

The Rosary of Divine Love

*A Catholic–Bhakti Devotional for Contemplative Union*

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# I. Introduction

The inspiration for this project came unexpectedly, during a community rosary earlier this year. The group was praying the Sorrowful Mysteries, and while the experience was beautiful in its reverence, I found myself quietly withdrawing inward. The emphasis on suffering—the scourging, the crown of thorns, the crucifixion—was presented with such graphic detail that it began to feel heavy, even burdensome. I understood the theological meaning of these events, yet something within me longed for a rosary that would lift the heart toward love rather than sorrow. I realized that while the crucifixion remains at the center of our redemption, it is not pain that redeems, but love itself.

From that moment arose the *Rosary of Divine Love*: a devotion rooted in the words and actions of Jesus that revealed the depth of his compassion. Rather than meditating on the wounds of the body, it invites contemplation on the healing of the soul. This project, therefore, seeks to unite two rivers of devotion—**Catholic contemplative spirituality** and the **Bhakti tradition of Hinduism**—to create a path of prayer centered on divine love as the ultimate reality and unifying force.

This integration honors the essence of both East and West. Bhakti offers the language of *Prema*—a selfless, passionate love for God that consumes the heart. Catholic contemplation speaks of *Agape*—the self-giving love of God poured into humanity. Together they reveal that love, not intellect or asceticism, is the true path to union with the Divine. The *Rosary of Divine Love* seeks to embody this truth in a form that is accessible, musical, and ministerial.

## II. Bhakti as the Path of Divine Love

Among the Dharmic traditions, *Bhakti Yoga* stands as the heart-centered way. While other paths—such as *Jnana*(knowledge) or *Karma* (action)—seek liberation through wisdom or service, Bhakti finds liberation through love. The Sanskrit root *bhaj* means “to share” or “to partake,” implying an intimate relationship between the devotee and the Divine. The Bhakta does not approach God as an abstract principle but as a beloved—one to be sung to, served, and surrendered into.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna declares that “by devotion alone can I be known and seen and entered into” (Gita 11:54). This verse encapsulates the Bhakti ideal: knowledge and ritual are incomplete without the heart’s surrender. The Bhakta’s goal is not to escape the world but to perceive God within it—to see the Beloved in all forms. Saints like Mirabai, who sang endlessly of her love for Krishna, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who danced in ecstatic devotion, reveal that love itself becomes the bridge between finite and infinite.

In Bhakti, repetition of the Divine Name (*Nama Japa*) transforms the heart. Each recitation becomes an act of remembrance, calling the devotee back into alignment with divine presence. The rosary, or *japa mala*, in Hindu practice serves this same purpose: not merely to petition but to awaken awareness. Every bead turns the heart further inward until only love remains. This sacred rhythm of remembrance provided a natural bridge for me to explore how a Christian rosary might be renewed with Bhakti’s luminous devotion.

### **III. Christian Contemplative Parallels**

Catholic contemplative theology shares this same current of divine love flowing beneath its mystical surface. St. Teresa of Ávila described prayer as “nothing but an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.” In

that one sentence, Teresa articulates what Bhakti saints spent lifetimes singing: that love is both the method and the goal of union with God.

St. John of the Cross, too, viewed the journey to God as one of transforming love. His *Spiritual Canticle* mirrors the longing of the Bhakta's heart: "Where have You hidden, Beloved, and left me moaning?" The Christian mystic's yearning echoes the same divine ache expressed in the poems of Mirabai or the songs of the Gita Govinda. In both, the soul is the lover, and God is the Beloved who simultaneously hides and reveals Himself so that love might deepen.

Julian of Norwich wrote, "Love was His meaning." This succinct phrase could stand as the thesis for both Bhakti and Christian mysticism alike. To pray is to enter the current of divine affection that already flows through creation. The contemplative path, whether through centering prayer, lectio divina, or the rosary, becomes the means by which the soul returns to the simplicity of love.

When I began constructing the *Rosary of Divine Love*, I saw at once how deeply these traditions resonate. Both rely on repetition, not as vain recitation but as sanctified rhythm—breath and heartbeat united in prayer. The Bhakta repeats the name of God; the Christian repeats "Hail Mary, full of grace." In both, the repetition erodes the self's boundaries, dissolving distraction until all that remains is awareness of the Beloved.

