

The Daily Rosary

The Fatima children, Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta, loved to play games and dance for entertainment as they watched over the family sheep. Before they played, they always “prayed” the Rosary, as was their family custom. I put “prayed” in quotes because sometimes they wanted to get through the Rosary as fast as they could, so the children would merely say the names of the prayers on each bead! The children were not as pious before the apparitions as they were afterwards.

During the apparitions from May through October 1917, the Blessed Mother urged the children to pray the Rosary daily. Lucia would ask, “What would you have me do?” Our Lady always responded, “Continue to pray the Rosary *every day*...”¹ Six times Our Lady said this to Lucia. Lucia later noted in her book that she wrote as a Sister, Francisco was given the special apostolate to pray many Rosaries² before he went to heaven. Sister Lucia said Our Lady’s request applies to all of us. The Blessed Virgin asked everyone to pray many Rosaries for the conversion of sinners and peace in the world. The Rosary must be an important element in the message of Fatima for Our Lady to have continually repeated the request. The question that I tried to answer is, how does the Rosary relate to Fatima and why was Our Lady so insistent?

Mr. Francis Johnston, an authority on the events of Fatima, in his book, *Fatima: the Great Sign*, wrote, “As a prayer which unites us more intimately with God, the praying of the rosary is second only to the Sacred Eucharistic liturgy, because it consists of a wealth of prayers, all of which have come from Heaven, either dictated or inspired by God...”³. To place a simple yet profound devotion next to the Liturgy bespeaks its value and effectiveness. Though the efficacy of the Rosary is not directly related to the message of Our Lady of Fatima and her

¹ The Apparitions at Fatima

² Sr. Lucia “Calls from the Message of Fatima” Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2000 pg. 126

³ Francis Johnston “Fatima: the Great Sign” New Jersey: AMI Press, 1980 p 109

Immaculate Heart, she would not have requested it at each apparition if it were not powerful and useful. Thus the Rosary's efficacy is still worthy of note.

Pope John Paul II, in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, wrote "The Rosary is both meditation and supplication. Insistent prayer to the Mother of God is based on confidence that her maternal intercession can obtain all things from the heart of her Son."⁴ Her motherly intercession is most powerful before the throne of God because of who she is; as the Mother of God and our mother, she knows perfectly the holy will of God and what is best for us. (Who knows better the needs of a little child save the child's own mother? Our Blessed Mother knows the needs of every single one of her children, personally. She knows what we find difficult, easy, burdensome, and light, our Blessed Mother knows our weaknesses and strengths. She knows our joys and sorrows better than we do.) She knows exactly what we need in order to grow holier in the situations God allows to happen and wants to provide for us, so that we may reach our eternal destination.

Our Lord cannot deny the wishes of His own Mother for her heart is Immaculate and is always united to the will of her Divine Son. She attentively listens with a mother's heart and pleads to her Son on our behalf for the graces that will help us the most. Pope Leo XIII stated, "She is the Mediatrix of our peace with God and the dispenser of heavenly graces. She has been placed by her divine Son at the pinnacle of glory and power, in order to assist men with the help of her protection as they wind their way amidst hardships and dangers toward the Eternal City"⁵.

(She is glad to help us in any way she can. "Mary's greatest joy is to grant her help and assistance to those who call upon her; there is no reason to doubt that she wishes not only to answer the prayers of the universal Church, but that she is eager to do so".⁶)

⁴ *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, par. 16

⁵ Leo XIII *Supremi Apostolatus*

⁶ *ibid.*

“In the Rosary, we have the most powerful and efficacious of all prayers because it is primarily a ‘gospel prayer’”⁷. The Rosary takes its inspiration from the Gospel to suggest the attitude with which the faithful should recite it. We meditate upon the very mysteries of our Redemption from the moment of Christ’s conception to His glorious Ascension to the effects of these events when the Church began, namely Pentecost, to Mary’s Assumption and Coronation. Even the very prayers, Hail Mary’s and Our Fathers, are the Word of God whose object is Jesus Christ.⁸ We say the very same words the angel Gabriel used to greet Mary at the Annunciation. Jesus taught us the Our Father. When reciting the rosary we are praying the words of the Gospel in our hearts and with our lips; here we encounter Jesus Christ.

Now knowing that Our Lady asked for the daily recitation of the Rosary because of her powerful, motherly intercession we turn to yet another reason. The Rosary is an exquisitely contemplative prayer.

Our Lady of Fatima asked that the three children pray for the conversion of poor sinners and so in praying the Rosary, we contemplate the One whom we are called to imitate and thus, are conformed to Christ. (“Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ. Hence, the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ.”⁹)

As we say each prayer of the Rosary, our attention turns toward the events of Christ’s life. The repeated prayers, Hail Mary’s, Our Father’s, and Glory Be’s, become the background music. Our mind and heart are fixed upon the mystery being considered so that “contemplating the scenes of the rosary in union with Mary (becomes a) means of learning from her to ‘read’

⁷ Johnston p. 106 quoting Pope Paul VI *Marialis Cultis*

⁸ Benedictine Monks of Solesmes “Papal Teachings: The Holy Rosary” trans. Rev. Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M. Daughters of St. Paul: USA, 1980. pg. 273

⁹Ibid, par. 15

Christ, to discover his secrets and to understand his message.”¹⁰ The Rosary leads us to contemplation, which in turn leads to imitation, and ultimately to conversion of heart. (Blessed Bartolo Longo wrote: “Just as two friends, frequently in each other’s company, tend to develop similar habits, so too, by holding familiar converse with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary... we can become, to the extent of our lowliness, similar to them and can learn from these supreme models a life of humility, poverty, hiddenness, patience and perfection.”¹¹)

The graces received when praying the Rosary effects a change of heart in sinners. It is also a prayer for peace, peace with God and each other which ultimately leads to world peace; another intention for which Our Lady asked the children to pray.

