



THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO PRAY A ROSARY

Tommy Tighe

As a Catholic, Mary is kind of my jam.

Whenever I need to call in the reinforcements to help me storm heaven, she's my go-to mediatrix. And while I can completely conceptualize in my head that Mary is a human being just like me, in my heart I can feel like she's so far out of my league that there's no way she would be able to understand what I'm going through in my day-to-day life, especially as a parent. That's why, while the Rosary has brought me untold amounts of comfort in times of intense suffering, it has also left me feeling even further away from Mary at times.

Thankfully, as a Catholic hipster constantly on the lookout for the awesomely obscure in our faith, I stumbled upon an alternative contemplative prayer that completely changed things for me and was just what I needed: the Servite Rosary, or the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows.

This Rosary originated with the Servite Order and focuses on the Seven Sorrows (or *Dolors*, if you want to impress your friends) of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The journey you embark upon as you move the beads through your fingers goes a long way toward bringing the Holy Mother of God right up beside you and into your life.

THE FIRST SORROW: THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON

Just days after the birth of my first son, he had an extremely rough night that culminated in our rushing him to our doctor. Once there, we were given the crushing news that he would be admitted to the hospital and kept overnight for observations. It was terrifying to hear.

The Bible doesn't document any of Jesus' battles with childhood illness, but Mary was told by Simeon that her baby boy "is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel" (Lk 2:34) and that her own heart would be sword-pierced with sorrow over him. She knows a parent's fears.

THE SECOND SORROW: THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Do you know those times when you find yourself feeling left out in the cold, either literally or emotionally? Where you've felt unwelcome, even among your closest friends and family, simply because you're tracking in a different direction? Mary's definitely been there—unmoored and with only the consolation of God, her husband, and her son to take comfort in.

THE THIRD SORROW: THE LOSS OF THE CHILD
JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Think of the wave of stomach-churning, dizzying terror that you feel when you lose track of your child, even for a minute while out in public, and the emptiness and guilt that inevitably replace your panic once you find him or her. You may only have lost sight of your child for a moment, but the self-recrimination lives on: "How could I have been so distracted?" Mary has been there, in spades.

THE FOURTH SORROW: THE MEETING OF JESUS
AND MARY ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS

As a mental health professional, I have given support to parents as they have faced their struggling children, have realized their children still haven't hit rock bottom and still aren't ready to get the help that is needed, and have been forced to let them go, to let them fall the rest of the way, in hopes that they will finally rise.

That confrontation is awful, because feeling helpless in the face of your child's trouble is terrifying and heartbreaking. There is nothing worse. Mary knows what it means to stand helplessly before the pain in her child's eyes. There is no better companion in such terrible moments as these.

THE FIFTH SORROW: THE CRUCIFIXION

Have you ever had to experience the unbearable and unspeakable pain of losing a child to death, to estrangement, or because a child has lost his or her way in life? Mary's right there, crying alongside you.

THE SIXTH SORROW: THE TAKING DOWN OF THE
BODY OF JESUS

We all have that day: the day of darkest suffering—when we must see something and bear it, and it makes us feel like we just can't go on—a day of nothing but pain, and a future that seems empty and void. Mary, once handed her bloodied, broken son, understands.

THE SEVENTH SORROW: THE BURIAL OF JESUS

We all know how this story ends: "But take courage; I have conquered the world!" (Jn 16:33). Jesus wins, yes. And yet we mostly forget it; we continually second-guess whether a happy ending could ever be on its way. Deaths, financial worries, miscarriages,

marital problems, work difficulties—hope can be hard to find in these difficult moments, and we want to give up.

Mary must have felt this way as she stood by and watched her Son be placed in a borrowed tomb. Whether or not she knew at that moment that Easter was on the way, she certainly understands how difficult it can be for our hearts to see beyond Good Friday.

With good reason, Mary can seem so far above us as to seem out of reach, but if we take a moment to reflect upon all she endured throughout her life, we start to see how fully she understands everything we're enduring throughout ours. The Servite Rosary has helped me to see this, clearly, and to believe that if I hang on, Mary will gladly take me by the hand and lead me the rest of the way home.

COOL SAINT

ST. ANTONIO MARIA PUCCI

Born in 1819, the second of seven children, Antonio felt called to life in a religious order as a child but faced opposition from his father. He eventually pushed through this opposition and joined the Servite Order in 1837, and he was ordained to the priesthood six years later. He served as pastor of a small parish for forty years, and he became well known for taking care of the poor and sick of the area. He was canonized by St. John XXIII in 1962.

St. Antonio Maria Pucci, pray for us.

FORGOTTEN PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER FROM THE SEVEN SORROWS ROSARY

Let intercession be made for us, we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, now and at the hour of our death, before the throne of Thy mercy, by the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, whose most holy soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow in the hour of Thy bitter Passion. Through Thee, Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, Who

with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns,
world without end. Amen.

