THE ROSARY IN A YEAR

WITH FR. MARK-MARY AMES, CFR

PHASE 3: MEDITATING ON THE MYSTERIES

MEDITATING ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

When the Rosary "is prayed in an authentic way," said Pope Benedict XVI in 2008, "it contains within itself the healing power of the most holy name of Jesus." If we just rush through the Rosary, praying it does little good.

St. John Paul II offers this advice in Rosarium Virginis Mariae 12: "The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without this contemplative dimension, it would lose its meaning."

From the words of the prayers to the mysteries that feature events from the lives of Jesus and Mary, the Rosary is deeply rooted in the Bible. Due to this biblical foundation, one way you can practice the contemplative nature of the Rosary and build your "meditation muscles" is *lectio divina*.

Lectio divina ("divine reading") is a form of prayer in which we read the Scriptures in order to meditate on them and hear God's words to us. The Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,

meaning God is the author of Scripture. This means God can speak directly to us through Scripture. The Scriptures are intended to lead us into union with God, and *lectio divina* is an excellent way to seek union with God through praying with the Bible.

As we spend more time in prayer, asking God to guide us through his Word, we will have real, prayerful encounters with the Gospels, and it will be much more natural for our minds and hearts to contemplate the mysteries. We will be moved with greater ease to meditate on these mysteries as we are invited to do in the Rosary.

The Mysteries Using *Lectio Divina*

To help you begin using *lectio divina* in meditating with the Rosary, the Scriptures associated with the mysteries of the Rosary are a great place to start.

The Joyful Mysteries are familiar stories to many Catholics, but as mysteries, their fruit for meditation is inexhaustible. Today, try praying *lectio divina* with one of these Gospel passages:

The Annunciation: Luke 1:26–38

The Visitation: Luke 1:39–56

The Nativity: Luke 2:1–20

The Presentation: Luke 2:22–39

Finding of Jesus in the Temple: Luke 2:41–52

STEPS TO *LECTIO DIVINA*

1. Lectio
- Select a Gospel passage and read through it slowly.
- Pay attention to the narrative, asking, "What is this story about?"

2. Meditatio
- Read the passage again, letting your heart and mind wrestle with God's Word.
- See what words or phrases stand out to you and let them reverberate. If you feel called to do so, you can take this time to journal on the passage.
- What is the passage saying to you?

3. Oratio
- After reading, put your feelings from *meditatio* into words or a mental image and speak to God.
- What do you want to say to God? Take this moment to ask him for grace, redemption, or anything else you feel drawn to speak to him about.

4. Contemplatio
- Sometimes, *lectio divina* can lead to *contemplatio*, the feeling of the presence of God.
- There is no formula for *contemplatio*. It is a gift from God.
- Instead, turn your heart and mind to God and spend time simply gazing at the Lord and being with him.

5. Action
- After your prayer time has come to an end, ask yourself what concrete action you can take on anything you may have learned or felt during *lectio divina*.

Reflection and Contemplation

The next time you pray a Rosary, let your mind return to the time you spent meditating on the Scripture passage associated with the mystery. Use your prayer of *lectio divina* to form a blueprint for your Rosary meditation.

What stood out to you in the Scriptures? Did you have any insights? Ask God to speak to you through the mystery as you pray. Let your mind rest on these thoughts as you pray the words of the Hail Mary.

Make It Your Own

What stood out to you about your Rosary experience this week?

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The Rosary in a Year is a daily podcast, produced by Ascension and hosted by Fr. Mark-Mary Ames, CFR. It takes Catholics on a journey to form a lasting habit of prayer and gain tools to enter more deeply into meditation on the lives of Jesus and Mary through the Rosary. This bulletin was adapted from the podcast and materials that complement the podcast.