



Practicing the Presence of God: Learning to Pray the Anglican Rosary

Workshop #2 –Breathing. Jesus Prayer. Julian of Norwich.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,

"Receive the Holy Spirit."

John 20:21-22 ESV

The Holy Spirit is the breath of God who enlivens us to be *a new creation* in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). It is vitally important that we practice intentional controlled breathing during contemplative prayer with the rosary. For example, while praying the Jesus Prayer, breathe in while praying the first half of the prayer; hold your breath for a brief moment; and breathe out while saying the second half.

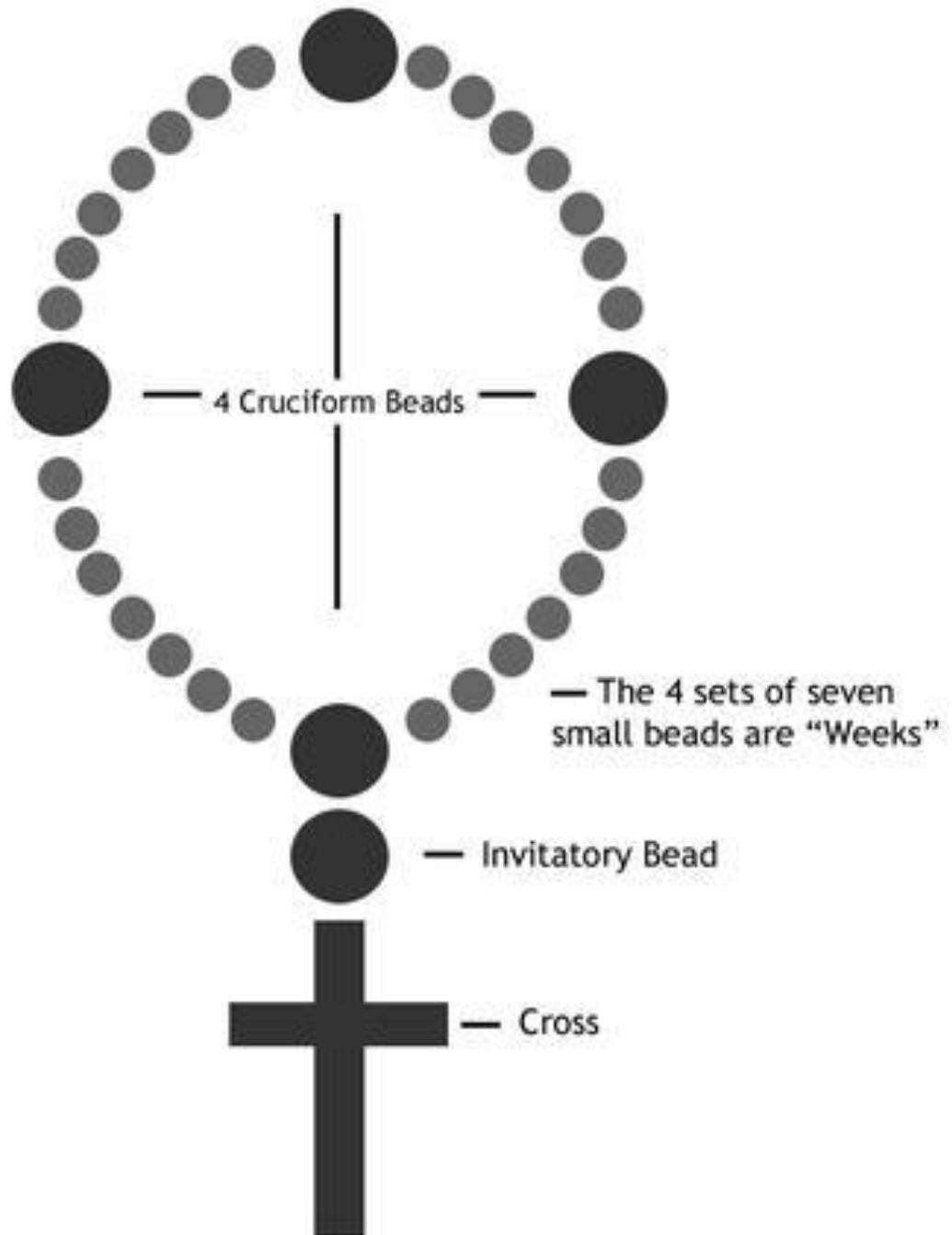
- In-breath: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God' ...
- Hold
- Out-breath: 'Have mercy upon us.'

