

How To Pray The Rosary

The Rosary prayer actually consists of a series of smaller prayers, all of which take about twenty minutes to pray.

First, you hold the rosary and begin with the **sign of the cross**:

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

Next, holding the crucifix of the rosary, you pray the ancient **Apostles' Creed**, which is a summary of our baptismal promises:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and 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 into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there 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 life everlasting. Amen.

Holding the first bead above the crucifix, you then pray the **Our Father**, which is the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray:

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.

For each of the three beads that follow, you pray the **Hail Mary**, which is derived, in part, from the greetings of the angel Gabriel and Mary's relative Elizabeth in Scripture (Luke 1:28, 42). (One thing we might pray for during this introductory triplet is an increase in faith, hope, and love.)

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.

Next, you pray the **Glory Be**, which gives praise to the three persons of our one God:

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.

Next, we move into the heart of the Rosary—the five “decades”. These are groupings of ten beads separated by an individual bead. Each of these decades corresponds to a “mystery” in the lives of Christ and his mother. When you pray the Rosary, you pray it following one of four categories of mysteries: the Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Glorious Mysteries, and the Luminous Mysteries.

The **Joyful Mysteries**, which are traditionally prayed on Mondays, Saturdays, and, during the season of Advent, on Sundays, are:

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Nativity
4. The Presentation in the Temple
5. The Finding in the Temple

The **Sorrowful Mysteries**, which are traditionally prayed on Tuesdays, Fridays, and, during the season of Lent, on Sundays, are:

1. The Agony 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

The **Glorious Mysteries**, which are traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and, outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on Sundays, are:

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption
5. The Coronation of Mary

The **Luminous Mysteries**, which are traditionally prayed on Thursdays, are:

1. The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan
2. The Wedding Feast at Cana
3. Jesus’ Proclamation of the Coming of the Kingdom of God
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

On the bead before the first decade, you announce the mystery, perhaps followed by a brief reflection or reading from Scripture.

Next, you pray an Our Father. Then, for each of the ten beads of the decade, you say a Hail Mary, contemplating the first mystery as you pray.

After you pray the tenth Hail Mary, you pray the Glory Be, followed by the prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary in her apparition at Fatima:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to heaven, especially those who have most need of thy mercy.

You repeat this cycle of prayers—announcement of the mystery, Our Father, ten Hail Marys, Glory Be, and the Fatima Prayer—for each of the five decades, meditating on the corresponding mystery as you move through each decade.

After completing the five decades, you pray the **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 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.

You then recite a **concluding prayer**:

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 while meditating on 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.

Finally, you conclude in precisely the same way you started—with the **sign of the cross**.

The Rosary

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