

Traditional rosary gets a tech update from the Catholic Church

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.30.19

Word Count **503**

Level **710L**



The "Click to Pray eRosary" wearable, smart bracelet. It is activated by making the sign of the cross. Photo by: Vatican News

Pope Francis has worked to modernize the Catholic Church. The pope is the head of the Catholic Church.

The latest effort is a wearable "Click to Pray eRosary." It comes complete with a smartphone app. The Church wants to use it to connect with young people.

Rosaries are a string of beads. They are used for prayer in the Catholic Church. The eRosary is slightly different. It can be worn as a bracelet. It is made of 10 dark beads and a "smart cross." The smart cross can store data. The bracelet can sync with the official prayer app. The eRosary can be purchased online for \$110.

Users can turn on the device by making the sign of the cross. They can also choose what to pray. There are many different kinds of prayers to choose from. They are updated every year. The smart rosary keeps track of the user's progress.

Young People Feel Disconnected From The Church

The modern app may seem at odds with the traditional rosary. After all, the rosary is a longtime tradition that is centuries old.

Mathew Schmalz is a religious studies professor at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts. He is a Catholic himself. He saw the eRosary as a neat invention that is part of a bigger campaign.

Schmalz said the Catholic Church is trying to "reclaim a generation that is close to being lost." He said young people feel disconnected from the Church these days. That is due to problems in the Church as well as our general culture becoming less religious.

The Vatican is trying to change that.

The pope joined Instagram in 2016. His Twitter account had almost 9 million followers by then. The Vatican also launched its "Click to Pray" app in 2016. The app had daily reminders to pray and a feature allowing users to ask others for prayer.

Catholic Church Needs To Catch Up On Technology

The Vatican created a new game last year. It is called "Follow JC Go!" It was inspired by "Pokémon Go." The Vatican's game was similar to the popular game, with a few differences. Users can answer philosophical questions. They can then collect saints and people from the Bible instead of Pokémon characters.

Vatican officials have also tried to modernize the Church's communications. They talked about a central content website. It would make it easier to share content across platforms.

Schmalz believes the Church is behind other religions when it comes to technology. He said the Church must act fast to catch up to many other faiths.

Schmalz pointed to Evangelical Christians as an example. He said those leaders and members seem "much more comfortable" using new media to share their faith in a different way.

Catholicism has a long history of adapting to new technologies. Schmalz went back to the revolutionary invention of the printing press in the 15th century. "This is a user-friendly way to introduce people or reintroduce them to an important part of Catholic piety," Schmalz said.

Quiz

- 1 What is the MAIN idea of the article?
- (A) The Catholic Church is trying to connect with young people through technology.
 - (B) A rosary is a tradition of the Catholic Church that is hundreds of years old.
 - (C) Pope Francis is the leader of the Catholic Church and he uses Instagram.
 - (D) Vatican officials want the Church's communications to come from one central website.
- 2 How does the information in the introduction [paragraphs 1-5] support the MAIN idea of the article?
- (A) It explains how young people feel about the eRosary.
 - (B) It describes what the eRosary is and how it works.
 - (C) It highlights the games that the church made before the eRosary.
 - (D) It shows a problem that people have with the eRosary.
- 3 Why does Matthew Schmalz think that the Catholic Church is falling behind other religions?
- (A) because other religions do not use special apps to pray
 - (B) because other religions read the Bible more often
 - (C) because other religions already have an eRosary app
 - (D) because other religions use technology more easily
- 4 How does "Follow JC Go!" work?
- (A) The users can add daily reminders to pray and ask other users to pray for them.
 - (B) The users can make the sign of the cross and sync their prayers with an app.
 - (C) The users can get on Twitter and Instagram and follow the pope's account.
 - (D) The users can answer questions and collect saints and biblical people.