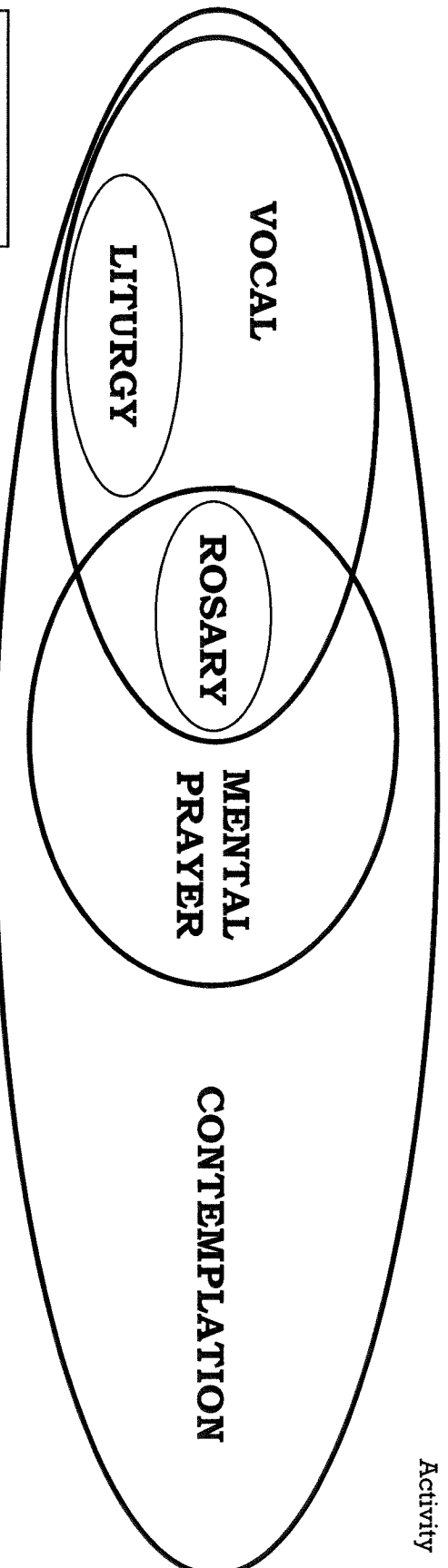


Prayer is a vital (gives life) and personal (between friends) relationship with the one true God

YOU

GOD

Activity



Vocal prayer is the expression of your heart in words, silently or audibly.

The **liturgy** is a participation in Christ's own prayer addressed to the Father in the Holy Spirit. Through it, Christ continues the work of our redemption *in, with, and through* his Church.

Rosary leads one into resful and contemplative prayer, penetrating the mysteries of the life of Jesus

Mental prayer is a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. By confronting the subject considered with your own life, through the eyes of faith, your heart opens to conversion and you are able to respond to what the Lord is asking of you, following Christ more closely

Contemplation is a closing sharing between friends, in a silent love. In this silence, the Father speaks to us his incarnate Word; in this silence the Spirit of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus. In the Gospel, praying for Jesus means living his relationship as Son with the Father in Love (the Spirit).

MARY

Do Catholics worship Mary?

We don't worship Mary, we honor and venerate Mary. Worship and adoration are reserved only for God.

1. The Second Vatican Council states that devotion to the Blessed Virgin "differs essentially from the cult of adoration, which is offered equally to the Incarnate Word and to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and it is most favorable to it" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 66).

Although the veneration of the faithful for Mary is superior to their devotion to the other saints, it is nevertheless inferior to the cult of adoration reserved to God, from which it essentially differs. The term "adoration" indicates the form of worship that man offers to God, acknowledging him as Creator and Lord of the universe.

When the faithful call upon Mary as "Mother of God" and contemplate in her the highest dignity conferred upon a creature, they are still not offering her a veneration equal to that of the divine Persons. There is an infinite distance between Marian veneration and worship of the Trinity and the Incarnate Word.

As a consequence, although the Christian community addresses the Blessed Virgin in language that sometimes recalls the terms used in the worship of God, it has a completely different meaning and value. Thus the love of the faithful for Mary differs from what they owe God: while the Lord must be loved above everything with all one's heart, with all one's soul and with all one's mind (cf. Mt 22:37), the sentiment joining Christians to the Blessed Virgin suggests, at a spiritual level, the affection of children for their mother.

2. Nevertheless there is a continuity between Marian devotion and the worship given to God: indeed, the honor paid to Mary is ordered and leads to adoration of the Blessed Trinity.

