

The Rosary / De Rozenkrans

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Onderstaand een uitleg over de rozenkrans vertaald vanuit het engels.
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The Rosary / De Rozenkrans (vertaling vanuit engels naar Nederlands) <http://www.catholic.com/library/rosary.asp>
 Het woord rozenkrans komt vanuit het Latijn en betekend een slingerkrans van rozen, de roos is een van de bloemen welke gebruikt wordt als symbool van de Maagd Maria. Indien je zou vragen welk object het meest symbolisch is voor de Katholieke kerk, zou men waarschijnlijk zeggen "De rozenkrans natuurlijk." We zijn bekend met de volgende beelden: de stil prevelende lippen van de oude vrouw die de kralen door haar vingers laat glijden. De naar verhouding veel te grote rozenkrans bungelend vanaf de middel bij een oud nonnetje met een kap op. Of meer recentelijk de vrolijk decoratieve rozenkrans welke aan de achteruitkijkspiegel hangt. Na het tweede vaticaanse concilie verviel de rozenkrans in relatieve onbruik. Hetzelfde kan gezegd worden van de Maria-verering in zijn algemeenheid. Maar in de recente jaren is de rozenkrans weer helemaal terug aan het komen. En niet uitsluitend bij de Katholieken. Vele protestanten bidden nu de rozenkrans, en herkennen het als een wezenlijk bijbelse vorm van bidden, de gebeden komen immers voornamelijk vanuit de bijbel. De rozenkrans is een devotie ter ere van de maagd Maria. Het bestaat uit een aantal specifieke gebeden. Beginnend met de inleidende gebeden: een Geloofsbelijdenis, een Onze Vader (De Pater Noster of Gebed van de Heer), drie Wees Gegroettes (Ave Maria), een Eer aan de Vader (Gloria Patri). De Geloofsbelijdenis De Geloofsbelijdenis wordt ook wel het Apostel Credo genoemd, niet omdat het door de apostelen zelf was samengesteld, maar omdat het een expressie van hun onderricht is. De originele vorm van de geloofsbelijdenis werd in gebruik genomen omstreeks 125 na Christus, en de huidige vorm dateert van ongeveer 400. Het gaat als volgt:

Ik geloof in God, de almachtige Vader,
 Schepper van hemel en aarde.
 En in Jezus Christus, zijn enige Zoon, onze heer,
 die ontvangen is van de heilige Geest,
 geboren uit de Maagd Maria;
 die geleden heeft onder Pontius Pilatus,
 is gekruisigd, gestorven en begraven,
 die nedergedaald is ter helle,
 de derde dag verrezen uit de doden,
 die opgestegen is ten hemel,
 zit aan de rechterhand van God
 de almachtige Vader,
 vandaar zal Hij komen oordelen
 de levenden en de doden.

Ik geloof in de heilige Geest;
 de heilige katholieke kerk,
 de gemeenschap van de heiligen;
 de vergeving van de zonden;
 de verrijzenis van het lichaam;
 en het eeuwig leven. Amen. Traditioneel Protestanten kunnen de geloofsbelijdenis zonder verschillen opzeggen en er elke regel ervan menen, echter moeten ze een andere betekenis geven aan sommige regels dan bij de Katholieken die de geloofsbelijdenis samenstelden. Ondanks deze verschillen wordt de geloofsbelijdenis door Protestanten zonder weerzin overgenomen, ze zien het als een belichaming van christelijke basis-waarheden volgens hun opvatting. Het Onze Vader Het volgende gebed van de rozenkrans - het Onze Vader of de pater Noster (van de openingswoorden in het Latijn), ook bekend als het gebed van de Heer - is zelfs nog meer acceptabel voor Protestanten omdat Jezus het zelf aan zijn leerlingen leerde. Het wordt genoemd in de bijbel in twee enigzins verschillende versies (Mat. 6:9-13; Luk. 11:2-4). De versie van Mattheus is degene welke we opzeggen. Het Weesgegroetje Het volgende gebed van de rozenkrans, en meteen het gebed wat de kern van de devotie vormt, is het Weesgegroetje. Omdat het Weesgegroetje een gebed aan Maria is, wordt door veel Protestanten verondersteld dat het onbijbels is. Maar dit is eigenlijk het tegenovergestelde. Laten we er eens kijken. Het gebed begint zo; "Wees gegroet Maria vol van genaden, de heer is met u." Dit is niets anders dan de woorden waarmee de engel Gabriel Maria begroette in Lukas 1:28. Het volgende stuk gaat als volgt: "Gij zijt de gezegende onder de vrouwen, en gezegend is Jezus de Vrucht van uw schoot." Dit was exact wat Maria's nicht Elisabeth zei tegen haar in Lukas 1:42. Het enigste wat toegevoegd is aan deze twee verzen zijn de namen van Jezus en Maria om duidelijk te maken over wie het handelt. Dus het eerste gedeelte van het Weesgegroetje is volledig bijbels. Het tweede stuk van het weesgegroet is niet uit de Schriften, maar het is volkomen bijbels in de gedachte waarin het is uitgedrukt. Er staat: "Heilige Maria, Moeder van God bid voor ons zondaars, nu en in het uur van

