

The Pontifical Mission Societies reintroduced the World Mission Rosary created by the late Archbishop Fulton Sheen in 1951, then national director for the Society for the Propagation of Faith. Archbishop Sheen made an appeal to "Embrace the World in Prayer"!

Each of the five decades of the World Mission Rosary has different colors that represent different mission regions of the world:

- **Yellow** for the rising sun over **Asia**
- **Red** for the blood of the martyrs of the **Americas**
- **White** for **Europe** home of the Holy Father, and his call for new evangelization
- **Blue** for water surrounding **Oceania** (the island nations) of the world
- **Green** for the grasslands and forests of **Africa**

To this "geographical" rosary, we reflect on the five points of evangelization described by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, "On the Mission of the Redeemer." These are:

- Inter-religious dialogue
- Liturgy
- Solidarity
- Witness
- Proclamation.

It is suggested to meditate on five Scriptural "Mission Mysteries" while praying the rosary: The Visit of the Magi; Jesus Talks with the Samaritan Woman; Jesus Heals the Centurion's Servant; Jesus Sends out his Disciples; and The Conversion.

YELLOW- ASIA

The First Mission Mystery, The Visit of the Magi. "Behold, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem" (Mt 2:1).

The Magi, astrologers of Persia's Zoroastrian religion, could read stars the way you and I read the newspaper. Around the year six BC, the planet Jupiter (signifying Kingship) aligned with Saturn (governing Israel) and, appearing as one large star in the sky, crossed the constellation Pisces (symbolizing birth). For the Magi, the heavens themselves announced a newborn king of the Jews. The Mission Mystery of the Magi teaches us that all who seek God with an open mind and heart will be guided to the Lord.

RED - THE AMERICAS

The Second Mission Mystery, Jesus Talks with the Samaritan Woman. "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23).

Jesus scandalized his disciples by talking with the Samaritan woman. He rejected arbitrary barriers that separated people into "us" and "them." Samaritans were notorious for changing gods as often as this woman changed husbands. That explains her sudden interest in where Jews worshiped. Jesus assured her that, when worshiping God, spirit and truth mattered most. She left her water jar -- her deepest thirst quenched -- and became a missionary to her villagers and led them to Christ.

WHITE - EUROPE

The Third Mission Mystery, Jesus cures the centurion's servant. "I have not found such great faith even in Israel" (Lk 7:9).

There was no love lost between Jews and Romans who represented the ruling Empire. Jews were a proud but subjugated people. Each considered the other the enemy. Unlike the typical centurion, who oppressed the people, this Roman officer helped the Jews and even built a synagogue for them. Love for his servant who was ill enabled the man to reach out to Jesus for help. For Jesus, solidarity with human suffering knew no nationality. When people express solidarity with other races, religions or nationalities, both sides find liberation.

GREEN - AFRICA

The Fourth Mission Mystery, the Conversion of St. Paul. "Immediately he began to proclaim Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

Saul (later "Paul") of Tarsus was Christianity's sworn enemy and became one of its greatest advocates. His is the story of perfect conversion: not just changing religions, but changing his heart. The Risen Lord came to Saul, not while he was praying in the Temple or studying the Bible, but while he was tracking down and arresting Christians. "Why do you persecute me?" the Lord asked. Paul realized that when one persecuted Christians, he persecuted Jesus. Paul remains the greatest spokesperson for the teachings of Jesus. He transformed the Church from a small, persecuted sect of Judaism into a truly universal faith that embraces all peoples. This mission mystery compels us never to dismiss others as beyond God's reach, even those whose previous actions showed them to be our enemies.

BLUE – OCEANIA (ISLAND NATIONS)

The Fifth Mission Mystery, Jesus Sends out His Disciples. "Go, preach the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16:15).

The disciples could hardly contain their joy: Christ is risen! Life triumphed over death! This good news was too good to keep to themselves. Heedless of their own safety, the disciples spread out, unarmed and defenseless, empowered only by the Spirit of God. This was the original "Mission Impossible": Spread the Good News to the ends of the earth. Here is the mission mystery: from this ragtag group of disciples facing certain annihilation, Christianity spread and flourished throughout the world.