

**Is it true the rosary was given to us directly by Mary herself? When and where and in what form? Did she specify the prayers and mysteries as we know them today?**

Wow, three questions in one! I'll try to answer the first two today, and the last one next week.

The Hail Mary prayer developed gradually over the centuries, and was originally referred to as the Angelic Salutation. This is because it begins with the salutation of the angel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation. The first part of the prayer is based entirely on scripture and was in common use by around the year 1000. The second intercessory part was added by the Church about 500 years ago. Legend has it that the laity prayed the Angelic Salutation 150 times a day in imitation of the monks who prayed all 150 psalms of the Old Testament every day. This became known as the Angelic Psalter. Mary did not give us the rosary directly, but Our Lady did appear to St. Dominic in France in the year 1214 and asked him to teach the people the Angelic Psalter as a weapon to convert heretics and sinners. She told him: *"I want you to know that, in this kind of warfare, the battering ram has always been the Angelic Psalter which is the foundation stone of the New Testament. Therefore if you want to reach these hardened souls and win them over to God, preach my Psalter."* The Angelic Psalter became the rosary as we know it in its current form.

The structure of breaking the 150 Hail Marys up into 15 groups of ten, called decades, occurred at this time. St. Dominic and his successors, especially Blessed Alan de la Roche, possibly guided by Mary, tied each decade to some aspect of the life of Jesus and Mary from scripture. These are referred to as mysteries, and we use meditate upon them as we pray the rosary.

**Deacon Joe**