



# Experiences Praying the Rosary: A Quantitative Survey

By Chris Risey

## Overview

In 2021, a medical study from Germany examined the prayer experiences of individuals who regularly prayed the Rosary to determine what impact, if any, this practice had on their religious experience and well-being, including its effectiveness as a coping mechanism for reducing stress and anxiety. The results were positive. Researchers concluded, "...Through the use of a tangible prayer cord and the rhythmic repetition of the Rosary, the participants described experiencing orientation in life, peace, and a contemplative connection with the Divine... Praying the Rosary as a religious form of ritualized meditation may lead to positive benefits in health and well-being and may have resilience-promoting or preventive effects in facilitating trust, relaxation, connectedness, and prosocial behavior..."

While these conclusions were encouraging, a limitation of the study was its small sample size of only ten participants. This raised an important question: **how common are these positive experiences among the broader population of individuals who regularly pray the Rosary?**

To address this question, a questionnaire was developed based on statements drawn directly from the 2021 German study. These statements were organized into a 23-question survey with multiple-choice responses. For each question, participants were asked whether they agreed, disagreed, or had no opinion regarding the statement. Responses concerning participants' experiences and perceived effects of praying the Rosary were largely consistent with the findings of the German study. Several questions yielded positive response rates of 90% or higher for statements taken directly from that study.

Taken collectively, the survey results appear to further support previous research on the Rosary's perceived positive impact on respondents' religious experience, faith, health, and well-being. Sampling theory and statistical principles

allow for reasoned inferences about larger populations. With a sample size of 385 participants, this study allows for 95% confidence that the results fall within a 5% margin of error for a population of 3,000,000 or more. **This suggests that the survey findings are likely consistent with the experiences of the broader population of individuals who regularly pray the Rosary.**

## Background: Other Recent Rosary Studies

In 2021, a medical study<sup>1</sup> from Germany examined the prayer experiences of individuals who regularly prayed the Rosary to assess its impact on religious experience and well-being, including its effectiveness as a coping mechanism for reducing stress and anxiety. The study approached the Rosary in a manner similar to research on meditation, mindfulness, and relaxation practices.

Using open-ended questions and structured interviews, participants described numerous positive effects they attributed to their prayer practice. Several representative quotes from the study include the following:

- "The most important and frequently reported (experience) were feelings of relaxation, inner peace and tranquility experienced by taking time to connect with God while praying the Rosary." "These experiences were also described as lasting beyond the prayer practice itself."
- "Participants felt focused and that the prayer had given direction to their lives. A discipline to maintain regular and continuous practice was said to have enabled lasting changes in their lives."
- "One of the effects most frequently mentioned was a deepened trust in God and therefore in life."
- "Participants frequently mentioned that they had experienced a change in their personal character over time."
- "They had experienced a shift from pride and arrogance to humility, friendliness, helpfulness from feelings of isolation and loneliness to a sense of connection with a community; and from feelings of insecurity to a sense of dignity and equanimity."
- "The Rosary was seen as a powerful instrument with possible impacts on oneself, others and even the world."

From this study, researchers concluded, "...Through the use of a tangible prayer cord and the rhythmic repetition of the Rosary, the participants described experiencing orientation in life, peace and a contemplative connection with the Divine. Mary was seen as a mediator and advocate before God and as a role model in devotion. Praying the Rosary as a religious form of ritualized meditation may lead to positive benefits in health and well-being and may have resilience promoting or preventive effects in facilitating trust, relaxation, connectedness and prosocial behavior..."

### *April 2025 Study*

Lending further support to these findings, a study<sup>2</sup> published in April 2025 with 361 participants from Italy, Poland, and Spain also found positive, moderate correlations between praying the Rosary and outcomes such as reduced depression, increased empathy, and lower levels of religious struggle.

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<sup>1</sup> "Experiences and Perceived Effects of Rosary Praying: A Qualitative Study," Journal of Religion and Health, June 2021

<sup>2</sup> "Is the Rosary Still Relevant? Exploring its Impact on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Multinational Study," Journal of Religion and Health, February 2025

## Purpose of this Survey

While the results of these studies were encouraging, a key question remains: **how common are these positive experiences among individuals who regularly pray the Rosary, particularly among U.S. Catholics? Additionally, can the consistency of these positive experiences be quantified?**

To address these questions, a questionnaire was developed using statements drawn from the 2021 German study. These statements were organized into a 23-question, multiple-choice survey. For each item, participants indicated whether they agreed, disagreed, or had no opinion. **Table 1** presents the complete list of survey questions.

