



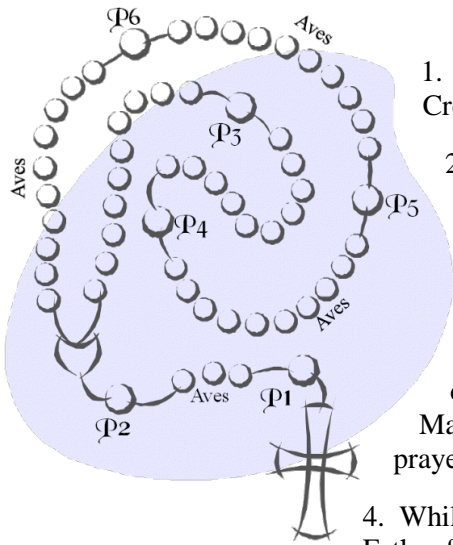
# How to Pray the Rosary



By Rosaries by Speziale

“Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in lectio divina or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with Him.” This statement about meditation and the rosary comes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It confirms our reasons for using the rosary as a way of nurturing our spiritual relationship with God.

Traditionally, most rosaries are made up of 5 decades, but there are also single decade or “pocket” rosaries, full sized 15-20 decade rosaries (1 decade for each mystery depending upon when the rosary was made), car rosaries, bracelets and many different types of chaplets. The following rosary is based on the traditional 5 decade model which will have 5 decades located above the centerpiece and 5 beads below the centerpiece followed by the crucifix. Each decade represents a mystery and includes 1 Pater bead (Our Father) and 10 Ave beads (Hail Marys). The mysteries are stories taken from the lives of Mary and Jesus which we meditate on in order to grow closer to God. Each mystery is representative of a specific “virtue” or “fruit” which are listed below along with corresponding Bible verses. There are 4 sets of mysteries: the Joyful, the Sorrowful, the Glorious and the Luminous (also called Mysteries of Light). The mysteries are listed in order of use (i.e. Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, etc.).



1. Starting with the Crucifix, make the Sign of the Cross, then say The Apostles’ Creed and the *optional* Opening Prayer from Fatima.
2. Move to the first Pater bead after the Crucifix (see P1 in diagram) and say the Our Father followed by 3 Hail Marys, one for each of the next 3 Ave beads (meditating on the virtues of faith, hope, love/charity respectively). After the 3rd Hail Mary, say the Glory Be (Tip: some people use the chain in-between the Aves and the following Pater bead to help them remember when to say the Glory Be).
3. While meditating on the **1st mystery**, take hold of the 2nd Pater bead (P2 in diagram) and say the Our Father. Then skip over the rosary center and say one Hail Mary for each of the next 10 Ave beads ending with the Glory Be and the O My Jesus prayer.
4. While meditating on the **2nd mystery** take hold of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pater bead (P3). Say the Our Father followed by one Hail Mary for each of the next 10 Ave beads, ending again with the Glory Be and the O My Jesus prayer.

5. While meditating on the **3rd mystery** take hold of the 4<sup>th</sup> Pater bead (P4). Say the Our Father followed by one Hail Mary for each of the next 10 Ave beads, ending with the Glory Be and the O My Jesus prayer.

6. While meditating on the **4th mystery** take hold of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pater bead (P5). Say the Our Father followed by one Hail Mary for each of the next 10 Ave beads, ending with the Glory Be and the O My Jesus prayer.

7. While meditating on the **5th mystery** take hold of 6<sup>th</sup> Pater bead (P6). Say the Our Father followed by one Hail Mary for each of the next 10 Ave beads, ending with the Glory Be and the O My Jesus prayer.

8. While holding the center say the Closing Prayer (“Let Us Pray”) and the Saint Michael prayer. Finish with the Sign of the Cross.