The Council recalls that "the various forms of piety towards the Mother of God ensure that while the Mother is honored, the Son through whom all things have their being (cf. Col 1:15-16) and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell (cf. Col 1:19) is rightly known, loved and glorified and his commandments are observed" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 66).

4. Marian devotion is unrepeatable because it is directed to a person whose personal perfection and mission are unique. (*John Paul II*, General Audience, 22 October 1997)

Why do Catholics seek Mary's intercession?

The Queen Mother served as an advocate for the people in front of the king. People were going to her so she could present the petition to his son.

"So Bathsheba visited the king in his room. The king was very old, and Abishag the Shunamite was caring for the king. Bathsheba bowed in homage to the king. The king said to her, 'What do you wish?'" (1Kg 1:15-16)

"Adonijah, son of Haggith, came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. Then Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, and the king stood up to meet her and paid her homage. Then he sat down upon his throne, and a throne was provided for the king's mother, who sat at his right. She said, 'There is one small favor I would ask of you. Do not refuse me'. The king said to her, 'Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you'." (1Kg 2:13; 19-20)

Jesus Christ is the King. With kingship, sitting at the right hand is a sign of authority.

"On the next day, when the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out: 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, [even] the king of Israel'." (Jn 12:12-13)

We seek friends' and family members' prayer for our intentions. Mary and the saints are so close to God's throne in Heaven. Their prayers are more powerful. Death can't separate us from them, we are in communion because of Christ.

We pray to God; we also pray to Mary, asking her to pray to God for you (like you go to a friend with a favor you want he/she asks to his/her close friend).

Christian fellowship draws us closer to Christ, and our relationship with Mary and the saints does the same.

The conclusion of the first sign (miracle) at the wedding feast of Cana, fruit of Mary's intercession, shows how her action was directed to the glorification of her Son.

"When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine'. [And] Jesus said to her, 'Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come'. His mother said to the servers, 'Do whatever he tells you'. ... Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him" (Jn 2:3-5; 11)

What are the prayers the Catholics say to Mary?

You know the Bible, you study the Bible, you listen to the Bible and to its explanation... why then not praying the Bible, with the words of the Bible? **Hail Mary** can be divided in two parts:

First half: taken from the Bible. "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28); "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42)

Second half (added by Pope Pius V): we turn to her, who said YES to God and the mission entrusted to her by God, and we ask for her intercession that we might say YES to God's will "now and at the hour of our death", persevering in God's mission till the end of our earthly life.

Jesus: is the center of this prayer.

"God greatly exalted him [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil 2:9-10)

Rosary (from Latin, garland of roses), is made of different prayers (Apostles' Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Fatima prayer) to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer, related to the most important Mysteries of Christ's life (and his Mother's).

The Mysteries of the Rosary center on the events of Christ's (and Mary's) life. There are four sets of Mysteries: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and the Luminous (added by Pope John Paul II, 2002).

Used especially by St. Dominic to spread the Gospel, fight heresies, and have uneducated people (who couldn't read nor afford to have their own expensive hand written Bible) meditate on the most important life events of Jesus of Nazareth (and his Mother).

What does the Church say about Mary?

We have 4 dogmas about Mary. Everyone points to Jesus. They are privileges given by God to Mary.

Dogma (CCC 88-90). Truth revealed by God (Scripture or oral tradition) or having a necessary connection with it. They illuminate and make secure the path of faith. They oblige Catholics to adherence of faith.

- 1) **Mary Mother of God** (*Council of Ephesus, 431*). It's a dogma related to the Incarnation. It protects the union between God and man in Jesus Christ: He is true God (godly Father) and true Man (human Mother).

"The young woman (the virgin), pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel" (Is 7:14)

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption" (Gal 4:4-5)

Original sin (CCC Glossary). Describes the fallen state of human nature which affects every person born into the world, and from which Christ, the "new Adam", came to redeem us.

- 2) **Perpetual Virginity of Mary** (*Council of the Lateran, 649*). Mary not only conceived Jesus as a virgin (prior the birth of Jesus), but stayed a virgin her whole life, remaining faithful to her mission to bear Christ in the world.

How about his brothers and sisters then? "A crowd seated around him told him, 'Your mother and your brothers [and your sisters] are outside asking for you'." (Mk 3:32)

The word *adelphoi* [*adelphai*] is a generic word used for relatives. It is used also, for example, in talking about the relationship between Abraham (uncle) and Lot (nephew) in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint).

"Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother'. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:27). If Jesus had brothers [or sisters], wouldn't he have entrusted His Mother to them?

