

# What Is the Hail Mary Prayer? Words and Meaning

*Discover the origin, meaning, and words of the Hail Mary Prayer. Learn the importance of Mary in Christianity and the Bible. Use the Hail Mary Prayer for blessings from God, praying to Mother Mary for grace and love.*

**Christianity.com Editorial Staff** 202018 Dec

## Origin of Hail Mary Prayer

The Hail Mary prayer stems from two passages in the gospel of Luke. The first one, found in [Luke 1:28](#), says, “Hail, full of **grace**, the Lord is with you!” This was mentioned by the angel Gabriel when he greeted Mary; this event is also known as the Annunciation. The second passage can be found in [Luke 1:42](#), and it says, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” These words were said by Elizabeth when she visited Mary and greeted her. To many Catholics, this event is also called the Visitation.

Though the two verses are from the same book in the Bible, these lines were not put together until about the 11th century. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia:

In point of fact, there is little or no trace of the Hail Mary as an accepted devotional formula before about 1050. All the evidence suggests that it took its rise from certain versicles and responsories occurring in the Little Office or Cursus of the Blessed Virgin which just at that time was coming into favor among the monastic orders. Two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts at the British Museum, one of which may be as old as the year 1030, show that the words ‘Ave Maria’ etc. and ‘benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui’ occurred in almost every part of the Cursus, and though we cannot be sure that these clauses were at first joined together so as to make one prayer, there is conclusive evidence that this had come to pass only a very little later.

In its early years, the prayer was only composed of those two verses ([Luke 1:28](#) and [Luke 1:42](#)) and was called the “Salutation of the Blessed Virgin.” Later on, the second half of the prayer was added. Back then, it was published in Latin, with the title being “Ave Maria.”

The Ave Maria, however, was only officially finalized when the Catechism of the Council of Trent was published. There, it was referred to as the “Angelical Salutation.” Later on, the prayer was incorporated into the Roman Breviary of 1568. Since then, it has been in use widely and is known by a huge majority of Catholics.

## Hail Mary Prayer

*Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.*