

FATHER MARK SCHULTE
HOMILY
SIXTH SUNDAY EASTER (C)
MAY 25, 2025

“Mary’s Bouquet”

My brothers and sisters, I would be remiss if I allowed the month of Mary to pass by without saying something about one of the Church’s most important prayers and of course that prayer is the Most Holy Rosary (CCC 971, 2678, 2768).

Praying the rosary should be at the heart of our daily prayer life. The Church and many saints have sung its praises. The rosary had its origins well over a thousand years ago in Europe, but other ancient cultures have used a string of beads to keep track of prayers for many centuries. The rosary that we are familiar with is generally thought to have its beginning with Saint Dominic. St. Dominic had a vision from the Virgin Mary who asked Dominic to promote praying the rosary.

In earlier times most of the populous could not read. Many of the local people settled around a monastery and they could hear the monks chant the 150 psalms of the bible as part of their daily prayers (CCC 1176). The people wanted to pray along with them but couldn’t because of illiteracy. However, they could recite the “Hail Mary” prayer and so they replaced the 150 psalms with 150 Hail Mary prayers (Lk 1:26-38). Over time various mysteries of the Gospel were interspersed among the Hail Mary’s along with other common prayers such as the Our Father, Glory Be, and then much later the Fatima and St. Michael prayers (Mt 6:9-13). In time the entire rosary consisted of 150 Hail Mary’s and 15 Gospel mysteries called Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries.

The Blessed Virgin Mary has repeatedly requested that the faithful pray the rosary, most recently to the three children at Fatima, Portugal an apparition site that is approved by the Catholic Church. Numerous saints and popes have promoted the praying of the rosary as an integral part of spiritual life. At most of our parish masses the rosary is prayed either before or after Mass.

Prayer is essential for maintaining the integrity of the family (CCC 2559). Every family should pray the rosary together as a family. It is the perfect way to introduce children to the important discipline of praying (CCC 2226). Families are fraught with all kinds of challenges associated with sickness, death, relationships, employment and so on. Praying the rosary and calling upon the aid of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God establishes a solid foundation for helping families meet their many challenges. We are all familiar with the perennial saying, “the family that prays together stays together.”

I had the fortunate opportunity recently to attend a priesthood ordination at our diocesan Cathedral. It was a sacred and regal event. The Bishop spoke about how families and parishes foster vocation to the priesthood and religious life. All priests from time to time will speak about the origins of their own vocation. For the vast majority of them the holy rosary and the Blessed Virgin Mary were integral to their vocation.

Many people struggle to maintain their Catholic faith while living in our materialistic world. They struggle to stay obedient and faithful to the laws of God and His Holy Church. This is where calling upon the aid of the Virgin Mary while praying the rosary can be very helpful. The Virgin Mary as an example of obedience is significant. She was willing to fulfill all that God asked of her, even while knowing that her Son Jesus would suffer greatly and be killed. Tradition tells us that Mary spent many hours in prayer seeking the strength to do the will of God.

Every man and woman should carry a rosary in their pocket or purse, not only as a device that helps us pray but also as a source of comfort throughout the course of the day. It is a sign that the Blessed Mother accompanies us at every moment of the day. If I said, “who has a rosary with them?” Would many people raise their hands? If you think carrying a rosary is silly, I can tell you that many soldiers carry a blessed rosary. I always did.

Don’t take this simple prayer for granted. It is very powerful, and the devil flees from it. If you want to keep the demons at bay, carry a rosary. But more importantly, pray it!

The name rosary comes from the Latin *rosarium*. It means bouquet of roses or rose garden. The rose is the symbol of the blessed Virgin Mary and every Hail Mary prayed is a rose that is given to her. She is always there to help those who seek her assistance. After all, being the Mother of God is a very big deal affording her the highest level of intercession with her son (CCC 1354, 2634). God grants her every request. So go to her praying the rosary. She is waiting for you to call. Place yourself and your family into her hands.

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church