

How to Pray the Rosary

A printable companion with the prayer order, twenty mysteries and traditional English prayers.

The prayer order

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and pray the Apostles' Creed on the crucifix.
2. Pray the Our Father on the first large bead. Pray one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads, traditionally for faith, hope and charity. Then pray the Glory Be.
3. Announce the first mystery. Pause to picture the event or read its Scripture reference. Pray the Our Father.
4. Pray ten Hail Marys while meditating on that mystery. This group of ten is a decade.
5. Pray the Glory Be. Many Catholics add the Fatima Prayer.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 for the second, third, fourth and fifth mysteries of the same set.
7. Conclude with the Hail Holy Queen and closing prayer, then make the Sign of the Cross.

The usual weekly pattern

Monday: Joyful • Tuesday: Sorrowful • Wednesday: Glorious
Thursday: Luminous • Friday: Sorrowful • Saturday: Joyful
Sunday: Glorious

This pattern is customary, not obligatory. Some families use Joyful mysteries on Advent and Christmas Sundays, and Sorrowful mysteries on Lenten Sundays.

Begin gently

One decade is a good beginning. Pause over the mystery, return gently when distracted, and continue without restarting because you lost count.

Online guide: catholic-repository.org/prayers/how-to-pray-the-rosary/

The Twenty Mysteries

Joyful Mysteries

1. The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)
2. The Visitation (Luke 1:39-56)
3. The Nativity (Luke 2:1-20)
4. The Presentation (Luke 2:22-38)
5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

Sorrowful Mysteries

1. The Agony in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-46)
2. The Scourging at the Pillar (John 19:1)
3. The Crowning with Thorns (John 19:2-3)
4. The Carrying of the Cross (John 19:16-17)
5. The Crucifixion (John 19:18-30)

Glorious Mysteries

1. The Resurrection (John 20:1-18)
2. The Ascension (Acts 1:6-11)
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13)
4. The Assumption of Mary (Catholic teaching; CCC 966)
5. The Coronation of Mary (Catholic teaching; CCC 966; compare Revelation 12:1)

Luminous Mysteries

1. The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)
2. The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15)
4. The Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)
5. The Institution of the Eucharist (Luke 22:14-20)

The Assumption and Coronation express Catholic teaching (CCC 966); the Bible does not narrate these events directly. Scripture comparisons are not direct accounts.

The Rosary Prayers

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 rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits 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.

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.

Fatima Prayer (customary after each decade)

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.

Concluding the Rosary

Hail Holy Queen

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. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Closing Prayer

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.

Sources

USCCB: How to Pray the Rosary

St John Paul II: *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, sections 19-21 and 38

Traditional devotional prayer forms; wording varies among prayer books. This guide does not reproduce the current Roman Missal. Prepared by Catholic Repository, 12 September 2026.