onze dood. Amen." Laten we eens kijken naar de eerste woorden. Sommige Protestanten hebben er iets op tegen om te zeggen "Heilige Maria" want ze beweren dat Maria een zondaar was zoals de rest van ons. Maar Maria was een Christen (de eerste Christen, eigenlijk de eerste die Jezus accepteerde; vlg. Lukas 1:45), en de Bijbel beschrijft Christenen in het algemeen als heilig. Feitelijk worden ze sinten genoemd, wat betekent "de heiligen" (Eph. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:2). Verder als de moeder van Jezus Christus, de Geïncarneerde Tweede Persoon van de Gezegende Drie-eenheid, Maria was zeker een zeer heilige vrouw. Sommige Protestanten verwerpen de titel "Moeder van God", maar volstaat het om te zeggen dat de titel niet betekent dat Maria ouder is dan God; het betekent de persoon die uit haar is geboren was een goddelijk persoon. (Jezus is een persoon, de goddelijke, maar heeft twee naturen die van goddelijk en de menselijke; het is niet correct om te zeggen dat hij een menselijk persoon is.) De ontkenning dat Maria God in haar schot droeg is een ketterij bekend als Nestorianisme (wat beweerd dat Jezus was twee personen, een goddelijke en een menselijke), welke is veroordeeld sinds de vroege vierde eeuw en welke de Gereformeerde en Protestantse Bijbelwetenschappers altijd hebben verworpen. Andere Voorspraak? De meest problematische regel voor niet-Katholieken is meestal het laatste: "bid voor ons zondaars nu en in het uur van onze dood." Veel niet-Katholieken denken dat zo'n verzoek de leer van 1 Timothëus 2:5 ontkennen "Want er is een God, er is ook een Middelaar Gods en der mensen, de Mens Christus Jezus." Maar in de voorgaande vier verzen (1 Timothëus 2:1-4), Geeft Paulus instructies aan Christenen om te bidden voor elkaar, daarmee bedoelend dat er geen tussenkomst is met de voorspraak van Christus: "Ik dring erop aan dat gebeden, petitie en dankbetuigingen voor iedereen zijn gemaakt. Dit is goed en naar de wil van God onze Redder." We weten deze gebeden te bidden voor anderen, verwijst naar de heiligen in de hemel die, zoals men in de bijbel openbaart, voor ons door onze gebeden te offeren aan God: De vierentwintig ouderen vielen neer voor het Lam, elk hield een harp vast en met gouden bokalen vol met wierrook, welk de gebeden zijn van de heiligen.

Eer aan de Vader Het vierde gebed van de rozenkrans is het Eer aan de Vader, soms ook het Gloria of Gloria Patri genoemd. De laatste twee namen zijn genomen uit de openingswoorden van het latijnse versie van het gebed, welk in het Nederlands is: "Eer aan de Vader, de Zoon en de Heilige Geest. Zoals het was in het begin nu en in de eeuwen der eeuwen. Amen." Het Eer aan de Vader is een kleine hymne van lofprijzingen waarin alle Christenen zich kunnen vinden. Het is in gebruik sinds de vierde eeuw (doch de huidige vorm is uit de zevende eeuw) en wordt traditioneel opgezegd na het einde van elke Psalm in de Goddelijke Office.

Het afsluitende Gebed We hebben alle beginnende gebeden van de rozenkrans gehad. Alle behalve de laatste, welke meestal het Wees gegroet Koningin (Save Regina) soms ook wel genoemd Gegroet Heilige Koningin. Het is het meest ... gebed om Maria te prijzen, na het Weesgegroeitje zelf, het is samengesteld aan het eind van de elfde eeuw. Het gaat als volgt: (er zijn diverse varianten) "Wees gegroet Koningin, Moeder van barmhartigheid wees gegroet..... Dus dat zijn de gebeden van de rozenkrans. Tussen de inleidende gebeden en de sluitgebeden zit het vlees van de rozenkrans: de tientjes. Elk tientje - er zijn vijftien tientjes in een volle rozenkrans (wat ongeveer vijfenveertig minuten kost om op te zeggen)- is samengesteld uit tien Weesgegroeitjes. Elk tientje wordt voorafgegaan door een Onze Vader en besloten met een Eer aan de Vader, dus bestaat een tientje eigenlijk uit twaalf gebeden. Elk tientje neemt men een mysterie (geheim) in overweging uit het leven van Jezus of zijn moeder. Hier refereert het woord mysterie aan de waarheid van het geloof, niet iets ongeloofwaardigs als in de zin, "het is een compleet mysterie voor me!" De vijftien mysteries (geheimen) zijn verdeeld in drie groepen van vijf: De vreugdevolle, De bedroefde geheimen, en de glorievolle geheimen. Wanneer mensen zeggen "we doen een rozenhoedje" betekend dit meestal een van de sets van vijf (wat ongeveer vijftien minuten kost) in plaats van alle vijftien geheimen. Laten we eens naar die geheimen kijken. Overwegingen zijn de sleutel Eerst moeten we begrijpen dat het overwegingen (meditaties) zijn. Wanneer Katholieken de twaalf gebeden opzeggen die een tientje van de rozenkrans vormen, mediteren ze op het geheim dat verbonden is met dat tientje. Indien ze slechts de gebeden opzeggen, of dat nu hardop of stil wordt gedaan, ze missen de essentie van de rozenkrans. Het is niet alleen het opzeggen van gebeden, maar een overweging en meditatie van de genade van God. Critici die niet op de hoogte zijn van het meditatiedeel, veronderstellen dat de rozenkrans saai is, nutteloos herhalend, zonder betekenis, en hun kritiek lijkt gerechtvaardigd als je de rozenkrans tot een formule reduceert. Christus verbood herhaling zonder betekenis (Matheus 6:7), maar de Bijbel zelf schrijft sommige gebeden voor die herhaling impliceren. Neem bijvoorbeeld Psalmen 136, welke een litanie is (een gebed met een terugkomend refrein) bedoeld om in de Joodse Tempel te worden gezongen. In de psalm het refrein "Zijn genade duurt tot in eeuwigheid." Soms begint het refrein in Psalmen 136 voordat een zin wordt beëindigd, wat betekent dat het meer repeterend is dan de rozenkrans, hoewel dit gebed direct onder de inspiratie van God werd geschreven. Het is het mediteren op de geheimen waardoor de rozenkrans zijn blijvende kracht heeft. Dit zijn de vreugdevolle geheimen: de boodschap (Lucas 1:26-38), het bezoek (Lucas 1:40-56), de geboorte (Lucas 2:6-20), het opdragen van Jezus in de Tempel (Lucas 2:21-39), het weder vinden van het kind Jezus in de Tempel (Lucas 2:41-51). Dan volgen de droevige geheimen: De doodstrijd in het hof van Gethsemanië (Matheus 26:36-46), de geseling (Matheus 27:26), de doornenkroon (Matheus 27:29), Het dragen van het kruis (Lucas 23:26-32), en de kruisiging (Lucas 23:33-46). De laatste zijn de glorieuze geheimen: de wederopstanding (Lucas 24:1-12), de hemelvaart (Lucas 24:50-51), het neerdalen van de Heilige Geest (Handelingen 2:1-4), de ten Hemel opneming van Maria (Openbaringen 12), en haar kroning in de Hemel (Openbaringen 12:1). Met uitzondering van de laatste twee, is elk geheim uitdrukkelijk uit de Bijbel. Het klopt dat de ten Hemel opneming en de kroning van Maria niet vernoemd wordt in de Bijbel, echter het wordt ook niet bestreden, dus er is geen reden om ze te verwerpen. Gezien de bijbelse basis van de meeste geheimen, is het geen wonder dat vele Protestanten, zodra zij eenmaal de overwegingen begrijpen die de essentie van de rozenkrans zijn, het zonder problemen opnemen als toewijding. Wij hebben nu de gebeden bekeken welke voorkomen in de rozenkrans en de geheimen waaruit ze werden gevormd. Zie hoe het historisch werd gevormd. Het Geheim van de Paternoster Er wordt in het algemeen gezegd dat St. Dominic, de stichter van de Orde van Preachers (de Dominicanen), de rozenkrans instelde. Dit is niet zo. Bepaalde delen van de rozenkrans dateerden van voor Dominic; anderen deden zich slechts na zijn dood voor. De eeuwen voor Dominic, waren monniken begonnen alle 150 psalmen op een regelmatige basis te

