

The SEVEN DAY BIBLE ROSARY

Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION

1. How *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* developed

In the mid-1960s a newspaper columnist asked a Catholic celebrity if she still prayed the Rosary. She replied that she didn't because she didn't want to bore God. When I read this, my first thought was that she was confused about the difference between God and herself. My second reaction was that she was pointing to problems that many of us have experienced—boredom and distractions. It occurred to me that an expanded version of the Rosary might help some of us to overcome these difficulties.

When praying the rosary in the usual way, not infrequently my mind wanders all over the place. Having a verse of Sacred Scripture before each Hail Mary does not completely eliminate my distractions, but it certainly helps me to focus my mind and imagination on the subject of the mystery. If you are an easily distracted soul like myself, you may find it helpful too.

In the traditional manner of praying the Rosary, the same mystery is repeated two or three times per week. I find that it is easier to think or meditate about a particular mystery if I don't repeat the same meditation quite as often. *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* offers eight sets of meditations, one for each day of the week plus an alternate.

I was also concerned that the traditional form omits the entire public life of Jesus. In October 2002, Pope John Paul II expressed the same concern in his apostolic letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (n. 19). After the traditional fifth Joyful mystery of the finding of Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve, the next traditional meditation is on the agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemani. The gospels' emphasis on his public life is not retained in the traditional 15-decade form of the rosary. According to Pope John Paul II, the rosary "is at heart a Christocentric prayer" and can be called a "compendium" or concise summary of the gospel (n. 2). *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* provides a weekly review of certain events and themes of the gospel.

2. Possible outcomes

Our Lady of Fatima never told us that we had to enjoy praying the rosary, and many people who do not really enjoy praying the rosary continue to do so simply because Our Lady told us that if we want peace, we must pray the rosary. On the other hand, if various techniques can help you or me to pray the rosary with fewer distractions and greater devotion, then let us use them.

A personal hope of mine is that some parents will find this form of the rosary helpful in praying the family rosary with their children. It is not uncommon for outspoken children to say they think it's boring to say the rosary. As indicated previously, some adults have the same reaction. Pope John Paul II has given formal recognition to this problem. "If this repetition [of the Hail Marys] is considered superficially, there could be a temptation to see the Rosary as a dry and boring exercise" (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, n. 26). In response, he has suggested additional meditations on the public life of Jesus and has given us suggestions on how to pray the rosary with greater thoughtfulness. Perhaps the combination of a wider series of meditations, the scripture verses, and a variety of ways to pray *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* will prove helpful to children as well as to adults.

It's also possible that weekly meditation on the importance of priests and their vocation to administer the sacraments and to preach the Word of the Lord may stimulate vocations.

Perhaps weekly meditation of the permanence of marriage may have beneficial long-term effects on Christian married couples.

I make no claim that this form of praying the rosary is “better” than the usual method. It is more complete because it provides more of the events in the life of our Lord for meditation. I can say only that some people find it helpful.

3. A short history of the rosary

The currently "traditional" method of praying the rosary has not always been traditional. In fact, *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* is closer to the way the rosary was prayed in former centuries than the current “traditional” rosary.

The earliest rosary was an outgrowth of the monastic practice of praying the 150 psalms weekly. Around the beginning of the ninth century, the laity began praying 150 Our Fathers as a substitute for the monks’ Psalter, and soon they were using strings with 150 or 50 knots or pieces of wood.

The practice of saying Hail Marys began to develop in the eleventh century. However, for perhaps two hundred years, only the Angelic salutation, the first part of the Hail Mary, was said. It was not until about the middle of the thirteenth century that the present form of the Hail Mary came into common use. "It is certain that in the course of the twelfth century and before the birth of St. Dominic (1170-1221), the practice of reciting 50 or 150 Ave Marias had become generally familiar" (Andrew J. Shipman, “The Rosary,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al., New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1912, 185).

The current practice of dividing the Hail Marys into decades—groups of ten plus an Our Father and a Glory Be—was not yet developed when St. Dominic began promoting the rosary to defeat the Albigensian heresy in the thirteenth century. This was a heresy that taught that all material things including the human body were created by an evil spirit and were therefore evil. The Albigensians denied that Christ took on our full human nature with a genuine body, and that was a denial of the Incarnation. “Probably what St. Dominic did was this: at the command of the Blessed Virgin he urged the people to recite often and fervently the salutation which the Archangel Gabriel uttered to Mary” (Isidore O’Brien, O.F.M., *The Drama of the Rosary*, Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1948, 5).

