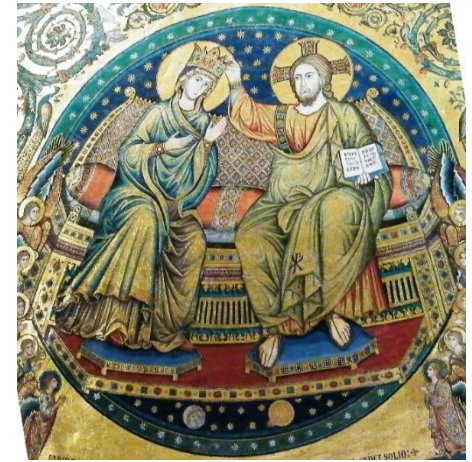


St. Joseph's Family Activities

May Saints and Celebrations



<https://www.theannunciation.org.uk/resources/>



Hail Mary Full of Grace....

May is the month of Mary and this edition begins and ends with ideas on how we can celebrate our dear Mother in heaven. I've also given you a full-page version of the Magnificat which could be used as a poster to decorate. This is a beautiful prayer to teach children if they don't say it regularly. Mary proclaimed the Magnificat when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and she was carrying Jesus in her. Maybe you can learn this by heart and pray this prayer after Holy Communion as that is the most intimate time with Jesus we have on earth.

There are also a number of English saints this month, two of them, archbishops of Canterbury. There is a list of all eighteen Archbishops of Canterbury who have been canonised – with spaces for you to fill in with their feast dates – an ideal project for someone who likes looking things up on the internet. Please send me any research results and I will publish them in a later edition.

Each month I am adding more saints, and this month amongst others, I have included St. Brendan of Ireland, whom tradition says, reached the New World in leather bound coracles long before Columbus! I leave you to decide, but there is an old video link which you might find interesting. How about trying to make paper boats in half term to see how far they sail?

These activities still reflect the four dimensions of our faith, as in everything we do, we are either learning or proclaiming the faith, celebrating it in the liturgy and the sacraments, living it in the context of the family and community and praying it.

Our Lady being crowned queen of heaven by her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Note that she is wearing His crown! Mary is the queen of heaven. In ancient times, and in many societies still, the queen was/is generally the mother of the king, or the chief. The queen's is about hearing the petitions of the pp and taking them to the king. That is what Our Lady does – and that is why we pray to her. She hears our prayers and presents them to her Son. Just as she noticed that the wine had run out at Cana (see Jn. 2:1-12).

There are three states of the Church: those of us here on earth, journeying to the Father in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit; those in purgatory whose lives on earth have finished and who are being purified, and those in heaven, sharing in the divine life, for which we have all been created. For them, their joy is complete but because of that, they are eager for us to join them. Close to Our Lord, they intercede (pray) for us. The saints in heaven are more than the canonised saints the Church knows of, as the author of the Book of Revelation says, "I looked and saw a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, tribe and peoples and tongues..." (Rev.7:9).

The saints are our heroes. They come from all walks of life, from all around the world and all ages. We can always find a saint who inspires us and ask him or her to pray for us. So, celebrate your own saints' days, go to Mass if you can as there, the whole Church is united! We can't see the saints, but we join in with their praise in the Holy Holy Holy. Have something special to eat, light your baptism candle or another one if you don't have it, and regard the saints as special members of the family.

May, the month of Mary

When I was growing up, we used to have a May queen procession on the first weekend in May (as did a lot of other Catholic communities). One of the girls from that year's First Holy Communion group was chosen to be the May Queen and then we had a procession carrying a statue of Mary, the "May Queen", and the rest of the children would scatter rose petals and flowers leading the way.

Mary and the "May Queen" wore a crown of flowers which the children had made beforehand (I think that paper flowers were used as they lasted longer!) Then we had a great big tea in the parish hall!



Ideas

If you have a statue of Mary at home, why don't you make her a crown of flowers, and place fresh flowers at her feet during May.

If you don't have a statue, you can print and cut out this picture of a statue and stick it on card, and then make a small crown to go on Mary's head.

Or just decorate the page with flowers, drawn or cut out from magazines.

Mary's Many Titles

Mary has lots of different titles many of which reflect how she cooperated (helped) her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ in His work of saving us so that we can live in the loving care of His Father, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The wonderful thing about these titles is that we can use them when we pray to her and ask her for help. Say this litany by beginning each petition: Holy Mary, then use the given title, e.g. "Ark of the covenant", and then end with, "pray for us...."

Ark of the Covenant
Help of Christians
Holy Mary
Holy Mother of God
The Immaculate Heart
The Immaculate Conception
Mother Most Pure
Mother of Christ
Mother of God
Mother of Our Redeemer
Mother of Sorrows
Our Lady of Fatima
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Our Lady of Knock
Our Lady of Loreto



Our Lady of Lourdes
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Our Lady of Nazareth
Our Lady of Peace
Our Lady of Sion
Our Lady of the Assumption
Our Lady of the Rosary
Our Lady of Victories
Our Lady Refuge of Sinners
Our Lady, Star of the Sea
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Queen of Angels
Queen of Heaven
Queen of Apostles
Queen of Peace

1st May: St Joseph the Worker

The feast of St. Joseph the worker was established by Pope Pius XII in 1955 to emphasise that our work is a wonderful opportunity to share in God's work of creation. Whatever our work is, we are participating in creation - from cleaning the streets to studying the remotest part of the galaxy; from the day-to-day grind of answering phone calls and participating in meetings on zoom, to an active retirement when the work done is not paid, but (hopefully) less stressful.

Work is a privilege and sadly because of the stresses of the last year, there are many people who have lost their jobs and are in danger of losing their self-esteem. It is interesting that when strangers meet, quite often one of the first questions people ask each other is "what do you do?" As if work defines us. This feast is showing that work does not need to define us. St. Joseph is the patron saint of workers because we know what his work was - a carpenter. He was probably not just a "chippy" making furniture as is often portrayed in images but was probably part of the building trade (in modern terms). But he is not defined by his work, any more than St. Peter was for ever a fisherman. Jesus turned St. Peter's work into a glorious vocation, and St. Joseph's work of building and construction was given a new and higher status, that of building the Holy Family and therefore the foundations for the family of the Church.

