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## Mary: Our Blessed Mother





## The Rosary: A Contemplative Prayer By John McNally

The Rosary is a rich and powerful prayer. Many books, encyclicals and apostolic letters have been written about the Rosary. This brief article will just highlight a few aspects of this highly esteemed prayer, namely: components of the Rosary, excerpts from an apostolic letter of Pope Saint John Paul II which describe in more detail the opportunities for contemplation and transformation via the praying of the Rosary.

The praying of the Rosary involves the praying of vocal prayers and the opportunity to meditate on the mysteries in the Life of Christ. The 20 mysteries of the Rosary are events that we can understand to a certain extent by prayer and our experience, but they can never be fully grasped or understood because they have divine depth. In addition to the praying of vocal prayers and meditation, the Rosary also offers opportunities for contemplation and our transformation. Many books and guides have been written about contemplative prayer, but just to highlight two aspects: (1) The entrance into contemplative prayer is by God's initiative. Whether contemplation occurs and when it starts and when it ends is determined by God. We can co-operate, but we can not determine the duration of contemplative prayer. (2) The dynamics of contemplative prayer are different in a group prayer setting vs. an individual prayer setting. In a group prayer setting, typically, the vocal prayers proceed in the planned sequence and at the planned pace, independent of contemplative activity. In an individual prayer setting, contemplative prayer can take priority over vocal prayer and the overall duration of prayer can change based on contemplative activity.

With respect to transformation, it is important to note that all desired Christian transformation is of a specific nature, namely, greater conformity to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29) and, thereby, greater capacity to live the Great Commandment of love of God and love of neighbor. Paradoxically, greater

conformity to the image of Jesus Christ is the path to true freedom. These opportunities for contemplation and transformation are described in greater detail by Pope Saint John Paul II in his apostolic letter "On the Most Holy Rosary."

### Excerpts from "On The Most Holy Rosary,"

#### Apostolic Letter of Saint John Paul II in 2002

- \*To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ.
- \*Against the background of the words Ave Maria the principal events of the life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul.
- \*The Rosary belongs among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation. Developed in the West, it is a typically meditative prayer, corresponding in some way to the "prayer of the heart" or "Jesus prayer" which took root in the soil of the Christian East. (Jesus prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.) (Divine mercy chaplet: Jesus, I trust in You.)
- \*The Rosary, reclaimed in its full meaning, goes to the very heart of Christian life; it offers a familiar yet fruitful opportunity for personal contemplation, the formation of the People of God, and the new evangelization.
- \*The Rosary has many times been proposed by my predecessors and myself as a prayer for peace.
- \*To rediscover the Rosary means to immerse oneself in contemplation of the mystery of Christ who "is our peace" (the peace of God that surpasses all understanding (Phillipians 4:7))
- \*The Rosary represents a most effective means of fostering among the faithful that commitment to the contemplation of the Christian mystery which is a genuine "training in holiness"
- \*It would be impossible to name all the many Saints who discovered in the Rosary a genuine path to growth in holiness.

## Contemplating Christ with Mary

- \*The contemplation of Christ has an incomparable model in Mary.
- \*Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: “She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19; Luke 2:51). The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side. In a way those memories were to be the “rosary” which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.
- \*Mary constantly sets before the faithful the “mysteries” of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power.
- \*Contemplating the scenes of the Rosary in union with Mary is a means of learning from her to “read” Christ, to discover his secrets and to understand his message.
- \*Mary's contemplation is above all a remembering. We need to understand this word in the biblical sense of remembrance (zakar) as a making present of the works brought about by God in the history of salvation. The Bible is an account of saving events culminating in Christ himself. These events not only belong to “yesterday”; they are also part of the “today” of salvation.
- \*The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul. By its nature, the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way, the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are disclosed.
- \*In contemplating Christ's face we become open to receiving the mystery of Trinitarian life, experiencing ever anew the love of the Father and delighting in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul's words can then be applied to us: “Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18).

