

# “The Orthodox Way of Praying the Holy Rosary”

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## Introduction & context

What is your experience with the Rosary?

What is the Rosary?

**Crown of Roses**

How do we pray the Rosary?

<https://www.newadvent.org/images/rosary.pdf>

Praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary is our Christian heritage. From the beginning, Christians have praised Mary as the Mother of God (Theotokos) and prayed to her both in the Liturgy and private devotion.

The origin of praying to Mary is Biblical:

*And when they met her, they all blessed her with one accord and said to her, “You are the exaltation of Jerusalem,\* you are the great glory of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation!*

*<sup>10</sup> You have done all this singlehanded; you have done great good to Israel, and God is well pleased with it. May the Almighty Lord bless you forever!” And all the people said, “So be it!”*

(Jdt 15:9–10).

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\* 15:9, *You are the exaltation of Jerusalem*: This passage is included in the office for feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, e.g., the little chapter for None on the Assumption, 15 August.

## **Why we pray to Mary?**

The Church's norm of faith requires that her standard of prayer should everywhere blossom forth concerning the Mother of Christ. Such devotion to the Blessed Virgin is firmly rooted in the revealed word and has a solid foundation in the Tradition.

*"It is based on the singular dignity of Mary, Mother of the Son of God, and therefore beloved Daughter of the Father and Temple of the Holy Gost, Mary, who, because of this extraordinary grace, is far greater than any other creature on earth or in heaven."*<sup>1</sup>

*"When Mary ius honored, her Son is duly acknowledged, loved and glorified, and his commandments are observed. To venerate Mary Correctly means to acknowledge her Son, for she is the Mother of God. To love her means to love Jesus, for she is always the Mother of Jesus."*<sup>2</sup>

*"To pray to our Lady means not to substitute her for Christ, but to glorify her Son who desires us to have loving confidence in His Saints, especially in his Mother. To imitate the 'faithful Virgin' means to keep her Son's commandments."*<sup>3</sup>

### **The difference between adoration and veneration:**

The following distinctions are created by theologians and help understand the reverence due to God and his saints.

**Latria (adoration) => God**

**Hyperdulia (highest reverence) => Mary, the Mother of God**

**Protodulia (first revered)) => St. Joseph**

**Dulia (revered) => All other saints**

*"Who is not aware that, after the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is, of all the saints, the one who is the dearest to God?"*<sup>4</sup>

-St. Alphonsus Liguori

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<sup>1</sup> Marialis Cultus No 56.

<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Bishops of the United States explained the meaning of Marian prayer in the 1973 Letter *Behold Your Mother*.

<sup>3</sup> Marialis Cultus No 82.

<sup>4</sup> St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary* (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 2012), 589.

*“The Almighty has concentrated in St. Joseph, as in a Sun of unrivaled luster, the combined light, and splendor of all the other saints.”<sup>5</sup>*

-St. Gregory Nazianzen

### **The Church Prays to Mary, Theotokos:**

- 1) **Mary was present at the Foot of the Cross** praying, suffering with his Son and, offering the Holy Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross for our Salvation:

*“But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother...” (John 19:25).*

- 2) Mary was present at the Foot of the Cross and received the last desire from her Son, **to become our spiritual Mother, and he is inviting us to become her disciples and to receive her in our homes:**

*“When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”<sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home.‡”*

- 3) Mary was present with the disciples **in prayer at the Church’s birth when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Upper Room disciples** (Acts 1:14).
- 4) The Church has always made a special place for Mary in the **Sacred and Divine Liturgy.**
- 5) The **Church prays to God with Mary and through her intercessions.** The Church takes cognizance of Mary receiving the Word of God and putting it into practice or repeats Mary’s great canticle of thanksgiving, the Magnificat.

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<sup>5</sup> St. Gregory Nazianzen, as quoted in Anthony J. Patignani, SJ, *A Manual of Practical Devotion to St. Joseph* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1982), 72

‡ 19:27, *took her to his own home*: Joseph must now have been dead.

- 6) The Church also identifies herself with Mary in the **offering of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in the Divine Liturgy** or has **recourse to Mary's intercession** in heaven in our persona devotion.
- 7) The **Church prays to God in honor of Mary**. The Church celebrates the Virgin Mary by praising God for the Mother of Jesus's participation in her So's life's significant events.
- 8) The **Church also renders praise to God** for the special graces that prepared the Virgin Mary for her mission as our Spiritual Mother.
- 9) The **Church prays to Mary**. The Church speaks directly to Mary herself, to praise her, to congratulate her in words of the Gospel, and to directly beg for her intercession with the Divine Son and the Blessed Trinity.

### **The Hail Mary:**

The Hail Mary summarizes the whole of the Church's public prayer to Mary. For this, Marian prayer was in its initial form among the first to be used in the Church, and its complete form is put together in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and finalized in the 16<sup>th</sup>.

The Hail Mary is divided into 2 parts:

- 1) The Evangelical Salutation:

***“And he [the angel Gabriel] came to her and said, “Hail, full of grace,b2 the Lord is with you!” c (Luke 1:28).***

***“and she [Elizabeth ]exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” (Luke 1:42).***

- 2) The Supplication of the Church:

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<sup>b2</sup> Or *O favored one*.

<sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities add *“Blessed are you among women!”*.

***“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 first part was used very early in the Church. It was found in the Eastern Liturgies of St. James of Antioch and St. Mark of Alexandria, which may date from the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century.

It is also found in the Liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites and the ritual of St. Severus (538).

This first part also appears on an Egypt in the 6<sup>th</sup> century with the additional words: ***“Because you have conceived Christ, the Son of God, Redeemer of our souls.”***

The word Mary is added in some copies of the Liturgy of St. James and the words ***“Mary, Virgin Mother of God”*** in some Greek churches.

**The Marian Psalter: Saint Seraphim of Sarov (1754-1833)**, born Prokhor Moshnin, is one of the most renowned Russian saints and is venerated both in the Eastern Orthodox Church and in the Catholic Church.

*“I forgot to give you a piece of advice vital for Salvation, say the **Oh Hail Mother of God, 150 times**, and this prayer will lead you in the way to Salvation. This rule was given by the Mother of God herself in the **8<sup>th</sup> century**, and at one time, all Christians fulfilled it.”<sup>6</sup>*

#### **Easter Hail Mary:**

**Hail, Oh Virgen Theotokos, Mary, full of grace;**

**The Lord is with you.**

**Blessed are you among women, and**

**Blessed is the fruit of your womb,**

**for you have borne the Savior of our souls**

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<sup>6</sup> As quoted in Taylor Marshall, PhD, *The Rosary in 50 Pages: The Layman's Quick Guide to Mary's Psalter* (Rockfort, IL: Saint John Press, 2020). [https://taylormarshall.com/2021/02/638-eastern-orthodox-pray-rosary-yes-podcast.html?ct=t\(Regular\\_Blog\\_Updates\\_Campaign\)](https://taylormarshall.com/2021/02/638-eastern-orthodox-pray-rosary-yes-podcast.html?ct=t(Regular_Blog_Updates_Campaign))