

The Rosary

Dear pilgrim,

Throughout our pilgrimage, we will be invited to recite the Rosary or to say the chaplet.

What is it about? A rosary is a crown of roses, while a chaplet is a small garland of flowers.

Saying one's chaplet or reciting the Rosary means weaving a crown of prayers for the Blessed Virgin.

However, as Saint John Paul II reminds us in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, which we will often refer to in the following discussion:

"...while having a Marian character, the Rosary is a prayer centered on Christ... It concentrates within itself the depth of the entire Gospel message, of which it is almost a summary."



What does the Rosary consist of?

Traditionally, a Rosary includes three chaplets, each chaplet itself containing five mysteries, meaning five meditations focused on the main events of the lives of Jesus and Mary:

- **Five Joyful Mysteries:** those of Jesus' childhood;
- **Five Sorrowful Mysteries:** those of Christ's Passion;
- **Five Glorious Mysteries:** those of God's triumph.

To these fifteen mysteries, which form the traditional structure of the Rosary, Pope John Paul II, reviving a practice dating back to the Middle Ages, proposed (without imposing it) the addition of five "Luminous Mysteries," corresponding to the most significant events of Jesus' public life. This, according to his expression, makes the Rosary a true "**summary of the Gospel.**"

How is the Chaplet Recited?

Let us allow Saint John Paul II to speak:

"The Rosary is both meditation and supplication... It is also a path of proclamation and deepening."

The recitation of each Chaplet begins with the "**I believe in God**", "as if to place the profession of faith at the starting point of the contemplative journey being undertaken," as the Holy Father points out.

Then, one recites (or sings):

- An **"Our Father"**,
- Followed by three **"Hail Marys"**,
- And a **"Glory Be to the Father"**.

For the announcement of the first mystery, which serves as the foundation for the first meditation, the Pope observes that:

"To provide a biblical foundation and greater depth to the meditation, it is useful for the announcement of the mystery to be followed by the proclamation of a corresponding biblical passage."

Furthermore, after this reading:

"It is appropriate to pause for a significant amount of time to fix one's gaze on the meditated mystery before beginning the vocal prayer."

This vocal prayer consists of the recitation (or singing), in French or Latin, of:

- One **"Our Father"** (*Pater*),
- Ten **"Hail Marys"** (*Ave*),
- One **"Glory Be to the Father"** (*Gloria*),
- Followed by the short prayer that the Blessed Virgin taught us during one of her apparitions at Fatima:

"O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are in most need of Your mercy."

Two Notes on the Recitation of the Our Father:

1. The Use of Formal Address ("Vous")

Out of respect for God, the Almighty Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, we address Him using the formal *vous* in French. This practice of using formal address for God and the Virgin Mary is a rule of our pilgrimage and must be applied in the public prayer of all chapters. It serves as a sign of unity among the different chapters and a mark of filial piety for the Christians who, before us, have walked and prayed the chaplet on the road to Chartres.

Certainly, a few great mystics, because of their profound intimacy with Jesus, sometimes allow themselves to address Him in the informal *tu*, but they are great mystics...

2. The Use of the Phrase "Do not let us succumb to temptation"

This is the traditional formula, inherited from the ancient pilgrims, ensuring unity among all chapters. It also aligns well with the original Greek text, as stated in the **Catechism of the Catholic Church (C.E.C. 2846)**:

"God does not experience evil, nor does He tempt anyone."

On the contrary, He desires to **free us from it**.

Meditation and Graces to Ask For

Thus, each meditation will focus on a moment in the life of Christ, but with the aim of drawing conclusions for our present life and in connection with the theme proposed to us each day during the pilgrimage. These will be the **fruits of the mystery** and the **graces to ask for**. This is what Pope John Paul II expressed with this phrase:

"Each mystery of the Rosary, when well meditated, illuminates the mystery of man... Meditating on the Rosary means entrusting our burdens to the merciful Hearts of Christ and His Mother."

So, what are these meditations, and what graces can we ask for as the fruit of these mysteries?