On the right there is a prayer for workers, or for younger children, you may wish to use the format below which you can adapt for those you know. (There are two versions, one which has been started and another blank one).

Prayer to St. Joseph For Workers

Joseph, by the work of your hands
and the sweat of your brow,
you supported Jesus and Mary,
and had the Son of God as your fellow worker.

Teach me to work as you did,
with patience and perseverance, for God and
for those whom God has given me to support.
Teach me to see in my fellow workers
the Christ who desires to be in them,
that I may always be charitable and forbearing
towards all.

Grant me to look upon work
with the eyes of faith,
so that I shall recognize in it
my share in God's own creative activity
and in Christ's work of our redemption,
and so take pride in it.

When it is pleasant and productive,
remind me to give thanks to God for it.
And when it is burdensome,
teach me to offer it to God,
in reparation for my sins
and the sins of the world.

*This prayer was taken from the booklet "Devotions to Saint Joseph" by Brian Moore, S.J., printed and published by the Society of St. Paul. Accessed on 21/4/21
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-joseph-the-worker>*



Prayer for workers by _____

O St. Joseph we turn to you to ask you to support all these people:

For teachers, St. Joseph, pray for them

For TAs, St. Joseph, pray for them

For those who clean our school, St. Joseph, pray for them

For nurses and doctors, St. Joseph, pray for them

For those who don't have any work, St. Joseph, pray for them

For _____

For _____

For _____

For _____

Prayer for workers by _____

O St. Joseph we turn to you to ask you to support all these people:

For _____

For _____

For _____

For _____



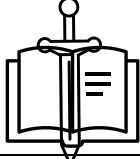
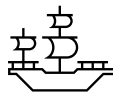
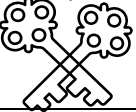

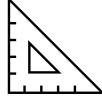
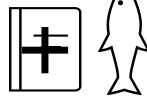


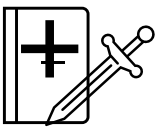
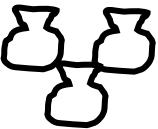

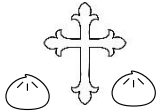
For _____

For _____

For _____

St. Joseph, pray for them

3rd May, St. Philip and St. James, Apostles

Symbols of the Apostles			
<p>Did you know that each of the Apostles have symbols? The symbols come from the lives of the Apostles. Some of these are just traditions and we don't know for certain the how each of them died. See if you can match the Apostle with the symbol. One is done for you.</p>			
St Andrew, who was St. Peter's brother, died on a diagonal cross			St. Bartholomew (St. Nathaniel) is traditionally thought to have been cut to death with knives
St. James the Great (son of Jonah, John's brother) has the scallop shell as his symbol as he traditionally died in Compostella in Spain and the coast there was known for these shells.			St. James the Less may have been sawn in half (but he was probably stoned to death).
St. John (author of the Gospel and the Apostle who stood at the foot of the cross). There's a Tradition that he survived drinking from a poisoned chalice.			Judas Iscariot has a money bag as he looked after the shared money for the Apostles and sadly stole from it too (Jn. 12:6).
St. Jude travelled by ship on his missionary journeys with St. Simon (the Zealot).			St. Matthew was a tax collector before he met Jesus and is represented by three purses.
St. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas and is symbolised by an open bible and sword by which he was traditionally said to have been beheaded			St. Paul who was chosen by Jesus after His Ascension, is represented by a Bible and a sword. He is the author of a lot of the letters of the New Testament and his head was cut off with a sword
St. Peter is represented by crossed keys as Jesus gave him the "keys of the gates to heaven" (Mt. 16:18)			St. Philip is represented by loaves beside a cross as it was he who offered Jesus the small boy's loaves before the feeding of the 5,000
St. Simon (The zealot) was a fisherman and preached the Good News that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament			St Thomas traditionally went to India and built a Church there and the carpenter's set square is his sign

St. Philip:

He was born at Bethsaida and was originally a disciple of St. John the Baptist. Jesus "found" Philip (Jn. 1:43) who in turn, invited to his friend, Nathaniel, to come and see Jesus, the long-expected Messiah (v.46). It was St. Philip who was worried that they did not have enough food or money to feed the 5,000 (Jn. 6:7). It is also Philip who says to Jesus "Show us the Father" (Jn. 14:8), which leads Jesus to explain that if we have seen Him (Jesus), we have seen the Father. In other words, Jesus is the face of the Father and we come to know the Father in and through Jesus.

We can see from these few accounts that St. Philip is someone who likes the facts and who is someone who likes to get things clear in his head. When we are finding things too confusing at times, we can turn to St. Philip and ask for his prayers to help us get things sorted in our heads.

St. James, son of Alphaeus:

He is called "James the Less" and is also called "James the brother of the Lord" (Mt. 13:55, Gal.1:19) to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. (Note that "brother" means cousin or from the same tribe or other relative). James "the brother of the Lord" ruled the Church (he was what we called a Bishop) at Jerusalem and wrote the epistle that bears his name, which is full of sober advice on the Christian life. At the "Council of Jerusalem" the Church's first council, it was St. James who sensibly summed up the conditions for gentile converts and who recognised that gentiles (pagans) who became Christians did not need to become Jews first.

James says many wise things in his letter, such as:

- Anyone who lacks wisdom should ask God in faith for more wisdom (1:5).
- Faith without works is dead (2:17)
- Do not speak evil against one another (4:11)

Josephus, a Romano-Jewish historian, recorded the importance James had in the early Church at Jerusalem and also that he was stoned to death in AD 62.

Information from Butler's Lives of the Saints, Concise edition, Burnes & Oates (1991)

4th May, the English Martyrs

On 4 May 1535, at Tyburn in London, three Carthusian monks, the first of many martyrs of the English Reformation died for their faith in Jesus Christ. Since then, hundreds of men and women of every walk of life remained faithful to the universal Church and were prepared to die for their faith. There were rich people and poor people; married and single; men and women. They are remembered for the example they gave of being strong in their faith and for their courage in the face of persecution. Many were tortured in prison because the authorities hoped that they give the names of other Catholics, but they refused to speak. Over forty of these men and women have been canonised (declared a saint) and nearly 250 have been beatified (declared a blessed).

