

THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle
Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States
www.dmas-acc.org

The Rev. Peter Geromel OHI, Th.M, Rector
July 2021
<https://stpetersacc.org>

The Rector's Ramble (In and Out of Brambles)

Prayer Beads

Someone was kind enough to send us a box of rosaries from Wytheville. The note inside the box (now pasted on the box) reads: "Dear Pastor, Please give these rosaries to anyone in your parish that want them. I only ask that you suggest to them, if they would include in their petitions that Our Lady asked [sic] as she asks us to pray the rosary for peace in our nation, by honoring her son our Lord. Second, [sic] way of bringing the strayed back to Our Lord and Christ in our country. Finally, the third: A way, to save the unborn. May Our Lord bless you all and keep you in the palm of His hand." We are certainly more than culturally aware of the Roman Catholic emphasis on the "Most Holy Rosary" but let us investigate its history so that we can see that it has a much broader context than we might imagine.

The origin of the "Prayer Rope" or "Rosary of Beads" is contested. Many religions, Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim, use something similar. Sabine Baring-Gould (famous for his hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers,") offers that, "The use of a rosary of beads is a valuable assistance. The Arabs use them to assist their prayers, and they have been found of great help to devotion since their introduction into the Christian Church. A prejudice exists against them as distinctively Roman; but such they are not, as they are employed likewise in the Eastern Church." The origin of the Prayer Rope is said to originate with Anthony of the Desert in Egypt. It is said that he tied a knot every time he said, "Lord, have mercy" and that the Devil would untie the knot and throw off his count until he developed what the prayer rope is now created by, a "monkey knot" which is exceedingly difficult to tie and to untie.

Now, I contest this story a little bit, and would adjust it to be more accurate. It is true that the Desert Father, Abba Macarius, said to recite the "Lord, have mercy" often, and this developed into the Jesus Prayer which constitutes the Hesychasm of the Eastern Church, the "Prayer of the Heart." Thus Fr. John Meyendorff tells us,

In Macarius, the Evagrian [of Evagrius Ponticus, d. 399 - a spiritual master] "prayer of the mind" thus becomes the "prayer of the heart"; the center of man's psychosomatic life, the heart, is the "table where the grace of God engraves the laws of the Spirit"; but it also can be a "sepulcher," where "the prince of evil and his angels find refuge." The human heart is thus the battlefield between God and Satan, life and death. And the monk devoting his entire existence to prayer chooses, in fact, to be at the forefront of this battle, in a direct and conscious way. . . .

Originally, however, it seems that the Prayer of Hesychasm also entailed the Psalms. Thus St. Gregory of Sinai refers to Hesychasm in relation to Psalmody as well. "He who practices hesychasm must first of all possess the following five virtues, as a foundation upon which to build his actions: silence, abstinence, watchfulness, humility and patience. There are three practices pleasing to God: psalmody, prayer and reading - and work with the hands for those weak in body. . . . From early morning, freeing oneself from everything, it is necessary to keep remembrance of God, by prayer and silence of the heart . . ." A Footnote in this part of the "Philokalia" (On Prayer of the Heart) reads: "The meaning of the word 'psalmody;' is explained by Bishop Ignatiy Brianchaninov as follows: 'By the word "psalmody" . . . should be understood a very slow, long-drawn intoning of psalms and other prayers. . . It was done from memory. The monks of those times had to learn the psalms by heart.'"

Thus we find evidence that the early Desert Fathers, who might have recited all 150 Psalms every day, considered Psalmody too a part of the "Prayer of the Heart." Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon tells us in *Christ in the Psalms*,

The entire business of praying with words is to put the words themselves deeply in the heart, so that the reflecting mind descends into the heart with the words of the prayer. This is what is meant to learn the Psalms by heart. It involves memory, to be sure, but also a great deal more than memory. I think of it as a kind of kneading of leaven into the dough of the mind. The goal is to make the words, images, ideas, and sentiments of the Psalms part of our own inner world of thought and resolve.

You can see how very well he is using the idea that Fr. Meyendorff points us to, that the “prayer of the mind’ thus becomes the ‘prayer of the heart’”.



