

## LIFE OF CHRIST ROSARY

This sheet explains how to pray the 'Carthusian' (or 'Life of Christ') rosary, which was developed by Dominic of Prussia (1382-1461) and others.

In using this Rosary, it is important to remember that the goal is to encourage meditation on the mysteries of Christ's life, death and resurrection. There needs to be a great freedom in the one using the Carthusian Rosary: the freedom to stop to meditate at length on a mystery which seizes the mind and heart, and the freedom to move on when there is no obvious attraction to a particular mystery on a particular day. The mysteries that attract the heart will likely vary from time to time. In this sense, the prayer is rather like *lectio divina*.

Whilst it is not strictly necessary to use Rosary beads to pray the Life of Christ Rosary (or, for that matter, any form of the Rosary...), many people find that holding a string of beads in the hands is both a help to counting and an aid to prayer.

### THE HAIL MARY

Blessed Dominic's Rosary was composed at a time when only the first half of what we now think of as the *Hail, Mary* had been composed. The text of the prayer used in the praying of this form of the Rosary is as follows:

Hail, Mary, full of grace;  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus Christ...

The '...' indicates that many different formulæ (*'clausulæ'*) are attached to the end of the prayer, in order to help us to focus on different aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus.

### HOW TO PRAY THE LIFE OF CHRIST ROSARY

1. Begin by kissing the Crucifix, and making the sign of the Cross, whilst saying: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' Recite the *Apostles' Creed*.
2. On the next bead, recite the *Our Father*.
3. On the next three beads, recite the *Hail Mary* as given above, inserting three clauses that speak of the Lord. You can compose these yourself. The following examples may be useful:

1. ... blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, source of our salvation.

2. ... blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, lover of the soul.

3. ... blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, hope of all the nations.

4. Say the *Glory be* on the next bead.

In the next part of the Rosary, each 'mystery' is introduced by adding the *clausulae* given below to the end of the *Hail Mary*, as given above. 'Amen. Alleluia.' is then added after each *clausula*. There is no need to consider saying all 50 *Hail Mary*'s in one sitting. A suggestion is to pause after each *clausula*, to see whether there is an attraction to meditate for further on the mystery in question. The 'Amen. Alleluia.' can be added when it is time to move on to the next mystery.

#### FIRST DECADE: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

1. Say the *Our Father* on the first bead.
2. On the next 10 beads, say one *Hail, Mary*, adding to the end the *clausulae* below, pausing for meditation as appropriate.
  1. ...Jesus Christ, whom you conceived of the Holy Spirit, at the annunciation of the Angel. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  2. ...Jesus Christ, together with whom you visited Elizabeth in the hill country. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  3. ...Jesus Christ, to whom you gave birth with joy, all the while remaining a holy virgin in mind and body. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  4. ...Jesus Christ, whom you adored as your Creator, whilst you fed him at your virgin breasts. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  5. ...Jesus Christ, whom you wrapped in swadling clothes, and laid in a crib. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  6. ...Jesus Christ, to whom the angels gave praise, singing 'Glory to God in the highest,' and whom the shepherds found in Bethlehem. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  7. ...Jesus Christ, who was circumcised on the eighth day, and given the name, 'Jesus'. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  8. ...Jesus Christ, who was adored with great devotion by the three wise men, who offered him three gifts. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  9. Jesus Christ, whom you carried to the Temple in your motherly embrace, and presented to God, his Father. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  10. ...Jesus Christ, whom Simeon blessed, taking him in his arms, and whom the widow Anna recognised. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
3. Conclude the 'decade' by praying the *Glory be* on the final bead.

SECOND DECADE: THE YOUTH OF JESUS AND HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

1. Say the *Our Father* on the first bead.
2. On the next 10 beads, say one *Hail, Mary*, adding to the end the *clausulae* below, pausing for meditation as appropriate.
  1. ...Jesus Christ, with whom you fled to Egypt, to escape from Herod. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  2. ...Jesus Christ, with whom you returned to your own country after seven years, having been summoned back by an angel. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  3. ...Jesus Christ, whom you lost in Jerusalem when he was twelve years old, and found in the Temple after three days of seeking him with anguish. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  4. ...Jesus Christ, who grew daily in age, grace and wisdom before God and his fellow human beings. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  5. ...Jesus Christ, whom John baptized in the Jordan, pointing him out as the Lamb of God. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  6. ...Jesus Christ, who fasted in the desert for forty days, and whom Satan tempted there three times. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  7. ...Jesus Christ, who, having subsequently gathered together his disciples, preached to the world concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  8. ...Jesus Christ, who gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, cured paralytics, and set free all those oppressed by the devil. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  9. ...Jesus Christ, whose feet Mary Magdalene washed with her tears, dried with her hair, kissed and anointed with perfume. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  10. ...Jesus Christ, who raised from the dead Lazaurus (who had lain in the tomb for four days) and others who had died. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
3. Conclude the 'decade' by praying the *Glory be* on the final bead.