On 25th October 1970 Pope Paul VI canonised 40 martyrs of England and Wales and this was their liturgical feast day until 2001 when the English date was moved to 4th May, but the Welsh still celebrate their martyrs on the 25th October.

Saint John Almond
Saint Edmund Arrowsmith
Saint Ambrose Barlow
Saint John Boste
Saint Alexander Briant
Saint Edmund Campion
Saint Margaret Clitherow
Saint Philip Evans
Saint Thomas Garnet
Saint Edmund Gennings
Saint Richard Gwyn
Saint John Houghton
Saint Philip Howard
Saint John Jones
Saint John Kemble
Saint Luke Kirby
Saint Robert Lawrence
Saint David Lewis
Saint Anne Line
Saint John Lloyd

This is the list of the forty martyrs canonised in 1970.

Why don't you find out about one of these and send what you find to me to include in a later edition of this activity pages. May be one of these martyrs lived near you? Or may be one of these people share your name.

For example, St. Anne Line shares my second name (Ann) and so I looked up about her to find out that she and her husband became Catholics even though they knew that it was illegal. Her husband, Roger, was caught and banished to live abroad until he died, but this did not deter Anne. Anne used to hide priests in her house and secretly enabled people to come to Mass there, until one day it was noticed that a crowd had gathered. The constables were sent to investigate. The priest, Fr Francis Page, hid in a secret hiding hole but Anne was arrested and was eventually sentenced to death. Before she died, she said that she did not regret what she had done and only wished that she could have helped a lot more priests.

Saint Cuthbert Mayne
Saint Henry Morse
Saint Nicholas Owen
Saint John Payne
Saint Polydore Plasden
Saint John Plessington
Saint Richard Reynolds
Saint John Rigby
Saint John Roberts
Saint Alban Roe
Saint Ralph Sherwin
Saint Robert Southwell
Saint John Southworth
Saint John Stone
Saint John Wall
Saint Henry Walpole
Saint Margaret Ward
Saint Augustine Webster
Saint Swithun Wells
Saint Eustace White

7th May, St. John of Beverley (-721)

The beautiful minster at Beverley was founded by this man. Of course, the building we see is more recent, but it was built over the spot of his original foundation.

John of Beverley was born at Harpham in Yorkshire, and as a young man, travelled to Canterbury to study under St Adrian, the African-born abbot of the famous monastery there. Adrian was at that time the best teacher of Greek and Latin in the country and he was also very knowledgeable about the Bible. In those days, all writing and reading was done in Latin and Greek. When he had finished his studies, John joined the double monastery at Whitby under the remarkable abbess, St Hilda, who had a great influence on many of the outstanding religious people of her time. John became known for his life of prayer and the seriousness in which he took Lent. In 687 John was ordained Bishop of Hexham, and during his time at Hexham, John ordained the future St Bede as priest. (St. Bede's memorial is also in May). John was a good pastoral bishop, that means that he took great care of those under his charge. He loved the Scriptures, and he was a patient teacher. He also recognised the importance of getting away from people for a time of quiet prayer, and even as bishop, John would be found sitting on the banks of the River Tyne for personal prayer and the study, especially during the season of Lent. In 705 he was made bishop York where he remained for 12 years. However, he really wanted to just be an "ordinary monk" and so four years before his death he retired to Beverley to spend the rest of his life in quiet prayer and reflection, preparing to meet Jesus in heaven after his death.

John died on 7 May 721, having worked for more than thirty years as a bishop. After his death, many miracles of healing are ascribed to him and he was canonized in 1037. His shrine became famous up and down the country and many people travelled to pray at his shrine during the Middle Ages. In 1541, his shrine was destroyed on the orders of Henry VIII, but about a hundred years later workmen discovered a vault under the floor of the Minster's nave. The inscription on it indicates that the contents contained the relics of St John. In 1738, when the present Minster floor was laid, these relics were disinterred and replaced in the same position with an arched brick vault over them. The inscription on the tomb now reads:

HERE LIES
THE BODY OF SAINT JOHN OF BEVERLEY
FOUNDER OF THIS CHURCH
BISHOP OF HEXHAM A.D. 687-705
BISHOP OF YORK A.D. 705-718
HE WAS BORN AT HARPHAM

St. John of Beverley loved to find a quiet space outside to pray and think about Jesus. Why don't you find a quiet spot outside just to be still and reflect on the wonderful things that Jesus has done for us. Maybe you can write a prayer thanking him for the beauty of creation.

9th May Saint George Preca (1880 - 1962)

George was born in Valetta, Malta, growing up not far from the Carmelite Shrine church there. At the age of four, he nearly drowned in the Grand Harbour, but was rescued by a passing boatman. When his family later told the story they would joke that he had been rescued from the waters, like Moses. George, recalling that the rescue had happened on the 16th July, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, attributed his rescue to the protection of the same Lady. George heard God calling him to be a priest and was ordained in 1906. Father George ('Dun Gorg' in Maltese) realised that many people were happy to live the outward life of a Christian, going to Mass, and celebrate important festivals, but this had little connection to the interior life of a true follower of Jesus. St. George had a vision of something more and he gradually gathered a circle people gathered for prayer and discussion of the faith. Many of these people would eventually work as lay missionaries in parishes and villages around Malta. He formed a society of mainly young people who continued to learn and study their faith whilst volunteering in parishes as catechists which was very unusual at that time. These days we are very used to lay people leading the catechesis in parishes.



He had a great devotion to Mary as Our Lady of Mount Carmel and in 1957 he composed the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, which Pope St John Paul II formally added to the rosary in 2002. Dun Gorg died in 1962 and was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.

Here is a link to an article about the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. <https://aleteia.org/2017/05/11/pope-john-paul-ii-wasnt-the-first-to-propose-luminous-mysteries-for-the-rosary/>

Image from <https://ocarm.org/en/item/106-st-george-preca-priest>

Pray the Luminous mysteries of the Rosary:

(See how to make your own one-decade rosary below).

- 1) The Baptism in the Jordan
- 2) The wedding feast of Cana
- 3) The proclamation of the kingdom of God
- 4) The Transfiguration
- 5) The institution of the Eucharist

What is a catechist?

We often think that catechists are those men and women who prepare people for the sacraments in parishes but in fact "catechesis" means "to echo something that has been heard." The work of a catechist is to echo the teaching which we have heard. Why don't you play this "Chinese whispers" kind of game?

