

PRAYING THE ROSARY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

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A small but dedicated group of your fellow parishioners meets by the Lady Shrine in the back of the church at 9:30 AM on the first Saturday of the month to pray the Rosary. What is that about?

The purpose of the Rosary is to help keep in memory certain principal events or mysteries in the history of our salvation, and to thank and praise God for them. There are twenty mysteries reflected upon in the Rosary, and these are divided into the five Joyful Mysteries, five Luminous Mysteries, five Sorrowful Mysteries, and five Glorious Mysteries.

The word Rosary comes from a Latin word meaning Crown of roses or Garland of roses. The name refers to the string of beads that the suppliant uses to count the prayers (the beads were originally made from crushed rose petals) and to the devotion that is recited. The devotion was standardized in the 16th century, though it is much older, and is probably most associated with Roman Catholicism because of the references to Mary's part in the history of our salvation, but properly understood, it is used also by many Catholic-minded Anglicans.

The prayers of the Rosary often involve the use of Picture texts similar to *Lectio Divina*, which assist meditation. Those of us who use this devotion are happy to welcome newcomers and to offer assistance and instruction in the praying of the Rosary.