# The Mysteries

Mondays and Saturdays we meditate on the **Joyful Mysteries**:

**1st Decade: The Annunciation** (Luke 1:26-38) - The Angel Gabriel tells Mary she will give birth to the Son of God. (*Virtue/Fruit: Humility.* Mary humbled herself before God, who rewarded her with His only begotten Son. Humbling ourselves before God makes us more open to His role in our lives. Pray for the grace needed to help us accept God's will without fear, just as the Virgin Mary did. What better way to build a strong relationship with God and others in our lives than by practicing humility while learning to keep our egos in check?)

**2nd Decade: The Visitation** (Luke 1:39-56) - Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth and stays for 3 months before the birth of John the Baptist. (*Virtue/Fruit: Charity and Love of Neighbor.* Although she was newly pregnant, Mary chose to go help her cousin Elizabeth who was nearing the end of her pregnancy. This wonderful visit between cousins is a great example of how we can be there to help others when they need us, even if inconvenient. Pray that all of our personal interactions may be as loving, charitable and blessed as Mary's visit with Elizabeth was. Think about how you can serve those around you every day whether it is someone you know, a stranger, or even a local, national, or international charity. This mystery also touches on the ideas of miracles, faith and trust in God. Elizabeth, who was also very devoted to God, believed herself to be barren and unable to have a child of her own, but God granted her a miracle allowing her to have a baby later in life. Practicing our faith and having the ability to trust God wholeheartedly will inevitably bring us closer to Him.)

**3rd Decade: The Birth of Jesus** (Luke 2:4-21) - Jesus is born in Bethlehem. (*Virtue/Fruit: Poverty vs. Materialism.* Since Mary and Joseph had nowhere to stay, they were grateful for the stable that was offered to them in their time of need. Always remember to thank God for all of the gifts you have been given (including the obvious, the things we take for granted, the material and the immaterial) while praying for an openness and willingness to use our blessings with love, according to God's will. Think about what material things you really need in your life today. Which things are you willing to do without, what can you share with those in need or donate to charity? Pray that we are able to accept God's message of love and peace while being willing to sacrifice the things in our lives that prevent us from truly connecting with God on a deeper level.)

**4th Decade: The Presentation of Our Lord** (Luke 2:22-38) - Jesus is presented to Simeon in the Temple. (*Virtue/Fruit: Obedience, Hope and Faith.* Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to Simeon at the temple according the Jewish law, knowing that His identity would be revealed. Can you imagine what Simeon must have felt when meeting the Son of God for the first time? His feelings of renewed faith, hope and great joy, all remind us of God's promise to His people and the rewards awaiting us in Heaven. Pray that we will be patient and open to renewed hope in our own lives and someday experience the joy that Simeon felt upon meeting Jesus for the first time. Pray for the willingness to practice obedience. Obedience to God and others can be very difficult in today's world, but this mystery gives us the opportunity to really work with the virtue of obedience while being open to learning important lessons from it.)

**5th Decade: Jesus in the Temple** (Luke 2:41-52) - After being lost for 3 days, Jesus is found in the temple speaking with the elders. (*Virtue/Fruit: Devotion and Joy.* Can you imagine the joy Mary and Joseph felt when they found Jesus at the temple? This mystery provides a good opportunity to reunite with the joy and pride our faith gives us while rediscovering a desire to learn more about God message. This is also a chance to pray for religious vocations, for ALL who teach, for the unity and strength of family, and for the willingness of Christian families to live their lives according to God's will. If you are lucky enough to be blessed with a family, remember to thank God every day while asking His guidance and grace in all aspects of your family life.)

Tuesdays and Fridays we meditate on the **Sorrowful Mysteries**:

**1st Decade: The Agony in the Garden** (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46) - Jesus prays in the Garden of Olives, sweating blood. (*Virtue/Fruit: Repentance and Submission.* Jesus was terrified about the suffering that was to come. He could have run, but He submitted Himself to God's will and gained strength through repentance and prayer. Remember to always turn to God in times of need. Practice a willingness to tackle

any challenge you may face without fear, and with God's guidance. Pray and have compassion for those who have no one to turn to in times of need. Pray for those troubled by doubt. Pray for those suffering from any kind of mental, physical or emotional illness, and for those unwilling to repent or accept personal responsibility for their sinful actions. We prayerfully ask that God will comfort and strengthen us during our darkest times as He did Jesus in the garden.)

