

Praying the Rosary with the Way of the Rose

The Way of the Rose is an open-hearted, inclusive community of beings dedicated to the forgotten Earth wisdom of the rosary...and to the Lady, by any name you like to call Her. We are not affiliated with the Catholic Church or any other religious institution. Nor do we seek to build a new one. We have no dues or fees, no buildings to maintain or capital campaigns. We pass the hat from time to time for our modest needs. There are no priests or levels of mastery. Instead of lineages of power, we value circles of friendship. We support one another in praying for our heart's desire.

Every rosary circle honors the **Five Petals of the Wild Rose**:

- **First Petal—WOTR circles are free.** We may pass the hat to cover special expenses, but no contribution will ever be required. WOTR has no dues or fees for membership.
- **Second Petal—WOTR circles are inclusive.** Everyone is welcome at every meeting. We have affinity meetings but these circles are open. Anyone may attend.
- **Third Petal—WOTR circles pray the rosary or a chaplet.** We may adapt these or modify them for the purpose of a meeting, but the focus of our fellowship remains on Our Lady and Her beads.
- **Fourth Petal—WOTR circles are places to pray for our heart's desire.** We do not support outside causes—religious, political, humanitarian, or otherwise—that might divert us from our own petitions.
- **Fifth Petal—WOTR circles are leaderless.** A member may sponsor a meeting, but there are no teachers, experts, or authorities. Once a meeting format has been established, any member may lead it.

A **Message from Our Lady of Woodstock** is shared by a volunteer. (Early messages are included in the book *The Way of the Rose*. All other messages can be found on the website.)

We ask for five volunteers for the day's rosary and announce the Mystery we are praying that day [Joyful/Sorrowful/Glorious]. Participants are welcome to make the prayers their own, but we do remind you that the rosary consists of some recognizable form of these two prayers.

The Our Father

*Our Father, Who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen*

The Hail Mary

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

The Glory Be

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Child,
and to the Holy Mother, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

We then pray the rosary together, with volunteers leading each decade. Each decade consists of announcing and/or exploring the Mystery (see below), then praying one Our Father followed by ten Hail Mary's and one Glory Be. After the final Glory Be, the leader recites the Hail Holy Queen:

The Hail Holy Queen (or Salve Regina)

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope!

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears!

*Turn, then, O most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us,
and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb.*

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Life.

After we finish saying the rosary, participants are invited to share their novena petition or their heart's desire. While we may have many personal petitions in our daily rosary, at our meetings we ask that each participant focus on their current novena petition or heart's desire.

Then we will acknowledge the presence of the Dead among us, and a volunteer leads us in the Prayers for the Dead, another decade, concluding with the Memorare:

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, never was it known

that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother;

to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.

The WOTR website contains many resources for learning about and praying the rosary either with us or on your own. Please explore it and know that you will be welcome at any or all of our online or in-person circles. We invite you to participate in whatever ways feel comfortable to you. For easy reference, the 15 Mysteries are listed below.

The Fifteen Mysteries

The Joyful Mysteries

1. The Annunciation

The Angel Gabriel appears to Mary and announces that, if she is willing, she may bring forth a child without a husband. In medieval art, Mary is often depicted illuminated by a shaft of sunlight, wearing over her red dress a robe of the deepest blue—the color of the ocean.

2. The Visitation

Now with child, Mary visits the home of her cousin Elizabeth who, despite her advanced age, is also miraculously with child. The young woman and the old woman celebrate together the rising life force within them and its power to transform the world.

3. The Nativity

Mary gives birth in a cave used as a stable. In the darkness of the night, surrounded only by the animals, she brings her child into the world and lays him in a manger.

4. The Presentation

Mary presents her child to the greater community. On her way into the Temple, she encounters two ancient seers who recognize her as the Mother of God, but predict that a sword shall pierce her heart.

5. The Finding at the Temple

Mary loses her twelve-year-old son in Jerusalem. For three days she searches for him and eventually finds him discussing scripture with the elders in the Temple. Rather than leave him with these men, she brings him home to be with her.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

1. The Agony in the Garden

Jesus remains awake in the garden at night. The disciples have fallen asleep, unaware of the coming danger. Alone, he experiences the full weight of all the many sorrows to come.

2. The Scourging at the Pillar

Just as the land is furrowed by ploughs and the beasts are beaten into submission, the body of Mary's child is scourged. In the name of Empire, Jesus is flogged by soldiers who are following the orders of their commanders.

3. The Crowning with Thorns

In the central mystery of the rosary, Jesus is mocked by those still fearful of the power he represents. He is given a red robe and a reed for a scepter—each an ancient symbol of the goddess. On his head is placed not a wreath of roses but a crown of thorns.

4. The Carrying of the Cross

A crowd gathers as Jesus is marched to his execution. No one intervenes. After Jesus stumbles and falls, a random onlooker who has come for the spectacle is forced by the soldiers to assume responsibility for carrying the cross.

5. The Crucifixion

The tree that once stood at the center of devotion to the Mother has been stripped of life and made an instrument of execution instead. When Jesus is dead, he is lowered into Mary's arms.

The Glorious Mysteries

1. The Resurrection

Following an ancient pattern whereby a slain god is resurrected by a mother or a lover, Mary Magdalene observes a sacred vigil at Jesus's tomb. On the third day, he appears to her at last. When she tells the other disciples, they refuse to believe her.

2. The Ascension

After his resurrection Jesus appears unexpectedly to various other disciples. On the fortieth day he disappears into a cloud, surrendering to the ceaseless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that includes all life on Earth.

3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit

The disciples pray together with Mary for nine days after the Ascension. Finally, a mighty wind fills the room and the Holy Spirit descends upon them. The Hebrew word for spirit is *ruach*, which is feminine. In art, the Holy Spirit is often depicted as a dove—another sign of the Goddess.

4. The Assumption

Legend has it that Mary never dies but simply falls asleep and is "assumed" into heaven, her body and her spirit undivided. The body of the Great Mother is the body of the Earth and the body of the Heavens, the body of all that is.

5. The Coronation

In the final mystery of the rosary, Our Lady is crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth. Medieval statues of the Coronation showed Mary in the fullness of her power and glory, and yet mysteriously reborn and young again, holding the infant Christ. Life is a journey that circles back to where it started. This is where the rosary ends, and where it begins again.