

Pope John Paul II *and the* Prayer *of the* Rosary



This heroic Pope told the world that the Rosary was his favorite prayer, one of "great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness".

His beautiful Apostolic Letter of October 16th, 2002 (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*) reflected his conviction that the faithful receive abundant graces through the praying of the Rosary – "as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer." He knew that the Rosary helps us "to be conformed evermore closely to Christ until we attain true holiness".

His Letter recalls that the Rosary is "the fruit of centuries of experience" and a proven help for countless saints; yet it remains a method of prayer, which serves as a means to an end and cannot become an end in itself. As a method, he teaches that the Rosary can be improved by the introduction of the Luminous mysteries, citing the Catechism of the Catholic Church which places great emphasis on the mysteries of Christ: "Everything in the life of Jesus is a sign of His Mystery".

Thus the existing 15 mysteries of the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious "cycles of meditation" now are joined by 5 Luminous mysteries, selected by the Pope from the many events in the public life of Jesus.

"I look to all of you, brothers and sisters of every state of life, to you, Christian families, to you, the sick and elderly, and to you, young people: confidently take up the Rosary once again. Rediscover the Rosary in the light of Scripture, in harmony with the Liturgy, and in the context of your daily lives."

"May this appeal of mine not go unheard!"

The First Luminous Mystery The Baptism of the Lord

["Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan River."] Mat 3: 13-17

The Second Luminous Mystery The Wedding Feast at Cana

["Christ changes water into wine at Mary's request."] Joh 4: 46-54

The Third Luminous Mystery The Proclamation of the Kingdom

["Preach and believe in the Gospel. Jesus announces the coming of the Kingdom and invites conversion."] Mat 10: 1, 20-23

The Fourth Luminous Mystery The Transfiguration

["This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."] Mat 17: 14

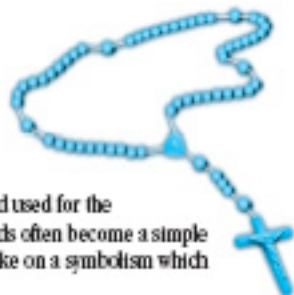
The Fifth Luminous Mystery The Institution of the Eucharist

["At the Last Supper, Christ changes bread and wine into His Body and Blood."] Mat 26: 17-31

Our Lady's Rosary Crusade™

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The Rosary Beads



Quoting Pope John Paul II (from *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*), "the traditional aid used for the recitation of the Rosary is the set of beads. At the most superficial level, the beads often become a simple counting mechanism to mark the succession of *Hot Marys*. Yet they can also take on a symbolism which can give added depth to contemplation."

The distinctive "blue" rosaries of Our Lady's Rosary Crusade have gone to more than 7 million people in many parts of the world since 1982. The goal of this "Crusade" has been to give a rosary to everyone who has asked for one, wherever he or she may live. Because low-cost rosaries of satisfactory quality then were not available, the familiar "blue" rosaries were developed, with plastic crucifix, medallion, and beads formed onto a flexible cord.

Again quoting Pope John Paul II, "Here the first thing to note is the way *the beads converge upon the Crucifix*, which both opens and closes the unfolding sequence of prayer. The life and prayer of believers is centered upon Christ. Everything begins from Him, everything leads toward Him, everything, through Him, in the Holy Spirit, attains to the Father."

The "blue" rosary beads of Our Lady's Rosary Crusade have some unique and symbolic features, beginning with the clear, almost stark printing on the back of each crucifix; "Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pray For Us." That prayer came from the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1917 at Fatima, Portugal, when she said "God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart."

Those who pray the rosary with some regularity find themselves keeping extra beads handy in pockets or purses, so that they are always available, and thus the symbolic power of the beads is learned as a matter of personal experience. When Mother Teresa was alive and seen frequently in the media, she always seemed to have a rosary in her hand, emphasizing to us that the rosary can be said virtually anytime, anywhere – on a

commuter train, relaxing after lunch, and so on.

Even one decade is better than none, provided that it is accompanied by meditation on one of the twenty mysteries.

Another feature of the "blue" rosary beads, one that results from an artifact of the method of manufacture, is the temporary presence of "thorns"

on the garland of roses that is the rosary. These "thorns" are

tiny but noticeable bits of plastic left at the place where the hot plastic entered the cool mold. After a few uses of these beads in saying the rosary prayers, the "thorns" disappear. Until they are gone, they serve as a reminder of the need for repentance and reparation along with prayer, another of the Fatima messages.

The rosary beads are an unmistakable visible symbol of hope and love for all who feel overwhelmed by the misery of the world. Just holding the rosary – even out of sight in a pocket or a purse – is a sure aid for anyone in a time of temptation or stress.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Pray for Us

