

Q: Is there a Carthusian Rosary?

A: Even if some deny the existence of a Carthusian Rosary, the Carthusians themselves are in no doubt about its existence and importance. They would concede that it is different from the ordinary, the Dominican Rosary. They would even go so far as to say that it is, the Carthusian Rosary, at the root of the Dominican Rosary.

The Carthusian Rosary, even now--more than five centuries after Dominic of Prussia (1382-1461) and Adolf of Essen, his mentor and friend--is an invitation to meditation. It aims to lead towards contemplation of the mysteries of Christ's life. It does not have mysteries which are different according to the days of the week. Although at one time built around 150 Hail Marys, the stages of Christ's life are seen to center on a series of fifty Hail Marys. Each one of the Hail Marys--the first part only, ending in 'benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus' is followed by a theme of Christ's life. The first of these themes, for example, highlights the Anunciation: "Jesus, conceived of the Holy Spirit during the Anunciation of the Angel." The series of fifty Hail Marys is concluded with Jesus' glorious return to the Father: "Jesus, who reigns together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and with your most holy Mother, triumphant and glorious for ever." The number of Hail Marys are not important. What counts is the quality of one's meditation, of authentic contemplative prayer. The Carthusian Rosary wants to be essentially action of grace and it is thus suggested that each theme be followed by an Alleluia (Adolph of Essen). The Our Father which could be preceded by the Glory be is/are "finally inserted in the series of fifty Hail Mary prayers to give the full prayer a Trinitarian and doxological conclusion." The Carthusian Rosary is a prayer of great flexibility. There is no obligation to say all fifty Hail Marys, but nothing prevents the prayerful person to add the second half of the Hail Mary. Dominic of Prussia recommends to conclude the Rosary with the following prayer.

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

Here are the fifty themes to be added/recited after each Hail Mary:

1. Jesus, conceived of the Holy Spirit during the Anunciation of the Angel.

2. Jesus, who together with you who has conceived him, visits Saint Elizabeth.

3. Jesus, to whom you, virgin in body and soul, have given birth with joy.

4. Jesus, whom you have fed from your virginal breast, adoring in him the creator.

5. Jesus, whom you have swaddled in clothes and placed him in a crib.

6. Jesus, whom the Angels celebrated singing *Gloria in excelsis* and the shepherds visited in Bethlehem.

7. Jesus, who received his circumcision on the eighth day, and was given the name of Jesus.

8. Jesus, whom the Magi adored while filling him with gifts.

9. Jesus, who was carried by you to the Temple and presented to God, his Father.

10. Jesus, who was received in the arms of old Simeon, and recognized by the holy widow, Anna.

11. Jesus, with whom you fled into Egypt, because of Herod's persecution.

12. Jesus, with whom you returned home seven years later, as told by the Angel.

13. Jesus, lost in Jerusalem when he was twelve years old, and found again in the temple after three days.

14. Jesus, who each day grew further in age and grace before God and men.

15. Jesus, whom John had baptized in the Jordan and shown out to be the Lamb of God.

16. Jesus, who, having fasted for forty days in the desert, has won over the temptations put to him by the Enemy.

17. Jesus, who, after having chosen the disciples, preached the kingdom of God.

18. Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind, healed lepers, rose to their feet paralyzed persons and freed those possessed by the devil.

19. Jesus, whose feet were washed with Mary Magdalene's tears, dried with her hair, anointed with her perfume.
20. Jesus, who rose Lazarus and other persons who were dead.
21. Jesus, triumphally acclaimed by his people on Palm Sunday.
22. Jesus, who in the Last Supper instituted the sacrament of his Body and Blood.
23. Jesus, who in the garden, after having prayed for long, sweat profuse blood.
24. Jesus, who, meeting his enemies, gave up himself willingly in their hands.
25. Jesus, captured and bound with force by those sent by the Jews, was so led to the high priest.
26. Jesus, who, being falsely accused, was blindfolded, hit and covered with spit
27. Jesus, before Caiphas and Pilate, is given the burden of the cross to bear like a malefactor.
28. Jesus, has his clothes taken off and is cruelly whipped on order given by Pilate.
29. Jesus, crowned with thorns, is covered with a purple mantle and hailed king by mocking soldiers.
30. Jesus, who is condemned to a wicked death and led to face torment between two thieves.
31. Jesus, nailed to the cross and made to drink gall and vinegar.
32. Jesus, while praying for his murderers, said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."
33. Jesus, who said to the thief who was crucified on his right hand: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in heaven."
34. Jesus, who said to you, his Mother: "Mother, here is your son"; and to John: "Here is your Mother."
35. Jesus, who cried from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned Me?"
36. Jesus, who said: "I thirst!" and after having tasted the vinegar cried out: "It is all accomplished."
37. Jesus, who at the end cried out" "Father, in you hands I put my spirit."
38. Jesus, who for us, poor sinners, has suffered a cruel and painful death.
39. Jesus, whose side was pierced with a spear, pours out Blood and Water for the forgiveness of our sins.
40. Jesus, whose sacred body was brought down from the cross, was received in your arms according to a pious saying.
41. Jesus, whose body was wrapped in a sheet and wrapped with herbs and spices was laid in the grave by holy men.
42. Jesus, whose grave was sealed and guards put beside it by the Jews.
43. Jesus, whose holy soul descended to Hades, to conduct the holy patriarchs to heaven.
44. Jesus, who rose from the dead on the third day, filling you, his holy Mother, with an ineffable joy.
45. Jesus, who after his Resurrection appeared frequently to his disciples and friends to strengthen their faith.
46. Jesus, who, before you and his apostles, ascended into heaven and is sitting on the right hand of the Father.
47. Jesus, who, as he had promised, sent the Holy Spirit on his apostles on Pentecost Sunday.
48. Jesus, who has finally called you to him, oh sweet Mother of his, placing you on his right hand and crowning you with glory.
49. Jesus, who wants to call us after this miserable life, us servants of his and yours, and receive us in his Father's Kingdom.
50. Jesus, who reigns together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and with you most Holy Mother, triumphant and glorious forever.