

Holy Mary, Mother of God

“If our faith is weak, we should turn to Mary. St. John tells us that it was because of the miracle that Christ performed, at His mother’s request, at the marriage feast at Cana, that ‘His disciples learned to believe in Him.’ Our mother is always interceding with her Son, so that He may attend to our needs and show Himself to us in such a way that we can cry out, ‘You are the Son of God.’”

— **Blessed Josémaría Escrivá**

“The Blessed Mother of Christ . . . shows herself a mother also by her care and loving attention. For her heart is not hardened against these children as if they were not her own; her womb carried a child only once, yet it remains ever fruitful, never ceasing to bring forth the fruits of motherly compassion.”

— **St. Gueric of Igny**

“It is because (Mary) is, of all the saints, the most perfectly poor and the most perfectly hidden, the one who has absolutely nothing whatever that she attempts to possess as her own, that she can most fully communicate to the rest of us the grace of the infinitely selfless God. And we will most truly possess Him when we have emptied ourselves and become poor and hidden as she is, resembling Him by resembling her. And all our sanctity depends on her maternal love. The ones she desires to share the joy of her own poverty and simplicity, the ones whom she wills to be hidden as she is hidden, are the ones who share her closeness to God.”

— **Thomas Merton**

How to Pray the Rosary

One of the most unmistakably Catholic items is the rosary — the set of beads on which millions of people offer prayer with Mary each day. The Rosary is an ideal Marian prayer because, as with all the works of Mary, it serves to draw us closer to her divine Son, Jesus. The Rosary is an ancient prayer, which took its present form in the Middle Ages.



When people say the word “Rosary,” they can be referring to one of two things: either the set of beads used to count out Marian prayers, or the prayers themselves. A rosary is a set of beads that follow a pattern: one bead by itself, followed by ten beads grouped together. On the stand-alone bead, we pray an Our Father. On each of the ten beads, we pray a Hail Mary. The

sets of ten beads are called “decades,” and there are five decades in an ordinary rosary. (There are other variations on the beads, including ring rosaries, which can be worn on one’s finger, and pocket rosaries, which are one decade long.)

“No enemy on earth fears a powerful hostile army as much as the demons of hell fear the name and protection of Mary.”

— St. Bonaventure

The term “Rosary” also refers to the set of prayers and meditations that we count on the strung beads. We *can* say the prayers of the Rosary without using beads. But the action of moving one’s fingers along the beads is beneficial because it takes yet another of our senses up into our prayer, and the beads do make it easier for us to count the prayers.

Normally one begins the Rosary by reciting the Apostles’ Creed while holding the crucifix of the Rosary. After the cross comes one individual bead followed by three consecutive beads. As the fingers take up that first solitary bead, we recite an Our Father. On each of the three consecutive beads, we say a Hail Mary; it is customary to offer these three prayers for an increase of faith, hope, and charity. Next we say a Glory Be before moving to the next individual bead. This forms the introductory prayer to the traditional five-decade Rosary.

With each decade, then, we meditate on one of the events, or “mysteries,” in the life of Jesus and Mary. Before beginning each decade, we call to mind that event. There are fifteen of these particular mysteries, and they are divided into three sets of five: the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries. The Joyful Mysteries recall the events surrounding the conception, birth, and childhood of Jesus. The Sorrowful Mysteries focus on His suffering and death. The Glorious Mysteries begin with Jesus’ resurrection and move on to heavenly realities. All fifteen mysteries together comprise an entire Rosary. Usually only five are covered in each recitation.

After recalling one of the mysteries, we say an Our

Father while holding the stand-alone bead. Then we move along the ten consecutive beads, praying a Hail Mary with each one. We conclude each decade with a Glory Be. Then we continue with another mystery and repeat the process until we've completed five decades.

Some people follow each decade's Glory Be with a "Fatima Prayer" (found on page 114), a short prayer that the Blessed Mother taught to three little children in Portugal in 1917. Another pious custom is to end the recitation of the Rosary by praying the Hail Holy Queen, another ancient prayer, in honor of the Blessed Mother.

Try to pray the Rosary in an unhurried manner with a quiet rhythm. Take time after announcing the particular mystery to orient your meditation before beginning the recitation of the decade.

Hold That Thought

The Rosary is best prayed when the mind is free to contemplate the mysteries. The best time is when you have fifteen minutes or so to devote entirely to the prayer. But you can also pray the Rosary fruitfully during physical activity that does not monopolize your thoughts — such as mowing the lawn, doing the dishes, or driving the car.