- 3) **Immaculate Conception** (*Pope Pius IX, 1854*). Mary is conceived free from the stain of original sin.

We have a high priest "who has similarly been tested in every way, yet **without sin**" (Heb 4:15)

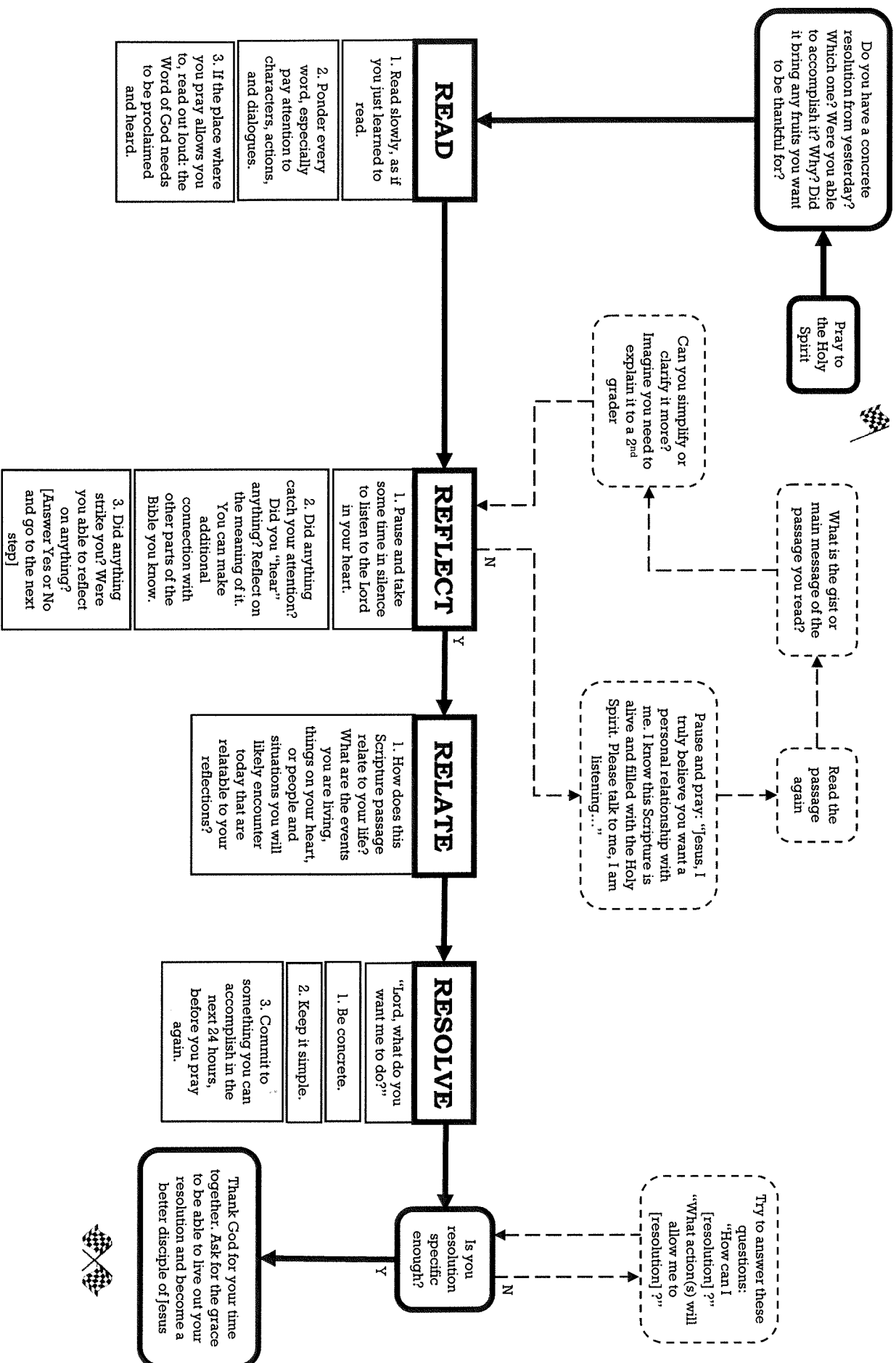
As Jesus is without sin, His Mother must have been spare from it, so not to pass it onto Her Son. "Hail, **full of grace!**" (Lk 1:28).