**2nd Decade: The Scourging at the Pillar** (Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:22-25) - Jesus is tied and beaten with whips. (*Virtue/Fruit: Modesty, Purity, Mortification and Self-Denial.* Can you even imagine how much physical and emotional pain and humiliation Jesus endured when publicly stripped down and whipped? Pray that God will heal the wounds of our hearts so we can be more open and loving to those around us. Think about how you can offer up small personal sacrifices in your daily life for the intentions of others. Pray for all whose hearts are full of hate, resentment, judgment or a strong, driving desire for revenge so that their hearts may be healed by God's love and personal sacrifice.)

**3rd Decade: Jesus is Crowned** (Matthew 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; John 19:1-6) - Jesus is mocked by placing a crown of thorns on His head. (*Virtue/Fruit: Moral Courage.* Think about the humiliation Jesus endured when He was being belittled and mocked in public. Do you have the courage to stand for your faith in the face of ridicule as Jesus did? Pray for the grace of moral courage and strong faith in the face of personal attack, but also pray for those who are doing the attacking whether they are believers or not. Pray for those who mock Jesus by taking His name in vain, by harming, abusing or demeaning others in His name, or by trying to take away people's religious freedoms. Pray for those who twist His word to justify their own beliefs or mislead others, pulling them away from God's true message toward a false ideology that victimizes and abuses people instead. Pray for those who spread hate, judgment and division in the name of God.)

**4th Decade: Jesus Carries His Cross** (John 19:17) - Jesus is made to carry His cross to Calvary. (*Virtue/Fruit: Patience and Fortitude.* While we all know how difficult patience can be in minor situations like sitting in traffic or at the grocery store, can you imagine the mental and physical strength, determination and patience Jesus practiced in carrying His cross while in pain, feeling abandoned by friends, and being mocked by those along the way? Pray that God will grant us the grace and strength to stand up for our faith even if it brings persecution, sorrow or pain. Pray that those who are suffering with overwhelming burdens, torments, or illnesses will have the patience, strength and faith necessary to carry their crosses just as Jesus did. Make a commitment to practice patience in your everyday life.)

**5th Decade: The Crucifixion** (Matthew 27:33-56; Mark 15:22-41; Luke 23:33-49; John 19:17-37) - Jesus suffers and dies on His cross for our sins. (*Virtue/Fruit: Salvation, Self-Denial, Perseverance, Mercy.* Think about God's ultimate sacrifice given solely for our salvation and redemption including the emotional, physical and spiritual pain Jesus had to endure to make it happen. How can we practice a similar kind of self-denial, putting others before us, in our own daily lives? Remember to be grateful that God loved us enough to sacrifice His only Son for our salvation. Pray that God will grant mercy and forgiveness to those we consider our "enemies", and those who hurt, abuse or take advantage of us. Pray that they too will be able to some day open their hearts and learn about the love God has for mankind.)

### Wednesdays and Sundays we meditate on the **Glorious Mysteries:**

**1st Decade: The Resurrection** (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-18; Luke 24:1-49; John 20:1-31) - Jesus rises from the dead. (*Virtue/Fruit: Faith and Joy.* It took very strong faith for people to believe that Jesus had risen, even after He showed them His wounds. Imagine the overwhelming joy the apostles and Mary must have felt upon seeing Jesus whole again. Pray that we are able to faithfully give ourselves over to Jesus, His will and His guidance without doubt or fear of judgment/retaliation from others. Use prayer as a way to erase doubt and give us the strength to use our faith as **the** major cornerstone of our lives.)

