



Learning to pray: The Rosary

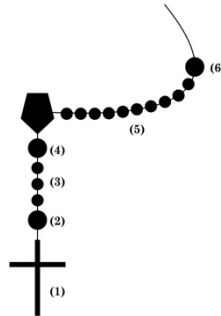
The rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the book of the aged, whose eyes close upon the shadow of this world, and open on the substance of the next' (Fr Fulton J Sheen).

The Rosary is a method of contemplative prayer that involves the recitation of familiar prayers, especially the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and *Glory Be*. It is a meditative practice, in which we focus on the mysteries of Christ's life, including his birth and baptism, transfiguration and crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The Rosary is named for the prayer beads with which it is associated: it means 'garland of roses'.

As the Rosary typically involves *fifty* repetitions of the Hail Mary, it is considered an aspect of the veneration of the Blessed Virgin. In praying the Rosary, we participate in the life of Mary, whose focus was Christ. There are many virtues of the Rosary that has made it one of the most popular forms of popular piety. It is simple in its repetitiveness, and yet it engages our minds as we contemplate the mysteries of the Incarnation. It also engages the body, especially in the use of prayer beads. It may be done individually, but is also commonly used in communal prayer, even by families.

Rosary beads typically consist of a crucifix, a row of five beads, and a chain of five decades (i.e., ten beads), each separated by a single bead. Each decade provides an opportunity to think about and meditate upon a different *mystery*, or event in the life of Christ and Mary. There are four traditional sets of mysteries, as included below.

The prayers of the rosary proceed as follows:



1. At the crucifix, make the *Sign of the Cross* and say the *Apostles' Creed*. (1)
2. At the first five beads, say the *Lord's Prayer* (2), followed by three *Hail Marys* (3), ending with the *Glory Be* (4). Prepare to meditate upon an event in the history of salvation. Repeat the Lord's Prayer.
3. At each decade, meditating upon a mystery, say ten *Hail Marys* ending with the *Glory Be* (5). Prepare to meditate upon the next event. At the next bead, say the *Lord's Prayer* (6).
4. At the end of the rosary, say:

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 vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward 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.

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 by 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

Prayers

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Mysteries

Joyful

The Annunciation
The Visitation
The Nativity
The Presentation
Jesus in the Temple

Sorrowful

The Agony
The Scourging
The Crown of Thorns
Jesus Carrying the Cross
The Crucifixion

Glorious

The Resurrection
The Ascension
The Descent of the Holy Ghost
The Assumption
Mary is Crowned

Luminous

The Baptism of Christ
The Wedding at Cana
The Proclamation of the Kingdom
The Transfiguration
The Institution of the Eucharist