

Sophía's Rosary



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Why Sophia's Rosary?

Many women and men of our time hunger for an experience of the divine feminine. Their search has inspired scholars to discover—or, more accurately, to rediscover—a wealth of feminine images for God within the Bible and Christian tradition. The most important are God the Mother, another face of the loving God Jesus also called Father, and Sophia, Holy Wisdom who creates, redeems, and sustains the universe. These images have helped mystics throughout history to experience God's tender embrace, and they can provide spiritual nourishment for people today. But for this to happen, we need creative forms of prayer to help write them deep within our hearts.

Many wonderful books have appeared in recent years with meditations and prayers focusing on such scripture passages. Others have provided versions of the Psalms or Liturgy of the Hours in gender-neutral, or, in a very few cases, feminine God-language. But this renewal of traditional prayer practices has yet to take hold with one of our most beloved devotions: the Rosary. Begun as a medieval

layperson's alternative to monastic recitation of the psalms, which required literacy and the possession of costly manuscripts, this prayer has led millions to a deep experience of God's love. Christians have learned the beads on their mothers' laps and prayed them through tears by the bodies of their loved ones, experiencing Mary's maternal tenderness as an echo of God's faithful care throughout their lives.

Yet the traditional rosary, fruitful as it is, does not fully satisfy the longings of many believers today. Some are uncomfortable with repeatedly declaring themselves "sinners"-- fifty-three times in a standard recitation. Others treasure the powerful stories of Mary's life found in the mysteries: risking death by stoning in accepting the invitation to bear the Messiah as an unwed mother; rejoicing with Elizabeth as they and their unborn children were filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied; proclaiming the Gospel in a strange tongue, flames dancing over her head, with the other women and men gathered in the Upper Room. Yet they also yearn for a connection with the other female disciples of Jesus, and sense the ambivalence in Mary's functions as (officially)

humble handmaid become exalted queen of heaven and (unofficially) the feminine face of God. If the human Mary is our only faint experience of God the Mother, women are at a permanent disadvantage in experiencing themselves as created in the divine image, compared to men who can fully identify with the divine Jesus as one like themselves. Mary can even become an irrelevant human role model for modern women when she is viewed in traditionally pious terms as the passionless mother of one perfect child, born without the ordeal of labor which forms the sacred rite of passage for all other birth-givers on this planet.

Sophia's Rosary is an attempt to resolve this dilemma by providing a simple, powerful means of connecting with God the Mother directly, while freeing Miriam of Nazareth to be "truly our sister"—the brave, wise woman who sanctifies daily labor and fights for justice in partnership with her Son. It adapts the prayers whose rhythms dwell deep in our flesh and bone to connect us with Sophia, holy mystery existing from before time began and tenderly revealed to struggling human hearts. And it extends the mysteries offered for meditation and

contemplation to a diverse array of scriptural texts highlighting divine love in a myriad of images, and human courage in the faces of many different women. May repeating these invocations and reflecting on these stories allow us to meet God's maternal tenderness deep within, and share Her compassion with a suffering, searching world.

Hail Sophia

Hail Sophia, full of grace,
our hearts are with you.
Blessed are you, Holy Wisdom,
And blessed is the face of your love, Jesus.*

Bright Sophia, Spirit of Life,
Make us your friends, and prophets of your truth. Amen.

Prayer of Jesus

Creator God, our Mother and Father,
Let our lives be a song of praise to you.
May your divine love govern in our world.
Guide us in fulfilling your will.
Nourish us who hunger for peace, justice, and love.*

Forgive us our selfishness, neglect, and indifference,
And teach us to disarm our enemies with love.
Protect us from being put to the test,
and free us from all that prevents us
from realizing your image.
For to you alone, Most High, loving God,
be glory and praise forever. Amen

Gloria

Glory to the Mother, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Spirit;*
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Mysteries of Sophia

1. Sophia transforms us into God's friends and prophets.
(Wisdom 7:25-8:18).
2. Sophia lovingly guides us and protects us with Her glory.
(Wisdom 9).
3. Sophia saves Israel from brutal slavery in Egypt.
(Wisdom 10:15-11:4).
4. Sophia calls us to the joyous feast of God's reign.
(Proverbs 9:1-6).
5. Sophia's beauty richly delights our bodies and spirits.
(Sirach/Ecclesiasticus 24).

Mysteries of Women Empowered by Jesus

1. The Syro-Phoenician woman calls Jesus to serve all people.
(Mark 7:24-30)
2. A forgiven woman anoints Jesus' feet in love and gratitude.
(Luke 7:36-50)
3. A poor widow at the Temple excels all others in generosity.
(Luke 21:1-4).
4. A woman of Bethany anoints Jesus's head to proclaim him as the Messiah. (Mark 14:3-9).
5. Pontius Pilate's wife challenges his unjust execution of Jesus.
(Matthew 27:19).