The first person whispers a truth of the faith - may be a line from the Creed - to the next person and it's passed on down the line. Unlike Chinese whispers though, if you don't hear it correctly ask for it to be repeated. See how far you can pass on the truth of salvation in Jesus Christ.

10th May Saint Damien of Molokai (1840 - 1889)

St. Damien was born in Belgium in 1840 and was baptised as Joseph (de Veuster). At the age of 19, he joined the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, much to his father's disappointment. His father had hoped that young Joseph would take over the family business! As a religious, Joseph took the name "Damien". The order had a mission in the Hawaiian Islands and in 1863, Damien pleaded to be allowed to go out as a missionary. He had not yet been ordained as a priest! Damien arrived in Honolulu in March 1864, and was ordained as a priesthood two months later. He was sent to the island of Hawaii to minister to the people living there.

Leprosy was a dreadful disease which at that time was incurable. We hear about Jesus healing lepers in the Gospels, and it was still a terrible disease. If you got leprosy, your fingers, toes and even your nose, would slowly be "eaten away" as the virus spread around your body. It was very contagious and so as in the Gospels, lepers had to keep away from other people.

In the C19, the Hawaiian Government tried to stop the spread of leprosy by deporting anyone who was considered to be infected to an isolated peninsula on the island of Molokai, part of the Hawaiian Islands. The people there were desperate for a priest to come and serve them, to celebrate Mass and hear their confessions. No one wanted to go as it would probably mean becoming infected themselves. However, Fr. Damien volunteered for the job. On 10th May 1873 he went by ship to the isolated community and settled there among the outcasts and rejected peoples, where he would spend the rest of his life. Fr. Damien brought love to a community that had been abandoned and rejected. He was priest, doctor and teacher and gave each person hope and a reason for living. Because of his love and support, a community that had been violent and loveless, became a community of love and mutual support.

Of course, the inevitable happened and Fr. Damien became a leper like the people he lived among. He was able to say "we lepers..." He taught that it was at the foot of the Cross that he found strength and in doing so, he gave hope of Eternal Life to those who like him, were dying of this terrible disease. He died on April 15, 1889, having been with the lepers for 16 years. His example of selfless love has been an inspiration to many who, like him, gave gone to live amongst outcasts. St. Damien was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.

Damien, brother on the journey, happy and generous missionary, who loved the Gospel more than your own life, who for love of Jesus left your family, your homeland, your security and your dreams.

Teach us to give our lives with joy like yours, to be in solidarity with the outcasts of our world, to celebrate and contemplate the Eucharist as the source of our own commitment.

Help us to love to the very end and, in the strength of the Spirit, to persevere in compassion for the poor and forgotten so that we might be good disciples of Jesus and Mary. Amen.

<https://www.catholicahawaii.org/catholic-essentials/saints-traveling-relics/history-of-hawaiis-saints/saint-damien/>

Can you draw a picture of Mary here?

13th May, Our Lady of Fatima

This feast commemorates the visions of Our Lady seen near Fátima in Portugal in 1917 by three shepherd children, Lúcia dos Santos and her cousins Jacinta and Francisco Marto. The visions occurred on the 13th day of each month from May to October, and by October huge crowds were gathering at the site of the visions and reporting visions and miraculous occurrences themselves.

Pope John Paul II was devoted to Our Lady of Fátima and attributed his survival of an assassin's bullet on 13 May 1981 to her intervention. Jacinta and Francisco Marto, who died in the great Spanish Flu pandemic of 1919-20, were beatified on 13 May 2000.

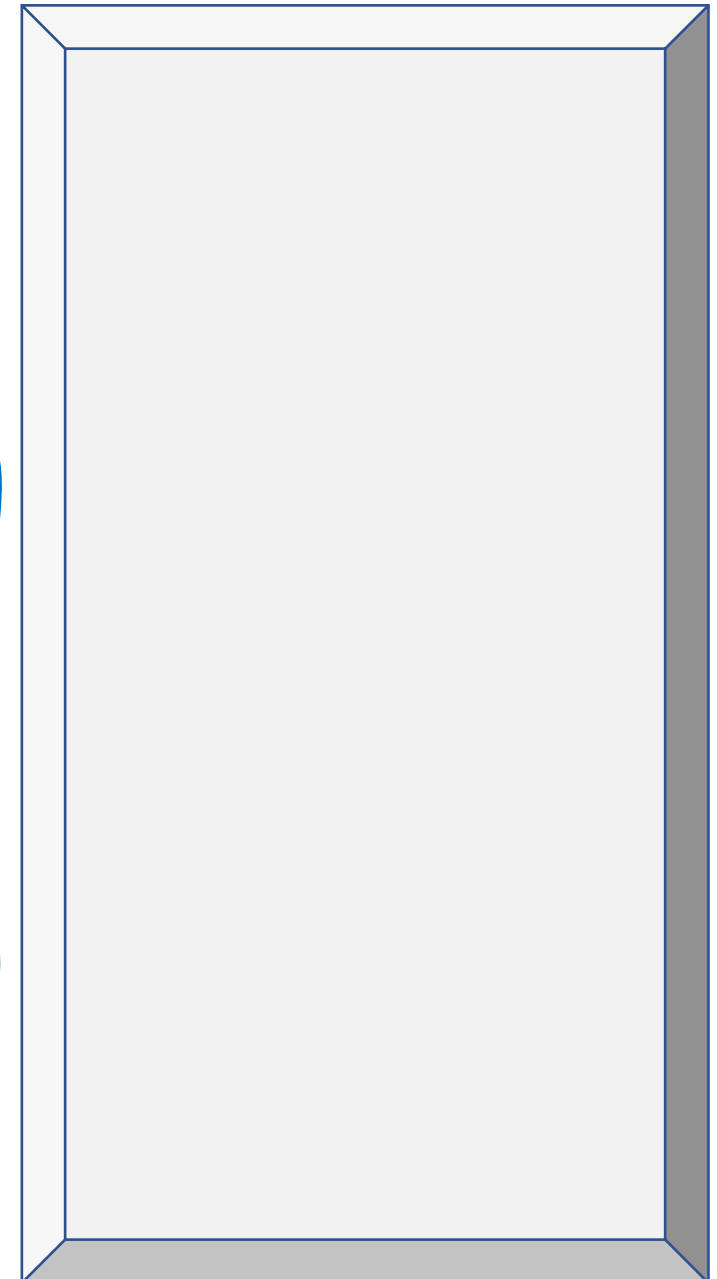
Pray the Fatima prayer, which is normally added to the end of each decade of the Rosary:

O My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

14th May, St Matthias, Apostle

St. Matthias was chosen by lot after Jesus' Ascension into heaven to replace Judas. He had been a close follower of Jesus and so knew Him and the other Apostles very well.