## **IV. The Rosary of Divine Love**

The *Rosary of Divine Love* follows the familiar five-decade format but shifts the focus from the Passion to five moments of love's revelation in the life of Jesus. Each decade becomes an icon of divine compassion: healing, forgiveness, nourishment, empathy, and abiding presence.

## The Five Mysteries of Divine Love

Decade	Theme	Scripture	Contemplative Focus
1	Love that Heals	Mark 5:25–34 – The Woman with the Hemorrhage	Love restores what fear has broken.
2	Love that Forgives	John 8:1–11 – The Woman Caught in Adultery	Mercy transcends condemnation.
3	Love that Feeds	Mark 6:30–44 – Feeding of the 5,000	Love multiplies when shared.
4	Love that Weeps	John 11:35 – Jesus wept at Lazarus’s tomb	God’s heart feels with ours.
5	Love that Abides	John 15:9–12 – “Abide in my love”	Love is the ground of being.

Each decade begins with a brief scripture reading followed by a mantra-like refrain such as:

“Jesus, Love Incarnate, dwell in my heart.”

Then, ten repetitions follow of a Bhakti-inspired invocation:

“O Christ of Infinite Love, heal and transform my heart.”

Between each decade, a moment of silence invites the practitioner to rest in stillness, mirroring the Bhakti practice of interior absorption (*samadhi*). The *Hail Mary* is recited in its Orthodox form—gentle, inclusive, and affirming Mary’s role as bearer of divine compassion.

The opening prayer of this rosary centers on divine love as life's source:

“Divine Love, present in all creation,  
breath of the Spirit and heart of the world,  
draw me into the fire of your compassion.  
Let my prayer awaken the same love that moved Christ to heal,  
to forgive, and to abide with all who suffer.”

The closing prayer dedicates the practice to the world's healing:

“May the love born in this prayer flow into every heart,  
reconciling all divisions,  
until only love remains.”

This simple pattern, combining repetition, scripture, and silence, mirrors the Bhakti flow of *bhajan*—sung devotion. In its rhythm, theology becomes living experience.

## **V. Theological Commentary and Reflection**

At the heart of this rosary lies the conviction that love, not suffering, is the truest revelation of God. In traditional Catholic devotion, the Sorrowful Mysteries invite meditation on Jesus' Passion to deepen gratitude and empathy. Yet even within the crucifixion, what transforms the world is not the nails, but the love that held Him there. When viewed through a Bhakti lens, the cross becomes not a symbol of pain but of love's ultimate surrender.

Bhakti theology teaches that God's nature is *ananda*—bliss. Even divine sorrow is pervaded by love's sweetness. When Mirabai sang of Krishna's departure, her grief became ecstasy because it deepened love's intensity. Likewise, when the Christian soul contemplates

Christ's suffering, the invitation is not to dwell in agony but to awaken the boundless compassion that flows from it.

In both traditions, repetition leads to transformation. The mind may begin by speaking the prayer, but in time the prayer begins to speak the mind. The *Rosary of Divine Love* thus becomes a contemplative exercise in theosis—the gradual transfiguration of the heart into love's likeness.

Theologically, *Prema* and *Agape* meet at this very point. Both describe a love that gives itself entirely for the other. In Bhakti, the devotee offers self to God. In Christian contemplation, God offers self to humanity in the Incarnation. Each decade of the *Rosary of Divine Love* draws the practitioner into that mutual offering until separation dissolves.

This movement from duality to unity, from devotion to union, is the mystic's journey in every tradition. The difference lies not in doctrine but in language. Where Bhakti speaks of the Beloved, Christianity speaks of the Christ. Both describe the same reality: divine intimacy in which the soul realizes, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

## VI. Ministerial Application

The *Rosary of Divine Love* lends itself naturally to ministry in contemplative and pastoral settings. At the **Shrine of Holy Wisdom**, it can serve as a communal devotion that reflects the Shrine's inclusive, mystical ethos. By focusing on divine compassion rather than guilt or punishment, it invites people from varied backgrounds to encounter Christ's love without fear.

Within my personal spiritual practice as well as my overall ministry, this rosary may become part of sound-healing or contemplative sessions. Each decade could be accompanied by crystal bowls, chanted refrains, or soft instrumental tones that allow the group to feel the

vibration of love resonating in their bodies. The practice becomes both meditation and healing—sound and silence interwoven.

