

The Holy Rosary

Objective:

We, as Catholics, know and understand that the Mass is the most powerful prayer since Jesus commanded us to “do this in memory of me”. As Vatican II stated, the Holy Eucharist is the “Source, Center, and Summit of our Faith.” Of the numerous Catholic prayers and devotions, the Holy Rosary is arguably the second most powerful prayer.

History and Origin of the Rosary: before Christianity, the ancient Hebrews used to pray the 150 Psalms and used to tie 150 knots to represent all of the Psalms in the Bible. The origin of the Rosary is rooted in the 13th Century, when Saint Dominic de Guzman was sadly praying to the Blessed Mother about his lack of progress in his preaching to the Albigensians who were a growing group of heretics in France at that time. The Albigensians denounced the Incarnation and the dignity of human life and even praised suicide.

In response to Saint Dominic’s lamentations, the Blessed Mother appeared to him and taught him to pray the Holy Rosary to which she referred as “heavenly dew” which would bring an “abundant harvest” and that it did for St Dominic. In subsequent apparitions (ie, Lourdes and Fatima), our Blessed Mother has strongly encouraged us to pray the Rosary. Starting with Pope Urban IV, numerous Popes throughout the centuries have strongly endorsed the Holy Rosary including Pope John Paul II who wrote an encyclical on the Rosary. In fact, it was Pope John Paul II, a staunch advocate of the Rosary, who added the Luminous Mysteries to the traditional Joyful, Glorious and Sorrowful mysteries.

Song Suggestion: Immaculate Mary (Blue 222, Red 783)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Luke 1: 28

(what the Angel Gabriel said to Mary at the Annunciation)

And he came to her and said, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you.”

Luke 1: 42

(how Elizabeth greeted Mary at the Visitation)

And she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

Catechism 2679

Mary is the perfect *Orans* (pray-er), a figure of the Church. When we pray to her, we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men. Like the beloved disciple we welcome Jesus' mother into our homes,³⁹ for she has become the mother of all the living. We can pray with and to her. The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope.⁴⁰

Saint: St. Dominic

According to legend, St. Dominic received the Rosary during a period of prayer at the abbey in Prouille. This allegedly took place in 1214 during an apparition of the Virgin Mary. This legend is a matter of some dispute among historians, but while similar devotions existed before this time, there is no record of the Marian rosary in this form before. Also, the Marian Rosary became popular following this event, suggesting the legend may be true.

Vignette: –

“Whatever you do, do not be like a certain pious but stubborn lady in Rome, so often mentioned when speaking about the Rosary. She was so devout and so fervent that she put to shame by her holy life even the strictest religious in the Church. Having decided to ask Saint Dominic’s advice about her spiritual life, she asked him to hear her confession.

For penance he gave her one whole Rosary to say and advised her to say it every day. She said that she had no time to say it, excusing herself on the grounds that she made the Stations of Rome every day, that she wore sackcloth and a hair shirt, that she carried out so many other penances and fasted so much.

Saint Dominic urged her repeatedly to take his advice and say the Rosary, but she would not hear of it. She left the confessional, horrified at the tactics of this new spiritual director who had tried so hard to persuade her to take on a devotion that was not at all to her liking.

Later on, when she was in prayer, she fell into ecstasy and had a vision of her soul appearing before Our Lord's Judgment Seat.

Saint Michael put all her penances and other prayers onto one tray of the scales and all her sins and imperfections onto the other tray. The tray of her good works was greatly outweighed by the tray with her sins and imperfections.

Filled with terror she cried for mercy, imploring the Blessed Virgin Mary's help. Her gracious Advocate took the one and only Rosary that she had said for her penance and dropped it onto the tray of her good works.

This one Rosary was so heavy that it weighed more than all her sins as well as all her good works. Our Lady then reproved her for refusing to follow the counsel of her servant Dominic and for not saying the Rosary every day.

As soon as she came to, she rushed and threw herself at Saint Dominic's feet, and told him all that had happened. She begged his forgiveness for her unbelief and promised to say the Rosary faithfully every day. By this means she arose to Christian perfection and finally to the glory of everlasting life.

You who are people of prayer— learn from this how tremendous is the power, the value and the importance of this devotion of the Most Holy Rosary when it is said together with meditation on the mysteries."

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

If you meditate on Sacred Scripture as you pray the Rosary, why is this NOT boring?

What opportunities do you have to pray the Rosary in your busy schedule?

What makes the Rosary such a powerful prayer?

Do you have opportunities to pray the Rosary with your Family? If so, when?

Action Plan:

1. Pick a day of the week and a time to say the rosary, calmly and with the intent to have The Holy Mother smile at how devoutly you have said the Rosary. Not a ten-minute lightning round version.
2. Read something about the Rosary even google miracle stories about the Rosary.

Additonal Resources

1. *The Secrets of the Rosary* by Saint Louis De Montfort
2. *Fatima A Message More Urgent than Ever* by Luiz Sergio Solimeo
3. *True Devotion to Mary* by Saint Louis De Montfort

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