You could say that St. Matthias was in the right place at the right time, but he had chosen to follow Jesus, even if he was not originally one of the close band of the twelve. Nothing else is really known about him, but the fact that he was there and was chosen is enough for us. If he had not chosen to respond to Jesus we would never have heard of him. So, we need to recognise that we have a choice; do we stay close to Jesus or do we move away? We don't all have to be leaders; we can be there in the background supporting and encouraging people. How can we stay close to Jesus today?



15th May St Isidore the Farmer (1070 - 1130)

St. Isidore the Farmer is patron saint of Madrid and was named after the famous St. Isidore of Seville. He was born to very poor parents in the city of Madrid and as soon as he was old enough to work (probably about 10-12 years old), he was sent to work for Juan de Vergas, one of Madrid's wealthiest citizens. Juan de Vergas owned great estates on the edge of the city and Isidore was sent to work there, on the land as a farm labourer. And that is what he did for the rest of his life. He never grew rich financially but his life of faith in Jesus Christ was a richness that inspired many other people.

He married a girl as poor as himself, and together they prayed and made God the centre of their lives. Each morning, very early, just as the sun rose, they would go to Mass and then they would start their work in the fields, praying all day long. On holidays, they would visit people even poorer than themselves, taking what little food and clothing they could to share with them. However, the most important gift they gave, was their love of Jesus and their faith in Him. He died on 15 May 1130 and very soon, there were stories of miracles in his name. The Spanish Royal family adopted him as their patron saint, even before his official canonisation in 1622.

How can St. Isidore inspire us?

St. Isidore was not rich in material wealth but his whole life was focussed on Jesus Christ. He prayed whilst he worked. We can pray too during the day as we do other things, such as traveling to school, walking around, outside in the garden, on a walk.... One way we can do this is by saying the "Jesus" prayer - **"Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner."** If we say this over and over again, we can draw closer to Jesus and begin to love as He loves, just like St. Isidore did.

15th May, St Brendan (486 - 578)

There are probably more legends about St. Brendan than known true facts. He was born in south-west Ireland and became a priest and a monk, establishing a number of monasteries in Ireland and Britain. Many people have heard of him because of his voyage to the New World on skin covered coracles. Whilst there is no firm scientific evidence of this tradition, it is known that at that time, Irish monks regularly travelled far and wide, taking their faith in Christ to many other lands. Legends always have some truth at their base, so it is quite possible that Brendan led some kind of voyage in a small leather covered boat or boats, to spread their faith in Jesus Christ. Maybe he arrived in North America....? Who knows where they ended up? A lot of the accounts of the voyage can be matched with current phenomena. Here is a very old film about a reconstruction of that voyage which took place in the 1970s.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0achCp3VZO> May be you could make a small model boat that can sail across a school or garden pond?

19th May, St. Dunstan (909 - 988)

St. Dunstan is one of our most important English saints as he really helped the king before the Norman Conquest to organise the Church and the country. In those days there was almost no difference between the "law of the land" and "Church law."

Dunstan was a Benedictine monk who became the Archbishop of Canterbury, the most important Bishop in England at that time. He was born near Glastonbury in Somerset and educated at the abbey there (which is just ruins now). He became a priest at Winchester but then started to work for King Edmund who appointed him as Abbot of Glastonbury, his old school! A lot of the monks had become lax, that is, they had lost the habit of praying regularly, so Dunstan began to organise, not just the monks at Glastonbury, but all over England as well. This is considered to be one of the best things that he did for the Church in England.

After a short spell in what is now Belgium, where he saw the strict discipline of a monastery there, Dunstan came back to England and was made Bishop first of Worcester, then of London and then Archbishop of Canterbury. As archbishop, He composed (wrote) the Rite for the Coronation of King Edgar at Bath which is the basis of the Coronation Rite still in use.

Dunstan worked well with King Edgar, and together they worked on reforming the Church in England through the monastic orders. Dunstan advised King Edgar, making laws and generally governing the country and setting up governing structures for the Church in England. Remember, there was not much difference between Church law and state law. The whole law of the country was based on God's law of love for Him and our neighbour.

Dunstan died at Canterbury, on 19 May 988 at nearly 80 years old which was a long life for those days! After his death he was quickly recognised as a saint and was one of the most popular Anglo-Saxon saints. St. Dunstan, pray for us and for England.

Making Laws:

If you had the chance to help create laws for this country based on God's law of love for Him and one another, what would your three most important laws be?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

25th May, St. Bede the Venerable

"In the midst of the Church he opened his mouth, and the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding and clothed him in a robe of glory, alleluia." (Entrance antiphon for today, the memorial of St. Bede).

St. Bede (673-735) is one of those saints of whom many people have heard, because of the impact that he made on the Church in England more than thirteen hundred years ago. He was educated and then lived in the neighbouring monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow all his life. At that time, the North East of England was a great centre of learning and there was a large collection of Christian books. All books were copied out by hand, very beautifully and were extremely valuable and rare. St. Bede was the first person in England to write a history of the Church and from it we have learned a lot about how Christianity spread across England.

However, as the antiphon says, He was filled with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding and also wrote many commentaries on the Bible, especially on the Gospels which he translated into English. Although St. Bede spent most of his life alone in his cell, He was united to Jesus Christ in love, and so he could say with Jesus, "I am not alone because the Father is with me" (Jn. 16:33). Let us say this prayer with St. Bede:

"I pray to you, noble Jesus, that as you have graciously granted me joyfully to imbibe (learn, take in) the words of your knowledge, so you will also of your bounty grant me to come at length to yourself, the fount of all wisdom, and to dwell in your presence for ever."



Bibles that St. Bede used were beautifully written and illustrated like the book on the left. Maybe you can decorate the text below which is from today's Gospel.

