

## The Rosary Practice for Lent The Sorrowful Mysteries

*"Just as the scripture says that faith and hope without love are only sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, so also the joy proclaimed without mentioning the pain is only sounding brass and tinkling cymbal; unheeded, it whistles past the ear of the suffering one; it sounds on the ear but does not resound in the heart; it agitates the ear but is not treasured within. But this voice which quivers with pain and still proclaims joy - yes, this forces its way in through his ear and descends into his heart and is treasured there."* ~Soren Kierkegaard

To pray the rosary for other people is to miss the point completely. The beads are meant for deep, loving contemplation of your own inner condition with the intention of evolving into a loving being. This is true of any prayer beads in any spiritual tradition. The purpose is to focus you away from your usual habitual defenses of thinking. Consider how you "think" yourself away from sinking deeply into contemplation of your own life and suffering. You get busy in your head with shopping lists, "to do's," and judgments, without recognition of what you are doing.

**The first purpose** of an exercise in contemplation with the rosary is to *recognize* the defenses that stop you from going deeply inside yourself, and to *very gently bring your attention back to the work at hand, which is to SINK, into your own suffering with complete loving attention.* The physicality of the beads helps you do this. If you judge how your mind wants to distract you away from this task with judgment and self-condemnation you are merely perpetuating the suffering of the cross in your own life. Disciplining the mind is teaching it to **follow the laws of love.** In other words, gentle redirection back to sinking into the suffering that exists within yourself. Slowly, holy ritual replaces ego habit. Avoidance turns to acceptance through practice.



In the sorrowful mysteries we start with a symbol of our suffering – the Soul hanging and nailed to the cross of duality. The cross is the perfect representation of you suffering the agonies of duality – both the ones you create in your own present life through judgments, criticisms, self negation and doubt, but also the past suffering of your own young soul that you split off from with defense. This is what creates the cross – splitting. What heals is reconciling the two parts that are split away from one another through defense.

The cross symbolizes *you* when you have created suffering through duality through the experience of your own socialization. This condition is created *in unawareness* in childhood. You protect against the experience of suffering shame and fear by splitting off from your suffering and living in defense. Your condition then becomes one of fragmentation and broken relationship with yourself. Relationship with your young Self is now one of ego defense repressing, denying and judging You. Your ego represses and denies your own soul – your own suffering. Now you are two, not one, and you are nailed to this condition until you start waking up to it and what caused it. And so, the suffering body on the cross IS the representation of your own suffering at the stage of development of 2<sup>nd</sup> quadrant, unaware ego development. The stations of the cross talk about the myth of our Hero, Jesus, and represent the progression and development in this quadrant of development.

First there is betrayal and selling out for 30 pieces of silver, (a slave to materialism – safety and comfort in the physical world) then denial of your own soul's suffering through repression, suppression, dissociation, addiction, achievement, status, power, wealth – just to name a few means to deny Self.

This denial and repression is done through self-scourging and flagellation, beating and cussing - judgment, criticism, control, self-hatred, all creating inner conflict – you live at cross purposes to yourself. You wear the crown of thorns of not knowing who you are. You are tormented, and your consciousness is pricked through living in double binds, inner conflict, rationalizations, intellectualizations, minimization, justifications and so on, denying the inner little voice of intuition and truth.

You carry this cross of duality, condemned by yourself with ego as King and Ruler. Along the way you find helpers who, because they feel sorry for you and pity you and need to feel better about themselves, help you. (Simeon) You learn to pity yourself too for the miserable plight you are in.

You still know nothing of compassion, only self-pity in a victimy and helpless kind of way. You stumble and fall over and over again. There is no self-responsibility as yet. The feminine Soul within weeps for the suffering, but you are bitter and revengeful, blaming others for your condition, telling others to not pity you – there will be vengeance (the women on the Via Dolorosa).

But gradually, you start shedding the outer garments of defense, you find under the outer garments a white inner garment that is seamless – i.e. not in pieces of duality – but whole and undefiled. You start being aware of the pain of the nails that keep you on this cross of suffering. If you are lucky, your heart will be pierced and break open and you awaken to love for yourself instead of self-pity, and you surrender to the Law of Love. You recognize that goodness must indeed be aligned with this great Love (the good thief). You start aligning yourself to the very Source of your own incarnation and being-ness, knowing that this is the way to Heaven/God/Completion/Resurrection.

