

Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Month of May 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this “family” aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers (only one included) to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

Pope Francis' Prayer to Our Lady

O Mary, You shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus' suffering, and persevered in your faith.

“Protectress of your people”, you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For he took upon himself our suffering, and burdened himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God; Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from every danger, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

The Rosary ~ A Little History

(adapted from an article 'The Popes and the Rosary' by John Putzolu)

www.vaticannews.va

It was in the 15th century when Pope Sixtus IV officially approved the Rosary, although the practice probably originated with the Cistercians in the two previous centuries as an aid for illiterate people. The recitation of prayers and psalms in succession, gradually became a series of 150 Hail Marys. Greeting Mary so many times was compared to offering her a wreath of roses, the “Rosary”.

Promoted by the Dominicans in the 15th century, the Rosary took the form of a meditation on the life of Christ, while the Our Father and the Hail Marys were recited. In the 16th century, the Dominican theologian, Antonio Ghislieri, who became Pope St Pius V, structured the Rosary around 15 mysteries. On 7 October 1571, he instituted the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

In recent times, St John Paul II, who had a great devotion to the Virgin Mary, completed the Rosary with five new mysteries: The Luminous Mysteries. These, together with the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries concentrate “all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety”, through which “the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer” (St John Paul II)



“The recitation of the Rosary can help you learn the art of prayer with Mary's simplicity and depth”

Pope Benedict XVI