Jesus said,

**"You are the light
of the world."**

27th May Saint Augustine of Canterbury (- 605?)

Christianity had been brought to Britain by the Romans but when the Romans left, the practice of the faith died out in most parts of the country, except for the West and North. The story behind the re-conversion of England by St. Augustine of Canterbury is often told. One day, Pope St. Gregory the Great saw some fair-haired Anglo-Saxon slaves standing in a square in Rome, waiting to be sold as slaves and not used to seeing people with such fair hair (as the Mediterranean peoples are normally dark-haired) he asked where they were from. He was told that they were "Angli" (Angles), but he said, looking at the fair hair, and fair skin, "*non Angli, sed angeli*" ("no-not Angles but Angels"). On asking more about these strange-looking people he realised that they might look like angels but they did not know Jesus, and so sent a monk called Augustine to lead a group of thirty monks to evangelise the people of Britain. Augustine was horrified and did not want to travel all that way to the cold northern country, but Gregory was adamant!

The missionaries landed in Kent in 597, and the King of Kent, Ethelbert, welcomed them and was very soon baptised along with many of the people. More missionaries arrived in 601 and Augustine was consecrated archbishop of the English and set up his diocese in Canterbury, and then two more: one in Rochester and another in London.

St. Augustine was at first a reluctant missionary and he shows us that sometimes we might think that we know best, but other people actually do have a better plan. St. Augustine thought that he was not good enough and also was very comfortable where he was in Rome, but St. Gregory the Great knew by God's grace that St. Augustine was the person. Sometimes we are asked to do something that we think might be too difficult. However, God never asks us to do something that He is not going to help us with.

Can you do some research for me? Can you fill in the gaps for the feast days of these canonised saints?

Archbishops of Canterbury who have been canonised (declared saints)			
From	To	Saint	Feast day
597	26 May 604 or 605	Augustine	27 th May
c. 604	2 Feb 619	Laurence	
619	24 Apr 624	Mellitus	
624	10 Nov	Justus	
627	30 Sep 653	Honorius	
Mar 655	14 Jul 664	Deusdedit	
26 Mar 668	19 Sep 690	Theodore (of Tarsus)	
29 Jun 693	13 Jan 731	Berhtwald	
10 Jun 731	30 Jul 734	Tatwine	
735	17 Oct 739	Nothhelm	
27 Sep 761	764	Bregowine	
941	2 Jun 958	Oda	
959	19 May 988	Dunstan	19 th May
el. 21 Apr 995	16 Nov 1005	Ælfric of Abingdon	
1006	19 Apr 1012	Ælfheah (St. Alphege)	
4 Dec 1093	21 Apr 1109	Anselm	21 st April
3 Jun 1162	29 Dec 1170	Thomas Becket	29 th December
2 Apr 1234	16 Nov 1240	Edmund of Abingdon	16 th November

The last Catholic archbishop of Canterbury was Cardinal Reginald Pole, whose mother Blessed Margaret Pole was martyred by King Henry VIII in her late seventies. Her feast day is 28th May.

31st May, the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On hearing that her elderly cousin is at long last expecting a child, Mary rushes to be at her side. As baptised people, that is, those who have received Our Lord Jesus Christ in Baptism and have become united who to Him, are commissioned to go out and take Christ to the whole world (c.f. Mt. 28:19-20). We see here our Blessed Mother doing exactly that! Mary has received Christ in her womb at the Annunciation (c.f. Lk. 1:26-38) and immediately takes him to Elizabeth. This painting¹ is a beautiful illustration of the effects of Mary's action.

Elizabeth recognised that she was in the presence of her Lord as the child in her womb (St. John the Baptist) leaped in recognition of the presence of Jesus, God the Son. At this moment, John the Baptist was surely baptised himself, and filled with the Holy Spirit who was to inspire him to proclaim the coming of Christ at the river Jordan (c.f. Mt. chapter 3).

Look at the way the woman with her back to us is kneeling reverently before Mary. Because Mary carried Jesus in her womb, she is a tabernacle. The woman's posture reminds us that we too kneel or genuflect when we come into the church as we come into the presence of God in the tabernacle.

Look at the lake which has turned gold as the whole of creation rejoices in the presence of God on earth (in Mary's womb).

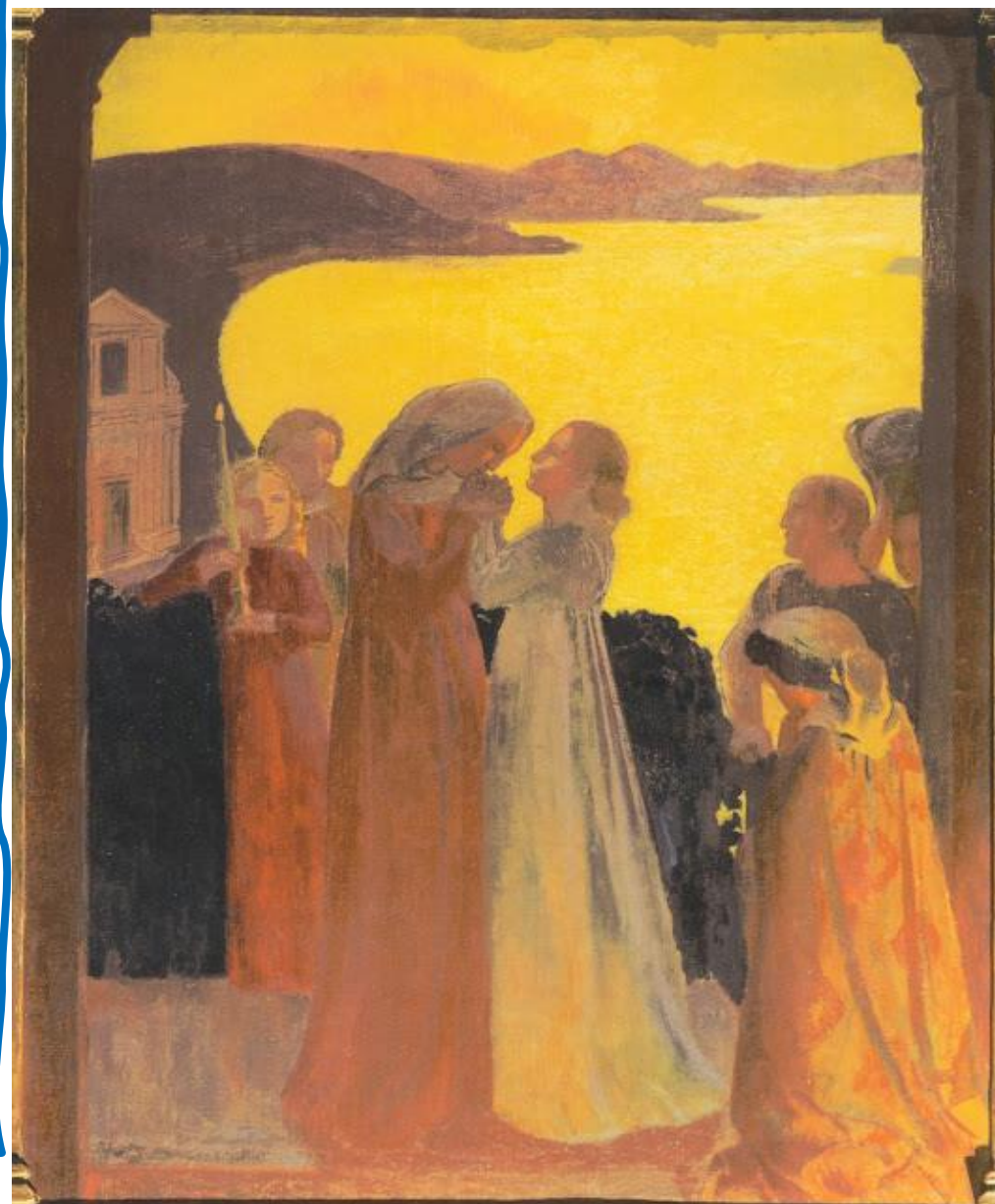
Look at how the girl is carrying the single candle, which reminds us our own baptismal candles which were lit when we were baptised and were united to Jesus Christ.

