

The Rosary Way

- Walking the Rosary Way at Aylesford is a way of calling to mind the mysteries of our salvation. The word 'mystery' here means events in the life of Jesus or Mary that have elements beyond our understanding).



- There is a connection with the place where these happened at the shrine of Our Lady and St. Simon Stock where earth from the Holy Land is buried so this walk can also be a form of pilgrimage.

- Each 'mystery' is represented in a ceramic by Adam Kosowski, an artist who lived and worked at Aylesford.



The 15 mysteries begin with 5 concerning the early life of Jesus and are called 'Joyful': the Annunciation (announcement) of his birth to Mary; Mary's visiting her cousin Elizabeth; Jesus birth in Bethlehem; Jesus being presented in the Temple; Jesus, aged twelve being found by his parents talking to the priests in the Temple.



The next 5 mysteries are called 'Sorrowful': Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane; his being scourged at the pillar; his crowning with thorns; his carrying of the cross; his crucifixion.



The last 5 mysteries are called 'Glorious': The resurrection of Jesus; his ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Spirit; the Assumption of Mary; the Coronation of Mary in heaven.

- People use a string of beads called a rosary to count the prayers said at each mystery. Other faiths also use prayer beads like this.

- The prayers are 1 Our Father, 10 Hail Marys and 1 Glory be to the Father for each mystery. This way of using repeated prayers was very helpful in times when not everyone could read or had access to books.

- Set days are allotted to each group of 5: Monday and Thursday – Joyful; Tuesday and Friday – Sorrowful; Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday – Glorious.

The roses planted in the Rosary Way are white for the joyful, red for the sorrowful and yellow for the glorious mysteries.



Suggested programme

- Prepare the three prayers traditionally used to say the rosary
- Discuss the repetitive nature of this which can be particularly helpful in times of stress or where our own words fail.
- Explain that the prayers are said alternately (i.e. with a break) which is reminiscent of two sides answering each other as in other prayers of the Church particularly Divine Office.

Basic experience

Walk round the Rosary Way stopping at of each group of mysteries to identify the scenes portrayed and to say an Our Father at the beginning and a Glory be at the end.

A fuller experience

Choose one set of mysteries to walk along slowly. Say a whole decade of the Rosary (1 Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, 1 Glory be).

Choose one scene you would like to reflect on further. Why does it attract you? How does it relate to you?

Extended experience

Investigate the Mysteries of Light (sometimes called 'Luminous Mysteries') initiated by Pope John Paul II –The Baptism in the Jordan, The Wedding at Cana, The Proclamation of the Kingdom, The Transfiguration and The Institution of the Eucharist (if used, said on Thursdays). Share your reflections on the Rosary Way – orally, in writing, music, artwork etc.

Further reading

The book shop has a number of books and leaflets about the Rosary. Especially recommended is Fr Wilfrid McGreal's book which is illustrated with photographs of the ceramics by Adam Kossowski.