reciteren. Naarmate de jaren voorbijgingen, was men van mening dat de lekenbroeders, die als bekeerling bekend waren, één of andere eigen vorm van gebed zouden moeten hebben. Zij verschilden van de koormonniken, en een belangrijkste onderscheid was dat zij ongeletterd waren. Aangezien zij niet de psalmen konden lezen, konden zij niet samen met de monniken reciteren. Zij hadden een gebed nodig wat men zich makkelijk herinnerd. Het eerst gekozen gebed was het Onze Vader, en, afhankelijk van omstandigheden, werd het gezegd of vijftig of honderd keer. Deze bekeerlingen gebruikte rozenkransen om de telling bij te houden, en de rozenkransen werden toen Paternosters ("Onze Vaders") genoemd. In Engeland was er een gilde van vaklieden die van belang was, de leden welke deze rozenkransen maakten. In Londen kunt u een straat vinden, genoemd Paternoster Row, die herinnert aan het gebied waar deze vaklieden werkten. De rozenkransen werden oorspronkelijk gebruikt om Onze Vaders te tellen. Tijdens de twaalfde eeuw werden Weesgegroetjes gebruikt, of feitelijk de eerste helft van wat wij nu Weesgegroetjes noemen. (De tweede helft werd wat later toegevoegd.) Zowel Katholieken als niet-katholieken, naarmate men steeds meer leert over de rozenkrans door er frequenter gebruik van te maken, merkten hoe men door de meditaties/overwegingen de zoete geur van niet alleen de Moeder van God maar ook van Christus zelf gaat waarnemen.

De originele engelse tekst Bron: <http://www.catholic.com/library/rosary.asp> The Rosary The word rosary comes from Latin and means a garland of roses, the rose being one of the flowers used to symbolize the Virgin Mary. If you were to ask what object is most emblematic of Catholics, people would probably say, "The rosary, of course." We're familiar with the images: the silently moving lips of the old woman fingering her beads; the oversized rosary hanging from the waist of the wimpled nun; more recently, the merely decorative rosary hanging from the rearview mirror. After Vatican II the rosary fell into relative disuse. The same is true for Marian devotions as a whole. But in recent years the rosary has made a comeback, and not just among Catholics. Many Protestants now say the rosary, recognizing it as a truly biblical form of prayer—after all, the prayers that comprise it come mainly from the Bible. The rosary is a devotion in honor of the Virgin Mary. It consists of a set number of specific prayers. First are the introductory prayers: one Apostles' Creed (Credo), one Our Father (the Pater Noster or the Lord's Prayer), three Hail Mary's (Ave's), one Glory Be (Gloria Patri). The Apostles' Creed The Apostles' Creed is so called not because it was composed by the apostles themselves, but because it expresses their teachings. The original form of the creed came into use around A.D. 125, and the present form dates from the 400s. It reads this way: "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. The third day he arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. From thence he shall come 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 the life everlasting. Amen." Traditional Protestants are able to recite the Apostles' Creed without qualms, meaning every line of it, though to some lines they must give meanings different from those given by Catholics, who composed the creed. For instance, we refer to "the holy Catholic Church," meaning a particular, identifiable Church on earth. Protestants typically re-interpret this to refer to an "invisible church" consisting of all "true believers" in Jesus. Protestants, when they say the prayer, refer to the (lower-cased) "holy catholic church," using "catholic" merely in the sense of "universal," not implying any connection with the (upper-case) Catholic Church, which is based in Rome. (This is despite the fact that the term "Catholic" was already used to refer to a particular, visible Church by the second century and had already lost its broader meaning of "universal"). Despite these differences Protestants embrace the Apostles' Creed without reluctance, seeing it as embodying basic Christian truths as they understand them. The Lord's Prayer The next prayer in the rosary—Our Father or the Pater Noster (from its opening words in Latin), also known as the Lord's Prayer—is even more acceptable to Protestants because Jesus himself taught it to his disciples. It is given in the Bible in two slightly different versions (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). The one given in Matthew is the one we say. (We won't reproduce it here. All Christians should have it memorized.) The Hail Mary The next prayer in the rosary, and the prayer which is really at the center of the devotion, is the Hail Mary. Since the Hail Mary is a prayer to Mary, many Protestants assume it's unbiblical. Quite the contrary, actually. Let's look at it. The prayer begins, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." This is nothing other than the greeting the angel Gabriel gave Mary in Luke 1:28 (Confraternity Version). The next part reads this way: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." This was exactly what Mary's cousin Elizabeth said to her in Luke 1:42. The only thing that has been added to these two verses are the names "Jesus" and "Mary," to make clear who is being referred to. So the first part of the Hail Mary is entirely biblical. The second part of the Hail Mary is not taken straight from Scripture, but it is entirely biblical in the thoughts it expresses. It reads: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." Let's look at the first words. Some Protestants do object to saying "Holy Mary" because they claim Mary was a sinner like the rest of us. But Mary was a Christian (the first Christian, actually, the first to accept Jesus; cf. Luke 1:45), and the Bible describes Christians in general as holy. In fact, they are called saints, which means "holy ones" (Eph. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:2). Furthermore, as the mother of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Mary was certainly a very holy woman. Some Protestants object to the title "Mother of God," but suffice it to say that the title doesn't mean Mary is older than God; it means the person who was born of her was a divine person, not a human person. (Jesus is one person, the divine, but has two natures, the divine and the human; it is incorrect to say he is a human person.) The denial that Mary had God in her womb is a heresy known as Nestorianism (which claims that Jesus was two persons, one divine and one human), which has been condemned since the early 400s and which the Reformers and Protestant Bible scholars have always rejected. Another Mediator? The most problematic line for non-Catholics is usually the last: "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Many

