

PRAYER FOR PEACE

O Lord, our God,
 how many times do we raise our voices to you?
 For, we are a people of faith, hope and love.
 Renew our faith during these sacred days.
 Sustain our hope as an unclear future crowds in before us.
 Allow us to fulfill your love by sharing it with others.

Through your merciful guidance,
 send your Spirit upon all of those who work
 for true peace and justice in our world.
 Help those who are entrusted with the responsibility

for making just decisions.
 Give them courage to do your Will,
 to mold your future,
 and to work under the guidance of your loving Hand.

Allow the times and the seasons to shout out your praise.
 Rest your favor on us
 and in doing so, inspire us to bring
 to those who seek refuge, light
 to those who dwell in darkness, new hope
 to those who are alive, the promise of eternal life.
 Amen.

THE ROSARY Its Origin and Its Use

Not long ago, Bishop Matthew H. Clark encouraged dioceses to pray the rosary as a devotion honoring Our Lady of Peace.

"Since May," he said, "the rosary has been a special grace for me. Our pastoral letter on peace, 'The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response,' is, I believe, the occasion for that."

The letter, he explained, calls for devotion to Our Lady of Peace; and Bishop Clark singled out the rosary as an aid in that devotion.

However, the bishop said, it has been observed that "many in our faith community — especially among our young people — do not know how to pray the rosary. If you are among them, please let me encourage you to learn." prayer.

"If you know the prayer, but have not prayed it recently, let me invite you to consider offering it from time to time for peace!"

Rosaries are fixed in the devotions of nearly all the world's great religions. Essentially, rosaries are nothing more than counting devices, perhaps a string of knots or beads, on which are counted prayers. Mohammedans, Buddhists and, of course, Christians all employ them.

Since about the 12th century, Western Christians have identified the rosary with the Virgin Mary. Before that time, rosaries were used to count recitations of other prayers, including the "Kyrie Eleison (Lord, have mercy!)" the Psalms and the "Pater Noster (Our Father)."

In fact, throughout the Middle Ages, rosaries were called "paternosters," and those who made them "paternosterers." The guild of these craftsmen wielded considerable influence at the time.

The form that rosaries took in Christianity has also undergone considerable change. Early testimony has it that at least one rosary was nothing more than a heap of pebbles, from which the one praying would cast a stone at the end of the individual prayer. Another rosary looked much like a cribbage board.

It is Lady Godiva's will which gives us the first description of the "modern" Christian rosary. About 1075 she bestowed "the circlet of precious stones which she had threaded on a cord in order that by fingering them one after another she might count her prayers exactly."

It is a practical certainty that the Hail Mary only came into general use around the middle of the 12th century, and then only in the scriptural form: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

By its own nature it was seen as a salutation rather than a prayer, and appropriately repeated over and over. It is thought that because the Psalms are readily divisible into groups of 50, so too other prayers would be recited in groups of 50 at this time.

Indeed, texts from the period indicate the Hail Mary was recited 50 or 150 times in succession; and one text in particular calls for reciting 50 Hail Marys in groups of 10 with prostrations and other marks of reverence.

The rosary we know today really came into its own about 500 years ago, promoted by a Dominican, Alan de Rupe, who spread the word and founded organizations dedicated to the devotion, which he called "Our Lady's Psalter."

Ironically, however, de Rupe played overzealously with the truth, sending legends down the centuries that are both untrue and perhaps embarrassing.

For one, de Rupe claimed that Our Lady gave St. Dominic the rosary with which he defeated Albigensian heretics at the Battle of Muret in 1213.

The rosary is also associated with another military victory, the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, in which Don Juan of Austria defeated the Turkish fleet, while at the same time rosary devotees were making processions in Rome.



6. Meditate on 3rd Mystery, saying the "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys" and the "Glory Be."

7. Meditate on 4th Mystery, saying the "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys" and the "Glory Be."

5. Meditate on 2nd Mystery, saying the "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys" and the "Glory Be."

8. Meditate on 5th Mystery, saying the "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys" and the "Glory Be."

4. Meditate on 1st Mystery, saying the "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys" and the "Glory Be."

9. Concluding prayers, "Hail Holy Queen" and "Let us Pray: O God, whose only begotten Son, etc."

3. Say three "Hail Marys" and the "Glory Be."

2. Say the "Our Father."

1. Make the Sign of the Cross, say the Apostles' Creed.

With the crucifix, one makes the Sign of the Cross and says the Apostles' Creed. On the first bead, one says the Our Father; on the small beads, Hail Marys and the Glory Be; on the fourth bead, one begins meditation on the first mystery, and recites the Our Father. The Hail Mary is recited for each of the ten small beads, concluding with the Glory Be. For the second decade, meditation is made on the second mystery while reciting the Our Father, ten Hail Marys and the Glory Be. The process continues through the fifth decade, and at the point of the medal, concluding prayers are recited.

The wording of the prayers follows:
 ● **Sign of the Cross:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

● **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; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence 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

● **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.

● **Hail Mary:** Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among 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.

● **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.

● **Concluding prayers:** (1) Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do 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. (2) V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. (3) 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 in 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.

It was that occasion which gave rise to the feast of the Holy Rosary, celebrated on the first Sunday of October.

To pray with the rosary, one meditates on "mysteries" in the lives of the Virgin Mary and Jesus while reciting certain prayers, principally the current form of the Hail Mary, developed in the late 15th century and blessed by the Council of Trent.

The mysteries are grouped into joyful, sorrowful and glorious. The joyful mysteries are: the Annunciation, the occasion when the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she is to bear Jesus; the Visitation, the visit by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, during which Elizabeth was inspired to recognize the divinity of Mary's pregnancy; the Nativity, the birth of Jesus; the Presentation, Mary's presentation of Jesus in the Temple; the Finding in the Temple, the occasion when Jesus, thought lost, was found teaching the doctors in the temple.

The sorrowful mysteries are: the Agony in the Garden, the mysterious presentiment Jesus had of his impending death; the Scourging, when Jesus was lashed after his arrest; the Crowning with Thorns, when, in mockery, Jesus was crowned with thorns; the Carrying of the Cross, when Jesus was forced to carry the instrument of his death to Calvary; the Crucifixion, when Jesus was nailed to the cross and died after three hours of agony.

The glorious mysteries are: the Resurrection, when, dead for three days, Jesus rose from the tomb; the Ascension, when Jesus rose into heaven, 40 days after his resurrection; the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the occasion when the Holy Spirit appeared as flame over the heads of the Virgin Mary and the apostles; the Assumption, when Mary was carried into heaven after her death; the Coronation, when Mary was crowned in heaven as queen of heaven and earth.

The rosary itself is a circle of 50 beads divided into groups of 10 by single larger beads. Appended to this is a shorter chain with a crucifix, a large bead, three small beads, another large bead and a medal.

