



Conversations of Faith Blog



The Holy Rosary

"Say the Beads, Pray the Gospel"

By Timothy Andries, October 2021

Introduction

1. The Holy Rosary is a centuries-old devotional that has become very recognizable in the life of the Church. Like many other devotions, the Rosary developed over the centuries. The Rosary is by design a meditative prayer, to draw us into the mystery of the life, death, and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus. The Rosary is also Marian in character with the mysteries, like the Gospel, beginning with the angel's message to Mary.

2. Like many other people, I was taught how to pray the Rosary when I was young. Over my lifetime, the Rosary has become my "Go-To" devotion. Praying the Rosary wasn't always easy.

Sometimes I got lost in the repetition or just got bored with it. There were times when I felt as though I was forcing myself to pray it.

3. My approach, admittedly, was more of a formality focused on the method over everything else. I had praying the Our Father and Hail Mary prayers down to a science. The problem was that the Rosary didn't always feel like much of a devotion. In my mind, I tended to put more emphasis on saying the Hail Mary, with the meditation in the background. So what did I do to break that cycle and see the Rosary as praying the Gospel and not just repetitive or a devotion I had to do?

4. I had to change my approach and focus on the Rosary as a whole instead of just the steps. How can just looking at the Rosary itself open up a new and fresher look at this devotional prayer? The following article is not an exhaustive study of each part and prayer, but a general overview. It's another way to re-introduce oneself to the Holy Rosary, by looking at the Rosary itself. Looking at the Rosary as a meditation on the Gospel helped to renew my devotion. I hope that this article may inspire others also.

1. The Cross, the Beginning and the End



Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Mt 16:24)

5. The Rosary begins and ends with the Cross. The Cross is the key that opens the door to our redemption and life in Christ. When you hold the Rosary in your hand, notice that you begin at the Cross and go full circle, returning to the Cross. Every event in Jesus's life, from His Annunciation to the Passion, was directed to the Cross. The Cross was His mission and purpose for us. In the life of the Church, the People of God, the Cross is our beginning and end.

6. To put it another way, Our Divine Lord went to the Cross to save and redeem humanity. We on the other hand proceed from the redemption of the Cross. Our lives are taken up within the mystery of the Life of Christ. The mystery of the Cross reflects the life He had and the life we are called to. Our Crosses, like Our Lord's, are a mixture of Joy, Light, Sorrow, and Glory.

7. When you hold the Rosary in your hand, focus on the Cross. The Cross brings us to Christ, who in turn gives us the Gospel. The crucifix is connected by a circular chain with beads. The mysteries are the revelation of the Eternal Word of God. The beads are a kind of "Beaded Gospel", announcing to the heart, mind, and soul the call to repentance and holiness.

8. Next we take a look at the body of the Rosary. In a future article, we can take a "bead-by bead" look at praying the Rosary. For the time being, lest just look at the Rosary. There are now 4 sets of mysteries, Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious. This cycle of mysteries is the ongoing cycle that plays out in our lives.

II. The Rosary Chain – Compendium of the Gospel



"By its nature, the recitation of the Rosary helps the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life..." (St Pope John Paul II, Rosarium Virginis Mariae, #12)

9. Sometimes for me, trying to say the Rosary was like putting a puzzle together. I had the box with the picture on it, so I knew what it was supposed to look like. I had my little prayer book with meditations, so I had all the pieces. I knew the words to all the prayers and how to use a

Rosary. But sometimes the difficulty was getting the heart and mind past the litany of Hail Mary prayers. I could follow the mysteries, but how did the pieces fit together to make a full picture?

10. If you could picture the Rosary like buying a house. Before taking measurements for furniture, picking out flooring and carpet samples, let's just walk around the house first. The Cross as I mentioned before is the key that opens the door to that house. Looking at the chain of beads, the Rosary is the house. The chain of beads represents the drama of our redemption that we are invited to enter. We are invited to enter into the mystery of Jesus Christ.

11. Each of the mysteries can be compared to the four Gospels. The Gospels present us with Jesus as the Announced Messiah, the God-Man, the Sacrificial Lamb, and the Life in the Spirit. The four Gospels correspond to the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries. The life we are called to, the life that He led was one of joy, sorrow, light, and in the end glory. When we pray the beads and their cycle of prayers, we enter the cycle of the Christian life with its ups and downs.

12. Each Our Father is an address to God blessing His name asking Him to establish His will on earth. The Father's will, His Kingdom that we must enter is revealed in the mysteries to be meditated on. The succeeding Hail Mary prayers follow the words of the Archangel Gabriel, announcing or proclaiming the mystery of Christ. The Hail Mary prayer is an invitation to enter into the joy, sorrow, light, and glory that is the life of Jesus Christ.

III. Conclusion

13. The Rosary, a chain of beads with a Cross is a kind of spiritual keychain. It is to be chained or wrapped around our hearts and minds so that we can enter the mystery of Christ. It's also the key that opens the door for Our Lord to enter our own lives. The Rosary will and does prove beneficial when we pray it as a meditation on the Gospel. We are called to unite our response to God with Holy Mary's yes. In a future article, I'll walk through each mystery in greater depth. So as we walk the "beaded path" with Rosary in hand, meditate on these moments in Jesus' life, so that we may recognize them in our own. I'd like to close by mentioning that there are different ways of praying the Rosary. Each person has to find the method that works for them.

14. It takes practice, but when done in faith, hope and charity the grace of Our Lord will help you get past the method and focus more on the good news of the Gospel.

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you, blessed are you 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

The Month of October, dedicated to the Holy Rosary



“With the Rosary, the Christian people sit at the school of Mary and are led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.” (Rosarium Virginis Mariae, #1, St Pope John Paul II, 2002)

“All men and women, moreover, are filled with the hope and confidence that petitions which might be received with less favor from the lips of unworthy men, God will accept when they are recommended by the most Holy Mother and will grant with all favors.” (Octobri Mense, #5, Leo XIII, 1891)