non-Catholics think such a request denies the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." But in the preceding four verses (1 Tim. 2:1-4), Paul instructs Christians to pray for each other, meaning it cannot interfere with Christ's mediatorship: "I urge that prayers, supplications, petitions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone. . . . This is good, and pleasing to God our Savior." We know this exhortation to pray for others applies to the saints in heaven who, as Revelation 5:8 reveals, intercede for us by offering our prayers to God: "The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The Glory Be The fourth prayer found in the rosary is the Glory Be, sometimes called the Gloria or Gloria Patri. The last two names are taken from the opening words of the Latin version of the prayer, which in English reads: "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." The Gloria is a brief hymn of praise in which all Christians can join. It has been used since the fourth century (though its present form is from the seventh) and traditionally has been recited at the end of each Psalm in the Divine Office.

The Closing Prayer We've covered the opening prayers of the rosary. In fact, we've covered all the prayers of the rosary except the very last one, which is usually the Hail Queen (Salve Regina), sometimes called the Hail Holy Queen. It's the most commonly recited prayer in praise of Mary, after the Hail Mary itself, and was composed at the end of the eleventh century. It generally reads like this (there are several variants): "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 vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary." So those are the prayers of the rosary. Between the introductory prayers and the concluding prayer is the meat of the rosary: the decades. Each decade—there are fifteen in a full rosary (which takes about forty-five minutes to say)—is composed of ten Hail Marys. Each decade is bracketed between an Our Father and a Glory Be, so each decade actually has twelve prayers. Each decade is devoted to a mystery regarding the life of Jesus or his mother. Here the word mystery refers to a truth of the faith, not to something incomprehensible, as in the line, "It's a mystery to me!" The fifteen mysteries are divided into three groups of five: the Joyful, the Sorrowful, the Glorious. When people speak of "saying the rosary" they usually mean saying any set of five (which takes about fifteen minutes) rather than the recitation of all fifteen mysteries. Let's look at the mysteries.

Meditation the Key First we must understand that they are meditations. When Catholics recite the twelve prayers that form a decade of the rosary, they meditate on the mystery associated with that decade. If they merely recite the prayers, whether vocally or silently, they're missing the essence of the rosary. It isn't just a recitation of prayers, but a meditation on the grace of God. Critics, not knowing about the meditation part, imagine the rosary must be boring, uselessly repetitious, meaningless, and their criticism carries weight if you reduce the rosary to a formula. Christ forbade meaningless repetition (Matt. 6:7), but the Bible itself prescribes some prayers that involve repetition. Look at Psalms 136, which is a litany (a prayer with a recurring refrain) meant to be sung in the Jewish Temple. In the psalm the refrain is "His mercy endures forever." Sometimes in Psalms 136 the refrain starts before a sentence is finished, meaning it is more repetitious than the rosary, though this prayer was written directly under the inspiration of God. It is the meditation on the mysteries that gives the rosary its staying power. The Joyful Mysteries are these: the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), the Visitation (Luke 1:40-56), the Nativity (Luke 2:6-20), the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:21-39), and the Finding of the child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-51). Then come the Sorrowful Mysteries: the Agony in the Garden (Matt. 26:36-46), the Scourging (Matt. 27:26), the Crowning with Thorns (Matt. 27:29), the Carrying of the Cross (Luke 23:26-32), and the Crucifixion (Luke 23:33-46). The final Mysteries are the Glorious: the Resurrection (Luke 24:1-12), the Ascension (Luke 24:50-51), the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), the Assumption of Mary into heaven (Rev. 12), and her Coronation (cf. Rev. 12:1). With the exception of the last two, each mystery is explicitly scriptural. True, the Assumption and Coronation of Mary are not explicitly stated in the Bible, but they are not contrary to it, so there is no reason to reject them out of hand. Given the scriptural basis of most of the mysteries, it's little wonder that many Protestants, once they understand the meditations that are the essence of the rosary, happily take it up as a devotion. We've looked at the prayers found in the rosary and the mysteries around which it is formed. Now let's see how it was formed historically.