The artist has added an interesting feature. The church windows are dark... is this because everyone is "out there" proclaiming the Good News of salvation... or is it because the majority of the population don't regard the Church as relevant? In this painting, the whole of creation rejoices, and a small collection of people react.

In Baptism we received the Holy Spirit and in Confirmation that gift of the Holy Spirit is strengthened so that we can ask Him to help us to take Jesus to the world. Will we ask Him?

"Magnificat" by Maurice Denis

Use the reflection here to lead others through this picture and end with a moment of thought, how can we, like Mary, bring Christ to the world?



¹ Denis, Maurice: *Magnificat* accessed from <http://acatholicwomensplace.blogspot.com/2007/12/magnificat.html>

The Magnificat: Mary's prayer of praise at the Visitation.

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me.

Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.

He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever.

Amen.

(The day after Pentecost) Mary, the Mother of the Church

The day after Pentecost, we celebrate Mary as mother of the Church. We recognise that Mary is the mother of the Church for various reasons:

1. She is the mother of Jesus Christ, and the Church is His Body, so she is the mother of the "Body of Christ", the Church.
2. At the foot of the cross, Jesus gave His mother to John one of the disciples to be his mother and therefore the mother of all the disciples and the mother of all disciples (that means us).
3. Mary was with the Apostles when they gathered to pray after the Ascension (Acts 1:14) and was there when the Church was "born" through the coming of the Holy Spirit.

As a mother, she watches over the Church and prays for us. Like at Cana, when she noticed that the wine was running out, she turns to her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ and asks Him to help us.

If you do not know this prayer, it's a beautiful one to learn by heart as in it we turn to Mary, our mother and ask for her prayers:

The title "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church" was given to Mary by Pope St. Paul VI in 1964. All Marian doctrines (teaching) point to her Son, our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ and each one teaches us more about Him.

In this case, the title reminds us that the Church is the Body of Christ and Mary is our heavenly mother, watching over us, praying for us, just as she did with the disciples on earth.

Salve Regina

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
Hail, 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!
Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ. Amen.

Explanation:

We cry out to Mary as she is both our mother and the queen of heaven. In many cultures throughout history, it was the king's mother who was queen not his wife, and as queen, she was mother of the country.

We are Eve's banished children because we are sinners.

She is an advocate; she turns to her Son and pleads on our behalf when we need help and asks Him to help us.

Our "exile" is our time on earth, and we hope that she will show us her Son the fruit of her womb who is Jesus of course.

Clement = merciful, we ask her to pray for us.

She is the Mother of God because when Jesus was born, He was God as well as man.

May, the Month of Mary

How about creating a **Mary Garden**. This might be something to do during half term, or something to work on throughout the year, especially if you are sowing seeds now.

Whether you have acres or a windowsill indoors, there are a range of plants you can choose to honour Our Lady. Lots of the common names for plants have their origins in devotions to Mary. Think about marigolds, lilies (including lily-of-the-valley, roses) and any flower with "lady" in the name. Often these are "wild" flowers (or what are considered weeds"). Here are some ideas.* Please note that although these explanations are generally the stuff of the medieval imagination, they show us a history of devotion to the Mother of God and her work of supporting her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. They also help us to contemplate the mysteries of Jesus' birth, teaching, Passion, death, Resurrection and Ascension. Do look up the link below for more ideas of plants and flowers to use. These photos (except for the daisy chain) all come from my own garden.



Foxgloves (left) used to be called "Our Lady's gloves."



Roses (left) have a special place in our devotion to Mary. Legend has it that Mary blushed a deep rose pink at the Annunciation. Red roses symbolise her sorrow and motherhood and white, her purity. Mary is also known as the mystic Rose.



Poppies (right) remind us of Christ's blood that was shed for us. This is a sculpted poppy and it shows that if you don't have the space to grow many flowers then sculpture is a good alternative. Red poppies of course also bring to mind all those who have died for our country in war.



Daisies (right) are a symbol of innocence and freedom from sin as Mary is, and ox-eye daisies (far right) are also called "Mary's star". Legend says that the wise men lost sight of the star but found a clump of ox-eye daisies right beside where the Holy Family was.



Daffodils have also been called "Mary's Star" but meaning new life and hope. The way their heads look down reminds us of Mary looking down on us from heaven. (This yellow flower was photographed from below, looking up, against the blue sky).





