

Let's Pray
(NOT JUST SAY)
the Rosary

Richard Rooney, SJ

Luminous Mystery Meditations
by David Werthmann



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Thomas D. Picton, CSsR
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The Redemptorists

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Most Reverend Robert J. Hermann
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Introduction

Before a person can pray the rosary, he or she must know how to say it. Most Catholics take it for granted that everyone knows how to say the rosary. The number of requests we get for help in this matter—from non-Catholics, converts, and even “cradle” Catholics—proves this supposition is false. To meet these pleas, we start off with a simple explanation of the basic mechanics of saying the rosary.

The traditional rosary consists of a cross, five beads (two large and three small), a medal, and five “decades” (groups containing ten beads each). Each decade is separated from the others by a single bead; these are usually larger or more decorative than the others.

These different parts are used in the following way:

The Cross

You begin the rosary by taking the cross in your right hand and touching your forehead with it, saying, “In the name of the Father.” Then you touch your chest, saying, “and of the Son.” Finally, you touch your left and then your right shoulder, saying, “and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Still holding the cross, you then recite the Apostles' Creed:

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.

The Five Introductory Beads

On the first large bead, you recite the 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.

On each of the three smaller beads, you say the Hail Mary:

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

Then, as you pass on to the fifth bead, you recite the Glory Be (also called the Prayer of Praise or *Doxology*):

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.

These prayers are said for an increase of faith, hope, and charity.

At this point, you call to mind in general the mysteries you are about to say—that is, Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, or Glorious.

Recall now the first mystery in any one of these groups, for example, the first Joyful Mystery, the Annunciation.

Then, on the fifth bead, you say the Lord's Prayer.

The Decades

Slipping the beads through your fingers, you recite one Hail Mary on each of the ten beads.

When you get the hang of this, you will meditate on each bead as indicated in the following pages.

After you have recited the Hail Mary on the tenth bead, you say the Glory Be.

Since our Lady requested it at Fatima, you may also say,

Oh, my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to heaven, especially those who most need thy (your) mercy.

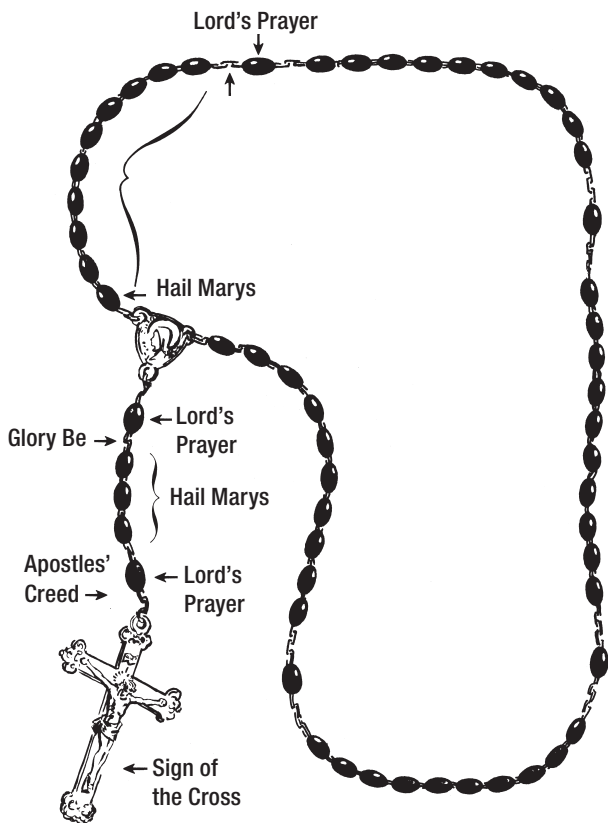
Recall now the title of the next mystery, for example, the Visitation.

Then, while clasping the larger bead, say the Lord's Prayer.

Now go on through the next decade, or group of ten beads.

Continue in the same way through the five decades. At the end, you bless yourself again with the cross (as previously explained) and kiss it.

Thus you have learned how to say the rosary. The following pages of this pamphlet will teach you how to *pray* the rosary—that is, how to meditate on each mystery.



How to Pray the Rosary

You are ready to pray your rosary. Having blessed yourself, said the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the three Hail Marys, and the Glory Be, you come to the first decade.

Let us suppose you have chosen the Joyful Mysteries, the first of which is the Annunciation.

In a general way, you form a mental picture of the scene in which Gabriel announces to our Lady that she is to be the Mother of God. This can be done before or during the second saying of the Lord's Prayer.

Then, with this pamphlet in your hand while you say each Hail Mary, you think about, or meditate on, the word-picture assigned to each bead.

In all the mysteries, you develop one thought, one mental picture, for each bead. You can either think of the picture before you say the Hail Mary, or you can look at the picture mentally while you repeat the prayer.

You will find that, after a time, the picture associated with each bead will be fixed in your memory and will come to your mind without your actual use of this pamphlet.

The Joyful Mysteries

(Suggested for Mondays and Saturdays)

I. The Annunciation

(Luke 1:27-38)

1. Our Lady, rapt in prayer, is kneeling in her little home in Nazareth.
2. Suddenly, a bright light glows in the little room.
3. Unafraid, our Lady looks up to see the Archangel Gabriel standing before her.
4. He gazes at her lovingly and says, "Greetings, favored one!" (Luke 1:28).
5. He asks her to be God's Mother and awaits her reply.
6. Mary asks but one question: What of her vow of virginity?
7. The angel explains that she is to be at once virgin and mother.
8. Without further hesitation, our Lady bows her head in loving submission: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord" (Luke 1:38).
9. "Let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).
10. The angel departs, leaving the Word made flesh dwelling in Mary's womb.