LIVING THE FAITH

Contemplate the sorrows of Our Lady and all she endured. Pick up a Servite rosary (or count away on your fingers, if you can't get your hands on one) and walk alongside Mary as she pushed through her trials with faith in God's plan. Think about the sorrows you have faced in your own life and how Mary, through her own sorrows, deeply understands what you're going through.

When you realize the Mother of God understands you, you can take a deep breath and find the courage to continue on.



THE SONG OF SONGS: THE MASS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Patrick Neve

At Franciscan University, there were three Mass times a day, which at first sounded like a blessing but ended up being a curse on my Catholic guilt. You see, two Masses were in the middle of the day, which meant I frequently had something going on. The other Mass was before anyone had anything to do that day. It was at 6:30 a.m.

A Mass that early in the morning was good for discipline and a great way to start my day. However, I found it was hard to pay attention and remain prayerful because 6:30 Mass had no music. Because of this, I am now of the opinion that if the music minister's voice isn't awake, I shouldn't be either.

My friend Nino and I were talking about this after Mass one morning, and he said that when there is no music accompanying the Mass, he meditates on the Song of Songs, particularly the springtime song in Song of Songs 2:8–16. That day we had a long conversation about that passage and how it relates to the Mass. Below, I split the passage up into seven sections so you can use the Song of Songs to meditate on the Mass.

SONG OF SONGS

PART OF MASS

The voice of my beloved!
 Look, he comes,
 leaping upon the mountains,
 bounding over
 the hills. . . .

INTRODUCTORY

Start off Mass by remembering why you are there. You are there because you heard the voice of God. Remember that voice throughout Mass today.

Look, there he stands
 behind our wall,
 gazing in at the windows,
 looking through
 the lattice.

READINGS

Christ peers out at us through the scriptures. He is hidden in the Old and preached in the New. Look for your beloved in the scriptures being read.

My beloved speaks and says
 to me:
 “Arise, my love, my fair one,
 and come away;
 for now the winter is past,
 the rain is over and gone.
 The flowers appear on
 the earth,
 the time of singing
 has come,
 and the voice of
 the turtledove
 is heard in our land.

GOSPEL

The Gospel is where the Lord speaks to us plainly. In all he does and says, he is saying these words to us: the winter of death has past; the spring-time of the Resurrection is here.

How is this Gospel calling you to live in the Resurrection?

SONG OF SONGS	PART OF MASS
<p>“The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”</p>	<p>PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS</p> <p>At this point, we know what is coming. We can smell the fragrance of the wine being brought. It reminds us of Christ in the Eucharist. We hear the voice of God more clearly now as he calls us to communion.</p> <p>What fragrance do we put forth? Does our fragrance remind others of Christ?</p>
<p>“O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”</p>	<p>CONSECRATION</p> <p>Are these Christ’s words to you or yours to him? If you feel in love with Jesus, say them at the elevation. If you feel nothing, let him say them to you.</p>
<p>“Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards— for our vineyards are in blossom.”</p>	<p>BEFORE RECEIVING</p> <p>As you say “Lord I am not worthy,” ask him to help you empty your heart of anything that does not belong to him.</p>

SONG OF SONGS

My beloved is mine and I
am his.

PART OF MASS

AFTER RECEIVING

In the Eucharist, you have become one with Christ. You belong to him and he belongs to you. Whatever the Lord is doing in your heart this week, let him. Ask how you can help.

Repeat this verse to yourself if you find yourself becoming distracted.

The Song of Songs ends with the two lovers in anticipation of the wedding feast. This Mass is what they were waiting for, and it is right at our fingertips. We are able to live in the springtime the two lovers dreamed about.

COOL SAINT

ST. GREGORY OF NAREK

St. Gregory of Narek was a tenth-century Armenian monk. His prayers and writings focused on how he could offer himself up to God. The Church in Armenia's relationship with the Church in Rome is long and complicated, but in 1996, Pope John Paul II and the head of the Armenian Church signed a declaration of mutual faith. This led to St. Gregory of Narek being declared a Doctor of the Church in 2015 by Pope Francis.

FORGOTTEN PRAYER
FROM SPEAKING WITH GOD
FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HEART
BY ST. GREGORY OF NAREK

The voice of a sighing heart, its sobs and mournful cries,
I offer up to you, O Seer of Secrets,
placing the fruits of my wavering mind
as a savory sacrifice on the fire of my grieving soul
to be delivered to you in the censer of my will.

Compassionate Lord, breathe in
this offering and look more favorably on it
than upon a more sumptuous sacrifice
offered with rich smoke. Please find
this simple string of words acceptable.
Do not turn in disdain.

May this unsolicited gift reach you,
this sacrifice of words
from the deep mystery-filled chamber
of my feelings, consumed in flames
fueled by whatever grace I may have within me.

LIVING THE FAITH

Go to a Mass without music and use the Song of Songs to remain
prayerful.