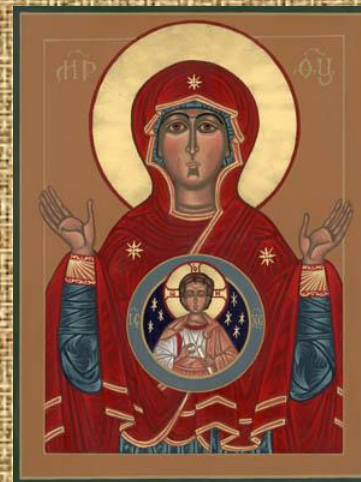


# Mary . . . Mother of Jesus, Saint

## Part VIIc: Marian Prayer and Apparitions



## Private Devotions to Mary: The Rosary

There is among Catholic Christians the need and the practice of private spiritual devotions. This private prayer life is found among other Christians also. For example, some Christians pray the Psalms daily; others prefer a form of meditation, etc. The Bible requires neither of everyone.

The Catholic Church has not and does not officially teach or proclaim a private devotion as doctrine or dogma, required

by faith or the practice of all believers. As any individual Christian has private devotions, so also has even the Bishop of Rome. Should even these private devotions be performed in public no universal teaching is intended.



# Development of the Rosary

A very popular devotion among Roman Catholics is the rosary. The rosary enjoys a very rich and interesting history.



## Ireland 800-900 AD

Historians trace the origin of the Rosary back to ninth century Ireland. Today, as then, the 150 Psalms of the Bible, The Book of Psalms of King David, were an important form of monastic prayer. Monks and clergy recited or chanted the Psalms as a major source of hourly worship.

People living near the monasteries realized the beauty of this devotion. But unable to read or memorize the lengthy Psalms, the people were unable to adapt this form of prayer for their use.



## First stage

An Irish monk suggested to the people around the monastery that they might pray a series of 150 Our Fathers in place of the 150 Psalms. At first, pebbles were carried in a pouch to count the 150 Our Fathers; later ropes with 150 or 50 (1/3 of 150) knots were used. Eventually string with 50 pieces of wood was used.

## Second stage

Next the Angelic Salutation (Luke 1:28) was added. St. Peter Damian (d. 1072) was the first to mention this form of prayer. Soon the Angelic Salutation replaced the 50 Our Fathers.



## Third stage

Some medieval theologians considered the 150 Psalms to be veiled mysteries about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. They began to compose Psalters of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - 150 praises in honor of Jesus. Soon psalters devoted to 150 praises of Mary were composed.

When a psalter of 150 praises in Mary's honor numbered 50 instead of 150, it was called a **rosarium**, or bouquet.





## c. 1365

The salutations were grouped into decades and an Our Father was put before each decade. This combined the Our Father and the Angelic Salutation for the first time.

## 1409

Special thoughts - meditations - were attached for each Hail Mary bead.

## 1470

The Dominican Order spread the form of the “new rosary” throughout Western Christendom.



## 1400 – 1500

The thoughts or meditations on the 150 Hail Mary beads took the form of woodcuts (graphic pictures). This exhausted the practice easily because of the volume of pictures. Picture rosaries were shortened to one picture/thought for each Our Father as it is today.

## 1700s

St. Louis de Montfort wrote the most common set of meditations for the rosary used today.