The Secret of Paternoster Row It's commonly said that St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans), instituted the rosary. Not so. Certain parts of the rosary predated Dominic; others arose only after his death. Centuries before Dominic, monks had begun to recite all 150 psalms on a regular basis. As time went on, it was felt that the lay brothers, known as the conversi, should have some form of prayer of their own. They were distinct from the choir monks, and a chief distinction was that they were illiterate. Since they couldn't read the psalms, they couldn't recite them with the monks. They needed an easily remembered prayer. The prayer first chosen was the Our Father, and, depending on circumstances, it was said either fifty or a hundred times. These conversi used rosaries to keep count, and the rosaries were known then as Paternosters ("Our Fathers"). In England there arose a craftsmen's guild of some importance, the members of which made these rosaries. In London you can find a street, named Paternoster Row, which preserves the memory of the area where these craftsmen worked. The rosaries that originally were used to count Our Fathers came to be used, during the twelfth century, to count Hail Marys—or, more properly, the first half of what we now call the Hail Mary. (The second half was added some time later.) Both Catholics and non-Catholics, as they learn more about the rosary and make more frequent use of it, come to see how its meditations bring to mind the sweet fragrance not only of the Mother of God, but of Christ himself.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13184b.htm> The Rosary I. IN THE WESTERN CHURCH

"The Rosary", says the Roman Breviary, "is a certain form of prayer wherein we say fifteen decades or tens of Hail Marys

with an Our Father between each ten, while at each of these fifteen decades we recall successively in pious meditation one of the mysteries of our Redemption." The same lesson for the Feast of the Holy Rosary informs us that when the Albigensian heresy was devastating the country of Toulouse, St. Dominic earnestly besought the help of Our Lady and was instructed by her, so tradition asserts, to preach the Rosary among the people as an antidote to heresy and sin. From that time forward this manner of prayer was "most wonderfully published abroad and developed [promulgari augerique coepit] by St. Dominic whom different Supreme Pontiffs have in various past ages of their apostolic letters declared to be the institutor and author of the same devotion." That many popes have so spoken is undoubtedly true, and amongst the rest we have a series of encyclicals, beginning in 1883, issued by Pope Leo XIII, which, while commending this devotion to the faithful in the most earnest terms, assumes the institution of the Rosary by St. Dominic to be a fact historically established. Of the remarkable fruits of this devotion and of the extraordinary favours which have been granted to the world, as is piously believed, through this means, something will be said under the headings FEAST OF THE ROSARY and CONFRATERNITIES OF THE ROSARY. We will confine ourselves here to the controverted question of its history, a matter which both in the middle of the eighteenth century and again in recent years has attracted much attention.

Let us begin with certain facts which will not be contested. It is tolerably obvious that whenever any prayer has to be repeated a large number of times recourse is likely to be had to some mechanical apparatus less troublesome than counting upon the fingers. In almost all countries, then, we meet with something in the nature of prayer-counters or rosary beads. Even in ancient Nineveh a sculpture has been found thus described by Lavard in his "Monuments" (I, plate 7): "Two winged females standing before the sacred tree in the attitude of prayer; they lift the extended right hand and hold in the left a garland or rosary." However this may be, it is certain that among the Mohammedans the Tasbih or bead-string, consisting of 33, 66, or 99 beads, and used for counting devotionally the names of Allah, has been in use for many centuries. Marco Polo, visiting the King of Malabar in the thirteenth century, found to his surprise that that monarch employed a rosary of 104 (? 108) precious stones to count his prayers. St. Francis Xavier and his companions were equally astonished to see that rosaries were universally familiar to the Buddhists of Japan. Among the monks of the Greek Church we hear of the kombologion, or komboschoinion, a cord with a hundred knots used to count genuflexions and signs of the cross. Similarly, beside the mummy of a Christian ascetic, Thais, of the fourth century, recently disinterred at Antinöe in Egypt, was found a sort of cribbage-board with holes, which has generally been thought to be an apparatus for counting prayers, of which Palladius and other ancient authorities have left us an account. A certain Paul the Hermit, in the fourth century, had imposed upon himself the task of repeating three hundred prayers, according to a set form, every day. To do this, he gathered up three hundred pebbles and threw one away as each prayer was finished (Palladius, Hist. Laus., xx; Butler, II, 63). It is probable that other ascetics who also numbered their prayers by hundreds adopted some similar expedient. (Cf. "Vita S. Godrici", cviii.) Indeed when we find a papal privilege addressed to the monks of St. Apollinaris in Classe requiring them, in gratitude for the pope's benefactions, to say Kyrie eleison three hundred times twice a day (see the privilege of Hadrian I, A.D. 782, in Jaffe-Löwenfeld, n. 2437), one would infer that some counting apparatus must almost necessarily have been used for the purpose.

But there were other prayers to be counted more nearly connected with the Rosary than Kyrie eleisons. At an early date among the monastic orders the practice had established itself not only of offering Masses, but of saying vocal prayers as a suffrage for their deceased brethren. For this purpose the private recitation of the 150 psalms, or of 50 psalms, the third part, was constantly enjoined. Already in A. D. 800 we learn from the compact between St. Gall and Reichenau ("Mon. Germ. Hist.: Confrat.", Piper, 140) that for each deceased brother all the priests should say one Mass and also fifty psalms. A charter in Kemble (Cod. Dipl., I, 290) prescribes that each monk is to sing two fifties (twa fiftig) for the souls of certain benefactors, while each priest is to sing two Masses and each deacon to read two Passions. But as time went on, and the conversi, or lay brothers, most of them quite illiterate, became distinct from the choir monks, it was felt that they also should be required to substitute some simple form of prayer in place of the psalms to which their more educated brethren were bound by rule. Thus we read in the "Ancient Customs of Cluny", collected by Udalrio in 1096, that when the death of any brother at a distance was announced, every priest was to offer Mass, and every non-priest was either to say fifty psalms or to repeat fifty times the Paternoster ("quicumque sacerdos est cantet missam pro eo, et qui non est sacerdos quinquaginta psalmos aut toties orationem dominicam", P. L., CXLIX, 776). Similarly among the Knights Templar, whose rule dates from about 1128, the knights who could not attend choir were required to say the Lord's Prayer 57 times in all and on the death of any of the brethren they had to say the Pater Noster a hundred times a day for a week.

