

How to pray the Rosary

The Rosary is typically recited with the aid of a set of beads. As each prayer is said the individual bead is passed through the fingers. The use of the beads is a useful counting mechanism but they also hold a certain symbolic value. A crucifix often adjoins the beads and as we pray progressively we depart from and return to the figure of Christ. The beads constitute a pathway along which we are invited to contemplate the different mysteries.

The Rosary proper comprises 20 decades that correspond to the 20 mysteries. Opening and Concluding Prayers may vary slightly depending on the part of the world you are in but the basic structure remains constant. Below is reproduced a suggested format for the praying of the Holy Rosary. See Rosary Prayers to familiarise yourself with the text of the different prayers:

1. Make the Sign of the Cross™
2. Recite the Opening Prayers™
3. Holding the Crucifix say the Apostles' Creed™
4. On the first bead say the Our Father™
5. Pray one Hail Mary™ on each of the next three beads for an increase in the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity
6. On the next bead pray the Glory Be™
7. Announce the first mystery. (You may wish to pause and read an appropriate portion of Scripture)
8. Recite an Our Father™ on the large bead
9. Pray a Hail Mary™ on each of the adjacent ten small beads while meditating on the mystery
10. Conclude the mystery with the Glory Be™ followed by the Fatima Prayer™
11. Continue the sequence with the next mystery by repeating steps seven to ten
12. At the end of the last decade recite the Concluding Prayers
13. It is a worthy practice to pray one Our Father™, one Hail Mary™ and one Glory Be™ for the intentions of the Holy Father. When prayed before the Blessed Sacrament a plenary indulgence may be gained under the usual conditions
14. Make the Sign of the Cross™

The 20 mysteries of the Rosary are subdivided into 4 equal groups of Mysteries: the Joyful; the Luminous; the Sorrowful; and the Glorious. While all 20 mysteries may be recited on any single occasion it is common to pray one particular group (five decades) each day.

Traditional Sequence

Using the traditional 15 decades of the Rosary the suggested allocation of mysteries to days is as follows:

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

Revised Sequence

Incorporating the new Mysteries of Light (Luminous) as suggested by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae involves modifying the format in the following way:

Monday: Joyful
 Tuesday: Sorrowful

Wednesday: Glorious
Thursday: Light
Friday: Sorrowful
Saturday: Joyful
Sunday: Glorious