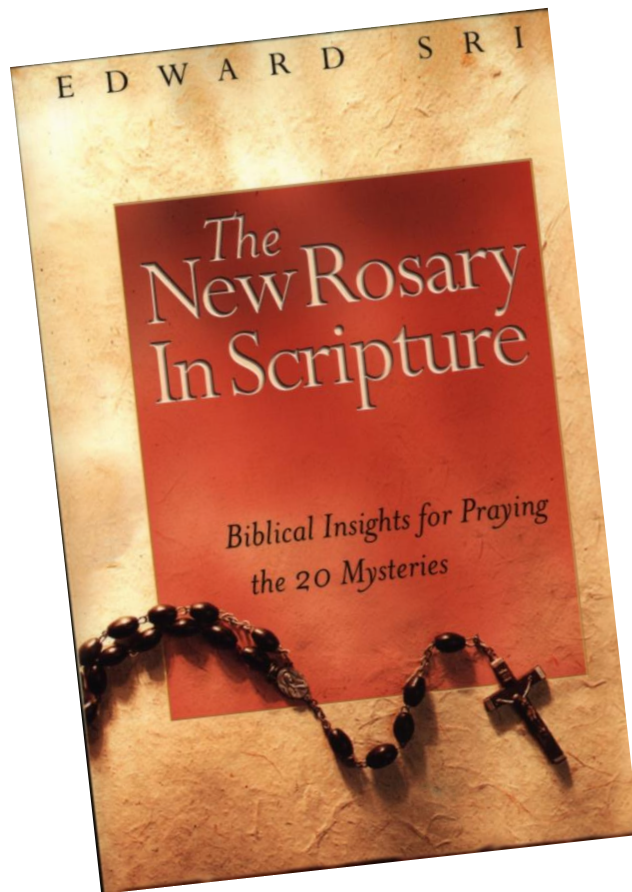
## Early 1900s

A movement was begun attempting to return to a form of the medieval rosary - one thought for each Hail Mary.



## Today

The present devotion, differing from the medieval version, is composed almost entirely of direct quotations from the Bible. It is appropriately called “the Scriptural Rosary.”



Charis  
Servant Publications  
Ann Arbor, MI





# Prayers of the Rosary

The prayer of the rosary is in reality a variety of prayers, many totally scriptural.

## The Apostles Creed c. 700

I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell, and on the third day he rose again from the dead.

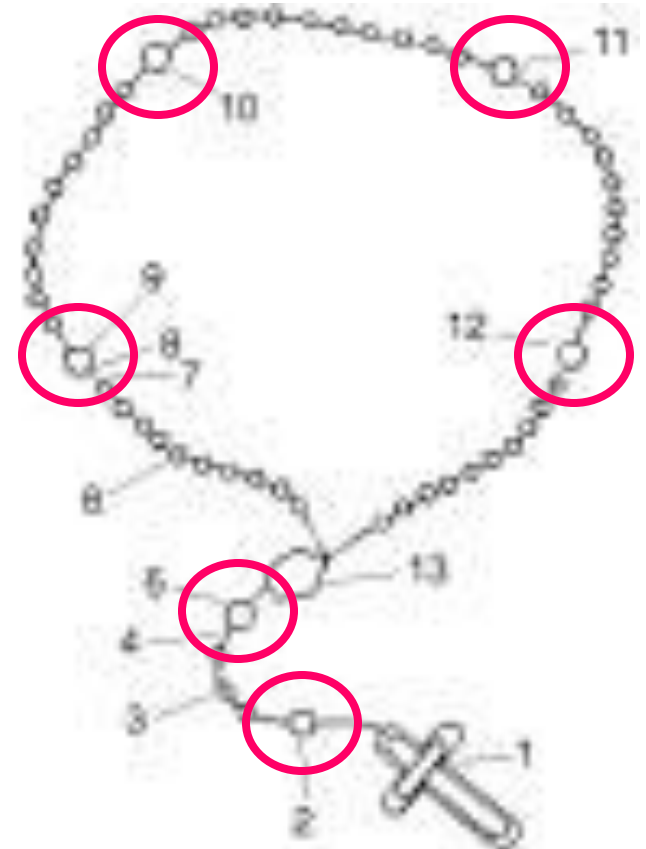
He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.



I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen

### **Matthew 6:9-13**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.



## Christian doxology (cf. Revelation 4:8)

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



## Luke 1:28

Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you

## Luke 1:42

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

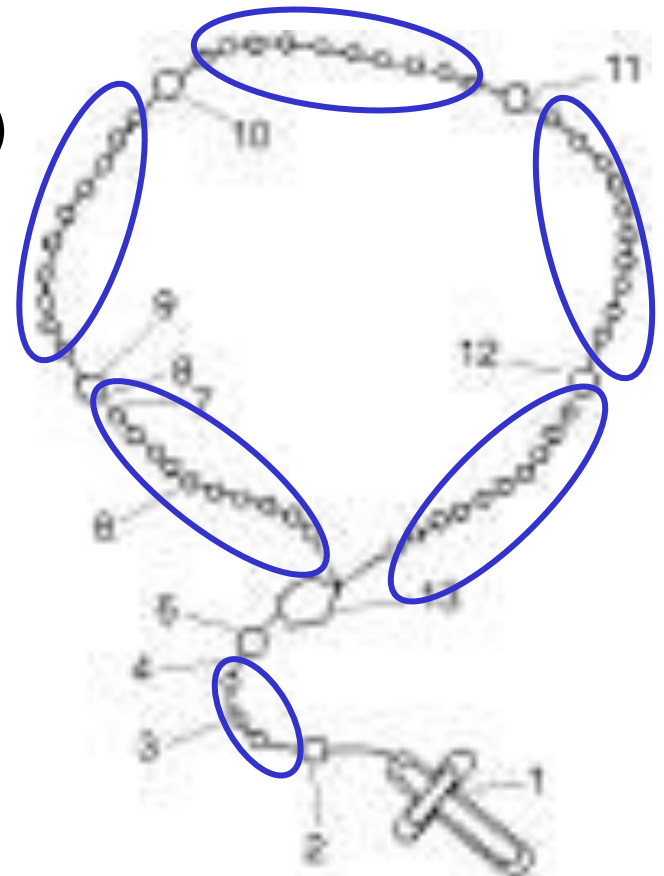
**Luke 1:43;** (Council of Ephesus, 431)  
“the mother of my Lord” (Holy Mary,  
Mother of God.)

## Prayer of petition; confession of sinfulness

Pray for us sinners;

## Petitioning Mary dates to 3rd century

now and at the hour of our death. Amen



# The sign of the cross; invoking the Holy Trinity

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



**Murillo**  
*Virgin and Child with a Rosary*  
1650-55



It is difficult to see how some Christians can criticize the private prayer life of other Christians. One such criticism centers on the element of repetition of the prayer, “Hail Mary.” But to even the casual reader of the word of God it must be apparent that the writers of the Bible--and God Himself--used the repetition of words and expressions in prayer.

The Bible uses repetition to indicate emphasis and the highest degree of something.

### **Isaiah 6:3**

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts!” they (the Seraphim) cried one to another.

The Psalms are a good example of repetition in prayer. Psalm 150 records a twelve-fold repetition in one psalm. One wonders if the prayerful repetitions found in all prayer services, especially “Halleluia” are modeled after the Psalms?

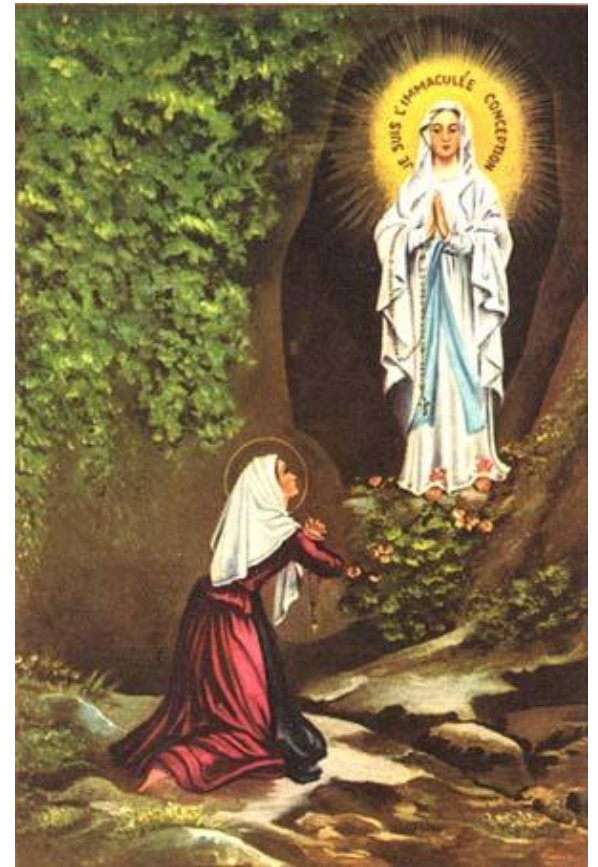


# Apparitions of Mary

Catholic Christians are also attracted to the reported appearance of Mary, throughout history, but especially in the past century or more.

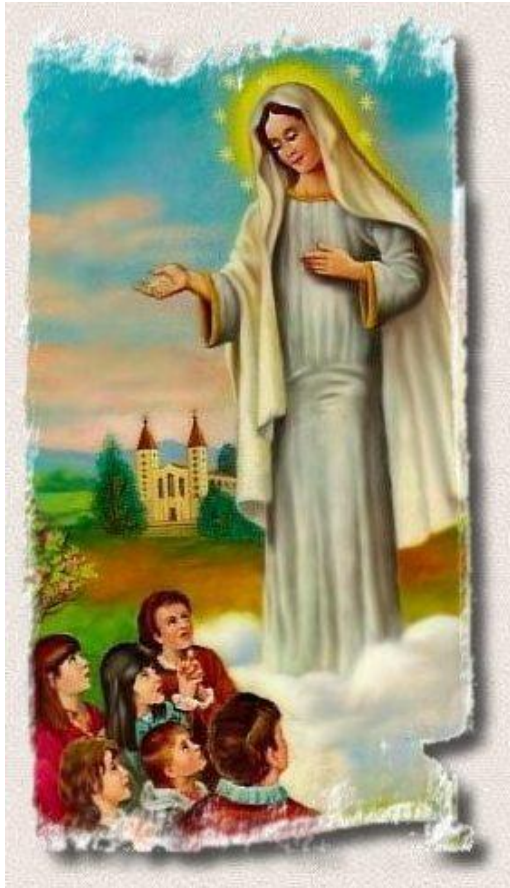


One often hears of the appearance of Mary at Lourdes, France (in 1858);



in Fatima, Portugal (in 1917);

in Guadeloupe, Mexico (in 1530);



in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia (today).

It must first be recalled that the Catholic Church does not teach that these visits of Mary are a matter of either faith or morals for Catholics. These fall in the class of private devotion.

The Church does permit these devotions when it is sure nothing said or believed about the visits of Mary is contrary to Divine Revelation--the Bible or the constant faith of the Church.



The Catholic Church also teaches that there is no new public revelation possible after the death of the Evangelist John. Any thing else approximating new messages would be private revelation only.

The Catholic Church applies the teaching of the Bible to her judgment of such private devotions.

### **1 John 4:1**

Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

### **Matthew 7:17-18, 20**

Every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. ... So by their fruits you will know them.



## James 3:12

Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce olives, or a grapevine figs? Neither can salt water yield fresh.

The **tests of such apparitions** of Mary have shown that nothing in her messages and consequent devotion contradicts the word of God and the constant teaching of the Church.

The fruit of the shrines of Mary speak for themselves: repentance, revival, healings, renewed faith, return to the church, Bible reading, fruits of the Spirit, etc. The Church has made and continues to follow the Biblical tests of the spirits and approves some such apparitions as of the Spirit.

It remains for all Christians of a renewed mind and of the Spirit of the Lord to follow the Biblical mandates of testing spirits and the fruit of the tree as the Catholic Church has done.



Ends of  
**Mary Prayer and Apparitions, Part VIc**

Go to  
**Eschatology--Last Things, Part VIIa**