

Contemplating the Face of Christ with Mary: How to Pray the Rosary

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Introduction

1. The Rosary: a “*Christocentric Prayer*” (RVM, 1)
2. Pope John Paul II’s “Favorite Prayer”! (RVM 2)
3. Objections to the Rosary (RVM 4)
 - a. A “Crisis of the Rosary”
 - b. Greater Importance of Liturgy means Lesser Importance of Rosary?
 - c. The Rosary is “unecumenical”
5. The Rosary: A Path of Contemplation (RVM 5)
 - a. “A most effective means of fostering contemplation of the Christian mystery”
 - b. What we need: “Christian life distinguished above all by *the art of prayer*”To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to *contemplate with Mary the face of Christ.*(RVM, 3)

Contemplating Christ with Mary

1. Mary, Model of Contemplation (RVM, 10)
 - a. A questioning gaze
 - b. A penetrating gaze
 - c. A gaze of sorrow
 - d. A gaze radiant with the joy of the Resurrection
 - e. A gaze afire with the Holy Spirit
2. The Memories of Mary (RVM 11)
 - a. “She kept all these things, *pondering them in her heart*” (Luke 2:19, 51)
 - b. Mary sets the mysteries of Christ before the faithful
3. The Rosary: “an *exquisitely contemplative prayer*” (RVM 12)
 - a. Body: Vocal Prayers
 - b. Soul: Meditation on the Mysteries of Christ’s Life
 - c. St. Louis de Montfort: Vocal Prayer and Mental Prayer (*Secret of the Rosary* 9)
4. The Goal: The *Imitation* of Jesus Christ (RVM 15)

The Parts of the Rosary (The Body)

1. Introductory Prayers
 - a. The Apostles’ Creed
 - b. 1 Our Father
 - c. 3 Hail Mary’s
 - d. 1 Glory Be
2. The Decade
 - a. 1 Our Father
 - b. 10 Hail Mary’s
 - c. 1 Glory Be
 - d. Additional Prayer (e.g., Fatima Prayer: “O My Jesus”)
3. Concluding Prayers (Vary according to Custom)
 - a. Hail, Holy Queen b. Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

The Mysteries of the Rosary (The Soul)

1. The Joyful Mysteries
 - a. The Annunciation
 - b. The Visitation
 - c. The Nativity
 - d. The Presentation
 - e. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple
2. The Sorrowful Mysteries
 - a. The Agony in the Garden
 - b. The Scourging at the Pillar
 - c. The Crowning with Thorns
 - d. The Carrying of the Cross
 - e. The Crucifixion
3. The Glorious Mysteries
 - a. The Resurrection
 - b. The Ascension
 - c. The Descent of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The Assumption
 - e. The Coronation
4. The Luminous Mysteries
 - a. The Baptism
 - b. The Wedding at Cana
 - c. The Kingdom of God
 - d. The Transfiguration
 - e. The Last Supper

(added John Paul II, Oct 16, 2002)
5. Church in Third Millennium: Will it enter into the mysteries? (RVM 24)

How to Pray the Rosary Well

1. Announce each Mystery (RVM 29)
 - a. Use of Icons
 - b. Use of Scripture(RVM 30); cf. the *Scriptural Rosary* (Christianica Publishers)
3. Silence after announcing the Mystery (RVM 31)
4. The Our Father: Mind is lifted up to the Father (RVM 32)
5. The 10 Hail Marys
 - a. True Nature of Repetition: an outpouring of love (RVM 26)
 - b. The Hail Mary: A Biblical Prayer (RVM 33; CCC 2673-2679)
 - c. The Name of “Jesus”: the “center of gravity”
6. The Gloria: “Trinitarian doxology... *the high point of contemplation*” (RVM 34)
7. Concluding Prayers: prayer for the fruits of that mystery (RVM 35)
8. The Rosary Beads: a “chain” linking us to God (RVM 36)
9. The Opening and Closing: diverse customs (RVM 37)
10. The Mysteries and the Days of the Week (BVM 38)
 - a. Joyful Mysteries: Monday, Saturday
 - b. Sorrowful Mysteries: Tuesday, Friday
 - c. Glorious Mysteries: Wednesday, Sunday
 - d. Luminous Mysteries: Thursday
11. The Family Rosary (RVM 41)
 - a. “The family that prays together stays together”
 - b. Replicates the “household of Nazareth”
 - c. The Rosary for Children: “Why not try it?!”
12. Prayer of Blessed Bartolo Longo: (BVM 43)

The Benefits of Praying the Rosary Well (St. Louis De Montfort)

1. Note: these benefits only come when the Rosary is said “with meditation on the mysteries” (*Secret of the Rosary*, 79, 81)