To count these accurately there is every reason to believe that already in the eleventh and twelfth centuries a practice had come in of using pebbles, berries, or discs of bone threaded on a string. It is in any case certain that the Countess Godiva of Coventry (c. 1075) left by will to the statue of Our Lady in a certain monastery "the circlet of precious stones which she had threaded on a cord in order that by fingerling them one after another she might count her prayers exactly" (Malmesbury, "Gesta Pont.", Rolls Series 311). Another example seems to occur in the case of St. Rosalia (A. D. 1160),

in whose tomb similar strings of beads were discovered. Even more important is the fact that such strings of beads were known throughout the Middle Ages -- and in some Continental tongues are known to this day -- as "Paternosters". The evidence for this is overwhelming and comes from every part of Europe. Already in the thirteenth century the manufacturers of these articles, who were known as "paternosterers", almost everywhere formed a recognized craft guild of considerable importance. The "Livre des métiers" of Stephen Boyleau, for example, supplies full information regarding the four guilds of patenôtiers in Paris in the year 1268, while Paternoster Row in London still preserves the memory of the street in which their English craft-fellows congregated. Now the obvious inference is that an appliance which was persistently called a "Paternoster", or in Latin *fila de paternoster*, *numeralia de paternoster*, and so on, had, at least originally, been designed for counting Our Fathers. This inference, drawn out and illustrated with much learning by Father T. Esser, O.P., in 1897, becomes a practical certainty when we remember that it was only in the middle of the twelfth century that the Hail Mary came at all generally into use as a formula of devotion. It is morally impossible that Lady Godiva's circlet of jewels could have been intended to count Ave Marias. Hence there can be no doubt that the strings of prayerbeads were called "paternosters" because for a long time they were principally employed to number repetitions of the Lord's Prayer.

When, however, the Hail Mary came into use, it appears that from the first the consciousness that it was in its own nature a salutation rather than a prayer induced a fashion of repeating it many times in succession, accompanied by genuflexions or some other external act of reverence. Just as happens nowadays in the firing of salutes, or in the applause given to a public performer, or in the rounds of cheers evoked among school-boys by an arrival or departure, so also then the honour paid by such salutations was measured by numbers and continuance. Further, since the recitation of the Psalms divided into fifties was, as innumerable documents attest, the favourite form of devotion for religious and learned persons, so those who were simple or much occupied loved, by the repetition of fifty, a hundred, or a hundred and fifty were salutations of Our Lady, to feel that they were imitating the practice of God's more exalted servants. In any case it is certain that in the course of the twelfth century and before the birth of St. Dominic, the practice of reciting 50 or 150 Ave Marias had become generally familiar. The most conclusive evidence of this is furnished by the "Mary-legends", or stories of Our Lady, which obtained wide circulation at this epoch. The story of Eulalia, in particular, according to which a client of the Blessed Virgin who had been wont to say a hundred and fifty Aves was bidden by her to say only fifty, but more slowly, has been shown by Mussafia (*Marien-legenden*, Pts I, ii) to be unquestionably of early date. Not less conclusive is the account given of St. Albert (d. 1140) by his contemporary biographer, who tells us: "A hundred times a day he bent his knees, and fifty times he prostrated himself raising his body again by his fingers and toes, while he repeated at every genuflexion: 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'" This was the whole of the Hail Mary as then said, and the fact of all the words being set down rather implies that the formula had not yet become universally familiar. Not less remarkable is the account of a similar devotional exercise occurring in the Corpus Christi manuscripts of the Ancrén Riwe. This text, declared by Kölbing to have been written in the middle of the twelfth century (*Englische Studien*, 1885, P. 116), can in any case be hardly later than 1200. The passage in question gives directions how fifty Aves are to be said divided into sets of ten, with prostrations and other marks of reverence. (See *The Month*, July, 1903.) When we find such an exercise recommended to a little group of anchorites in a corner of England, twenty years before any Dominican foundation was made in this country, it seems difficult to resist the conclusion that the custom of reciting fifty or a hundred and fifty Aves had grown familiar, independently of, and earlier than, the preaching of St. Dominic. On the other hand, the practice of meditating on certain definite mysteries, which has been rightly described as the very essence of the Rosary devotion, seems to have only arisen long after the date of St. Dominic's death. It is difficult to prove a negative, but Father T. Esser, O.P., has shown (in the periodical "Der Katholik", of Mainz, Oct., Nov., Dec., 1897) that the introduction of this meditation during the recitation of the Aves was rightly attributed to a certain Carthusian, Dominic the Prussian. It is in any case certain that at the close of the fifteenth century the utmost possible variety of methods of meditating prevailed, and that the fifteen mysteries now generally accepted were not uniformly adhered to even by the Dominicans themselves. (See Schmitz, "Rosenkranzgebet", p. 74; Esser in "Der Katholik" for 1904-6.) To sum up, we have positive evidence that both the invention of the beads as a counting apparatus and also the practice of repeating a hundred and fifty Aves cannot be due to St. Dominic, because they are both notably older than his time. Further, we are assured that the meditating upon the mysteries was not introduced until two hundred years after his death. What then, we are compelled to ask, is there left of which St. Dominic may be called the author?

