

2. Jesus at the heart of the Rosary. The Rosary: Prayer and Meditation.

The Rosary

Everything done by Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has one purpose only. She wishes to bring the people of the world to her Son. Her 'Fiat', her 'Yes' to God brought him to us.

The Rosary, when said with a **knowledge of the gospels** will lead us to a deeper, more sure relationship with Our Lord. He is the one who is at the heart of the Rosary. Mary whose Immaculate Heart accompanied Him in His life on Earth, accompanies Him still in Heaven. At no time does a mother stop being a mother! She became our Mother at the foot of her dying Son's cross and she will never stop being our Mother. It is Mary who can show us how to love God with our whole heart and our whole mind.

The Rosary can be said in private or in public. It is often said before Mass by the congregation to prepare them spiritually for the Liturgy, and the prayerful reception of the Eucharist.

Fatima in Portugal, and Lourdes in France, are two famous shrines of Our Lady. Processions of the Blessed Sacrament, and Rosary processions deepen the faith of thousands of pilgrims who travel to these two famous apparition sites from everywhere in the world. Spiritual and physical healings of the sick, attest to God's love and mercy in our own age. At Fatima Our Lady made the request that the Rosary be said every day to bring peace to the world.

Before you begin to say the Rosary, put yourself into the presence of Our Lord. Quieten your mind and breathe in and out slowly about three times. Use your imagination to mentally go to that place inside of you where no one else can enter. This is the **secret room** that Our Lord referred to in St. Matthew's gospel. This is the place where He makes his home. It is our secret garden, **our heart**.

' And when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.' (Matt.6: 6).

There are twenty Mysteries in the whole Rosary. These are divided into four groups of five. There are five Joyful Mysteries, five Sorrowful, five Glorious, and five Luminous. One group of five is said at a time. However, any number from one decade (one mystery), to all twenty may be said if you wish.

Pray the Rosary Daily.

As a general rule, the Joyful Mysteries are said on Monday and Saturday.

First Joyful Mystery----The Annunciation. For the love of humility. (Luke 1, 28)

Second Joyful Mystery----The Visitation. For charity towards my neighbour. (Luke 1, 41-42)

Third Joyful Mystery----The Birth of Jesus. For the spirit of poverty. (Luke 2, 7)

Fourth Joyful Mystery----The Presentation. For the virtue of obedience. (Luke 2, 22-23)

Fifth Joyful Mystery----Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple. For the virtue of piety (Luke 2, 46)

As a general rule the Sorrowful Mysteries are said on Tuesday and Friday.

First Sorrowful Mystery--The Agony in the Garden. For true contrition for sins.(Luke 22, 44-45).

Second Sorrowful Mystery--The Scourging at the Pillar. For the virtue of purity.(John 19, 1).

Third Sorrowful Mystery--Crowning with Thorns. For moral courage. (Matthew 27, 28-29).

Fourth Sorrowful Mystery--Carrying of the Cross. For the virtue of patience. (John 19, 17)

Fifth Sorrowful Mystery--The Crucifixion. For final perseverance. (Luke 23, 46)

As a general rule the Glorious Mysteries are said on Wednesday and Sunday.

First Glorious Mystery--The Resurrection. For the virtue of faith. (Mark 16, 6)

Second Glorious Mystery--The Ascension. For the virtue of hope. (Mark 16, 19)

Third Glorious Mystery--Descent of the Holy Spirit. For the virtue of love. (Acts 2, 4)

Fourth Glorious Mystery--The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Revelations 12, 1)

Fifth Glorious Mystery--The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Revelations 12, 1)

As a general rule the Luminous Mysteries are said on Thursday.

First Luminous Mystery--Baptism of Jesus. For submission to God's will. (Matthew 3,16-17)

Second Luminous Mystery--Wedding Feast at Cana. For devotion to Mary. (John 2, 1-5)

Third Luminous Mystery--Proclamation of the Kingdom of God. For the grace of conversion.(Mark 1, 14-15)

Fourth Luminous Mystery--The Transfiguration. For reverence and love of God.(Matthew 17, 1-2)

Fifth Luminous Mystery--Institution of the Holy Eucharist. For thanksgiving to God. (Luke 22, 19-20)

The Fifteen Promises of Mary to Those Who Pray the Rosary:

1. Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the rosary, shall receive special graces.

2. I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the rosary.
 3. The rosary shall be a powerful armour against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
 4. It will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of people from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.
 5. The soul that recommends itself to me by the recitation of the rosary, shall not perish.
 6. Whoever shall recite the rosary devoutly, and meditating on the sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise this soul in His Justice, nor shall this person perish by an unprovided death; if the person be just s/he will remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.
 7. Whoever shall have true devotion to the rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.
 8. Those who faithfully recite the rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and all His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.
 9. I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the rosary.
 10. The faithful children of the rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in heaven.
 11. You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the rosary.
 12. All those who teach others about the holy rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in heaven.
 13. I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour death.
 14. All those who recite the rosary are my children and brothers and sisters of my son, Jesus Christ.
 15. Devotion to the rosary is a great sign that the soul is making choices which will bring it to heaven.
- (The fifteen promises of Mary to those who pray the rosary were given by Our Lady to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan de Roche)

To say the rosary hold your rosary beads in your hands and complete steps one to nine given here. Start at the crucifix.