**2nd Decade: The Ascension** (Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:4-12) - Jesus ascends into heaven 40 days after His death. (*Virtue/Fruit: Hope Fulfilled.* After the apostles saw Jesus ascend into Heaven they knew their hope of salvation had been fulfilled. What a wonderful thought. Knowing that Jesus is in Heaven waiting offers us the strength we need to embrace our crosses and burdens, mindful of the day we will be united with Him. Pray for

the patience we need to faithfully practice our religion, like the apostles did, with an open heart while waiting for Jesus to show us the next step in our own spiritual journeys. This is also a good time to pray for those who spread the word of God whether it be missionaries, teachers, church leaders, community leaders, or family and friends.)

**3rd Decade: Holy Spirit Descends** (Acts 2:1-41) - The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on Pentecost which represents the birth of the church. (*Virtue/Fruit: Spiritual Enthusiasm, Wisdom and Love of God.* Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless us with the same abundant love and zeal for God's glory that the apostles received. Pray for the grace and wisdom necessary to remain on, or begin, our personal path to salvation by living a life that will make God proud. Think about the little things you can do every day to spread your faith. It can be as simple as a small verbal comment in difficult situations to showing people a reflection of God's love through your actions and choices.)

**4th Decade: The Assumption** (Revelation 12:1\*\*) - The Assumption of Mary into Heaven. (*Virtue/Fruit: Hope, Joy and Comfort During Death.* After Mary's peaceful passing she was rewarded for her devotion, her faith, and her maternal role by ascending into heaven body and soul. Pray that when we die, we are blessed with a peaceful passing, free of discomfort or suffering. Think about how amazing it will be to feel joy similar to that felt by Mary when she was finally reunited with her beloved Son. Her example gives us hope that we too will experience eternal happiness with the God we all love so much. Work on allowing Jesus to replace any voids you have in your heart with hope and love. Meditate on the desire to spread God's message through acts of mercy, charity and love in His name as Mary did.)

**5th Decade: Mary's Crowning** (Revelation 12:1\*\*) - The Blessed Virgin is crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth by her Son. (*Virtue/Fruit: Devotion to The Blessed Mother.* Mary gave herself completely to God and was always there for her Son, just as she is for us now. She is our spiritual mother, there to prayerfully intercede on our behalf whenever we need protection and support. She will always hold a special place in our faith. It is important for us to remember to use her as an example to live by, with a goal of living a life as holy as she did.)

\*\*Even though *The Assumption* and *The Crowning of the Virgin Mary* aren't specifically mentioned in the Bible, they are implied (See Revelation 12:1). To learn more about the Catholic view of Mary and her Assumption see *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* sections 966 & 974.

### Thursdays we meditate on the **Luminous Mysteries:**

**1st Decade: Baptism of Christ** (Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34) - Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist. (*Virtue/Fruit: Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Fidelity.* When Jesus was baptized he opened Himself up to the Holy Spirit and started His journey as Messiah. This is a time to keep in mind the promises made when we were baptized, and renewed again at our Confirmation. Reflect upon the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit (*Catechist 1830-1832*). The 7 gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. The 12 fruits are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. We are all God's children. Pray for the grace needed to live life like Jesus and Mary did, with reverence for God and the drive to keep the promises we have made to Him.)

**2nd Decade: The Wedding at Cana** (John 2:1-11) – Jesus' first miracle turning water to wine. (*Virtue/Fruit: Mary's Intercession and Obedience.* A shortage of wine at a wedding feast causes Mary to turn to Jesus, asking Him to help so the feast wouldn't be ruined. She then asked the waiters to do whatever Jesus asked of them. Jesus' first miracle was performed without hesitation, at Mary's request. This instance is an example of the strong bond between mother and Son. Think about the virtue of obedience (Jesus' obedience to His Mother and the waiter's obedience to Jesus). Remember Mary's maternal devotion to our well-being and have faith in her ability to intercede on our behalf, knowing that her son loves her and will help her when He can.)

