



## A Holding Cross

The holding Cross is an individually made cross designed to fit into the palm of the hand comfortably during prayer. The constant presence of the cross in your hand, or where you can touch it, is both an invitation to prayer and a reminder of God's continued presence with us wherever we are, or whatever situation we are in.

The crosses are made from a range of woods and no two ever look alike because they are hand made, often with the recipient in mind. A cross usually comes with a card of prayers to use with it. Every cross is blessed before it is sent to a recipient.

Here is what Angela Ashwin writes in a leaflet designed to be used with the holding cross:

“A holding cross is designed not so much to look right as to feel right. The cross is deliberately uneven, in order to fit between your fingers more comfortably than a “correctly shaped” cross would do.

“Because a holding cross is not decorated or ornamental, it is a harsh reminder of the wood of the cross of Jesus.

“Sometimes it is enough simply to hold the cross silently – this is itself prayer. Maybe you have no words anyway, and it is through your sense of touch that you are expressing your love of Christ and your need of him.

“Holding a cross can also be a way of praying for others, especially those who are suffering. Or it can be helpful to hold a cross when making an act of penitence.

“If you are ill, simply holding the cross may be the best way to pray. It doesn't matter that you have no energy for other kinds of prayer. You can give a wooden cross to a blind person, or someone who is ill or dying, as a way of sharing the love of Christ with them.”

Short prayers to use with the cross could be:

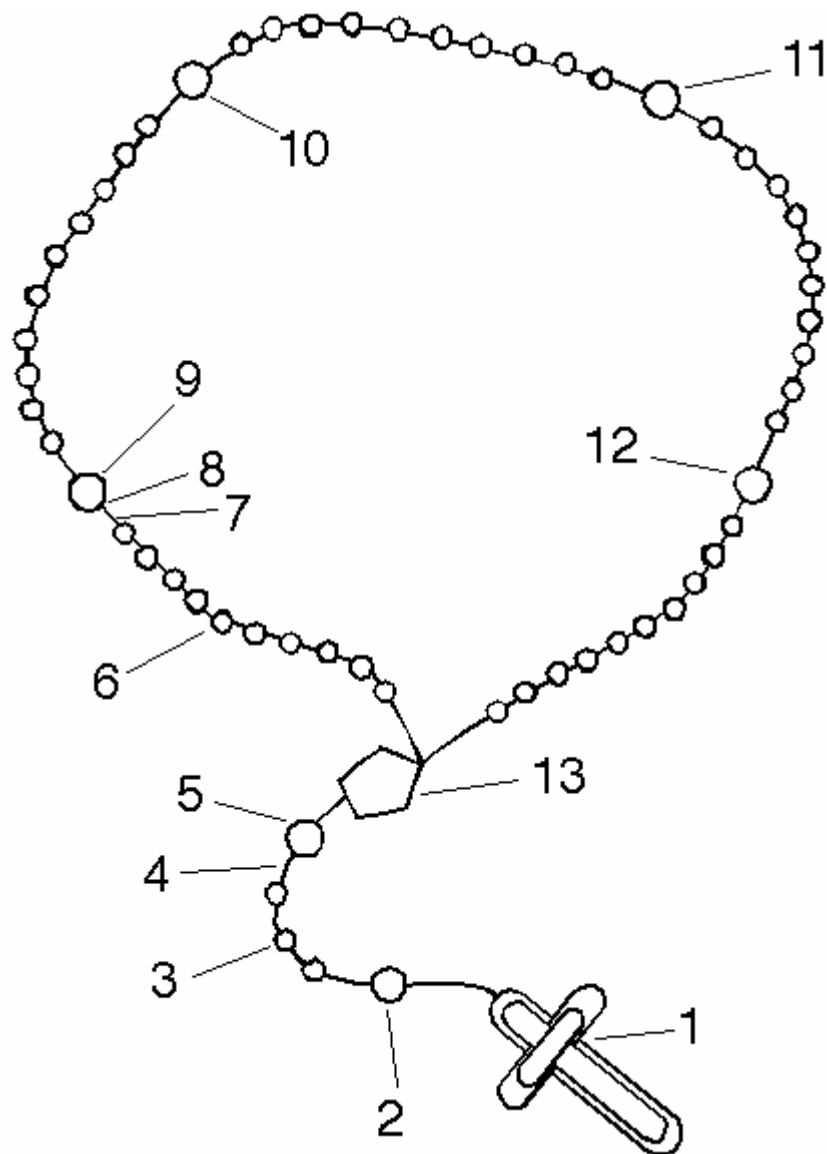
“As I hang on to this cross, Lord, hang on to me.” “As I hold this cross, Lord, fill me with your strength and peace.” “As I hold this cross, Lord, I remember the cost of your great love for me.” “As I hold this cross, Lord, I rejoice in the knowledge that our evil and sin do not have the last word, and that your love is indestructible.”

## The Rosary

The Rosary prayer is composed of sets (called decades) of shorter prayers: *the Our Father, ten Hail Marys, a Glory Be and an Oh, My Jesus*. Saying a 'rosary' means saying either five or twenty decades of beads. Each decade concentrates on an event in the life of Jesus, especially those in which Mary played an important part.



In saying twenty decades, Roman Catholics meditate on the five Joyful, five Luminous, five Sorrowful and five Glorious events of Christ's and Mary's life. These twenty events are called the Mysteries of the Rosary.



### The mysteries are:

*Joyful:* Annunciation, Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, the Nativity, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and finding the young Jesus in the Temple when "lost"

*Luminous:* Jesus' baptism, the wedding at Cana, Jesus proclaiming the message of the kingdom of God, the Transfiguration, the Last Supper

*Sorrowful:* the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus being scourged, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross and the crucifixion

*Glorious:* the Resurrection, the Ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Assumption of Mary, the Coronation of Mary in heaven

For a full explanation of how to use the rosary, the texts of the prayers, and some beautiful art from Roman churches see:

[www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980701/SCRMNTL/pray\\_rosary.htm](http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980701/SCRMNTL/pray_rosary.htm)

### Saying the Rosary

1. Make the *Sign of the Cross* and say *The Apostle's Creed*
2. Say the *Our Father*
3. Say three *Hail Marys* for the intention of an increase of Faith, Hope and Charity
4. Say the *Glory Be to the Father*, and one *O, My Jesus*
5. Announce the First Mystery, then say the *Our Father*
6. Say ten *Hail Marys*
7. Say the *Glory Be to the Father*
8. Say the *O My Jesus*
9. Announce the Second Mystery, then say the *Our Father*, ten *Hail Marys*, one *Glory Be* and *O My Jesus*
10. Announce the Third Mystery, then say the *Our Father*, ten *Hail Marys*, one *Glory Be* and *O My Jesus*
11. Announce the Fourth Mystery, then say the *Our Father*, ten *Hail Marys*, one *Glory Be* and *O My Jesus*
12. Announce the Fifth Mystery, then say the *Our Father*, ten *Hail Marys*, one *Glory Be* and *O My Jesus*
13. Conclude by reciting the *Hail, Holy Queen*