

The Rosary and Contemplative Prayer

*An Online Course of the Archdiocese of San Francisco
Fall, 2022*

The Rosary and Contemplative Prayer Course Description

- ✦ *At the dawn of the New Millennium, St. John Paul II wrote an apostolic letter on the rosary as an aid to his great pastoral program: contemplating the face of Christ. Twenty years later, the Church faces a crisis in Eucharistic devotion and at the same time, a crisis in personal prayer. Having lost a sense of the Real Presence of Christ, many Catholics are adrift in the chaos of secularism, and they are searching for something sacred to hang onto. Contemplation in the Catholic spiritual tradition as expressed in the rosary offers a life line for these disciples. These lectures propose Marian devotion to Christ found in the rosary as a powerful tool for spiritual revival.*



Course Objectives

- 1. Describe how the rosary has impacted you or the life of the Church and the context of the rosary today.*
- 2. Discuss the meaning of the mysteries of the Rosary and their relation to contemplation and Eucharistic Revival.*
- 3. Discern best practices and personal appropriation of the rosary in one's own life, family and parish.*



Bibliography

- ✿ John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae, Apostolic Letter, 2002*. Available here: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae.html
- ✿ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§ 2673-2682
- ✿ Aidan Nichols, OP *There is No Rose: the Mariology of the Catholic Church*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015, pp 1-21, 131-150
- ✿ Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Mary: The Church at the Source*, trans. Adrian Walker, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005, pp 19-36

Course Exercises

One 300-500 word reflections due on or before September 27 reflecting on one of two questions:

- 1. What role has Marian Devotion played in your own spiritual life and how have you seen attitudes toward the rosary develop or change over time? Or,*
- 2. How has praying the rosary helped you grow in holiness and served as an aid for better liturgical participation?*

One 300-500 word reflection due on or before October 11 reflecting on one of two questions:

- 1. Pastorally, why is it important that the Church contemplate the Mysteries of Light at this historical moment of Eucharistic revival? Or,*
- 2. What are some best practices when praying the rosary that help increase attention and devotion in contemplative prayer?*



Schedule of Lectures

- ✦ *September 13: Marian Piety, Contemplation and Eucharistic Revival: a context for our study.*
- ✦ *September 20: Introduction to Rosarium Virginis Mariae (hereafter, RVM) 1-8*
- ✦ *September 27: Contemplating Christ with Mary, RVM 9-17*
- ✦ *October 4: The Mysteries of Christ, the Mysteries of His Mother RVM 18-25*
- ✦ *October 11 For me, to live is Christ, RVM 26-38*
- ✦ *October 18 The Power of the Rosary, RVM 39-43*





Whatever happened to Marian Devotion?

Revisiting Vatican II and the Renewal of the Church

The Opportunity for a Fruitful Tension

Two movements before Vatican II:

1. The Liturgical Movement - Ressourcement, Youth Movements, and Biblical Studies

2. The Marian Movement - Apparitions of Lourdes, La Salette, and Fatima as well as the universal dogmatic statements on the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary



During the Council

Sacrosanctum Concilium - on the Liturgy, draws from the apostolic witness of the Eastern Church to present the liturgy as a participation in the mystery of the Holy Trinity and as serving as the source and summit of our faith. How do we make liturgical prayer a more personal experience for more of the faithful and does Marian Devotion have any space in this renewed Trinitarian emphasis?

Lumen Gentium, Chapter 8 - instead of a separate document on Mary, it was decided that the mystery of Mary should be presented in the Mystery of the Church

Dei Verbum — will Scripture studies support or hinder Marian Devotion?



After Vatican II

- ✿ *While some pastors attempted to purify Marian devotion so that it might more richly witness to Christ, others in theological, liturgical and academic circles used selected teachings of the Council to undermine Marian Devotion as if devotion to Mary were not part of the Catholic Tradition and intrinsic to Biblical teaching*
- ✿ *Against this, St. Paul VI proposed Marialis Cultus - in an effort to show that Marian was a great spiritual good for the Church.*
- ✿ *St. John Paul II builds on his predecessors legacy by showing in Mother of the Redeemer the role of Mary in Christ's work of Redemption and by recommending the Rosary in a apostolic letter in which he proposes new mysteries for this devotion.*
- ✿ *The number of apparitions around the world increases and significant conversion and spiritual renewal is attached the devotion these new apparitions solicit - while older apparition cites also multiplied the number of pilgrims visiting them each year.*



The Ever-Virgin Mother of God, Immaculately Conceived, Assumed into Heaven reveals Christ, prays for the Church and exemplifies the mystery of Christian life.

A summary of the great Marian Dogmas