

5 Reasons I No Longer Pray the Rosary

Growing up as a fervent Catholic, I prayed the rosary often. In fact, I still have my original rosary in a shadow box with a picture of me in my altar boy cassock.

During those formative years, running my fingers over the crucifix and 59 beads while repeating the assigned prayers was an often-recurring part of my spiritual regimen (quoting the Apostles' Creed, 53 Hail Marys, six Our Fathers and six Glory Be prayers). Then I drifted from the church as a teenager, and that practice became a faint memory.

At the age of 19, however, I was born again, then shortly afterward, baptized with the Holy Spirit. From that point, I began serving God with all my heart. However, I have never prayed the rosary again—for over 50 years—and for the following five reasons.

1. Jesus taught against repetitious prayer. Jesus was very clear in forbidding this practice. He instructed His disciples, "When you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Matt. 6:7, NKJV).

Why repeat the same prayers over and over, with no variation, thousands of times over years and even decades? We would never attempt to communicate with fellow humans using such a method. What if every time a wife needed her husband to take out the trash, she grabbed a string of beads and repeated in mantra-like fashion, "Please take out the garbage," at least a 100 times? Would that help facilitate the process? I don't think so. One time of sincerely making that request known should prove sufficient. Prayer is meant to be heartfelt and conversational, not memorized and mechanical. God is a Father,

not a force.

2. The mind-boggling logistics of praying to Mary. There are 1.3 billion Catholics in the world. Just suppose one-tenth of them prayed the rosary in a day. That's 130 million people quoting the Hail Mary 53 times (the number of beads assigned to that prayer). That totals 6,890,000,000 petitions lifted to her in one day. Divide that by 1,440 minutes in a day, and you have Mary receiving almost 5 million prayerful requests with each passing minute.

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Think about that! Could you process nearly 5 million people talking to you at the same time? To intelligently log that many petitions, Mary would have to be omniscient and omnipresent—attributes only God possesses. Besides, isn't it strange that there are 53 prayers to Mary as opposed to 12 prayers to God logged during the rosary recitation? Doesn't that seem out of balance, attributing far more importance to a created being than the Creator Himself?

3. Are you a sinner or a saint? Here's the wording of the Hail Mary prayer: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Those who pray the rosary repeatedly identify themselves as sinners. However, the Bible speaks very disparagingly of that class of individuals. Just reading Psalm 1 proves my point. Verse one declares, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of *sinners*" (emphasis added). Then verse five warns, "*sinners*" will not stand in "the congregation of the righteous."

But the truth is quite the opposite of this. Truly born-again believers are called "saints" in Scripture. ("Saints" are

those who have been sanctified: cleansed from the defilement of sin, made holy and consecrated to God). Check out Paul's opening greeting to various churches in his epistles. He refers to all believers as "saints" (Eph. 1:1, Col. 1:1-2). Another issue—how could Mary be aware of the "hour" of every Catholic's death? Do the math. That could be around 27,000 people daily. Again, only an omniscient, omnipresent God could be cognizant of such an ongoing exodus from this world to the next.

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4. Meditating on the Mysteries disputed. Those who pray the rosary are taught to meditate on various mysteries during its recitation. Most are pivotal happenings in the life of Jesus. However, two "Glorious Mysteries" are nonbiblical and nonprovable: the Assumption of Mary into heaven and the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven.

Both doctrines have been strongly debated matters of speculation from around the 5th century onward. The Assumption of Mary finally became official church dogma in 1950. Her status as Queen of Heaven was finally ratified by the decree of Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam* on Oct. 11, 1954. That's nearly 2,000 years after the establishment of the church in this world. Such beliefs were never part of the doctrinal foundation of Christianity.

5. An unknown practice for over a millennium. Most people believe the origin of the rosary can be traced to Dominic, a priest who claimed to have a vision of Mary in A.D. 1208. She supposedly instructed him to pray the rosary so his inferior force of 1,500 Catholic fighters could prevail against a superior army of over 30,000 Albigensian soldiers. The latter group was trying to take over a region of France, teaching the heresy that everything material is evil, while only that which

is spiritual is good.

The Albigensians spent the night in drunken revelry before the battle while Dominic's followers spent the night praying the rosary. Then Dominic's army launched a surprise attack and miraculously won. Praying the rosary became popular as a result. However, that one event is not sufficient in establishing such an all-pervasive religious practice.

The original church never would have used beads to count petitions or prayed to Mary after she passed. Other religions count prayer beads ritualistically (Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and more), but there's no account in the Bible of early Christians doing so. God commands His people, "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2b, KJV). We need to respond with obedience.{eoa}

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