These positive reasons for distrusting the current tradition might in a measure be ignored as archaeological refinements, if there were any satisfactory evidence to show that St. Dominic had identified himself with the pre-existing Rosary and become its apostle. But here we are met with absolute silence. Of the eight or nine early Lives of the saint, not one makes the faintest allusion to the Rosary. The witnesses who gave evidence in the cause of his canonization are equally reticent. In the great collection of documents accumulated by Fathers Balme and Lelaidier, O.P., in their "Cartulaire de St. Dominique" the question is studiously ignored. The early constitutions of the different provinces of the order have been examined, and many of them printed, but no one has found any reference to this devotion. We possess hundreds, even thousands, of manuscripts containing devotional treatises, sermons, chronicles, Saints' lives, etc., written by the Friars Preachers between 1220 and 1450; but no single verifiable passage has yet been produced which speaks of the

Rosary as instituted by St. Dominic or which even makes much of the devotion as one specially dear to his children. The charters and other deeds of the Dominican convents for men and women, as M. Jean Guiraud points out with emphasis in his edition of the *Cartulaire of La Prouille* (I, cccxxviii), are equally silent. Neither do we find any suggestion of a connection between St. Dominic and the Rosary in the paintings and sculptures of these two and a half centuries. Even the tomb of St. Dominic at Bologna and the numberless frescoes by Fra Angelico representing the brethren of his order ignore the Rosary completely.

Impressed by this conspiracy of silence, the Bollandists, on trying to trace to its source the origin of the current tradition, found that all the clues converged upon one point, the preaching of the Dominican Alan de Rupe about the years 1470-75. He it undoubtedly was who first suggested the idea that the devotion of "Our Lady's Psalter" (a hundred and fifty Hail Marys) was instituted or revived by St. Dominic. Alan was a very earnest and devout man, but, as the highest authorities admit, he was full of delusions, and based his revelations on the imaginary testimony of writers that never existed (see Quétif and Echard, "Scriptores O.P.", 1, 849). His preaching, however, was attended with much success. The Rosary Confraternities, organized by him and his colleagues at Douai, Cologne, and elsewhere had great vogue, and led to the printing of many books, all more or less impregnated with the ideas of Alan. Indulgences were granted for the good work that was thus being done and the documents conceding these indulgences accepted and repeated, as was natural in that uncritical age, the historical data which had been inspired by Alan's writings and which were submitted according to the usual practice by the promoters of the confraternities themselves. It was in this way that the tradition of Dominican authorship grew up. The first Bulls speak of this authorship with some reserve: "Prout in historiis legitur" says Leo X in the earliest of all. "Pastoris aeterni" 1520; but many of the later popes were less guarded.

Two considerations strongly support the view of the Rosary tradition just expounded. The first is the gradual surrender of almost every notable piece that has at one time or another been relied upon to vindicate the supposed claims of St. Dominic. Tournon and Alban Butler appealed to the Memoirs of a certain Luminosi de Aposa who professed to have heard St. Dominic preach at Bologna, but these Memoirs have long ago been proved to a forgery. Danzas, Von Löe and others attached much importance to a fresco at Muret; but the fresco is not now in existence, and there is good reason for believing that the rosary once seen in that fresco was painted in at a later date ("The Month" Feb. 1901, p. 179). Mamachi, Esser, Walsh, and Von Löe and others quote some alleged contemporary verses about Dominic in connection with a crown of roses; the original manuscript has disappeared, and it is certain that the writers named have printed Dominicus where Benoist, the only person who has seen the manuscript, read Dominus. The famous will of Anthony Sers, which professed to leave a bequest to the Confraternity of the Rosary at Palencia in 1221, was put forward as a conclusive piece of testimony by Mamachi; but it is now admitted by Dominican authorities to be a forgery ("The Irish Rosary, Jan., 1901, p. 92). Similarly, a supposed reference to the subject by Thomas à Kempis in the "Chronicle of Mount St. Agnes" is a pure blunder ("The Month", Feb., 1901, p. 187). With this may be noted the change in tone observable of late in authoritative works of reference. In the "Kirchliches Handlexikon" of Munich and in the last edition of Herder's "Konversationslexikon" no attempt is made to defend the tradition which connects St. Dominic personally with the origin of the Rosary. Another consideration which cannot be developed is the multitude of conflicting legends concerning the origin of this devotion of "Our Lady's Psalter" which prevailed down to the end of the fifteenth century, as well as the early diversity of practice in the manner of its recitation. These facts agree ill with the supposition that it took its rise in a definite revelation and was jealously watched over from the beginning by one of the most learned and influential of the religious orders. No doubt can exist that the immense diffusion of the Rosary and its confraternities in modern times and the vast influence it has exercised for good are mainly due to the labours and the prayers of the sons of St. Dominic, but the historical evidence serves plainly to show that their interest in the subject was only awakened in the last years of the fifteenth century.

That the Rosary is pre-eminently the prayer of the people adapted alike for the use of simple and learned is proved not only by the long series of papal utterances by which it has been commended to the faithful but by the daily experience of all who are familiar with it. The objection so often made against its "vain repetitions" is felt by none but those who have failed to realize how entirely the spirit of the exercise lies in the meditation upon the fundamental mysteries of our faith. To the initiated the words of the angelical salutation form only a sort of half-conscious accompaniment, a bourdon which we may liken to the "Holy, Holy, Holy" of the heavenly choirs and surely not in itself meaningless. Neither can it be necessary to urge that the freest criticism of the historical origin of the devotion, which involves no point of doctrine, is compatible with a full appreciation of the devotional treasures which this pious exercise brings within the reach of all. As regards the origin of the name, the word *rosarius* means a garland or bouquet of roses, and it was not unfrequently used in a figurative sense -- e.g. as the title of a book, to denote an anthology or collection of extracts. An early legend which after travelling all over Europe penetrated even to Abyssinia connected this name with a story of Our Lady, who was seen to take rosebuds from the lips of a young monk when he was reciting Hail Marys and to weave them into a garland which she placed upon her head. A German metrical version of this story is still extant dating from the thirteenth century. The name "Our Lady's Psalter" can also be traced back to the same period. Corona or chaplet suggests the

same idea as rosarium. The old English name found in Chaucer and elsewhere was a "pair of beads", in which the word beadoriginally meant prayers.