1. Say the Apostles Creed on the Crucifix.
2. Follow the beads. On the first bead say one Our Father.

3. Say one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads.
4. On the next bead say one Glory be..... .
5. Next is the medallion. Announce the First Mystery and say one Our Father.
6. Say one Hail Mary on each of the next ten beads.
7. On the next bead which is spaced a little wider say one Glory be to the Father and then finish the first decade by saying the Fatima Prayer. (decade means ten)
8. Announce the Second Mystery on the same bead, and say one Our Father. You have just repeated step five. Continue fingering your way around all the beads following and repeating steps five, six, and seven and announcing the next mystery until you arrive back at the medallion.
9. End the rosary on the medallion by saying the prayer, The Hail Holy Queen.

Rosary beads are used when we pray the rosary to help us keep our place.

It is believed that the rosary was given to St. Dominic by Our Lady at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The life, death, and resurrection of Our Lord are the central themes of the mysteries. The rosary takes you through the scriptures as well as recalling for us the Church's Traditional teaching.

If you wish to read the scriptures in order to learn about a certain mystery of the rosary, you are encouraged to do so. As an example we will learn about the first sorrowful mystery by reading the following passages from the Old and New Testament.

The Agony in the Garden

(Isaiah 50: 6)

For my part I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.

I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;

I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.

Isaiah lived in the year 765 B.C. He is the Prophet chosen by God to keep the Israelite Nation faithful to the Covenant. God made this Covenant with Moses and the people freed from slavery in Egypt when He gave them the Ten Commandments. Isaiah is aware of the difficulty the nation faces, but his prophecy of the Messiah who will establish peace and justice on earth gives hope to the whole Nation of Israel.

(Wisdom 2: 19-20)

Let us test him with cruelty and with torture,
and thus explore this gentleness of his
and put his endurance to the proof,
Let us condemn him to a shameful death
since he will be looked after---we have his word for it.

The Book of Wisdom was written in the middle of the 1st. century B.C. Not only do Christians see the image of Our Lord suffering for mankind in the writings of the Prophet Isaiah, but also in this passage from the Book of Wisdom.

(Matthew 26: 36-41)

Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray'. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And a sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me'. And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father,' he said, 'if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it'. He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake and praying not to be put to the test.

The account of Jesus' agony continues until his arrest and trial. By reading the Scriptures we have much to meditate on when we say the rosary. Before we can love God, we must get to know Him, and this we can do by opening the Bible often and taking time to learn about Him.

Every mystery of the Rosary has Scriptural references. It is a good idea to buy one of the small scriptural rosary books readily available in a Catholic book store. By saying the rosary in this way we learn how to meditate as well as learn about our faith.

A blessed rosary beads is a sacramental and is used by the faithful to keep count of the decades. A priest will bless your rosary for you. All acts of worship bring God's life to our soul.

Prayer is our way of feeding our soul and keeping it alive and strong.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the early centuries of our Church's history it was customary to have prayers with responses, resembling our present litanies, in the Mass itself. The only trace of this practice that now remains is the repetition of the Greek words "Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison" (Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy), which originally formed a part of these Mass litanies.

Among the five litanies approved by the Church, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary is used perhaps more commonly than the others. It is often called the "Litany of Loreto," because it came into use about four centuries ago at the famous Italian shrine which, according to tradition or legend, contains the little house of Nazareth in which our Saviour dwelt in childhood. This litany is a series of beautiful invocations about our Blessed Mother, where we address her by her various titles and beseech her intercession.

Litany of Loreto (Litany of the Blessed Virgin)

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Holy Virgin of Virgins, pray for us.
Mother of Christ, pray for us.
Mother of divine grace, pray for us.
Mother most pure, pray for us.
Mother most chaste, pray for us.
Mother inviolate, pray for us.
Mother undefiled, pray for us.
Mother most amiable, pray for us.
Mother most admirable, pray for us.
Mother of good counsel, pray for us.
Mother of our Creator, pray for us.
Mother of our Saviour, pray for us.
Virgin most prudent, pray for us.
Virgin most venerable, pray for us.
Virgin most renowned, pray for us.
Virgin most powerful, pray for us.
Virgin most merciful, pray for us.
Virgin most faithful, pray for us.
Mirror of justice, pray for us.
Seat of wisdom, pray for us.
Cause of our joy, pray for us.
Spiritual vessel, pray for us.
Vessel of honour, pray for us.
Singular vessel of devotion, pray for us.
Mystical rose, pray for us.
Tower of David, pray for us.
Tower of ivory, pray for us.
House of Gold, pray for us.
Ark of the Covenant, pray for us.
Gate of Heaven, pray for us.
Morning Star, pray for us.
Health of the sick, pray for us.
Refuge of sinners, pray for us.
Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.
Help of Christians, pray for us.

Queen of Angels, pray for us.
Queen of Patriarchs, pray for us.
Queen of Prophets, pray for us.
Queen of Apostles, pray for us.
Queen of Martyrs, pray for us.
Queen of Confessors, pray for us.
Queen of Virgins, pray for us.
Queen of all Saints, pray for us.
Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us.
Queen assumed into Heaven, pray for us.
Queen of the most holy rosary, pray for us.
Queen of peace, pray for us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Grant, we beseech You, O Lord God, to us Your servants, that we may rejoice in continual health of mind and body; and, by the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, may we be delivered from present sorrow and enjoy eternal joy. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

(Mt. 6.: 9-13)

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.

The Hail Mary

This popular prayer is composed of two texts from Scriptures: the Angelic greeting to Mary in Luke 1: 28, and her cousin Elizabeth's greeting to her in Luke 1: 42. The final section of the prayer is our plea to Mary our Mother for ourselves and the world.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glorify 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.

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. Amen.

The Fatima Prayer

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need of your mercy.