

## HOLY ROSARY

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### PAULINE JARICOT AND THE LIVING ROSARY

The spiritual genius of the Venerable Pauline Marie Jaricot goes far beyond the foundation of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In fact, she knew that prayer is the foundation of the Church's Mission and was determined to make the Rosary known and prayed by as many people as possible to sustain the proclamation of the Gospel in the missionary territories. In 1826, encouraged by her success organising the Missionary Societies in small groups, Pauline initiated the *Living Rosary* based on the same criteria.

Initially, she organised her friends and collaborators into groups of 15 people determined by the number of mysteries of the Rosary at that time. She asked each member to make a commitment to pray a decade of the Rosary daily and to meditate on the mystery of the day for an entire month. In this way, each day the groups recited and meditated on all 15 mysteries of the Rosary. At the start of the month, the group leader personally redistributed the Mysteries amongst the members. For each of the following four weeks each member meditated upon a different Mystery of the Rosary each day whilst reciting their decade. Therefore, each month Christ's entire life was meditated upon by the group and, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the prayer was presented to God. In this way, the Rosary became a 'living' reality that supported the Church's Mission to proclaim the Good News to those who had not yet heard it. The apostolic endeavour of the missionaries of Jesus spread throughout the entire world, sustained by the prayers of the *Living Rosary*.

Pauline's dream was that the *Living Rosary* would spread quickly to become a world-wide phenomenon. In 1931, she wrote, "the groups of 15 continue to multiply with incredible speed in Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, England and parts of America. The Rosary has spread its roots as far as the Indies and especially in Canada." Pauline's hope was that the Rosary would unite people all over the world in fervent prayer for the mission of the Church.

In fact, at the time of Pauline's death in 1862, the *Living Rosary* was comprised of more than 150,000 groups of 15 people with 2,250,000 members in France alone. Today, the *Living Rosary* is still practiced in many parts of the world. The groups of 15 people

have been enlarged to 20 which allows for the inclusion of the new *Luminous Mysteries* instituted by St Pope John Paul II. Consequently, this important prayer initiative, conceived by the Foundress of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, still continues today.