This amounted to a frequent and fervent act of faith in the reality of the Incarnation—the second Person of the Blessed Trinity taking on our full human nature, and in the presence of the people's proclamation of faith, the Albigensian heresy withered away.

Perhaps because of the promotion of this prayer by St. Dominic, a variety of laymen's Psalters developed so that by the end of the thirteenth century there were four different forms: “the 150 Our Fathers, the 150 Angelic Salutations, the 150 praises of Jesus, and the 150 praises of Mary” (*Scriptural Rosary*, Chicago: Scriptural Rosary Center, 1961, 11).

During the fourteenth century, “chains of 50, 100, or 150 phrases . . . were attached to the recitation of the Aves, one phrase to each Ave” (W. A. Hinnebusch, “Rosary,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, New York: McGraw Hill, 1967, 669).

In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the division into decades and the combination of an Our Father and ten Hail Marys occurred for the first time (Hinnebusch, 669).

The consolidation to the present tradition began in the late fifteenth century. “In 1483, a Rosary book written by a Dominican, *Our Dear Lady’s Psalter*, cut down the 150 points [of

meditation] to 15 all of which, except for the last 2, corresponded to the present mysteries. The Coronation was combined with the Assumption, and the Last Judgment was the 15th mystery” (Hinnebusch, 669). *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* follows this 15th century practice for the Glorious mysteries.

The first book to use the term “mysteries” to refer to the Rosary meditations was written by a Dominican in 1521 and retained the old series of 150 thoughts or meditations (Hinnebusch, 669), but “during the 16th century the Rosary of 15 mysteries gradually prevailed” (Hinnebusch, 669).

The decline of the “150 special thoughts” rosary was partially caused by technology. About the beginning of the 16th century, the printing press made it possible to reproduce woodcuts with relative ease, but economics made it more attractive to reproduce just one picture for each decade rather than one for each bead—15 instead of 150. That set the style for the contemporary tradition of the fifteen “traditional” mysteries of the rosary.

In the twentieth century there has been a revival of the medieval form of the rosary with several publications of special thoughts for each Hail Mary. In 1961 *the Scriptural Rosary* popularized the idea of reciting a verse of Sacred Scripture before each Hail Mary (*Scriptural Rosary*, 11).

In 1973, the National Council of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter on Mary in which they noted the following: “Besides the precise rosary pattern long known to Catholics, we can freely experiment. New sets of mysteries are possible. We have customarily gone from the childhood of Jesus to his Passion, bypassing the whole public life. There is rich matter here for rosary meditation, such as the wedding feast of Cana and incidents from the public life where Mary's presence and Mary's name serve as occasions for her Son to give us a lesson in discipleship: ‘Still more blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it’ (Luke 11:28)” (*Behold Your Mother—Woman of Faith: A Pastoral Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Washington: NCCB, 1973, n. 97). The revised version of *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* with the Luminous Mysteries now includes the miracle at Cana.

Pope John Paul II has also promoted the idea of an expanded rosary. “I believe... that to bring out fully the Christological depth of the Rosary it would be suitable to make an addition to the traditional pattern which, while left to the freedom of individuals and communities, could broaden it to include *the mysteries of Christ's public ministry between his Baptism and his Passion...*” (n. 19, italics in original).

He then introduced the Luminous Mysteries (or Mysteries of Light) in this way: “Consequently, for the Rosary to become more fully a ‘compendium of the Gospel,’ it is fitting to add...a meditation on certain particularly significant moments in his public ministry (*the mysteries of light*). This addition of these new mysteries, without prejudice to any essential aspect of the prayer's traditional format, is meant to give it fresh life and to enkindle renewed interest in the Rosary's place within Christian spirituality as a true doorway to the depths of the Heart of Christ, ocean of joy and light, of suffering and of glory” (n.19).

Thus, *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* is not a radical or unapproved form of praying the rosary. It combines elements from the medieval forms, from the traditional form of recent centuries, from the recent practice of the scriptural rosary, and the gift from Pope John Paul II—the Luminous Mysteries. To use the words of Pope John Paul II, it is an effort to make “the Rosary to become more fully a ‘compendium of the Gospel’” and “to give it fresh life and to enkindle renewed interest in the Rosary's place within Christian spirituality” (n.19).

4. What's in *The Seven Day Bible Rosary*?

1) The first thing you will notice is that *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* has eight sets of mysteries. There is some overlap between the Luminous mysteries and the Public Life and Last Supper mysteries since the latter two date back to the 1993 edition of this booklet. I retained the Last Supper mysteries because there is so much richness to that central event in the life of Christ. I suggest the following sequence, but you are free to make your own schedule. You need to make a choice on Tuesday or Wednesday or pray a second rosary.