## Being Conformed to Christ with Mary

- \*Christian spirituality is distinguished by the disciple's commitment to become conformed ever more fully to his Master (cf. Rom 8:29). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baptism grafts the believer like a branch onto the vine which is Christ (cf. Jn 15:5) and makes him a member of Christ's mystical Body (cf. 1Cor 12:12; Rom 12:5). This initial unity, however, calls for a growing assimilation which will increasingly shape the conduct of the disciple in accordance with the “mind” of Christ: “Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). In the words of the Apostle, we are called “to put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27). In the spiritual journey of the Rosary, based on the constant contemplation – in Mary's company – of the face of Christ, this demanding ideal of being conformed to him is pursued through an association which could be described in terms of friendship. We are thereby enabled to enter naturally into Christ's life and as it were to share his deepest feelings. In this regard Blessed Bartolo Longo has written: “Just as two friends, frequently in each other's company, tend to develop similar habits, so too, by holding familiar converse with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary and by living the same life in Holy Communion, we can become, to the extent of our lowliness, similar to them and can learn from these supreme models (Jesus and Mary) a life of humility, poverty, hiddenness, patience and perfection”. “. In this process of being conformed to Christ in the Rosary, we entrust ourselves in a special way to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin. She who is both the Mother of Christ and a member of the Church, indeed her “pre-eminent and altogether singular member”, is at the same time the “Mother of the Church”. As such, she continually brings to birth children for the mystical Body of her Son. She does so through her intercession, imploring upon them the inexhaustible outpouring of the Spirit. Mary is the perfect icon of the motherhood of the Church.

## May Promises of God Taken from 365promises.org

MAY 1 - My Spirit made you and My breath gives you life.  
Job 33:4

MAY 2 - There is no place you can go to escape My presence.  
Psalm 139:7-10

MAY 3 - All your days are known to Me and your inheritance is secure forever. Psalm 37:18

MAY 4 - I gently formed you in your mother's womb.  
Psalm 139:13

MAY 5 - I am delighted to give you My kingdom.  
Luke 12:32

MAY 6 - My face will shine upon you all the days of your life.  
Numbers 6:25

MAY 7 - My Word will brighten your steps and light your path.  
Psalm 119:105

MAY 8 - My Son took upon Himself all your sicknesses and diseases. Matthew 8:16-17

MAY 9 - My Spirit will help you in your weakness. Romans 8:26

MAY 10 - You can do all things through Jesus Christ who gives you strength. Philippians 4:13

MAY 11 - Be courageous, for I am with you and I will never fail you. Deuteronomy 31:6

MAY 12 - I am a very present help for you in times of trouble.  
Psalm 46:1

MAY 13 - I will keep watch over you and guard you forever.  
Psalm 12:7

MAY 14 - I hear your voice when you call to Me in the morning.  
Psalm 5:3

MAY 15 - All that I have is yours because you belong to Jesus.  
John 16:15

MAY 16 - My goodness and mercy will chase after you all your life. Psalm 23:6

MAY 17 - I will teach your children My ways and give them great peace. Isaiah 54:13

MAY 18 - I will not forget the love you have shown Me by serving others. Hebrews 6:10

MAY 19 - I will repay those who are kind to the poor.  
Proverbs 19:17

MAY 20 - All My blessings will overtake those who obey Me.  
Deuteronomy 28:2

MAY 21 - I know what you need before you even ask.  
Matthew 6:8

MAY 22 - I open prison doors and set captives free.  
Isaiah 61:1

MAY 23 - I will rescue the godly from all their troubles.  
2 Peter 2:9

MAY 24 - My displeasure may last a moment, but My favor is yours for life. Psalm 30:5

MAY 25 - I will fill those who hunger and thirst for My righteousness. Matthew 5:6

MAY 26 - I will show you the mysteries of My kingdom.  
Matthew 13:11

MAY 27 - Those who overcome will eat from the tree of life in paradise. Revelation 2:7

MAY 28 - I have prepared amazing things for those who love Me. 1 Corinthians 2:9

MAY 29 - Those who are pure in heart will see My face.  
Matthew 5:8

MAY 30 - began the good work in you and I will finish it.  
Philippians 1:6

MAY 31 - You can rest in My promise of eternal life, for I cannot lie. Titus 1:2

## Upcoming Events

June 13th, 2020

**Generational Healing Virtual Workshop via Zoom**

**Led by Ann Franzel, Our Lady of Lourdes Charismatic Prayer Group Leader**

**To register email [ron\\_annz@yahoo.com](mailto:ron_annz@yahoo.com)**

## Other Online Events

ST. ANTHONY SHRINE &  
OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL PARISHES  
PRESENTS

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**Dr. Mary Healy**

DR. HEALY IS Professor of Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, is a bestselling author, international speaker and was appointed by Pope Francis as one of the first three women ever to serve on the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

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