**Table 1**

<b>For each answer - yes or no</b>	
1	Do you participate in volunteer activities (civic, social, mission) whether within or outside your church?
2	Do you participate in devotions or programs like adoration, stations of the cross, or other church events?
<b>The following 12 statements are intended to inquire about the ways you believe the Rosary has helped you. Choose option best describes your experience: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) No Opinion, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree</b>	
3	The Rosary has helped increase my faith (i.e. religiosity).
4	The Rosary has increased my concern and love for others.
5	The Rosary has improved my understanding and faith in the Bible and/or teachings of my faith.
6	The Rosary has improved my character over time (i.e. made me a more upstanding person).
7	The Rosary has improved well being (i.e. judging life positively in spite of current situation).
8	I have experienced graces I attribute to the Rosary and/or Mary.
9	The Rosary has helped me better control vices (like excessive drinking, eating, anger or sensuality).*
10	The Rosary has helped me cope with negative emotions (like loneliness, anger, depression, stress).*
11	The Rosary increased my connectedness to God/Jesus (spirituality).
12	The Rosary helped me experience greater peace of mind and calmness particularly in stressful situations (equanimity).
13	The Rosary helps me be more humble, friendly and/or helpful.
14	The Rosary has helped directly or indirectly increase the faith, beliefs or religious observance of my family or friends.
15	The Rosary has helped cope with challenges (i.e. financial, loss of family or friend, health).
18	I have experienced negative emotions from practicing the Rosary.
19	I have experienced 'spiritual dryness' (feels like God not listening), boredom, fatigue or frustration praying the Rosary.
20	I have experienced positive emotions during or immediately following praying the Rosary.
<b>Other Optional Questions</b>	
21	Are you Male or Female?
22	Are you Lay person or Religious?
23	What best describes your regular Mass attendance?

## Results from the Survey

Responses to statements concerning participants' experiences and perceived effects of praying the Rosary were largely consistent with the findings of the German study. As shown in **Table 6**, 80% or more of participants selected "agree" or "strongly agree" for each statement drawn from the German study. Some additional questions addressing potential negative effects were included and showed low rates of agreement.

Several statements derived from the German study received positive response rates of 90% or higher, as shown in **Table 2**. Taken collectively, these results further support existing research on the Rosary's perceived positive impact on respondents' religious experience, faith, health, and overall well-being.

**Table 2**

% shows answers "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement unless otherwise noted	Daily		Weekly		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
The Rosary has helped me cope with negative emotions (like loneliness, anger, depression, stress). (1)	98%	166	96%	139	97%	305
The Rosary helped me experience greater peace of mind and calmness particularly in stressful situations (equanimity).	96%	214	94%	171	95%	385
The Rosary increased my connectedness to God/Jesus (spirituality).	97%	214	92%	171	95%	385
The Rosary has helped increase my faith (i.e. religiosity).	96%	215	85%	171	91%	386
The Rosary has helped me better control vices (like excessive drinking, eating, anger or sensuality). (1)	96%	135	83%	106	90%	241
The Rosary has improved well being (i.e. judging life positively in spite of current situation).	93%	212	85%	171	90%	383
I have experienced graces I attribute to the Rosary and/or Mary.	93%	212	85%	171	90%	383

Notes:

- (1) participants given option of 'not applicable' if not seen as an issue for them resulting in lower totals.
- % represents the percentage of people surveyed that "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement.
- "Daily" pray at least one Rosary (5 decades) each day; "Weekly" pray Rosary 1-7 times per week
- # represents number of respondents to each question

## Other Insights from the Survey

1. **Participants consistently reported improvements in well-being**, including greater ability to cope with negative emotions and increased feelings of peace. This finding is particularly relevant given the widespread prevalence of mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety. It suggests that praying the Rosary may serve as a practice that both elevates the heart and mind toward God while also contributing to improved well-being, effects that are likely interrelated. This result is consistent with other research indicating that meditative forms of prayer, such as the Rosary, show the strongest correlations with well-being and religious satisfaction.
2. **Results had meaningful differences in response rates between participants who prayed the Rosary daily versus weekly.** As shown in **Table 3**, response rates differed by 10% or more for these statements. Additionally, several participants noted in survey comments that they attribute their ability to sustain a good and moral life to their regular practice of praying the Rosary.

**Table 3**

% shows answers "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement unless otherwise noted	Daily		Weekly		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
The Rosary has helped me better control vices (like excessive drinking, eating, anger or sensuality). (2)	96%	135	83%	106	90%	241
The Rosary has helped cope with challenges (i.e. financial, loss of family or friend, health). (3)	92%	182	80%	148	87%	330
The Rosary has helped directly or indirectly increase the faith, beliefs or religious observance of my family or friends.	76%	214	64%	171	71%	385
The Rosary has increased my concern and love for others.	93%	214	82%	171	88%	385
The Rosary has helped increase my faith (i.e. religiosity).	96%	215	85%	171	91%	386
The Rosary has improved my understanding and faith in the Bible and/or teachings of my faith.	84%	213	74%	172	80%	385

3. **Survey results also consistent with several "Promises of the Rosary."** Tradition says Mary privately revealed "15 Promises of the Rosary" to St. Dominic and Alan de la Roche. Of the 15 promises, a few relate to experiences applicable to this life (as opposed to dying, death or heaven). A comparison of those promises to the survey results are shown in [Table 4](#) and appear to show a positive correlation.