**3rd Decade: The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God** (Mark 1:14-15; Mark 2:3-13; Matthew 5:1-11, 4:23-25, and 6:25-34) - Jesus goes from town to town proclaiming God's Kingdom while helping the sick and poor. (*Virtue/Fruit: Repentance, Forgiveness, and Conversion.* After His baptism, Jesus began His travels spreading the Word of God and proving God's love through acts of mercy and love. Pray for the grace we need to remember

Jesus' lessons of repentance, mercy, service to others, devotion to God and love of thy neighbor. Pray that God will stir our hearts and give us the courage to spread and defend our faith every day, even with the push-back and bullying we may face in today's world. Be willing to encourage others with mercy and love, as Jesus did, without succumbing to harmful feelings of pride or supremacy over others who don't share your beliefs. It may take some practice, but the result will be a closer relationship with God.)

**4th Decade: The Transfiguration** (Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36) - Jesus leads James and John up the mountain to pray. (*Virtue/Fruit: Desire for Holiness.* Jesus told the apostles of the horrific things to come and they were devastated, but when they saw Him praying, they saw His face change and His clothes become a dazzling white. Jesus gave them a glimpse of the glory that was to come after the sorrow was over. Pray that we will be willing to accept and make any sacrifices necessary to live a Holy life regardless of the temptations we may face. Pray that, through our faith, we can learn to always see God's light shining, even in the darkest of times.)

**5th Decade: The Last Supper** (Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-20) - The institution of the Holy Eucharist. (*Virtue/Fruit: The Blessed Sacrament and Active Participation at Mass.* The last supper was Jesus' last act of love given to His disciples before His death. Through the transformation of the bread and wine Jesus gave Himself to us. The Mass will always be a great opportunity to reconnect with God and foster devotion. Remember to pray for a strengthening love of the Blessed Sacrament and the devotion to regularly and actively participate during Mass.)

\*\*The Luminous Mysteries (also referred to by some as the Mysteries of Light) were introduced in Pope John Paul the II's Apostolic Letter entitled "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" back in October of 2002. They are the newest addition to the traditional rosary.

## Prayer List

**Optional Opening Prayer from Fatima:** "Queen of the Holy Rosary, you have deigned to come to Fatima to reveal to the three shepherd children the treasures of grace hidden in the Rosary. Inspire my heart with a sincere love of this devotion, in order that by meditating on the Mysteries of our Redemption which are recalled in it, I may be enriched with its fruits and obtain peace for the world, the conversion of sinners and of Russia, and the favor which I ask of you in this Rosary. (Here mention your request). I ask it for the greater glory of God, for your own honor, and for the good of souls, especially for my own. Amen."

**Sign of the Cross:** "In the name of the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen"

**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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall 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 Our Father:** "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"

**The Hail Mary:** "Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst 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."

**The Glory Be:** "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."

**O My Jesus Prayer:** “O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen”

**Hail Holy Queen:** “Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our hope. To thee we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee 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.

V. Pray for us O Holy Mother of God,

R. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen”

**Closing 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 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. Amen.

V. May the divine assistance remain always with us. R. Amen.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen

**Optional Closing Prayer (St. Michael Prayer)** My brother says this one in order to give Satan an extra Whammy!!: “Saint Michael the Ark Angle defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil, may God rebuke him we humbly pray and do thou O prince of the heavenly host, through the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all his evil spirits who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen”

**Footnote:** The preceding information was gathered from numerous sources including 1 pamphlet, 2 different versions of *The Bible (The Way and The Bible)*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2 books and 6 websites. For more information about the Church’s view about meditation, the rosary and the Virgin Mary please see the following sections from *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

The Rosary, prayer and meditation - see sections 971, 2678 and 2708

The Virgin Mary and her role in the Church - see **Part One: The Profession of Faith; Article 9** (I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church); **Paragraph 6** (Mary Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church).

**For additional information**, see the “**Subject Index**” in the *Catechist* under “**Mary**” where you can find many more details about her life, death and her role in our lives today.

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