You surrender your defensiveness and fall into the suffering of your young soul – you start dying to ego defenses and descending into the hell of your experience and reconciling with your own young soul, through the awakening of Love and Wisdom within yourself. You see and understand how the condition of suffering was created and defended against until this time. You bring love to the child soul in its moments of anguish and hurt. You reverse what happened through your own love. You redeem and reconcile with the past suffering of your life. You recognize that there can be life in the midst of death, that there can be wholeness within even in this broken world, that there can be heaven on earth and that it happens in you, for you, by you through the Love of all that IS.

## Pitfalls in Praying the Rosary

Seeing this as a story about someone else who will save you - *you* are the Hero or Heroine of your own journey, or not...

Seeing this as external to you and your own life

Seeing the Rosary as Penance

Seeing the Rosary as something to do for others

Seeing the Rosary as something God “does” for you

Earning points for being good

Asking God for special favors

Directing your gratitude and intentions, petitions and desires on to some externally formulated deity

The rosary is a song of adoration and submission to the Feminine – the Matrix of the World. It is the recognition that you are Her – your immortal Soul is indeed a manifestation of the Great Mother – the intercessory – the one connected to the Father, the Source and Mystery of all that IS and, you ARE that. You yourself have direct access to the Love of the Universe, you yourself are responsible, you yourself must learn to love – yourself.

The traditional Rosary only talks about 5 of the Sorrowful Mysteries even though I have referred to all 14 stations of the cross above. The traditional five decades are:

- The agony in the garden
- Scourging in the temple (your own body)
- Crowning with thorns
- Carrying the cross
- Dying on the cross

The beads help you stay focused on your intention of sinking into the experiences of this in your own life. The beads of the decades are the remembrance of who you really are. Replace “Hail Mary” with your own name and write your own invocation to yourself as you sink into the suffering of your life. **It reminds you to stay present and have co-consciousness to the suffering, until it becomes habitual to stay present and not split off. To stay present in the Soul by focusing only on the words of the mantra and prayers means to deny the suffering. To sink into the suffering without the Soul’s love means re-enacting the original suffering and results in self pity. This is a crucial understanding to using the beads as an effective spiritual practice.**

In creating your own Rosary you can adapt and rewrite all the prayers used by understanding them as internal relational prayers, for instance the “Our Father,” and the “Apostles Creed.” Look up the traditional prayers and see how you would adapt them to be an internally focused prayer instead of an externally referenced prayer. What is the essential meaning of the prayer? You can write your own, or find poems or mantras from other traditions that work for you in making your own individualized prayer bead ritual.

Consider for yourselves what would be your personal symbols of the ego, duality, the Soul, the integration of opposites, the Holy Spirit of God within, suffering, death and birth, the heart breaking, discipline, clarity, temptation, unawareness, sorrow, guilt, shame, fear, double binds, conflict and any other words that occur to you as you study the Via Dolorosa. What would your personal prayers, petitions, intentions be for yourself on the Via Dolorosa? What might the symbols be for the decades that celebrate the Glorious Mysteries and the Joyful Mysteries? Instead of just one rosary, you might want three for the three stages of development, represented by the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries of life, depending on the meditation you think is appropriate for where you are each day.

Consider for yourself what you habitually do to avoid feeling anxiety, depression, loneliness, shame, fear, grief. Can you set an intention this Lent to refrain from these practices of protection and allow yourself to be fully present to the inner condition these behaviors mask? Can you write an intention to be fully present to whatever arises with love? Can you write an intention that includes curiosity, a welcoming attitude, a desire for understanding and reconciliation, peace-making within – as you would welcome any stranger into your home? Can you use your beads in your daily contemplation of your own suffering?

*“Enlightenment is not imagining figures of light but making the darkness conscious.”  
Carl Jung*



In other words, are you willing to “die to ego defenses and face the inner “demons” that tempt you to defenses of power, control, status, wealth and greed, and reconcile with the one who was wounded and abandoned, and be one with that part of yourself in a resurrected or transcended state of consciousness?” Remember there is no transcendence without descent. There is no resurrection without death. There is no heaven without reclaiming everything that has been relegated to hell, to the light of your own love.

*“I dreamed I had a child, and even in the dream I saw it was my life, and it was an idiot, and I ran away. But it always crept on to my lap again, clutched at my clothes. Until I thought, if I could kiss it, whatever in it was my own, perhaps I could sleep. And I bent to its broken face, and it was horrible ... but I kissed*

*it. I think one must finally take one's life in one's arms."*

*~Arthur Miller*