For chaplaincy and pastoral care, the *Rosary of Divine Love* offers a gentle framework for those struggling with grief, shame, or alienation. Rather than emphasizing unworthiness, it reminds the soul that divine love is already present. The mantra, “Jesus, Love Incarnate, dwell in my heart,” can be prayed quietly with the sick, the dying, or anyone seeking reconciliation.

In all these contexts, the fruit of the devotion is compassion. Bhakti calls this *daya*, the spontaneous sympathy of a heart steeped in love. In Christian terms, it is charity—the natural overflow of divine indwelling. As practitioners pray this rosary, they may begin to see the world itself as the body of God, every being as beloved.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The *Rosary of Divine Love* is more than a new prayer; it is a bridge. It unites East and West, chant and silence, theology and experience. It reimagines the familiar Catholic rosary as a contemplative pathway through love’s many expressions, drawing from the Bhakti insight that devotion transforms both lover and Beloved.

In a world often fractured by fear and division, such practices remind us that love is not a sentiment but a spiritual force—one that heals, forgives, feeds, weeps, and abides. Through this rosary, I hope to contribute to a renewed spirituality that is both ancient and inclusive, mystical yet pastoral, deeply rooted in the mystery of Christ yet open to the universal language of love found in all faiths.



In love we are created, in love we are redeemed, and in love we return to the Source.

May every prayer bead turned in the Rosary of Divine Love echo that eternal truth:

God is Love, and all who dwell in love dwell in God.

# Appendix A

## The Rosary of Divine Love

*A Contemplative Devotion Rooted in the Love of Christ*

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### Opening Prayer

Divine Love, present in all creation,  
Breath of the Spirit and heart of the world,  
Draw me into the fire of your compassion.  
Let my prayer awaken the same love  
That moved Christ to heal, to forgive, and to abide with all who suffer.  
May this rosary open my heart  
To see through the eyes of mercy,  
To feel through the heart of Christ,  
And to know, beyond all doubt,  
That love is the life of God within me.  
Amen.

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### The Sign of the Cross

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

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## **The Creed of Divine Love (Optional)**

I believe in the Love that creates and sustains all things,  
In Jesus Christ, the embodiment of Divine Love,  
Who came among us to awaken the heart of compassion.  
He was misunderstood, condemned, and crucified,  
Yet even in death revealed love without measure.  
He rose in glory, showing that love is stronger than death.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the living breath of Love,  
In the communion of saints and the unity of all creation,  
In forgiveness, healing, and the life of love eternal.  
Amen.

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## **The Five Mysteries of Divine Love**

Each decade begins with the Our Father, then ten invocations of love, followed by the Orthodox form of the Hail Mary, a moment of silence, and a short reflection or closing refrain.

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### **The First Mystery: Love that Heals**

*Mark 5:25–34 – The Woman with the Hemorrhage*

“She said, ‘If I but touch his garment, I shall be made well.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you whole.’”

**Contemplation:**

Love restores what fear has broken. The heart that reaches out in trust is already healed.

**Invocation (10x):**

Jesus, Love Incarnate, heal the wounds within me.

**Hail Mary (Orthodox Form):**

Rejoice O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

**Refrain (Optional):**

Love flows through faith; faith awakens love.

(Silent meditation)

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**The Second Mystery: Love that Forgives**

*John 8:1–11 – The Woman Caught in Adultery*

“Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin again.”

**Contemplation:**

Mercy sees beyond judgment. Love does not punish—it liberates.

**Invocation (10x):**

O Christ of Infinite Mercy, teach me to forgive as You forgive.

**Hail Mary:**

Rejoice O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

**Refrain:**

Love forgives, and in forgiving, sets the soul free.

(Silent meditation)

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**The Third Mystery: Love that Feeds**

*Mark 6:30–44 – The Feeding of the Five Thousand*

“Taking the loaves and the fish, he blessed and broke them, and all were filled.”

**Contemplation:**

Love multiplies when shared. Every act of generosity becomes communion.

**Invocation (10x):**

Giver of Life, nourish my soul and teach me to share Your abundance.

**Hail Mary:**

Rejoice O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

**Refrain:**

Love feeds the world with the bread of compassion.

(Silent meditation)

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**The Fourth Mystery: Love that Weeps**

*John 11:35 – Jesus Wept at the Tomb of Lazarus*

“Jesus wept.”