Martin Chemnitz,
16th Century Lutheran Theologian with
Pater Noster Beads

So, Prayer Ropes and Rosaries often come in multiples of 5s and 10s. There are Prayer Ropes with 150 or 50 beads or knots. There are Rosaries, often, with 5 “decades”. All of these can be used, easily, to recite and keep track of the recitation of all 150 Psalms. This is why I think it more likely that the Prayer Rope was originally designed to keep track of which psalm Anthony the Great was on, rather than the Jesus Prayer or “Lord, have mercy” as the possibly apocryphal story goes. This makes more sense because we know that some Desert Fathers used stones to keep track of which psalm they were on. So a knot in a rope makes sense. Later on developed “Pater Noster Beads” in the Western Church. These were developed for lay associates of monasteries to recite 150 Our Fathers and these would count as the equivalent of saying the 150 Psalms that Monks and Nuns said regularly – but for the normal working stiff.

The Dominican Rosary is what we consider the “Most Holy Rosary” today, although there is also the Franciscan Rosary from the Middle Ages, and then Anglican and Lutheran Rosaries (both of much more recent innovation). That the Dominican Rosary consists mostly of the Ave (“Hail Mary”) rather than Pater Noster (“Our Father”) makes sense to my mind. (The medieval Ave Maria did not include the request for intercession, the “Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners...” That was added later by the Dominican Friar, Savanarola.) Yet the Dominicans were first instituted as an Order of Preachers to preach against certain die-hard gnostic sects, the Cathari (Pure Ones) or Albigensians, many of whom denied the Incarnation, that our Lord became flesh at the Annunciation. Thus a recitation of the biblical greeting to Mary both by the Archangel

Gabriel (Luke 1:28) and by Elizabeth (Luke 1:42) would be an apt contemplation and recitation for an Order of Preachers designed to preach against Gnostic neo-Platonism, which claimed that God was above and beyond inhabiting and incarnating the material world.

Again, when one looks at a regular rosary, there are many uses for it. Given that they have 5 decades, three times through makes that 150. There are also other uses such as Sabine Baring-Gould has in his work, the *Golden Gate*, The Titles of Jesus, with 5 biblical recitations said ten times each combined with Prayer, and the Rosary of Jesus and the Crown of the Church, which are similar ways for using beads. All of these can be said with standard Rosaries. There is also the Chaplet of St. Michael and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. So, when you see a box of Rosaries, I hope you see more clearly that there are many possibilities which lie before you!

News and Information

Vestry is not scheduled in July.

July 9th - 17th, Fr. Geromel is at St. Michael’s Youth Conference Midwest, Ages 12-21. He’s teaching Apologetics and Bible.

July 25th, Alasdair’s Birthday Party at the Rectory. 3 PM.

All are welcome.

Diapers for PRC!!!

Diaper Drive is especially looking for sizes 4, 5 & 6 and unscented wipes.

Bring them by the Church.



JULY, 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&HU – Prayers and Holy Unction				[1] 12 noon HC	[2]	[3]
[4] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS INDEPENDENCE DAY (TRINITY V)	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8] 12 noon HC	[9]	[10]
[11] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS TRINITY VI	[12]	[13]	[14]	[15]	[16]	[17]
[18] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS TRINITY VII	[19]	[20]	[21]	[22] 12 noon HC	[23]	[24]
[25] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE	[26]	[27]	[28]	[29] 12 noon HC	[30]	[31]

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Please — If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SECURE YOUR OWN REPLACEMENT!

Week beginning Sunday →	July 4	July 11	July 18	July 25	August 1
Altar Guild	B. Higginbotham	M. Slayton	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	M. Slayton
	J. Butterfield	B. Higginbotham	V. Williams	J. Butterfield	B. Higginbotham
Coffee Hour	J. Butterfield	G. Terrell	S. Darby	C. Pappas	V. Williams
Ushers	--	--	--	--	--
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Epistoler 8 a.m.	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	G. Mauney	A. Butterfield
Epistoler 10 a.m.	B. Paisley	T. Paisley	G. Terrell	P. Williams	C. von Claparede
Server	C. von Claparede	P. Williams	T. Paisley	P. Williams	P. Williams
Crucifer	W. Paisley	W. Paisley	W. Paisley	B. Paisley	W. Paisley

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2021 Vestry: Allen Butterfield, Dan Drysdale, Phil Pappas, Marnie Slayton, Clemens Von Claparede, Phil Williams