

YOU WERE ASKING . . . by Msgr. Pat Stilla

Q. As a senior, I am still afraid to venture out of my home during this pandemic, for fear of contracting COVID-19. I do continue to watch some livestreamed Masses on television but I feel closer to the Lord when I pray the Rosary, several times a day. How long have people been praying this wonderful prayer?

A. First of all, if you don't feel right to venture out quite yet, then you should continue to pray in the safety and privacy of your own home. Return to Mass in Church only when you feel ready to do so. In the meantime, since you like to pray the Rosary daily, use this centuries old Marian prayer as your means to deepen your relationship with God and His Saints during these un-

predictable times. Use it also to pray for others who feel discouraged or anxious as well as for the many victims of this illness and their loved ones who have been affected by it. Pray also for a speedy end to this crisis.

Origins of your favourite Prayer
The Rosary as we know it today dates back to the 12th Century. However, the use of "prayer beads" and the repeated recitation of prayers to facilitate meditation stem from the earliest days of the Church and have roots in pre-Christian times as

well. Even some non-Christians still continue to use various forms of this method of prayer.

.. **Rosary Means 'Rose Garden'**

The structure of our modern-day Rosary gradually evolved between the 12th and 15th centuries. Originally, 50 Hail Mary prayers were recited and linked with other prayers which centred on Jesus and Mary. Then, it was during the 16th century that the Rosary developed into a five decade form of prayer which included the recalling of pivotal events in the life of Christ (*Mysteries*). At that time, collections of prayers and stories were referred to as '*roses*', and so a collection of prayers was called a '*Rosarium*' ('*Rose Garden*').

.. **A practical way to pray daily**

At a time in history when most were employed as agrarian field labourers, it was very practical to pray the Rosary as they worked. The prayers were all memorized and there was no need to even hold the Rosary beads as you prayed and so, it became a favourite prayer for most.

.. **Marian Apparitions and the Rosary**

Some also believe that during the Marian apparitions at Lourdes and at Fatima, the seers were encouraged to pray the Rosary for the reconciliation of all sinners and for peace.

.. **Learning Bible Stories**

As I said above, it was during the 16th century that the Rosary developed into a form of prayer which included the recalling of pivotal events in the life of Christ. By memorizing these following Biblical events or '*Mysteries*', Catholics were able to recall many Bible stories.

~ **The Joyful Mysteries:** The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Birth of Christ, The Presentation and, The Finding of Jesus in the Temple.

~ **The Sorrowful Mysteries:** The Agony in the Garden, His scourging, The crowning with thorns, The Carrying of the Cross and, The Crucifixion.

~ **The Glorious Mysteries:** The Resurrection, The Ascension, The Descent of the Holy Spirit, The Assumption and, The Coronation of Mary.

~ **The Luminous Mysteries:** The Lord's Baptism in the Jordan River, The Wedding Feast at Cana, The Proclamation of God's Kingdom, The Transfiguration and, The Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