**Contemplation:**

Love is not distant from human grief. The heart of God feels with us, and through our tears, love flows.

**Invocation (10x):**

Jesus, Heart of Compassion, share in my sorrow and teach me divine empathy.

**Hail Mary:**

Rejoice O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

**Refrain:**

Love weeps, and through its tears, the world is healed.

(Silent meditation)

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**The Fifth Mystery: Love that Abides**

*John 15:9–12 – “Abide in my love.”*

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.”

**Contemplation:**

Love is the ground of being—the endless dwelling place of the soul.

**Invocation (10x):**

Christ of Eternal Presence, let me dwell in Your love forever.

**Hail Mary:**

Rejoice O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

**Refrain:**

Love abides. In love we live, move, and have our being.

(Silent meditation)

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## **The Closing Prayers**

### **The Glory Be**

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.

### **Final Dedication**

Eternal Love, You are the rhythm of my breath and the stillness of my soul.

May this prayer of love ripple outward,

touching every heart that longs for peace.

Let the fire of compassion be rekindled in our world,

until mercy, joy, and unity prevail over fear and division.

May all beings know Your peace,

and may every heart remember its divine origin in love.

Amen.

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## **Optional Chant or Refrain**



*(To be sung softly between decades)*

“Jesu Prema Om — Christ, Divine Love, within and beyond.”

or

“Love Divine, all Love embracing, dwell in us eternally.”

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## **Suggested Use**

This rosary may be prayed silently or aloud, individually or in community. It can be accompanied by gentle instrumental music, crystal singing bowls, or sacred chant. In a contemplative circle, each decade may be introduced with a moment of silence, inviting participants to bring to mind someone in need of healing, forgiveness, nourishment, empathy, or divine abiding.

Through repetition, the practice becomes *Nama Japa* in Christian form— a remembrance of the Name of Love dwelling within every heart.

# Appendix B

## Chant and Mantra Suggestions

*For the Rosary of Divine Love*

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### General Opening or Transition Chants

#### 1. “Jesu Prema Om”

*Jesus Love Divine, / within and beyond.*

- Sanskrit–English hybrid: “Prema” = Divine Love, “Om” = Universal Sound.
- Sing on a simple two-note drone (e.g., A / B or C / D) with gentle breath support.
- Repeat slowly as an invocation before beginning the rosary or between decades.

#### 2. “Spiritus Ananda”

*Spirit of Joy, fill my heart.*

- “Ananda” = bliss; evokes the joy of union in both Bhakti and Christian mysticism.
- Works well as a refrain after each Glory Be.

#### 3. “Love Divine, dwell in me”

Can be sung in canon or call-and-response form.

- Use alternating voices or instruments to build a meditative rhythm.

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## Chants for Each Mystery

Mystery	Chant / Mantra	Suggested Tempo	Focus
<b>1. Love that Heals</b>	<i>“Christa Shakti Prem”</i> – (Christ, Power of Love)	Slow 6/8	Healing energy; gentle circular motion.
<b>2. Love that Forgives</b>	<i>“Kyrie Krishna Have Mercy”</i>	Free tempo (chant style)	Merges Greek and Sanskrit pleas for mercy.
<b>3. Love that Feeds</b>	<i>“Jesu Bhavana Dana”</i> – (Jesus, Heart of Giving)	Moderate 4/4	Gratitude, generosity, and community.
<b>4. Love that Weeps</b>	<i>“Ananda Tears of Christ”</i>	Slow and minor mode	Compassion, shared sorrow, empathy.
<b>5. Love that Abides</b>	<i>“Om Agape Amen”</i>	Steady pulse in major key	Union, stillness, radiant peace.

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## Structure for Use

### 1. Opening → Invocation

- Begin with *Jesu Prema Om* repeated 3–5 times.
- Allow a brief silence to settle the heart.

### 2. Between Decades

- Use the corresponding mantra (from table above).

- Repeat softly 10–20 times or for about one minute.
- Let the sound fade into contemplative silence before the next reading.

