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Origin of The Rosary.

The rosary as an instrument for counting prayers is not peculiar to Christians. The Mohammedans, for example, have a bead-string, upon which they count devotional pronouncements of the name Allah. All over Japan, St. Francis Xavier learned to his amazement, Buddhists had rosaries which they used at prayer. And even in ancient Nineveh the use of the rosary was not unknown: a piece of sculpture shows two winged females standing in an attitude of prayer holding a rosary in the right hand.

Among Christians, long before the advent of the Ave Maria, a rosary was used to count Pater Nosters. The practice seems to have developed in the monasteries. When a member of a monastery died, every priest-member had to sing two Masses, every non-priest had to say fifty psalms or repeat fifty times the Pater Noster. These were the suffrages.

Pebbles, berries, or discs of bone, threaded on a string, became in the 11th and 12th centuries a helpful means of counting Pater Nosters.

About the middle of the 12th century the Hail Mary came into use as a salutation, it seems, rather than as a prayer. And just as today we measure the honor of salutations by the number of salutes fired, so they measured the honor they paid to the Blessed Virgin by the number of salutations that they addressed to her.

Imitating the practice of saying 50 psalms, established by the educated members of the monasteries, the more simple said their Ave Marias in groups of 50. The organization of Hail Marys into groups of tens seems, from historical evidence, to have started about the year 1200. A text of that date directs a little group of women in England to say 50 Aves in sets of ten with prostrations and other marks of reverence. The practice of meditation on certain mysteries of the Redemption (which is the essence of the rosary) is attributed to Dominic the Prussian, a Carthusian.

To the sons of St. Dominic belongs the credit of popularizing the recitation of the Rosary and of establishing the Rosary confraternities throughout the world.

Indulgenced Aspirations to Mary.

Devout, ejaculatory prayer is a quick, practical way of maintaining friendship with God. Within a few minutes you can learn one or all of the following ejaculations to Our Lady. You can let church or class bells remind you to say them frequently throughout the day. And by the end of May you will have formed a most valuable habit:

"May!" (25 days indulgence, every time); The Hail Mary, 500 days if said on a rosary enriched with the Crosier indulgences--all rosaries at the pamphlet rack are blessed with these Crosier indulgences; "Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, pray for us!" (300 days if said before the Blessed Sacrament exposed); "Our Lady of good studies, pray for us!" (300 days, once a day).

"O Virgin Mary, our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, glory of the Christian people, joy of the universal Church, salvation of the world; pray for us, and awaken in all the faithful devotion to the Holy Eucharist, in order that they may render themselves worthy to receive It daily." (300 days, every time.); "Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God." (300 days, every time.)

NOTE: an indulgence of 300 days means that by such an indulgence we cancel as much punishment as we could have cancelled in the early days of the Church by performing 300 days of severe penance.

PRAYERS: five special intentions.