

# The Anglican Rosary

## An Alternative Form of Contemplative Prayer

Taken from Lynn C. Bauman

### Sacred Symbolism

The configuration of the Anglican Rosary relates contemplative prayer using the Rosary to many levels of traditional Christian symbolism. Contemplative prayer is enriched by these symbols whose purpose is always to focus and concentrate attention, allowing the one who prays to move more swiftly into the Presence of God.

The circle of the Anglican Rosary symbolizes the wheel of time. Prayer, which moves around the "wheel" of the Rosary, represents the Christian's spiritual pilgrimage through time following Christ as Lord.

The Anglican Rosary is made up of thirty-three beads divided into four groups of seven called "weeks." Between each week is a single bead.

In Christian tradition the sacred number four represents the four quadrants of the church's year. In its yearly cycle the Church's calendar moves through the cardinal points which represent major events in the life of Christ, beginning with the season of Advent, and passing through Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost. In moral theology there are also the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance which are the four corners in the moral foundation of all human life. In addition to these there are the four cardinal directions: north, south, east and west, as well as the four primary elements earth, water, wind, and fire.

The number seven is repeated four times in the Rosary to create a conventional "month of weeks." In the Judeo-Christian tradition the number seven represents spiritual perfection and completion. Prayer is the Christian's cry for completion. Symbolic completion is represented by adding together the four weeks of seven beads to the four cruciform beads plus the additional "entry bead" representing the divine Unity at the beginning of the Rosary. The full number of beads totals thirty-three. That number (a multiple of three) prayed three times (signifying the Trinity) comes to ninety-nine, which in the Middle Eastern traditions the complete number of the Divine Names. Adding the crucifix (the first or final item on the Rosary) to this number, the total numeration reaches one hundred, which is the number of the Orthodox Rosary and represents the fullness of creation.

1. Begin praying the Rosary by selecting one of the examples given. Practice it until it is clear which bead goes with each part of the prayer and as far as possible commit the prayer to memory.
2. Find a quiet spot and allow your body and mind to become restful and still. After a time of silence, begin praying the Rosary at a pace that is unhurried and intentional. Complete the prayer three times.
3. Upon completion of the round of the Rosary, silence should follow the prayer. This silence allows you to center your being in an extended period of silence. It also invites reflection and listening after you have invoked the Name and Presence of God.

#### Prayer Form I

<i>Crucifix</i>	In the Name of the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
<i>First Bead</i>	Open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your Praise.
<i>Cruciform Beads</i>	Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.
<i>The Week</i>	Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have Mercy Upon Us (Me).