### 3. Closing

- Conclude with *Om Agape Amen* three times, letting the final tone dissolve.
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## Instrumentation Ideas

- **Crystal Bowls** tuned to A or D for heart-chakra resonance.
  - **Shruti Box or Harmonium** sustaining drone chords.
  - **Handpan or Frame Drum** for grounding rhythm.
  - **Vocal Overtone Chanting** with single ison note as low drone, then 1 single note overlaid, or 2 notes in harmony to symbolize the indwelling Spirit.
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## Integration Notes

- Keep chants simple—one to three words that invite repetition.
- Encourage participants to close their eyes and breathe with the rhythm.
- Silence after sound is equally sacred; it completes the mantra.
- The fusion of “Om” and “Amen” serves as theological synthesis—Alpha and Omega, the universal sound of beginning and completion.

# Appendix D

## References

*The following selections represent the primary scriptural and mystical sources that inform the theology, spirituality, and devotional structure of the Rosary of Divine Love. They illustrate the shared current of divine love flowing through both Dharmic and Christian traditions.*

### Bhagavad Gita

#### Chapters 9–12 (The Way of Devotion)

- *Bhagavad Gita 9:22* — “To those who are constantly devoted and who worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.”
- *Bhagavad Gita 12:13–14* — “He who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate, free from possessiveness and egoism, balanced in pain and pleasure, and forgiving — such a devotee is dear to Me.”

These verses form the theological foundation for the Bhakti dimension of the Rosary of Divine Love, emphasizing surrender, compassion, and love as the highest path to union with the Divine.

### St. Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582)

#### The Interior Castle

- “Prayer, in my opinion, is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.”

Teresa’s vision of prayer as loving friendship directly parallels the Bhakti concept of personal devotion to the Beloved. Her *Interior Castle* also informs the contemplative progression of the Rosary — moving from active prayer to silent union.

## **St. John of the Cross (1542–1591)**

### **The Spiritual Canticle and The Dark Night of the Soul**

- “Where have You hidden, Beloved, and left me moaning? You fled like the stag after wounding me; I went out calling You, and You were gone.” (*Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza 1)
- “In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone.”

John’s poetry expresses the same ecstatic longing found in Bhakti mysticism, where the soul’s yearning for God is both wound and healing. His theology of kenosis (self-emptying love) shapes the Rosary’s movement from separation toward union.

## **Julian of Norwich (1342–c.1416)**

### **Revelations of Divine Love**

- “Love was His meaning. Who showed it to you? Love. What did He show you? Love. Why did He show it to you? For love.”

Julian’s simple, profound theology anchors the Rosary’s entire spirit. Her assurance that “All shall be well” undergirds the devotion’s contemplative trust in divine compassion.

## **Thomas Merton (1915–1968)**

### **New Seeds of Contemplation**

- “The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image.”

Merton’s interfaith openness and contemplative theology inspired much of the East–West synthesis of this project. His writings legitimize the blending of Bhakti devotion and Christian contemplation as two expressions of the same mystical heart.

## **Bede Griffiths (1906–1993)**

### **The Marriage of East and West and Return to the Center**

- “The meeting of the religions today is not an accident. It is the coming together of the different streams of human consciousness which have been separated for thousands of years.”

Griffiths provides the explicit theological bridge that undergirds this Rosary’s synthesis — showing that love, as the unifying ground of all being, transcends dogmatic boundaries.

His Christian–Vedantic integration echoes the contemplative vision embodied in this devotion.

## **The Gospel of John**

### **Selected Passages**

- *John 11:35* — “Jesus wept.”

- *John 13:34–35* — “I give you a new commandment: that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”
- *John 15:9–12* — “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.”

John’s Gospel provides the scriptural foundation for every decade of the Rosary of Divine Love. His theology of abiding love — the indwelling Word made flesh — unites the contemplative silence of Christian mysticism with the Bhakti soul of devotional surrender.

### **Supplemental Inspirations**

- *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Anonymous, 14th century): For its emphasis on love over knowledge as the way to union.
- *Upanishads* (esp. Chandogya and Katha): For their early affirmations of divine immanence, “Tat Tvam Asi” — Thou art That.
- *The Imitation of Christ* (Thomas à Kempis): For its devotional intimacy and focus on interior transformation.

### **Summary Reflection**

The sources above converge on a single truth: Love is the essence of all mystical realization.

Whether expressed through the Sanskrit *Prema* or the Greek *Agape*, love is not merely a virtue but the very nature of God and the goal of spiritual life.

The *Rosary of Divine Love* emerges from this shared mystical heritage — a living synthesis of devotion, silence, and service that reveals the meeting point of East and West as the heart itself.