Pray the Rosary daily. If you can't find the time just now, start with just one decade per day. The habit allows you to grow in the prayer and over time, it engraves the truths of the fifteen mysteries upon your heart and mind.

The Rosary is an ideal prayer for family devotion. It provides a format that children can learn quickly. It also allows older children to have the opportunity to lead prayers. In the family Rosary or in group recitation, the leader prays the first half of each prayer (Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory Be . . .) while the rest of the group recites the second half (Give us this day . . . Holy Mary . . . As it was in the beginning . . .).

The Rosary is also a profoundly biblical prayer. Reading a scriptural quotation or some other meditation that pertains to the particular mystery can enhance our understanding. There are many good collections of Rosary meditations and Scripture verses.

October is the month of the Rosary and provides an excellent opportunity for an individual or family to grow in this devotion.

The Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries:

(Used on Mondays and Thursdays, and the Sundays from the First Sunday of Advent until Lent.)

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ
4. The Presentation at the Temple
5. The Finding at the Temple

The Sorrowful Mysteries:

(Used on Tuesdays and Fridays, and the Sundays of Lent.)

1. The Agony of Christ in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord

Glorious Mysteries:

(Used on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and the Sundays from Easter until Advent.)

1. The Resurrection of Our Lord
2. The Ascension of Our Lord
3. The Coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles
4. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary
5. The Coronation of the Virgin Mary

Prayers of the Rosary

The Apostles' Creed

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 was 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 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, 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.

Praying the Rosary

1. After making the Sign of the Cross, say the Apostles' Creed.

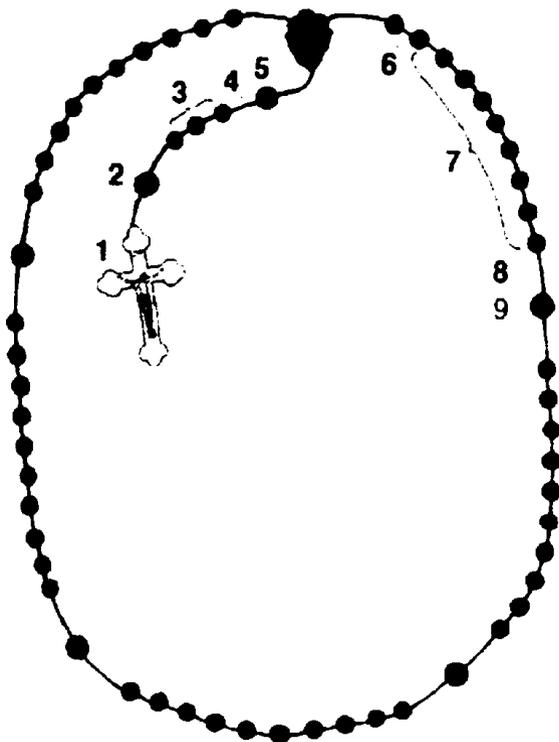
2. Say the Our Father.

3. Say three Hail Marys.

4. Say the Glory Be.

5. Announce the first mystery, then say the Our Father.

6. Read the first Scripture excerpt, then say the first Hail Mary while meditating on the mystery.



7. Repeat step 6 for the nine remaining Hail Marys in the decade.

8. Say the Glory Be.

9. Announce the second mystery, then say the Our Father. Repeat steps 6, 7, and 8 and continue with the third, fourth, and fifth mysteries in the same manner.

10. While not essential, it is very fitting to say the Hail Holy Queen at the end of the Rosary, then kiss the cross and make the Sign of the Cross.

Other Rosary Prayers

Fatima Prayer

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy. 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 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.

Let us pray:

O God, Whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech You, that meditating upon these Mysteries of the 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.

A Wreath of Roses

“The Rosary is my favorite prayer. A marvelous prayer. Marvelous in its simplicity and depth . . . I cordially exhort everyone to recite it.”

— **Pope John Paul II**

“The Rosary will be your little wreath of roses, your crown for Jesus and Mary.”

— **St. Louis de Montfort**

“Therefore let all men, the learned and the ignorant, the just and the sinner, the great and the small praise and honor Jesus and Mary night and day by saying the Most Holy Rosary.”

— **St. Louis de Montfort**

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