

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you.” Words of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary of Nazareth announcing she was to be the mother of the Word made flesh.

“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Words spoken by Elizabeth wife of Zechariah and mother of John the Baptist. She was filled with the Holy Spirit as she cried out these words to Mary when Mary traveled from Galilee in the north down to the hill country of Judea in the south, next to Jerusalem.

These words form the heart of the Hail Mary. The first part comes directly from the heart of the Father via the intercession of the archangel Gabriel delivering the precise words that God wanted to convey. The words of Elizabeth are prophetic words because she is described in that moment as being filled with the Holy Spirit. And so the conception of Jesus is the result of the Father’s word and recognized by Elizabeth who herself has had a miraculous conception.

But the words aren’t so much about Mary or Elizabeth. The Words are about God’s plan, the conception of Jesus and the recognition that Jesus is the Lord because Elizabeth also says that: How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”

These are the first two joyful mysteries of the rosary. The Annunciation (or the Announcement) and The Visitation. In Bethlehem Mary will bring forth her Son. The Birth of Our Lord. Shortly thereafter she and Joseph will present him in the Temple, The Presentation. And when Jesus turns twelve and is formally recognized as a man, he remains in his Father’s house, the Temple as his parents return to Galilee without realizing he is not with them. They return to Jerusalem and find in in the Temple. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple. There is a moment of joy in each of these events. The Joyful Mysteries.

While we pray the Hail Mary we are to reflect on one of these events and ask the Lord to help us draw closer and increase in our understanding and love for Him.

The Mysteries of Light or the Luminous Mysteries are all drawn from the ministry of Jesus

His Baptism in the Jordan which points to our own baptism.

The Wedding feast of Cana where Jesus performs his first miracle and it is a miracle of transformation of water into choice wine. A lavish gift to the bride and groom who had invited Jesus to their wedding celebration. This is why we invite Jesus to be the uniting force in our own marriage celebrations.

The preaching of the Good News and the Kingdom of God.

The transfiguration on Mt. Tabor when the Father allows Jesus’ true beauty to shine forth.

The Gift of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. These mysteries are all about Jesus in the sacraments. As we pray the rosary we are to think about our own sacraments and the place of Jesus in our lives

The Sorrowful Mysteries are all about the last 24 hours Jesus spend on this earth from the night of the Last Supper to his death on Calvary the next day
The agony in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus sweats blood as he accepts the crushing weight of our sins.
The scourging at the pillar where his blood was spilled on the ground.
The crowning with thorns where he is mocked by his torturers.
The carrying of the cross although depleted by the loss of blood and the painful whipping and the many blows, he trudges to the hill of death so as to make the full gift of his life for us.
The Crucifixion and death of Our Lord. Faithful and true to the end. Forgiving until his task was finished.
These sorrowful mysteries invite us to reflect on the depth of Jesus' love.

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection from the dead. The tomb is empty. The burial cloths though are still there. He appears, living and transformed to those who saw him die.
The Ascension. Forty days of appearing. Jesus returns to heaven, reunited with his Father. There is still one more thing for him to do.
The sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Mary. Father and Son together breathe their own Holy Spirit upon those early believers. The Church is born
Mary is taken into heaven. May years after the Ascension Mary dies and is buried but when her tomb is opened her body is not there. No corruption was allowed to bring decay to the mother of the Holy One. She has been taken into the Kingdom
Mary as Queen of Heaven. By God's design the faithful woman who overcame the sin of Eve and Adam, who became the new Eve and whose son, Jesus has become the new Adam, is given prominent place in the kingdom of God for a job well done.
These are truly glorious events from the life of Jesus

My friends the rosary is a most powerful prayer. One hundred years ago the Blessed Mother appeared at Fatima and said to the shepherd children to pray the rosary for world peace and peace in their homes and in their lives. We have not done a sufficient job of responding to her request. Today is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Today—pray a rosary. Do you worry about our world, your family, your own life? What prevents us from praying this prayer? You need 20 minutes—max. Pick one of the sets of mysteries. In joyous mood, go Joyful. If down, go sorrowful. If worried, go luminous. If on a roll, go Glorious.

I hope that you will not hear me as chastising you or yelling at you or shaking my finger at you. In my heart there is none of that. But I do pray the rosary and I have much peace and I would love you to come to experience what has happened to me. Just try and then try again. Our Lord is really very patient. Keep trying until you get it. You will be glad you did. And help each other and no put downs. Only encouragement. This is really important.