Joyful Mysteries

- **The Annunciation** – Fruit of the mystery: **Humility**.
 - **The Visitation** – Fruit of the mystery: **Fraternal charity**.
 - **The Nativity** – Fruit of the mystery: **The spirit of poverty**.
 - **The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple** – Fruit of the mystery: **Obedience and purity**.
 - **The Finding of Jesus in the Temple** – Fruit of the mystery: **Seeking God in all things**.
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Luminous Mysteries

- **The Baptism of Jesus** – Fruit of the mystery: **The state of baptismal grace**.
 - **The Wedding at Cana** – Fruit of the mystery: **Trust**.
 - **The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God** – Fruit of the mystery: **Conversion**.
 - **The Transfiguration of Jesus** – Fruit of the mystery: **The grace of an interior life**.
 - **The Institution of the Eucharist** – Fruit of the mystery: **Eucharistic devotion**.
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Sorrowful Mysteries

- **The Agony of Our Lord in the Garden of Olives** – Fruit of the mystery: **Repentance for our sins**.
 - **The Scourging at the Pillar** – Fruit of the mystery: **Mortification of our senses**.
 - **The Crowning with Thorns** – Fruit of the mystery: **Mortification of our pride**.
 - **The Carrying of the Cross** – Fruit of the mystery: **Patience in trials**.
 - **The Crucifixion** – Fruit of the mystery: **A greater love for God and souls**.
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Glorious Mysteries

- **The Resurrection of Jesus** – Fruit of the mystery: **Faith**.

- **The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven** – Fruit of the mystery: **Hope and the desire for Heaven.**
- **Pentecost** – Fruit of the mystery: **Charity and apostolic zeal.**
- **The Assumption of Our Lady** – Fruit of the mystery: **The grace of a holy death.**
- **The Coronation of Mary in Heaven** – Fruit of the mystery: **A greater devotion to Mary.**

The Benefits of the Rosary

Pope John Paul II praised the merits of the Rosary in these words:

"Through Mary, the Rosary brings down, so to speak, the saving light of all Christ's mysteries into the circumstances and difficulties of everyday life—work, fatigue, doubt, suffering, social and family life—and transfigures everything, elevates everything, purifies everything."

The Rosary: A Family Prayer for Unity and Peace

The Rosary, when prayed as a family, fosters unity and harmony.

Pope Pius XII said on this subject:

"By reciting the Chaplet, the family prays together... If the family prays, indeed, it lives; and if it prays together, it lives united. Few means seem to us as effective in promoting and preserving unity of spirit as common prayer recited in the family, under the affectionate and smiling gaze of Mary."

And further:

"It is especially within families that we desire the practice of the Rosary to be spread, faithfully maintained, and continuously developed. Any attempt to halt the decline of civilization will be in vain if the family, the foundation and principle of society, is not brought back to the law of the Gospel."

The Rosary: A Remedy for the Great Evils of Our Time

Pope Leo XIII affirmed:

"We place our greatest hope in the Rosary. May it please God that, as we desire, this holy practice of devotion may be restored everywhere to its ancient honor; that it may be loved and followed in cities and in the countryside, in families and in workplaces, as a clear sign of the profession of Christian faith and an excellent and sure means of drawing down divine mercy." (*Jucunda Semper*, 1894)

The Rosary: The Prayer Recommended by the Blessed Virgin

Each time the Virgin appeared in **Fatima in 1917**, she carried a Chaplet and never failed to recommend the recitation of the Rosary:

- **"Pray the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war."**
- **"I want you... to say the Rosary every day."**

- "I am Our Lady of the Rosary. Let people continue to recite the Rosary every day..."

Finally, when she appeared to **Sister Lucia in the convent of Pontevedra** on **December 10, 1925**, the **Holy Mother of God**, accompanied by the Child Jesus, showed her **Her heart** and said:

"See, my daughter, my heart surrounded by thorns, which ungrateful men drive into it at every moment through their blasphemies and ingratitude. At least you, try to console me and tell everyone that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with all the graces necessary for the salvation of their soul, those who, for five months, on the first Saturday, confess, receive Holy Communion, recite a Chaplet, and spend fifteen minutes with me in a spirit of reparation."

Dear pilgrims,

Let us keep silence for a few moments to meditate on these last words of the **Most Holy Virgin** and resolve to follow her recommendations—for **peace in the world** and for **our salvation**.

Some Recommended Readings...

- SAINT JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Éd. Téqui, 2002.
- Charles JOURNET, *Petit catéchisme de la Sainte Vierge*, Éd. Saint-Augustin.

Citations A - The Rosary

"This angelic salutation is infinitely pleasing to the Blessed Virgin, because it seems to renew the joy she felt when the Angel Gabriel announced to her that she had been chosen to be the Mother of God."

— *Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori*