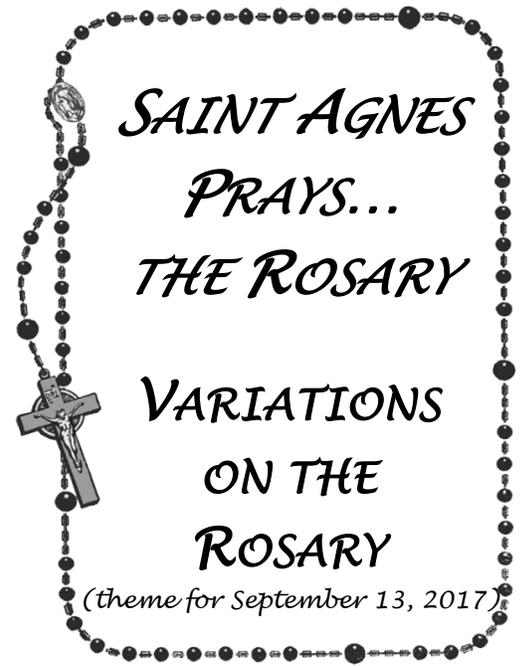


Variations on the Rosary

In previous months we've heard The Rosary described as "a powerful weapon" (Pope Pius XI), "my favorite prayer" (Saint Pope John Paul II), and a chain that links heaven and earth (St. Therese of Lisieux). No wonder then that the Rosary has taken on so many forms beyond the basic 5-decade string of beads and Crucifix. No wonder that Rosaries have been made bigger than life and smaller than the smallest fingers that hold them. No wonder that Rosaries have been made out of nearly every material known to man: crude stones, precious stones, plastic, wood, and even living materials. Rosaries can be very costly or very inexpensive, and some are truly priceless. This month we will look at variations of the Rosary in their appearance and in their use as an aid to prayer.



The Outdoor Rosary is always very large and sometimes a garden feature on the grounds of Catholic sites. Stones, bushes, or flowerbeds usually represent the beads. Of course, our favorite example of this distinctly different variation on the Rosary is our own parish Rosary Walk. Parishioner Josh Zapanta made it last summer as part of his Eagle Scout Award. Also nearby is the Rosary walk at [St. Emma Monastery, Greensburg](#) that winds through a thicket of trees where each of the 20 decades is represented by a plaque. The nuns are always happy to have visitors walk the Rosary path or Stations of the Cross path and visit the other shrines on their grounds. (Hint: Take the family on a little Saturday pilgrimage soon!)



Then, there is the [Giant Rosary at Christ the King Cathedral in Tagum City, Davao del Norte](#), in the Southern Philippines, reported to be the world's largest Rosary. The beads are made of ironwood native to the area, each weighing over 77 pounds. The entire Rosary is over ½ mile long and weighs just over 3 tons.





The Wall Rosary is a large form of Rosary made to be hung on a wall. For the home, these Rosaries are usually about 3 ft. in diameter. Saint Agnes is honored to have a 6 ft. “World Mission” Wall Rosary made by our Vacation Bible School children in 2013. (More about the World Mission Rosary below.) Our version of this famous Rosary is made of 2” and 3” colorful decoupage Styrofoam balls linked together by paper clips! It has found a permanent home on the wall of the new Liturgy of the Word for Children Room a.k.a. the Altar Server Sacristy.

The One Decade Rosary is, as it sounds, a rosary consisting of only one decade. The idea behind the one-decade rosary is that it is small, easy to carry around and ready to use for prayer any time, any day. These rosaries usually consist of the 10 Hail Mary beads and Crucifix and sometimes with just one large bead taking the place of the Our Fathers and 5 initial beads.



Rosary Jewelry often takes the form of the One Decade Rosary and may be the most common alternative to the normal set of 59 beads, medal, and Crucifix. Wearing a Rosary bracelet or Rosary ring assures that you will always have your Rosary nearby. Akin to wearing a Crucifix on a necklace, Rosary rings and bracelets are beautiful to wear but it must not be forgotten that their primary purpose is as an aid to prayer. When giving Rosary jewelry or any

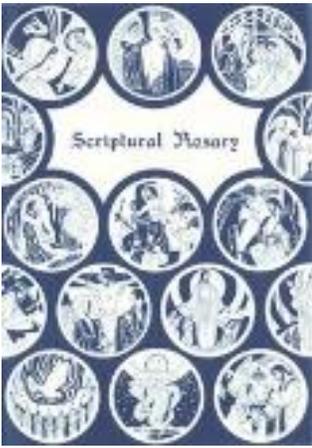


Rosary as a gift, please also give the receiver one of our ["How to Pray the Rosary"](#) handouts.

The Wallet Rosary is another novelty of a Rosary, which is made of plastic or metal in a credit card size and shape so that it can be kept in a wallet. The beads are represented by embossed bumps or finger holes.

The Glow-in-the-Dark Rosary truly deserves a little special recognition. Who can forget holding their first glow-in-the-dark rosary close to their night-light and then clutching the beautiful glow when the light was turned off? Afraid of the dark? Not with my glowing Rosary!

The World Mission Rosary is certainly the most colorful of Rosaries. (See our Wall Rosary version above.) It was designed in 1951 by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen and introduced on his radio show, *The Catholic Hour*. Each area of the world is represented by a specific color of beads on the [World Mission Rosary](#) and was described by the Archbishop as follows: green for the forests and grasslands of Africa; yellow for the morning light of the east, Asia; blue for the ocean surrounding the islands of the Pacific; red calling to mind the fire of faith that brought missionaries to the Americas; and white symbolizing Europe, the seat of the Holy Father, shepherd of the world.



The Scriptural Rosary is a variation of praying the Rosary that uses biblical scripture. One of the “Rosary Quotes” from our July handout described the Rosary as “the bible on a string” and this couldn't be more evident than when praying the Scriptural Rosary. A few verses of the bible on the subject of the Mystery is read and meditated upon before beginning the decade. Then after each Hail Mary, the next verse or two is read so that more of the story can be meditated upon. Scriptural Rosaries can be found in small booklet form at religious stores or online. Even entire Scriptural Rosaries can be found online. Two such examples are [The Scriptural Rosary for Justice and Peace from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) and [The Scriptural Rosary by the Knights of Columbus](#).

The Lazo (or lasso) Rosary is popular in Mexican, Spanish, and Filipino communities as a wedding Rosary. It is made for a husband and wife to pray the Rosary together. Two 5-decade loops are joined by a central medal and share the first 5 beads and Crucifix. The two loops are sometimes placed over the heads of a couple during their wedding ceremony.



The Chaplet and other Variations of the Rosary

The word “Rosary” as a proper noun, refers to the well-known and widely accepted form of prayer instituted by the Dominicans. The rosary is a set of beads used to help count the prayers while praying the Rosary. It consists of 59 beads, a medal, and a Crucifix. However, there are many, many variations on this theme, usually referred to as “chaplets.” A chaplet is simply a variation of the Rosary invoking a specific saint or cause, sometimes prayed on a special set of beads. The word is taken from the French word for “rosary,” *chapalet*. Below are just a few of the many, many chaplets prayed by people all over the world, some of them for hundreds of years.

[The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy](#) is without a doubt the most popular chaplet today especially since Saint Pope John Paul II ordained the Sunday after Easter as “Divine Mercy Sunday.” Saint Faustina, a nun who lived in Poland, introduced the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the early 1930s. The theme for this prayer is *mercy* and it focuses on three forms of mercy: to obtain mercy, to trust in Christ's mercy, and to show mercy to others. A normal pair of Rosary beads is used for this chaplet, which begins with the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Apostle’s Creed. Repeated on the large “Our Father” beads is this prayer: “Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.” On the 10 small beads the following is prayed: “For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.” The chaplet ends with this prayer repeated three times: “Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

The Our Lady of Sorrows Chaplet also known as the **Chaplet of Seven Sorrows (Dolors)** was instituted on Good Friday in 1239 by seven holy men, all now saints, who, at the request of the Virgin Mary who appeared to them at the time, founded the religious order known as the “Servites” or Servants of Mary. The Chaplet of Seven Sorrows is prayed with a rosary of seven sets of seven beads, one set for each of the seven sorrows of the Virgin Mary as follows: 1) The Prophecy of Simeon, 2) The Flight into Egypt, 3) The Loss of Jesus in the Temple, 4) Mary Meets Jesus on the Way to Calvary, 5) Jesus Dies on the Cross, 6) Mary Receives the Dead Body of Jesus, and 7) Jesus is Laid in the Tomb. After meditating on each of the sorrows on the large bead, seven Hail Mary’s are prayed on the small beads. A closing meditation and three Hail Mary’s conclude this chaplet.

The Chaplet of St. Michael was approved by Pope Pius IX in 1851. Starting with an Act of Contrition, it is prayed with nine salutations (like decades), one for each Choir of angels: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Archangels, and Angels. Each of the nine salutations contains an Our Father bead and 3 Hail Mary beads. The chaplet concludes with four Our Fathers, honoring Saints Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and our own Guardian Angel.

St. Anthony of Padua's Rosary (Chaplet) includes 13 groups of "Aves" (petitions) of three beads each (one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be). The chaplet concludes with a poem called the Miraculous Repository, written by St. Bonaventure. Of course, one of the “Aves” implores St. Anthony for what he is best known: “St. Anthony, finder of lost things, help us find all that we have lost in the spiritual and temporal order.”

The Franciscan Crown Rosary dates back to 1422. Two more decades are added to the normal five-decade rosary to commemorate the seven joys of the Virgin Mary: 1) the Annunciation, 2) the Visitation, 3) the Birth of Jesus, 4) the Adoration of the Magi, 5) the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, 6) the Resurrection of Jesus, and 7) the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and her Coronation in heaven.

Active Online Links: For active links to all sources notated by underlined text throughout this document, please access the online version available at <http://stagneschurch.info/st-agnes-prays-the-rosary/> and download this Rosary Variations document. This will provide you with links to all sources cited for further reading and study (and all the pictures will be in color ☺).

Saint Agnes Church, North Huntingdon, PA

Saint Agnes Prays... the Rosary

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In honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Miracle at Fatima, Portugal