It brings peace within those who pray it daily, to their families and those whom the soul encounters. Pope John Paul II stated in the document on the Rosary that, “Anyone who assimilates the mystery of Christ- and this is clearly the goal of the Rosary-learns the secret of peace and makes it his life’s project”. He went on to say that “by virtue of its meditative character, with the tranquil succession of Hail Mary’s, the Rosary has a peaceful effect on those who pray it, disposing them to receive and experience in their innermost depths, and to spread around them, that true peace which is the special gift of the Risen Lord.”¹²

The secret of peace is the virtue of charity, treating your neighbor in a kindly and loving manner. This is what Christ teaches us when we contemplate Him in His mysteries. In the Joyful Mysteries, we learn to “desire to welcome, and defend and promote life, and to shoulder the burdens of suffering children all over the world.”¹³ We make resolutions “to bear witness to His

¹⁰ Ibid par. 14

¹¹ Ibid par 15

¹² Rosarium Virginis Mariae par. 40

¹³ Rosarium Virginis Mariae par. 41

Beatitudes in daily life” through the Luminous Mysteries. We learn to share in his sufferings “feeling the need to act as a ‘Simon of Cyrene’ for our brothers and sisters weighed down by grief or crushed by despair.”¹⁴ “Finally, how could one possibly gaze upon the glory of the Risen Christ or of Mary Queen of Heaven, without yearning to make this world more beautiful, more just, more closely conformed to God’s plan?”¹⁵

Considering the crisis of family life in our modern world, the daily recitation of the Rosary is definitely a spiritual aide to bringing peace in the home and giving hope to family. Television, internet, cell phones or other electronic media can threaten the equilibrium of the home when not used in moderation. Hence, “the unity and sanctity of the family, will find their sure defense and unfailing protection (against these threats) in the practice of family prayer”¹⁶ particularly the Rosary. As Fr. Peyton said during the Rosary Crusade, "The Family that prays together stays together". The family turns their gaze toward Christ and learns to see him in each of the members.¹⁷ They also more closely imitate the Holy Family of Nazareth where “its members place Jesus at the center sharing in his joys and sorrows.”¹⁸ In a word, the daily recitation of the Rosary brings peace and unity within the family.

(“The family will meet with greater facility the problems of family life. Homes will thereby be converted into sanctuaries of peace. Torrents of divine favors will come to them, even the inestimable favor of a priestly or a religious vocation.”¹⁹)

However, the question remains, why the Rosary particularly? Sister Lucia stated that she was asked this question frequently. She did not know for certain and it never occurred to her to

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Papal Teachings: The Holy Rosary” pg. 254

¹⁷ Rosarium Virginis Mariae par. 41

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Papal Teachings: The Holy Rosary” pg. 218

ask Our Lady. However, she gave a few possible answers in her book, “Calls from the Messages of Fatima”.

First, it is very important to understand that the Mass and the Rosary are not set opposed to each other, but that the Rosary aides our participation in the Liturgy. Contemplating the mysteries of Christ’s life in the context of the Rosary nurtures the soil of our hearts to receive Christ more effectively and produce abundant fruit in our daily lives. We come to know Him more and his presence through the Sacraments becomes more tangible. “By immersing us in the mysteries, it ensures that what He has done and what the Liturgy makes present is deeply assimilated and shapes our existence”²⁰.

Though daily Mass is not always possible due to distance, circumstances, work, or health, the holy Rosary is because it can be prayed anytime and anywhere. It can be prayed on your way to and from work or school, as a family before going to bed. Some even pray it as they rock their child/grandchild. Others like to pray it as they get their daily exercise when they walk around the neighborhood. John Paul II prayed it in his heart along with the thousands of people as he lay on his bed dying.

The Rosary is so simple to pray yet very profound making it possible for anyone to recite; it does not matter if you are 100 years old or a little four or five year old just learning how to pray. It does not matter if you are rich, poor, educated or not, great or small. The Rosary is for everyone! (“This prayer-the Holy Rosary- is the simplest and easiest one of all for the Christian people...”²¹) No one is excluded from this pious devotion. God hears everyone’s prayers, and everyone’s prayers are advantageous. Pope Leo XIII once said, “Oh! how beautiful is the rosary of the innocent child and of those who are sick, of the consecrated virgin in the seclusion

²⁰ Rosarium Virginis Mariae par. 13

²¹ Ibid. p225

of the cloister or in the humble and self-sacrificing apostolate of charity; of the man and woman, father and mother of a family...”²²

In its accessibility, simplicity and profundity, Our Lady asked for the Rosary to be prayed for the conversion of sinners and for peace in the world.

Our Lady’s request to pray the Rosary was entrusted to us because it is very efficacious in fighting the evils of our time and bringing down heaven’s graces where it is needed the most. It helps change the hearts of sinners and brings peace to all who pray it and to those around them thereby spreading peace through the world.

Just as Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, grew in their appreciation and love for the devotion, and recited it fervently; I hope that you too are inspired to a deeper appreciation and will begin the daily recitation if you do not already, or as the case may be, that you will persevere in your efforts.

Our Lady of Fatima...Pray for us!

Our Lady of the Rosary...Pray for us!

²² “Papal Teachings: The Holy Rosary” pg.236