II. IN THE GREEK CHURCH, CATHOLIC AND SCHISMATIC The custom of reciting prayers upon a string with knots or beads thereon at regular intervals has come down from the early days of Christianity, and is still practised in the Eastern as well as in the Western Church. It seems to have originated among the early monks and hermits who used a piece of heavy cord with knots tied at intervals upon which they recited their shorter prayers. This form of rosary is still used among the monks in the various Greek Churches, although archimandrites and bishops use a very ornamental form of rosary with costly beads. The rosary is conferred upon the Greek monk as a part of his investiture with the mandyas or full monastic habit, as the second step in the monastic life, and is called his "spiritual sword". This Oriental form of rosary is known in the Hellenic Greek Church as kombologion (chaplet), or komboschoinion (string of knots or beads), in the Russian Church as vervitza (string), chotki (chaplet), or liestovka (ladder), and in the Rumanian Church as matanie (reverence). The first use of the rosary in any general way was among the monks of the Orient. Our everyday name of "beads" for it is simply the Old Saxon word bede (a prayer) which has been transferred to the instrument used in reciting the prayer, while the word rosary is an equally modern term. The intercourse of the Western peoples of the Latin Rite with those of the Eastern Rite at the beginning of the Crusades caused the practice of saying prayers upon knots or beads to become widely diffused among the monastic houses of the Latin Church, although the practice had been observed in some instances before that date. On the other hand, the recitation of the Rosary, as practised in the West, has not become general in the Eastern Churches; there it has still retained its original form as a monastic exercise of devotion, and is but little known or used among the laity, while even the secular clergy seldom use it in their devotions. Bishops, however, retain the rosary, as indicating that they have risen from the monastic state, even though they are in the world governing their dioceses.

The rosary used in the present Greek Orthodox Church -- whether in Russia or in the East -- is quite different in form from that used in the Latin Church. The use of the prayer-knots or prayer-beads originated from the fact that monks, according to the rule of St. Basil, the only monastic rule known to the Greek Rite, were enjoined by their founder to pray without ceasing" (I Thess., v, 17; Luke, 1), and as most of the early monks were laymen, engaged often in various forms of work and in many cases without sufficient education to read the prescribed lessons, psalms, and prayers of the daily office, the rosary was used by them as a means of continually reciting their prayers. At the beginning and at the end of each prayer said by the monk upon each knot or bead he makes the "great reverence" (he megale metanoia), bending down to the ground, so that the recitation of the rosary is often known as a metania. The rosary used among the Greeks of Greece, Turkey, and the East usually consists of one hundred beads without any distinction of great or little ones, while the Old Slavic, or Russian, rosary, generally consists of 103 beads, separated in irregular sections by four large beads, so that the first large bead is followed by 17 small ones, the second large bead by 33 small ones, the third by 40 small ones, and the fourth by 12 small ones, with an additional one added at the end. The two ends of a Russian rosary are often bound together for a short distance, so that the lines of beads run parallel (hence the name ladder used for the rosary), and they finish with a three-cornered ornament often adorned with a tassel or other finial, corresponding to the cross or medal used in a Latin rosary.

The use of the Greek rosary is prescribed in Rule 87 of the "Nomocanon", which reads: "The rosary should have one hundred [the Russian rule says 103] beads; and upon each bead the prescribed prayer should be recited." The usual form of this prayer prescribed for the rosary runs as follows: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Word of the living God, through the intercessions of thy immaculate Mother [tes panachrantou sou Metros] and of all thy Saints, have mercy and save us. If, however, the rosary be said as a penitential exercise, the prayer then is: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. The Russian rosary is divided by the four large beads so as to represent the different parts of the canonical Office which the recitation of the rosary replaces, while the four large beads themselves represent the four Evangelists. In the monasteries of Mount Athos, where the severest rule is observed, from eighty to a hundred rosaries are said daily by each monk. In Russian monasteries the rosary is usually said five times a day, while in the recitation of it the "great reverences" are reduced to ten, the remainder being simply sixty "little reverences" (bowing of the head no further than the waist) and sixty recitations of the penitential form of the prescribed prayer.

Among the Greek Uniats rosary is but little used by the laity. The Basilian monks make use of it in the Eastern style just described and in many cases use it in the Roman fashion in some monasteries. The more active life prescribed for them in following the example of Latin monks leaves less time for the recitation of the rosary according to the Eastern form, whilst the reading and recitation of the Office during the canonical Hours fulfils the original monastic obligation and so does not require the rosary. Latterly the Melchites and the Italo-Greeks have in many places adopted among their laity a form of to the one used among the laity of the Roman Rite, but its use is far from general. The Ruthenian and Rumanian Greek Catholics do not use it among the laity, but reserve it chiefly for the monastic clergy, although lately in some parts of Galicia its lay use has been occasionally introduced and is regarded as a latinizing practice. It may be said that among the Greeks in general the use of the rosary is regarded as a religious exercise peculiar to the monastic life; and wherever among Greek Uniats its lay use has been introduced, it is an imitation of the Roman practice. On this account it has never been popularized among the laity of the peoples, who remain strongly attached to their venerable Eastern Rite.

Rosary: Mysteries, Meditations, and the Telling of the Beads By Kevin Orlin Johnson. "If you are looking for one book to help you understand the Rosary better, then this is it. It covers every aspect of the Rosary in depth ... a treasure chest of knowledge about the Catholic Faith. It is written in a compelling way, never dry ... worth every penny. I have several other books on the Rosary, but this is worth all of them put together." --Olivia L., Arizona

The Essential Rosary By Caryll Houselander. This book is a Rosary classic: a "reader-friendly" guide for beginners, and a lifelong companion for those who've already spent long hours praying the Rosary. Excellent for group recitation of the Rosary.