

How to pray the Rosary

What is the Rosary?

The Rosary is a traditional way of praying while meditating on certain key events that define the Christian faith, called “mysteries”. Because of this, the vast majority of the Rosary is based on the recitation of verses from the Scriptures. For example, the Our Father, which is said before the recitation of each decade, is the prayer Jesus himself taught to us – the Lord’s own Prayer indeed; whilst the first part of the Hail Mary is an amalgamation of the Angel’s words announcing Christ’s birth and Elizabeth’s greeting to Mary found in the first chapter Luke’s gospel.

The word Rosary derives from the Latin word for a “crown of roses”. And in this sense, the Rosary is an offering we make to God and Our Lady, as if by crafting beautiful and fragrant flower-chains with our prayers. The Mysteries of the Rosary then are the “gems” in our crowns; the events through which God redeemed us in Jesus Christ, and demonstrated his unmeasured love for us. The beads which many people hold whilst praying the Rosary are also sometimes called “Rosary crowns” for this reason.

One of the best books the Rosary was written by a Methodist minister, Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy: Meditations on the Rosary (J.N.Ward).

The Mysteries of the Rosary

There are four sets of Mysteries: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and the Luminous. The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ’s spirit dwells.

The Joyful Mysteries (traditionally prayed on Mondays and Thursdays)

1. **The Annunciation of the Lord to Mary:** The Archangel Gabriel “announces” to Mary that she shall conceive the Son of God.
2. **The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth:** Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist.
3. **The Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ:** The Word of God made flesh, God-with-us, is born in Bethlehem.
4. **The Presentation of Jesus:** Mary and Joseph “present” Jesus in the Temple where they meet Simeon.
5. **The Finding of Jesus in the Temple:** Mary and Joseph find young Jesus teaching the Rabbis in the Temple.

The Luminous Mysteries (traditionally prayed on Saturdays)

1. **The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan:** The voice of the Father proclaims Jesus as the Beloved Son.
2. **The Wedding at Cana:** Christ changes water into wine, his first public miracle.
3. **The Proclamation of the Kingdom:** Jesus calls to conversion and forgives those who draw near to him.
4. **The Transfiguration of the Lord:** The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ.
5. **The Institution of the Holy Eucharist:** Jesus establishes the Eucharist; “Do this in memory of me”.

The Sorrowful Mysteries (traditionally prayed on Tuesdays and Fridays)

1. **Jesus’ Agony in the Garden:** Jesus sweats water and blood while praying the night before his passion.
2. **The Scourging of Jesus at the Pillar:** Pilate has Jesus whipped.
3. **The Crowning with Thorns:** Roman soldiers crown Jesus’ head with thorns.

4. **The Carrying of the Cross:** Jesus meets His mother and falls three times on the way up Calvary.

5. **The Crucifixion of the Lord:** Jesus is nailed to the cross and dies before His mother and His apostle John.

The Glorious Mysteries (traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and Sundays)

1. **The Resurrection of Jesus:** Jesus rises from the dead.

2. **The Ascension of the Lord:** Jesus leaves the Apostles and bodily "ascends" to heaven.

3. **The Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:** The Apostles receive the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire in the upper room with Mary.

4. **The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary:** Mary is taken bodily--assumed--into heaven by God at the end of her life here on earth.

5. **The Coronation of Mary and the triumph of Saints and Angels in heaven:** Mary is crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Where do I start?

Praying the Rosary is one of those practical things that take more time to explain how they're done, than actually doing them. But to put it simply, anyone who knows few easy prayers can pray a Rosary; you will also need to follow the Mysteries to meditate as you pray. If you do not have Rosary beads, it is perfectly okay to count with your fingers. Counting beads frees your mind to help you meditate. Let the beads do the counting, and immerse yourself in the scene described by each mystery, whilst quietly saying the prayers.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross.

2. Holding the Crucifix, pray the Apostles' Creed.

3. On the first bead, pray the Lord's Prayer.

4. Pray three Hail Mary on each of the next three beads.

5. Pray the Glory Be.

6. For each of the five decades, read the Mystery, then pray the Lord's Prayer.

7. While moving through each of the ten beads, say ten Hail Mary while meditating on the Mystery. Then say a Glory Be. Additional prayers may be added at this point.

8. After saying the five decades, pray the Hail, Holy Queen, and the concluding prayer.

Praying the Rosary

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

All: Amen.

The Apostle's Creed

All: 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.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed by thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. All: 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.

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.

All: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Glory Be

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

The "Fatima Prayer"

All: 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.

At the end of the Rosary

All: Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee 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. Amen.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

All: 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 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.

All: Amen.