2. It helps us pattern our lives on Christ’s virtues:

It was because our Lady wanted to help us in the great task of working out our salvation that she ordered Saint Dominic to teach the faithful to meditate upon the sacred mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ. *She did this*, no only that they might adore and glorify him, but *chiefly that they might pattern their lives and actions on his virtues*. (St. Louis de Montfort, *Secret of the Rosary*, 66)

a. Jesus’ Prudence: the Proclamation of the Kingdom (Matt 10)

b. Jesus’ Justice: the Baptism of Jesus (Matt 3)

c. Jesus’ Fortitude: Agony in the Garden (Luke 22:43)

d. Jesus’ Temperance: the Temptations in the Desert (Luke 4)

3. It is more powerful than many Penances:

Blessed Albert the Great, who had St. Thomas Aquinas as his student, learned in a revelation that *by simply thinking of or meditating on the passion of Jesus Christ, a Christian gains more merit* than if he had fasted on bread and water every Friday for a year, or had beaten himself with the discipline once a week till blood flowed, or had recited the whole book of Psalms every day. If this is so, then how great must be the merit we can gain from the Rosary, which commemorates the whole life and passion of our Lord?” (St. Louis de Montfort, *Secret of the Rosary*, 88, 28th Rose)

4. It leads us more quickly to more advanced stages of prayer:

We need to learn this easy form of meditation before progressing to the highest state of contemplation... Believe me, dear brother... if you genuinely wish to attain a high degree of prayer in all honesty and without falling into the illusions of the devil so common with those who practice mental prayer, *say the whole Rosary every day, or at least five decades of it*. If you have already attained, by the grace of God, a high degree of Prayer, keep up the practice of saying the holy Rosary if you wish to remain in that state and by it to grow in humility. For never will anyone who says his Rosary every day become a formal heretic or be led astray by the devil. This is a statement which I would sign with my blood. (St. Louis De Montfort, *The Secret of the Rosary*, nos. 76, 78)

The Rosary and the Illuminative Way

“The proficient [person in the illuminative way] obtained a deeper self-knowledge while passing through the period of prolonged aridity which marks the second conversion. With this knowledge of his poverty, of his spiritual indigence, there grows within him by contrast a quasi-experimental knowledge of God, not only in the mirror of the sensible things of nature, of the parables, of exterior worship, but in *the spiritual mirror of the mysteries of salvation* with which he familiarizes himself. *These mysteries*, which are those of the incarnation of the Word, of the redemption, of eternal life, *the Rosary daily places before our eyes* by recalling to us the Savior’s childhood, His sorrowful passion, His resurrection and ascension. If the proficient is faithful, he goes beyond the sensible aspect of these mysteries, he attains all that is spiritual in them, the infinite value of the merits of Christ; then the Rosary is no longer the mechanical recitation of the Hail Mary, but a living thing, a school of contemplation...

The proficient who would thus live a little better each day by the spirit of the Rosary, would reach the contemplation of the mystery of Christ... If he should listen daily to the secret teaching in the depth of his heart, this prayer would enkindle in him the desire of heaven, of the glory of God, and the salvation of souls; it would give him a love of the Cross and strength to carry it, and from time to time a foretaste of heaven, a certain savor of eternal life... He thus growing increasingly familiar with these mysteries of faith, he penetrates them a little, tastes them, sees their application in his daily life. In this more or less frequent contemplation, the proficient or advanced [souls] receive, in the measure of their fidelity and generosity, the light of *the gift of understanding*, which renders their faith more penetrating and which makes them glimpse the lofty and simple beauty of these mysteries, a beauty accessible to all those who are truly humble and pure of heart.

Consequently this period of the interior life merits the name of illuminative way. (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, 2:66-68)

The Tabernacle of Moses and the Illuminative Way

1. Three Parts of Tabernacle
 - a. The Outer Court: Bloody Sacrifice (Purgative Way)
 - b. The Holy Place: Unbloody Sacrifice (Illuminative Way)
 - c. The Holy of Holies: the Ark of the Covenant (Unitive Way)
2. The Holy Place:
 - a. The Bread of the Presence (Exod 25:23-30; 37:10-16)
 - b. The Golden Menorah (Exod 25:31-40; 37:17-23)
 - c. The Golden Altar of Incense (Exod 30:1-10; 37:25-28)

The Mystery of the Golden Menorah

1. The Menorah: *illuminated* the Holy Place
2. 7 Flames: 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isa 11:1-3 LXX; Rev 5:6; cf. 1:12-13)
3. A Bush/Tree Covered with *Flowers!* (Num 8:4; 1 Kgs 7:22-26; cf. Ps 45:1!)
 - a. The Burning Bush/The Tree of Life
 - b. Decorated with *50 Flowers?* (see *Encyclopedia Judaica*, “Menorah,” 11:1358)
 - c. Greek Bible: they are “lilies” (*krinon*) (Exod 25:32; compare Song 2:17!)
4. St. Louis de Montfort: “The Mystical Rose Tree” (*Secret of the Rosary*, 5-6)

THE PRAYER OF THE ENTIRE GOSPEL: THE ROSARY

(Courtesy: Jimmy Seghers)

I. THE STRUCTURE: THE PRAYERS

Invocation (once)

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).