Monday: The Preparation

Tuesday: The Luminous Mysteries or the Public Life

Wednesday: The Public Life or the Parables

Thursday: The Last Supper

Friday: The Passion and Death

Saturday: The Church

Sunday: The Glorious Mysteries.

2) Three sets of mysteries incorporate the three traditional sets of mysteries but with some slight changes. The **Mysteries of the Preparation** correspond to the Joyful Mysteries, and the differences are these: 1) The name is changed to reflect the reality that these events were the preparation for the public life of Jesus. 2) The Presentation and the Finding in the Temple have been combined since they both illustrate a similar lesson in discipleship, namely, religious obedience. 3) A meditation on John the Baptist has been added to reflect this final step in the divine preparation for the public preaching and teaching of Jesus.

The **Mysteries of the Passion and Death** correspond to the Sorrowful Mysteries. Two of the traditional mysteries—the Scourging and the Crowning with Thorns—have been combined since they are so closely related. Attention is drawn to the trials and witness of Jesus by the addition of “Jesus bears witness to the truth of his divinity and is condemned to die.”

The **Glorious Mysteries** have retained the same name. The traditional mysteries of the Assumption and the Coronation have been combined into one meditation because they are so closely related. Attention is focused on the Second Coming and Last Judgment by the addition of “Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.”

The other five sets are practically self-explanatory from their names. The **Luminous mysteries** concentrate on five special events in the public ministry of Jesus. The **Public Life mysteries** focus on five more events or broad themes in the life and teaching of our Lord. The **Parables** also illustrate important themes in the public teaching of Jesus.

The Mass ought to be the high point in the weekly life of a good Catholic. Thus it is fitting to meditate regularly on the events of the **Last Supper**, realities that we celebrate at each Mass, including the Lord's special prayer for unity.

Because the **Church** itself is so important in the life of an active Catholic, it seems prudent to meditate weekly on some of the things Jesus has done for his Church and the vocations He has created.

If you pray two or three five-decade rosaries a day, you might want to use the meditations on the Last Supper and the Church as your regular second or third rosaries of the day. You might also use these thoughts on Holy Thursday and when you make a Holy Hour.

3) Each mystery is preceded by a short meditation and then has a verse from Sacred Scripture (with a few exceptions) before each Hail Mary.

4) The translation is mixed. I wanted a fairly literal translation but also one that would be good for oral reading in the Catholic home. I generally followed the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) version of 1941 that is in the public domain and familiar to many Catholics. However, where the translation of the Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition (RSVCE) of 1965 was, in my opinion, more clear, I used it. Moreover, in many cases, I made changes to get away from archaic words or usages or to express the thought more briefly or in language that better conveyed the thought to the reader of today. If you are concerned about which translation is used for any particular verse, you will have to check the sources, and you will find that the CCD and RSV translations are identical in some cases. Obviously, in many cases, it was necessary to abbreviate the scriptural accounts in order to convey the overall lesson or event within the space of ten verses. References are given at the end of each mystery so you can read the complete account in your own Bible. Words in brackets [such as this] are words I inserted, usually to clarify certain transitions of place, time or speaker.

5) **Quotation marks.** You will see that some quotation verses end with quotation marks and others do not. When a quotation verse does **not** end with quotation marks, it means that the next verse is a continuation of the same text. When a verse ends with a quotation mark and the next verse begins with a quotation mark, it means that the second verse is not a direct continuation of the previous one.

Acknowledgement is gratefully given to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. for permission to use verses from the Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition, copyrighted 1952, 1965 and 1966. I want to extend many thanks also to a devoted disciple of Christ through our Lady of the Rosary. He encouraged me to produce a second edition, offered many helpful suggestions, and donated the first printing.

5. How to pray *The Seven Day Bible Rosary*

Pope John Paul II offers several suggestions to improve the way we pray the Rosary.

Introduction. He notes that “in different parts of the Church, there are many ways to introduce the Rosary. In some place, it is customary to begin with the opening words of Psalm 70, ‘O God, come to my assistance, O Lord, make haste to help me.’ ...In other places, the Rosary begins with the recitation of the Creed...” (n. 37).

Announce each mystery. “Announcing each mystery...is...to open up a scenario on which to focus our attention” (n. 29).

Use the Bible. “In order to supply a Biblical foundation and greater depth to our meditation, it is helpful to follow the announcement of the mystery with *the proclamation of a related Biblical passage*, long or short, depending on the circumstances... It is not a matter of recalling information but of *allowing God to speak*” (n. 30).

