

THE ROSARY
(J.F.M.H. 5.10 2017)

The Rosary is a wonderful prayer for all those discerning their vocation. Pope St. John Paul II describes the Rosary as “Mary’s way – a way of faith, of silence and of attentive contemplation”. Following Mary’s way, a way of stillness and contemplation, we can enter deeply into the mystery of God’s will for our lives. Each one of us has our own unique vocation – that particular calling of how we are to make God’s saving love real in our time and our place. Mary is a faithful guide whose own continuing vocation is to lead us to her Son, and to help us to say “yes” to God’s will, just as she said yes to God’s invitation to bear his Son. Pope Francis has asked that we should say the rosary each week for vocations

October is the month the Church dedicates to The Holy Rosary, and on October 7th is the Feast of ‘Our Lady of the Rosary’. When we pray this prayer we do so from within ‘the mystical body of Christ’, whose head is Christ Himself. So we pray with and through Jesus, as our Brother, Saviour, Friend, the Son of His Mother Mary and ‘beloved Son’ of His Almighty Father. With Christ our prayers become acceptable and pleasing to the eternal Father, in a way we cannot fully grasp. St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) told us that *“Jesus prays for us as our Priest, prays as our Head, and is prayed to, by us, as our God. Therefore let us acknowledge our voice in Him and His in us.”* We can pray the rosary with confidence. Like every prayer, the rosary has to be said with humility. If on our part humility is missing it becomes rather like the cord of a rosary being broken, and so the beads and prayers we say on them get scattered. In praying within the ‘Mystical body of Christ’ we have good reason to be very humble indeed. We are always the servants of Christ and must never be His proud rivals. We must learn from Christ who told his disciples *“Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest in your souls.”* (Matt. 11.29) *“Again therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying: “I am the light of the world: he that follows me, walks not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”(John 8:12)*

Because the Lord’s Prayer, the Decalogue and the Communion of Saints were all designed by God, it is not surprising to find that the structure of the prayer and the Commandments support and strengthen the Communion of Saints. In the Our Father the three “thou-petitions” concern God Himself in this world, while the four “our-petitions” concern us and our neighbour. In the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, the first direct us to the great Commandment to love God and the second towards our neighbour, in other words they are directions to the path of love. After each mystery of the rosary we insert the little prayer Our Lady taught the children of Fatima to say between the decades. *“O my Jesus forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.”* As always our Mother Mary directs our minds to her Son and shows her concern for each of us who sin, even for the greatest sinners, those most in need of His mercy. Clearly she accepts that on top of her own prayers *“now, and at the hour of our death”* we should perform our part as members of the mystical body of Christ, in the saving of our own souls and the souls of our fellow sinners. On August the 19th 1917 at Vallinhus, Our Lady told the children *“Pray, pray very much and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to Hell because there is no one to make sacrifices for them.”* The direction to make reparation was taken up by the children who prayed and multiplied their sufferings and offered them up for sinners. In doing this they were practising the vocation of a victim soul of substitution.

The rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a prayer with Christ at its centre. It contains all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety. In 2002 Pope St. John Paul II added the five Luminous Mysteries and in doing so underlined Christ’s central position in the

prayer. With the Rosary we sit at the school of Mary and are led to contemplate her Son, and to experience the depths of his love. How well this fit in with the role given to Our Lady, and announced by her to St. Elizabeth, her soul was *'to magnify the Lord'*. (Luke 1-46] She is a good teacher. While the Mass remains the Church's public act of our worship, the Rosary encourages private devotion and a quiet encounter with Christ. The Rosary, "precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is a contemplative prayer.

The Luminous Mysteries

1 The Baptism of the Lord At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus is baptized in the Jordan by his cousin. A voice from heaven is heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Just as the Father called his Son to ministry, so Jesus calls many to his service as diocesan priests, as monks, as nuns, as friars, as sisters, and as consecrated virgins. But there are so many factors that get in the way of hearing God's call. And if it is heard, the road of discernment is often long and bumpy. ***Pray for all those called to consecrated, or to religious life, that they will hear God's call and respond to it with joy.***

2 The Wedding at Cana Jesus and His disciples attend a wedding and Jesus works his first miracle, keeping the bride and groom from embarrassment. The family is a great good, and our family members are among the greatest blessings God gives us. And yet, family members can be the biggest obstacles to those discerning a religious or priestly vocation. It sometimes happens that when announcing their intention to become a Priest or Religious, their parents are horrified—they want him/her to marry and have a family. ***Pray for the loved ones of those called to a consecrated or religious life, that they will be supported and not hindered in the call.***

3 The Proclamation of the Kingdom

Following the Wedding at Cana, **Jesus preaches the Good News of the coming of the Kingdom of God in synagogues all over Galilee and Judea.** This mystery covers the bulk of Jesus' public ministry. We, His followers, are also called to preach the Good News of the Kingdom. Priests are called to preach at Mass; and like the rest of us are called to be witnesses of God's grace, by our words and our actions, to our families, friends, co-workers, and chance-met acquaintances.

Pray for all those who preach the Gospel by their words and in their lives, that by the grace of the Holy Spirit they will preach God's message faithfully.

4 The Transfiguration On Mount Tabor, Jesus gives a special gift to Peter, James, and John. He is transfigured before them, a glimpse of His divinity shining through His humanity. The apostles know something wonderful has happened, though they can't fully understand. They will continue to meditate and contemplate the mystery they've witnessed.

Similarly, those to whom the Gospel is preached need God's grace to hear it, to take it in, and to make it their own. Probably every priest can tell us stories about the times someone has come to him after Mass and thanked him for saying something in his homily that he can't remember having said, but which was exactly what the person needed to hear. The Holy Spirit is in the ears that hear as well as in the voice that speaks. ***Pray for all those to whom the Gospel is preached, that by the grace of the Holy Spirit they may hear and receive the words that God has for them.***

5 The Institution of the Eucharist On Holy Thursday, Jesus eats the Last Supper with His disciples; taking bread and wine he blesses both, and changed them into His body and blood and offered them to His Almighty Father as a sacrifice, and telling those at supper to do the same in memory of Him. It was the first Mass. And so they have done, they and their successors, from that day to this. Thanks to them, we, the members of the Body of Christ on Earth, continue to receive the Daily Bread of the Eucharist and all of the graces that come with it. Our priests are a great gift to us, and need our prayers. ***Pray for the priests in our lives, that God would bless them and keep them and make His face to shine upon them. Pray for them by name.***