**Table 4**

		Daily %	Count (1)
<b>Promise #6:</b>			
<b>"Those who recite my Rosary devoutly, applying themselves to the consideration of its sacred mysteries, shall never be conquered by misfortune."</b>			
The Rosary helped me cope with negative emotions (loneliness, anger, depression, stress).	98%	116	
The Rosary helped me experience greater peace of mind, calmness particularly in stressful situations	96%	214	
The Rosary helped me cope with challenges (i.e. financial, loss of family or friend, health).	92%	182	
<b>Promise 4#:</b>			
<b>"It will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities and will lift them to the desire of eternal things."</b>			
The Rosary helped me increase my connectedness to God/Jesus (spirituality).	97%	214	
The Rosary helped me increase my faith (i.e. religiosity).	96%	215	
<b>From Promise #3:</b>			
<b>"It will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies."</b>			
The Rosary helped me better control vices (like excessive drinking, eating, anger or sensuality).	95%	135	
<b>From Promise #1:</b>			
<b>"Those who faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary shall receive signal graces."</b>			
I have experienced graces I attribute to the Rosary and/or Mary.	93%	212	

4. **Experiences likely similar for larger population** - Sampling and statistics allow us to make reasoned insights into observations about larger populations. Thus, a sample size of 385 for this study, implies that we can be 95% confident that the results are within 5% margin of error on a population of 3,000,000. Assuming roughly 5% of 62,000,000 US Catholics pray the rosary regularly that would imply the results from the survey are likely consistent with the larger population.

**Table 5**

Confidence level	Margin of Error %	Population Size	Sample Size
90%	5%	3,000,000	273
95%	5%	3,000,000	385
98%	5%	3,000,000	543

## Areas for Further Exploration

Any survey or study of the Rosary pales in comparison to the power and beauty of the prayer itself, Mary, and those who pray it. Yet, modern scientific tools—like statistics—can help us better recognize effective practices we might otherwise overlook, much like how they are used to identify top draft picks in sports. These tools also help us implement such practices more effectively.

There is much more to explore regarding the Rosary's power and its role in transforming lives. While some may view these findings as merely reflecting the strong religiosity of those who pray the Rosary, deeper examination suggests that the Rosary may be a keystone habit, capable of dislodging negative behaviors and fostering positive change and growth in many areas. This suggests that promoting the Rosary could be a highly effective way to encourage growth in faith, well-being, and the Church itself—just as tradition holds that Mary gave the Rosary to St. Dominic to support his evangelization efforts.

## Summary of Responses to All Questions

**Table 6**

#	% shows answers "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement unless otherwise noted	Daily %	Daily #	Weekly %	Weekly #	Total %	Total #
1	How frequently do you typically pray the Rosary?		216		172		388
2	How long have you been regularly praying the Rosary?						
3	What best describes your weekly Mass attendance? (% shows those who regularly attend Sunday Mass) (4)	98%		97%			
4	Do you participate in volunteer activities (civic, social, mission) whether within or outside your church? (1)	84%	215	85%	172	84%	387
5	Do you participate in devotions or programs like adoration, stations of the cross, or other church events? (1)	94%	215	91%	172	93%	387
6	The Rosary has helped increase my faith (i.e. religiosity).	96%	215	85%	171	91%	386
7	The Rosary has increased my concern and love for others.	93%	214	82%	171	88%	385
8	The Rosary has improved my character over time (i.e. made me a more upstanding person).	89%	212	86%	171	87%	383
9	The Rosary increased my connectedness to God/Jesus (spirituality).	97%	214	92%	171	95%	385
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11	The Rosary has improved my understanding and faith in the Bible and/or teachings of my faith.	84%	213	74%	172	80%	385
12	The Rosary has helped cope with challenges (i.e. financial, loss of family or friend, health). (3)	92%	182	80%	148	87%	330
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14	I have experienced graces I attribute to the Rosary and/or Mary.	93%	212	85%	171	90%	383
15	The Rosary has helped me better control vices (like excessive drinking, eating, anger or sensuality). (1)	96%	135	83%	106	90%	241
16	The Rosary has helped me cope with negative emotions (like loneliness, anger, depression, stress). (1)	98%	166	96%	139	97%	305
17	The Rosary helped me experience greater peace of mind and calmness particularly in stressful situations (equanimity).	96%	214	94%	171	95%	385
18	The Rosary has helped directly or indirectly increase the faith, beliefs or religious observance of my family or friends.	76%	214	64%	171	71%	385
19	% of people Clergy/religious	19%	208	17%	167	18%	375
20	I have experienced 'spiritual dryness' (feels like God not listening), boredom, fatigue or frustration praying the Rosary.	13%	213	16%	170	15%	383
21	I have experienced positive emotions during or immediately following praying the Rosary.	85%	213	81%	172	83%	385
22	% female	58%	210	59%	170	58%	380
23	I have experienced negative emotions from practicing the Rosary.	2%	213	1%	169	2%	382

Notes:

(1) Answer options were 'yes' or 'no'; % of 'yes' answers shown.

(2) Participants given added option of 'not applicable.' if not seen as an issue for them resulting in lower totals.

(3) Question was added later to survey thus fewer responses.

(4) Options: (A) Sunday Mass, (B) Daily Mass, (C) Sunday & weekly, (D) not regularly attending Sunday mass