Use silence. “*Listening and meditation are nourished by silence.* After the announcement of the mystery and the proclamation of the word, it is fitting to pause and focus one’s attention for a suitable period of time on the mystery concerned, before moving into vocal prayer” (n. 31).

Realize what you are saying when you pray the Our Father, the Hail Marys, and the Gloria (n. 32-34).

Make specific intentions for each mystery. “...the contemplation of the mysteries could better express their full spiritual fruitfulness if an effort were made to conclude each mystery with a prayer for the fruits specific to that particular mystery” (n. 35). I think the same can be said about starting each mystery with such a prayer.

Understand the symbolism of the Rosary beads. They “converge upon the Crucifix, which both opens and closes the unfolding sequence of prayer. The life and prayer of believers is centered upon Christ” (n. 36).

Conclusion. The Holy Father suggests several prayers to conclude the Rosary. “The Rosary is then ended with a prayer for the intentions of the Pope, as if to expand the vision of the one praying to embrace all the needs of the Church” (n. 37). He also suggests praying the *Salve Regina* (Hail Holy Queen) and to pray that by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary we may come to “imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise” (n. 35). (See “The Prayers of the Rosary.”)

Allow me to make several more suggestions for praying *The Seven Day Bible Rosary*, especially in your family setting.

Variety. Not only children but also some adults experience restlessness with the rosary, so you may find it helpful to introduce a certain amount variety into your family rosary. For example, one week you may want to read everything. The next week you might omit the meditations. Another week you may want to spend a few minutes discussing one mystery, read the verses for just that one mystery, and announce only the title, an intention, and a selected Bible verse for the others.

However you choose to use *The Seven Day Bible Rosary*, I suggest that you always announce the mystery, read at least one key Bible verse, and state the intention. This combination will help to keep your mind and heart engaged.

Our Lady’s request. I suggest that you always start your rosary by specifically praying it in response to Mary’s request at Fatima. For example:

“Dear Blessed Mother, we pray our rosary today for world peace, for the conversion of Russia and for the conversion of sinners throughout the world as at Fatima you asked us to pray.”

In the family rosary setting, that makes it clear to everyone why you are praying the rosary as a family: it’s not your idea; it’s our Lady’s.

Prayer intentions. I suggest making several other intentions that are of universal importance—a stop to abortion, a rebirth of chastity, and authentic reform and renewal within the Church. Perhaps you will want to pray also for other large-scale intentions such as the conversion of Islam, the conversion of the Jews, peace in the Holy Land and the rest of the Middle East, the missionary work of the Church, the conversion of those who oppose the Church, and the conversion of the nation in which you live. Then mention your special family intentions and invite each family member to join in—perhaps with at least one prayer of thanksgiving and one of petition.

* * *

May you find *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* helpful in your personal fulfillment of our Lady's request that we pray the rosary every day. I hope that if you use *The Seven Day Bible Rosary* as your family rosary, you will find it helpful for aiding your children to walk more closely with the Lord, for that is the ultimate purpose of all Marian devotion—to Jesus through Mary.

--John F. Kippley

How to use rosary beads

The traditional rosary beads are a set of five groups of ten beads, called a decade, with a single, usually larger, bead between each decade. Where the decades are joined, there is another chain of five beads and a crucifix.

At the crucifix, pray the Apostles' Creed.
At the first bead, pray the Our Father.
At the set of three beads, pray three Hail Marys.
At the last single bead, pray the Glory Be.

Suggestion: Pray the Our Father, the three Hail Marys and the Glory Be for the intention of the Holy Father this month and for an increase in faith, hope and love.

At the decades, pray the Our Father and the first Hail Mary on the first bead, then a Hail Mary on each of the nine remaining beads, and conclude with the Glory Be on the single bead between the decades.

Many Catholics recite the Fatima prayer after the Glory Be.

THE PRAYERS OF THE ROSARY

Introductory intentions

The Apostles' Creed

(This version uses the new practice of “descended to the dead” instead of “descended into hell” because we all know that the place or state to which Jesus went was not the place of eternal punishment.)

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 to the dead; 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 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.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

The 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.

The 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.

The Fatima Prayer

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of thy mercy.

CUSTOMARY CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Salve Regina (Hail Holy Queen)

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, hail, 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 vale 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.

Let us pray: O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of everlasting life, grant, we beseech You, 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. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Conclusion

Queen of the most holy rosary, *Pray for us.*

Queen of Apostles, *Pray for us.*

Our Lady of Fatima, *Pray for us.*

Our Lady of Guadalupe, *Pray for us.*

Queen of Peace, *Pray for us.*

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