The expression "**full of grace**" is the translation of the Greek word *kecharitoméne*, which is a passive participle. Therefore to render more exactly the nuance of the Greek word one should not say merely "full of grace", but "*made full of grace*", or even "*filled with grace*", which would clearly indicate that this was a gift given by God to the Blessed Virgin. This term, in the form of a perfect participle, enhances the image of a perfect and lasting grace which implies fullness. (*John Paul II, General Audience, May 8, 1996*)

- 4) **Assumption** (*Pope Pius XII, 1950*). Mary was assumed into Heaven by God, body and soul.

The Assumption is a sign of what God wants to accomplish in the life of all the disciples of Christ: victory over sin and death, and experience of the resurrection of the body. We will at the end of time, Mary is the first one who did it before all of us.

Meditation or Mental Prayer



A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Lk 18:1-8)

Jesus told his disciples a parable
about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary.

He said, "There was a judge in a certain town
who neither feared God nor respected any human being.

And a widow in that town used to come to him and say,

'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.'

For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought,

'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being,
because this widow keeps bothering me

I shall deliver a just decision for her

lest she finally come and strike me.'"

The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says.

Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones

who call out to him day and night?

Will he be slow to answer them?

I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.

But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

A GREAT TASTING EXPERIENCE

HEAVEN ON EARTH IN THE EUCHARISTIC BREAD

GOOD TABLE MANNERS

Why do you eat? Some times to survive, others to have strength to accomplish what you are called to do, at times to enjoy your friends' company or to be consoled... Our soul needs nourishment too.

Since **Eucharistic Adoration is an extension of the Eucharistic Presence from Holy Mass**, THE PURPOSE of Eucharistic Adoration IS LOVING JESUS BY ACKNOWLEDGING HIS REAL PRESENCE, spending time with Him in the Eucharist.

*“Jesus wants you to do more than to go to Mass on Sunday. Our communal worship at Mass must go together with our personal worship of Jesus in Eucharistic adoration in order that **our love may be complete.**” (St. John Paul II)*

Do you want to know how to behave and how to spend fruitfully your time in Eucharistic Adoration? This is the key:

always **PRESENT TO JESUS' REAL PRESENCE** and remind yourself of that.

MENU

APPETIZER: a good starter helps to *stimulate your hunger*. Recite slowly a prayer to the Holy Spirit, or one in your own words to acknowledge His Presence, or simply the prayer Jesus taught us “Our Father...”

ENTRÉE: what do I need to *satisfy my hungry heart*? Anything you like that **helps you to be more attentive to Your Eucharistic Lord now present in front of you**. Here are some of the favorites and most recommended dish from the house: reading Scripture or a spiritual book; saying devotionals and other vocal prayers; reciting the Rosary; journaling*.

“If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point quite gently and replace it tenderly in its Master's presence. And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back and place it again in Our Lord's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed.” (St. Francis of Sales)

DESSERT: there is always room for a *sweet ending*. Conclude your time spent with Your Eucharistic Lord with gratitude: thank Jesus for the gift of the Eucharist, for the gift of the time that you've been able to spend with Him, for the graces you received, and ask for the ability to recognize His presence in everyone and everywhere else.

* These activities are like seasoning your food: too much can ruin it, too little don't bring out the full flavor. If at any moment, they distract you or are a detriment to being receptive to the gift of Jesus' Real Presence, then stop and re-think what you do and how you are spending your time.

INCREASE YOUR PALATE SENSITIVITY

Grow in your knowledge of the Eucharistic Jesus.

The more you know about a Person, the better you'll be able to relate to that Person and Love Him. Some great resources: Catechism of the Catholic Church, John Paul II Encyclical on the Eucharist (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 2003), etc.

Cultivate greater sensitivity to the Eucharistic Presence.

- a) Arrive at least 5 minutes earlier to Mass and quiet your heart from distraction and prepare to participation into Mass;
- b) Genuflect reverently acknowledging your are bowing down in front of Your King and Savior present in the tabernacle;
- c) Practice *Thanksgiving after receiving the Eucharist*, spending time thanking and loving Jesus now truly present in your heart;
- d) Practice Spiritual Communion throughout the day, going into your heart where Jesus lives in force of your Baptism.

"The Church and the world have a great need of Eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world by our adoration never cease." (St. John Paul II)

RESOURCES

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part IV, Christian Prayer

<https://www.myfaithwalk.org/>

<http://www.spiritualdirection.com/>

<http://bustedhalo.com/>

<http://www.wordonfire.org/>

<http://www.schooloffaith.com/>

<http://www.catholic.com/>

<http://www.scotthahn.com/>

<https://stpaulcenter.com/>