Since you cannot speak aloud and practice this controlled breathing simultaneously, pray the words in the silence of your heart. As you breathe in while invoking the Name of the Lord Jesus, you welcome Him into your heart as your honoured guest. You consciously allow Christ to take up residence within you so that He *may dwell in your heart by faith* (Eph. 3:17). *Christ is formed in you* (Gal. 4:19). With Christ now at the centre of your life, on your out-breath, you can now expel your anxiety, anger, attachments, guilt, shame, and whatever else may be troubling you. You can also imagine your out-breath and in-breath as a mini-death and resurrection with Christ. As you breathe out, you die to your old self (with its brokenness, fears, etc.); as you breathe in with His Spirit, you rise again to *newness of life* in Him (Rom. 6:3-8).



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The Jesus Prayer

Cross

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Invitatory

O God make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

world without end. Amen.

Cruciforms

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

have mercy upon us. (said three times)

Weeks

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, / have mercy upon us.

Dismissal (on the Invitatory bead)

The Lord's Prayer



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Julian of Norwich

(c. 1343–c.1416 A.D.)

Julian of Norwich was an anchoress, meaning that she voluntarily 'self-isolated' in a room for a lifetime of intense prayer. She lived in the wake of the Black Death, and around her repeated plagues were re-decimating an already depleted population. During this period, the Church experienced a blossoming of interior spirituality centered in monasteries and the normal homes of laity. It focused on the humanity and sufferings of Jesus. In the crucified Christ, God entered into the suffering of humanity with a conquering love to redeem us and bring us back into union with the Father through the Spirit.



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This late medieval piety is exemplified in the work of Julian, the first known female writer in the English language. She wrote of the need to acknowledge our vulnerability, and suggested perceiving it as a strength, because Christ's *power is made perfect in human weakness* (2 Cor. 12:9). Through Christ, suffering and difficulties will not ultimately defeat us. Her writings are published under the title, Revelations of Divine Love. Some of the most enduring quotations are these:

- 'God is nearer to us than our own soul.'
- 'All shall be well, all shall be well. All manner of things shall be well.'
- 'Christ did not say, 'You shall not be disturbed, you shall not be troubled, you shall not be distressed,' but He said, 'You shall not be overcome.' God desires that we pay attention to these words, and that our trust in Him always remain strong, in good times and in bad. For He loves and enjoys us, and so desires that that we love and enjoy Him and trust in Him with all our might; and all shall be well.'

According to medieval anchorite piety, the external world can only upset our interior world if we allow it to do so. This happens when we yield to temptation due to distraction from prayer and contemplation of Christ. Julian would have agreed with this contemporary quotation from Mindful Christianity: 'Just because everything is crazy around you, doesn't mean everything has to be crazy within you.' To foster this inner solitude, anchorites like Julian recited sequences of prayers, Psalms and other Bible readings at fixed points of the day.



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Julian of Norwich Prayer

Cross

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Invitatory

O God make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

world without end. Amen.

Cruciforms

God of your goodness, give me yourself,

for you are enough to me. (said three times)

Weeks

All shall be well, and all shall be well, /

and all manner of things shall be well.



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Dismissal (on the Invitatory bead)

Most holy God, the ground of our beseeching, who through your servant Julian revealed the wonders of your love: grant that as we are created in your nature and restored by your grace, our wills may be so made one with yours that we may come to see you face to face and gaze on you for ever; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**