Forget-me-nots (left) were known as "eyes of Mary". The stunning blue carpet of colour also reminds us of Mary's colour, blue.

There is a legend that Christ touched his mother's eyes and then passed his hand over the ground and forget-me-nots grew there.



Rosemary was known as "Mary's nosegay"



Chives were known as "Our Lady's Garlic. (Can you spot the bee?)



Bluebells have also been called "Lady's bells".



Tulips were known as "Our Lady's prayer"



Violets (left) were known as "Our Lady's Modesty" as they symbolise humility and modesty as they flower for months and months quietly getting on bringing a bit of colour through the winter and into spring when there is not a lot of other plants in flower.

Finally, here are some marigold seedlings... they will have bright yellow flowers and are named after Mary herself: "mari-gold"



Pray the Rosary more

The Rosary is a very powerful prayer which helps us to meditate on Jesus from His Incarnation (becoming human in Mary's womb) to His Ascension into heaven. We also reflect on the honour Jesus gives His mother in her Assumption and crowning. Traditionally, the Church reflects of different mysteries on different days of the week but as praying the rosary is an option (called a "devotion"), then you can reflect on the different mysteries whenever you like.

The Rosary classically is a ring of 5 sets of 10 beads, separated by another bead. There is a short set of 5 beads at the bottom, in a set of 3 with two on their own, above a crucifix.

Rosaries can also be "One-decade" that is, only the Our Father bead and 10 beads on a string with a crucifix. This is easier for carrying around. The photo also shows a rosary ring which is also a one-decade rosary.



The key prayers prayed are:

- The "Apostles Creed"
- The "Hail Mary"
- The "Our Father"
- The "Glory Be"
- And if you wish, the Fatima prayer can be added at the end of each decade:

"O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy".

The Joyful Mysteries: *Mondays, Saturdays*

- The Annunciation (Lk. 1:26-38)
- The Visitation (Lk. 1:39-56)
- The birth of Christ (Lk. 2:1-19)
- The presentation in the Temple (Lk. 2:22-36)
- The finding of the child Jesus in the Temple (Lk. 2:41-52)

The Mysteries of light: *Thursdays*

- Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan (Mt. 3:13-17)
- The changing of water into wine (Jn. 2:1-12)
- Jesus' preaching (any Gospel but especially Mt. chapter 5-7)
- The Transfiguration (Lk. 9:28-36)
- The Institution of the Eucharist (Mk. 14:22-25)

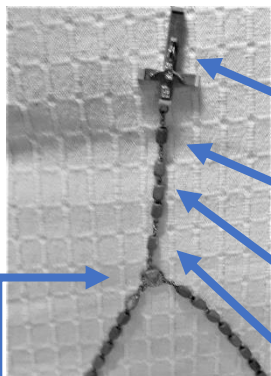
The Sorrowful Mysteries: *Mondays, Saturdays*

- The Agony in the garden (Lk. 22:39-46)
- Jesus is scourged (Mt. 27:27, Lk. 22:63-65, Jn. 19:1)
- Jesus is crowned with thorns (Mk. 15:17, Mt. 27:29)
- Jesus carried His cross (Jn. 19:17, Lk. 23:26-29)
- Jesus dies on the Cross (Lk. 23:32-49, Jn. 19:17-37)

The Glorious Mysteries: *Wednesdays, Sundays*

- Jesus' Resurrection (Mt. 28:1-10, Mk. 16:1-6)
- Jesus Ascension into heaven (Mt. 28:16-20, Acts 1:6-11)
- The coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13)
- Mary's Assumption into heaven (Catechism 966, also Gen. 2:16-17, death as a result of sin)
- Mary is crowned queen of heaven (Rev. 12:1-2)

How to pray the Rosary



- Holding the crucifix between your fingers, make the Sign of the Cross with it.
- On the first bead, pray the Apostles Creed (may be omit with young children).
- On the next three beads say a "Hail Mary" for each bead, for the Pope.
- On the next bead say the "Our Father"
- Announce which "mystery" you are praying, e.g. "the Annunciation" and then may be describe the scene of the Angel Gabriel coming to Mary.
- Pray a "Hail Mary" for each of the beads until you come to the large bead or the one that is set apart.
- Pray the "Glory Be" and then the Fatima prayer if you wish.
- Announce the next mystery, e.g. "The Visitation" and briefly describe the scene.
- Begin with an "Our Father" and then the 10 "Hail Marys" as before.

Praying the rosary together:

It is usual for the prayers to be split into two so one person prays the first part of the "Our Father" and everyone else prays the second half, as a response. This also applies to the "Hail Marys and the "Glory be". The Fatima prayer is generally prayed together.

Praying for an intention:

The Rosary is a very powerful prayer and so we can "offer" our rosary for someone else. May be for the sick, or for a particular person. Or we can offer each decade for a different intention. Don't forget that we can pray for ourselves! As Catholics we are good at praying for other people, but if you have a concern, ask Our Lady to pray for you!

Variations and suggestions with children

- Have a picture of the scene that the mystery is based on. (Collect good Christmas cards for the Joyful Mysteries and look for images on the internet.)
- Just pray one decade at a time.
- Or if you would like to cover the whole set of mysteries, then pray the "Our Father", three "Hail Marys" and the "Glory be".
- Instead of praying on a rosary, with very young children you can put out some cups or bowls with each "Hail Mary" so that they have to put one down. It keeps them involved. May be get a set of wooden bricks and label them to use again and again and why not let the children choose which mystery they are going to pray?
- Make a one-decade Rosary (see below) and as each bead is added you can talk through the mystery you



Make a one-decade Rosary

1. Begin with a crucifix (one from a broken Rosary may be?) and thread a cord through the loop at the top.

2. Fold the cord in half and thread both ends through a single bead, knotting them together on the other side of the bead.

3. Carefully thread five beads along each string. It's easier to do one side and then the other, but take care not to drop the first side when threading the second.



4. When all ten beads are in place, tie the two ends together at the end of the sets of beads. Make sure that you allow some space between the beads so that you can finger them when praying.



5. Carefully cut the ends of the cord.

6. Your rosary is now ready to use.

Ask your priest to bless your rosary and it becomes a holy object.

Maybe you can make a nice bag or box to keep it in when you are not praying with it.



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