

The Rosary

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Rosary [rose garden], or garden of roses—It is a prayer of Roman Catholics, in which beads are used as counters. The traditional Catholic Rosary is a series of 15 meditations on events (mysteries) in the lives of Jesus and Mary. The Joyful Mysteries are (Luke 1-2) the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of Jesus, His Presentation at the Temple, and the Finding of the Child Jesus in the temple. The Sorrowful mysteries are (Mat. 26-27) the Agony of Jesus in the Garden, His scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Crucifixion. The Glorious Mysteries are the Resurrection (Luke 24), the Ascension (Acts 1.1-11), the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), the Assumption of the Blessed Mother into Heaven, and the Coronation of Our Blessed Mother as Queen of Heaven and Earth. In 2002, Pope John Paul II proposed the addition of five “Mysteries of Light” drawn from Jesus’ public life: The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the Wedding Feast at Cana, The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, The Transfiguration, and The Institution of the Eucharist.



As one dwells on a mystery in thought one recites prayers—the Lord’s Prayer (or Our Father; Paternoster) once, Hail Mary (Ave Maria) 10 times, and Glory Be to the Father (Gloria Patri) once. Count is kept by slipping beads through the fingers; the beads have no other significance. The usual string—formerly called the chaplet—has five sets of 10 beads (decades); between the decades a single bead is set apart, for the Glory of one mystery and the Our Father of the next. There is a pendant with crucifix and beads for introductory prayers.

The Rosary is often said in common, but it remains an individual prayer. Its popularity is often ascribed to the combination of simplicity of method with solidity of subject matter. In one form or another it has been in use some 600 years. There is a feast of the rosary, Oct. 7, on the anniversary of the victory of the Christians over the Turks at the battle of Lepanto. According to tradition, St. Dominic received the rosary from the Virgin Mary in a vision.

Visit the Rosary Link elsewhere in this website to learn more about this devotion and to learn how to pray the Rosary.

Bibliography

F. B. Thornton, **This Is the Rosary** (1961).