they would only be interested in him because they wanted to see something spectacular.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Any word that has *trans* in it is a word that means action: from this to that, from here to there. *Transfiguration* means a change in the appearance of Jesus from ordinary to God-radiant - like at Easter. We can hope for *our own* transfiguration and the transfiguration of the *world* - growing and changing to show that we are all children of God - children of the light.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Remember, before the brightness of Easter, Jesus had said he must walk the way of suffering. Much of the world suffers everyday. But we often complain so much about even the tiniest suffering. We could all try to complain less. *Let's count blessings instead.*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Jesus led the apostles *up* the mountain and then *down* the mountain. Our lives are like that, aren't they: up and down and up and down. Sometimes we feel it very deeply. But along the way of success and failure, sorrow and joy, progress and setback, Jesus-God is there. *Let's keep moving* he seems to say, *God is here with us!*

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

*Glory be to the Father...*

## The Fifth Luminous Mystery ~ The Gift of the Eucharist



*Our Father Who art in Heaven...*

Tintoretto is the painter of this picture of the *Last Supper*. Jesus told his apostles: *I have long desired to eat the Passover Meal with you*. That Jewish feast, and its meal, remembers the ancient Hebrew people being freed from slavery and death. Jesus is *our* Passover from death to life and inner slavery to freedom.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

In Tintoretto's painting there are many more people in the room than just the twelve apostles. The crowds wanted an earthly king with power, but Jesus came to show God's friendship with us in love. *How boring*, many thought. Now on the night of the Last Supper, some are waiting and watching to see if Jesus will be the earthly king or not. Even his friends leave him in the end.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Jesus wants to be the companion to all the people of the earth until the end of time. He promises to stay with us in his Body and Blood, wearing the appearance of bread and wine.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

This promise is Jesus' gift from heaven and so Tintoretto has painted heaven opening up and angels filling the dining room as Jesus gives the Holy Food of his Body and Blood.

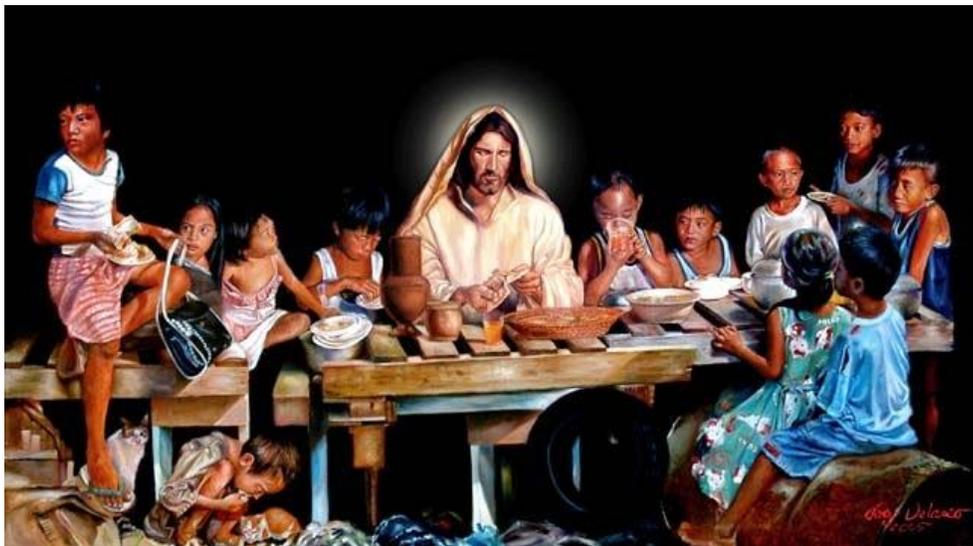
*Hail Mary full of grace...*

This Last Supper with his friends happens the night of Jesus' arrest. The next day will be Friday - the day of his suffering and death on Mount Calvary. And so, as he breaks the bread and passes the cup to each, he is really pointing to the self-gift he will make the next day on the cross.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

Jesus gave himself completely to the Father on the cross. But he didn't just do this 2000 years ago! Jesus gives himself in love all the time and forever. When we come to Mass we receive this gift of his love. We step into angel-time and are at Calvary with Mary under the cross. Jesus' gift is for each of us and all of us.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*



The bread is broken and given away. The cup is passed, poured out and emptied. But even before he did this, Jesus washed the feet of the apostles as a sign of servant-love. He tells us we must do the same. This painting shows Jesus sharing the supper with the poorest children from Manila. Everyone belongs at the table of Jesus!

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

The family of Jesus comes to the table. The Eucharist calls us to a new kind of heart. Receiving Holy Communion means having a heart that continues to open and expand to the world, especially where the world is hungry.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

When the ancient Hebrews wandered in the desert and were hungry, God fed them with bread they found each morning on the desert floor. *Now Jesus is our bread from heaven.* He feeds us with himself on our own journey - the journey of becoming the full-grown children of God. We might call that desire a *hunger*.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

When we are at Mass heaven and earth touch. The *Risen Jesus feeds his people.* So Communion also gives us a new way of looking at other people. See the little word *union* in *Communion*. We can't receive Holy *Communion* and be okay with divisions, arguing and hatred.

*Hail Mary full of grace...*

*Glory be to the Father...*