The Apostle's Creed (once)

I believe in God (Deut 6:4-5; Is 45:22-24; Phil 2:10-11; Mk 12:29-30), the Father almighty (Mt 28:19), creator of heaven and earth (Deut 32:6; Mal 2:10).

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, Our Lord (Mk 12:35-37; Mt 11:27; 16:16-17; Jn 1:1; Acts 2: 34-36; 9:20; Rom 9:5; 1 Cor 2:8; Gal 1:15-16; Col 1:15; Phil 2:6; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:3; Rev 5:13).

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38).

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried (Mt 27; Mk 15; Lk 23; Jn 18:26-19:42; Heb 2:9; 1 Cor 15:3; Rev 1:18; Acts 3:15).

He descended into hell (Eph 4:9-10; 1 Pet 4:6). On the third day he rose again (Mt 28: 1-15; Mk 16; Lk 24:1, 5-6, 34-36; Mk 16:1; Jn 20:11-18; 1 Cor 15:3-8; Acts 1:22; 2:24; 9:3-18; 13:32-33).

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (Mk 16:19; Lk 24:31; Jn 3:13; 12:32; 20:19, 26; Eph 4:8-10; Acts 1:9; 2:33; 7:56; Lk 9:34-35; Mk 16:19; 1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:16; Heb 7:25; 9:11, 24; Rev 4:6-11).

He will come again to judge the living and the dead (Jn 5:28-29; Mt 25:31-32, 46; Jn 12:49).

I believe in the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:17; 16:13; 1 Cor 2:11; Gal 4:6; Mt 28:19),

The holy catholic Church (Mk 16:15; Acts 19:39; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6),

The communion of saints (Jn 15:1-17; 1 Cor 12:7, 26-27; Rom 14:7; Eph 4:16),

The forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38-41; 22:16; Heb 10:32; 1 Cor 6:11; Jn 20:19-23),

The resurrection of the body (Jn 6:39-40, 54; 11:25; Rom 8:11; 1 Thess 4:14; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:12-14; 2 Cor 4:145; Phil 3:10-11)

And life everlasting (1 Jn 32; 1 Cor 2:9; 13:12; Rev 2:17; 22:4-5; Phil 1:23; Jn 14:3; 1 Thess 4:17; Mt 25:21, 23).

Amen

The Lord's Prayer (once)

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.

Lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil. Amen. (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4)

Hail Mary (three times)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee (Lk 1:28).
Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus (Lk 1:42).
Holy Mary, mother of God (Lk 1:43), pray for us sinners
Now and at the hour of our death (Jas 5:16; 1 Tim 2:1-6). Amen.

Glory be (once here, and once after each decade)

Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever (Rev 1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12-13; 7:12; 11:13; 14:7; 19:1-2; 21:22-24, et. al). Amen.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES

1. **The Annunciation** (Lk 1:26-38)
2. **The Visitation** (Lk 1:39-56)
3. **The Nativity** (Lk 2:1-21)
4. **The Presentation** (Lk 2:22-40)
5. **The Finding of Jesus in the Temple** (Lk 2:41-52)

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

1. **Jesus' Baptism by John** (Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34)
2. **The Wedding Feast at Cana** (Jn 2:1-11)
3. **The Proclamation of the Gospel** (Mt 4:12-17; Mk 1:14-15; Lk 4:14-15)
4. **The Transfiguration** (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8)
5. **The Eucharist** (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:2-25; Lk 22:14-20; Jn 6:22-71; 1 Cor 10:14-17; 11:23-30)

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1. **The Agony in the Garden** (Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-53)
2. **The Scourging at the Pillar** (Mt 27:26; Mk 15:15; Lk 23:16; Jn 19:1)
3. **The Crowning with Thorns** (Mt 27:27-31; Mk 15:16-20; Jn 19:2-16)
4. **The Carrying of the Cross** (Mt 27:31-44; Mk 15:22-32; Lk 23:26-43; Jn 19:16-50)
5. **The Crucifixion** (Mt 27:45-56; Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:44-56; Jn 19:31-42)

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

1. **The Resurrection** (Mt 28:15, 7; Mk 16:1-18; Lk 24:1-43; Jn 20:1-21:19)
2. **The Ascension** (Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:50-53; Acts 2:1-13)
3. **The Descent of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:1-13)
4. **The Assumption of Mary** (Rev 12:1)
5. **The Coronation of Mary** (Rev 12:1)