THIRD DECADE: THE PASSION OF JESUS

1. Say the *Our Father* on the first bead.
2. On the next 10 beads, say one *Hail, Mary*, adding to the end the *clausulae* below, pausing for meditation as appropriate.
  1. ...Jesus Christ, who on Palm Sunday, sitting on a donkey, was welcomed by the people with much praise. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  2. ...Jesus Christ, who, at his Last Supper, instituted the sacrament of his Body and Blood to be held in honour. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  3. ...Jesus Christ, who went into the Garden with his disciples, and there prayed so earnestly that he sweated drops of blood. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  4. ...Jesus Christ, who met with his enemies of his own accord, and willingly give himself into their hands. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  5. ...Jesus Christ, whom the religious leaders of the Jews bound harshly, and led him bound to the High Priest. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  6. ...Jesus Christ, whom the people accused with false testimonies, blindfolded, spat at, and struck with blows of hand and fist. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  7. ...Jesus Christ, whom the people, in the presence of Pilate and Herod, proclaimed to be a prisoner worthy of being put to death by crucifixion, as though he were an evildoer. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  8. ...Jesus Christ, whom Pilate caused to be scourged fiercely and for a great length of time, once his clothes had been taken away. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  9. ...Jesus Christ, whom the soldiers even crowned with thorns and whom, clothing in a purple garment, they proceeded to adore mockingly. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  10. ...Jesus Christ, whom the people unjustly condemned to a most shameful death, and led away with two criminals. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
3. Conclude the 'decade' by praying the *Glory be* on the final bead.

FOURTH DECADE: THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

1. Say the *Our Father* on the first bead.
2. On the next 10 beads, say one *Hail, Mary*, adding to the end the *clausulae* below, pausing for meditation as appropriate.
  1. ...Jesus Christ, whom they fastened to the Cross by his hands and feet, offering him wine that had been mixed with myrrh or gaul. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  2. ...Jesus Christ, who prayed for those who crucified him, saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  3. ...Jesus Christ, who said to the thief on his right-hand side: 'Amen, I say to you: today you will be with me in Paradise.' (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  4. ...Jesus Christ, who said to you, his most holy Mother, 'Woman, behold your Son,' and to John, 'Behold your mother.' (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  5. ...Jesus Christ, who cried out, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' That is: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  6. ...Jesus Christ, who said, 'It is finished.' (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  7. ...Jesus Christ, who at his final moment said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit.' (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  8. ...Jesus Christ, who died a most bitter and holy death, suffering for us wretched sinners, thanks be to God. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  9. ...Jesus Christ, whose side the soldier opened with a lance, and there flowed out blood and water, in remission of our sins. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  10. ...Jesus Christ, whose most sacred body they took down from the Cross, and laid lifeless upon your breast, according to pious custom. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
3. Conclude the 'decade' by praying the *Glory be* on the final bead.

FIFTH DECADE: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

1. Say the *Our Father* on the first bead.
2. On the next 10 beads, say one *Hail, Mary*, adding to the end the *clausulae* below, pausing for meditation as appropriate.
  1. ...Jesus Christ, whom righteous and holy people laid in a tomb, having anointed him with spices and wrapped him in a shroud. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  2. ...Jesus Christ, whose tomb the religious authorities sealed, appointing guards to keep watch over it. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  3. ...Jesus Christ, whose most holy soul descended to Hell, and consoled the holy fathers, leading them to Paradise with him. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  4. ...Jesus Christ, who rose again on the third day, and gladdened you with a joy beyond all telling: alleluia! (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  5. ...Jesus Christ, who, after his resurrection, appeared frequently to his disciples and those who had been faithful to him, and strengthened them greatly in the holy faith. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  6. ...Jesus Christ, who, in their presence (and while you to were present and looking on) ascended to the heavens, and took his seat at the Father's right hand. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  7. ...Jesus Christ, who, on the day of Pentecost, send from heaven the Holy Spirit to his faithful ones, as he had promised them. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  8. ...Jesus Christ, who finally assumed you, his most sweet mother, to himself, placing you at his own right hand and crowning you with glory. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  9. ...Jesus Christ, who, after the course of this life of misery, will, at your intercession, also take to himself us – his servants and yours – and establish us in the kingdom of his Father. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
  10. ...Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit (and you, his most glorious Mother) lives and reigns: our glorious and unconquered King, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Pause for meditation.*) Amen. Alleluia.
3. Conclude the 'decade' by praying the *Glory be* on the final bead.

CONCLUSION OF THE ROSARY

1. Say the following prayer, composed by Dominic of Prussia, to conclude the Life of Christ Rosary:

O Immaculate, ever blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God; O Temple of God, the most beautiful of all temples; O Doorway of the Kingdom of Heaven, through which the whole world has been saved: have mercy and hear me, and become my sweet protectress, for me a poor and wretched sinner. Be my help in all my needs. Amen.