

A GOOD METHOD TO PRAY THE ROSARY

by Saint Louis de Montfort

When you have asked the Holy Spirit to help you pray well, put yourself for a moment in the presence of God and offer up the decades in the way that I am going to show you later.

Before beginning a decade, pause for a moment or two — depending upon how much time you have — and contemplate the mystery that you are about to honor in that decade. Always be sure to ask of Almighty God, by this mystery and through the intercession of the Blessed Mother, one of the virtues that shines forth most in this mystery or one of which you stand in particular need.

Take great care to avoid the two pitfalls that most people fall into during the Rosary. The first is the danger of not asking for any graces at all, so that if some people were asked their Rosary intention they would not know what to say. So, whenever you say your Rosary, be sure to ask for some special grace. Ask God's help in cultivating one of the greatest Christian virtues or in overcoming one of your sins.

The second big fault a lot of people make when saying

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the Holy Rosary is to have no intention other than that of getting it over as quickly as possible! This is because so many of us look upon the Rosary as a burden which is always heavier when we have not said it — especially if it is weighing on our conscience because we have promised to say it regularly or have been told to say it as a penance more or less against our will.

It is really pathetic to see how most people say the Holy Rosary — they say it astonishingly fast and mumble so that the words are not properly pronounced at all. We could not possibly expect anyone, even the most unimportant person, to think that a slipshod address of this kind was a compliment and yet we expect Jesus and Mary to be pleased with it! Small wonder then that the most sacred prayers of our holy religion seem to bear no fruit, and that, after saying thousands of Rosaries, we are still no better than we were before! Dear Confraternity members, I beg of you to temper the speed which comes all too easily to you and pause briefly several times as you say the Our Father and Hail Mary. I have placed a cross at each pause, as you will see:

Our Father Who art in Heaven,† hallowed be Thy name,† Thy kingdom come,† Thy will be done† on earth as it is in Heaven.† Give us this day† our daily bread† and forgive us our trespasses† as we forgive those who trespass against us,† and lead us not into temptation,† but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,† the Lord is with Thee,† blessed art Thou among women† and blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb, Jesus.†

Holy Mary, Mother of God,† pray for us sinners, now† and at the hour of our death. Amen.

At first, you may find it difficult to make these pauses because of your bad habit of saying prayers in a hurry; but a decade that you say recollectedly in this way will be worth more than thousands of Rosaries said all in a rush — without any pauses or reflection.

Blessed Alan de la Roche and other writers (including Saint Robert Bellarmine) tell the story of how a good confessor advised three of his penitents, who happened to be sisters, to say the Rosary every day without fail for

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MARY'S CHASTITY

by Saint Alphonsus de Liguori

After the fall of Adam, man's senses became rebellious to reason. As a consequence, chastity is the most difficult of all the virtues to practice. St. Augustine says: "Of all inner conflicts, the most arduous are concerned with chastity. These battles are of daily occurrence, but victory is rare." May God be praised eternally, however, because in Mary He has given us such a shining example of this virtue. "Mary is with good reason called the Virgin of virgins," says Saint Albert the Great, "without the advice or example of others, She was the first to consecrate Her virginity to God." In this way She led to God all who imitated Her virginity, as David foretold: "After Her shall virgins be brought ... into the temple of the King" (Ps. 44:15). Without advice and without any example! St. Bernard says: "O Virgin, who taught You to please God by Your Virginity and to lead an angel's life on earth?" St. Sophronius replies: "God chose a pure Virgin for His Mother, that She might be an example of chastity to everybody."

He speaks here of those who appear anxious to win the battle against unchastity but are willing to use the means and flee the dangers.

That is why St. Ambrose calls Mary "the standard-bearer of virginity." Because of Mary's purity the Holy Spirit declared that She is as beautiful as the turtle-dove: "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's" (Cant. 1:9). "A most pure turtle-dove" is what Aponius calls Her. For the same reason Mary is also called a lily: "As the lily among the thorns, so is My love among the daughters" (Cant. 2:2). On this passage Denis the Carthusian remarks: "Mary was compared to a lily among thorns because all other virgins were thorns, either to themselves or to others." She inspired everybody who looked at Her with chaste thoughts. St. Thomas confirms this when he says that the beauty of the Blessed Virgin incited to chastity all who looked at Her. St. Jerome maintains that St. Joseph remained a virgin as a result of living with Mary. Writing against the heretic Helvidius, who denied Mary's virginity, St. Jerome said: "You say that Mary did not remain a virgin, I say that not only did She remain a virgin, but that even Joseph preserved his virginity through Mary."

St. Gregory of Nyssa says that the Blessed Virgin loved chastity so much, that to preserve it She would

have been willing to renounce even the dignity of Mother of God. This seems evident from Her reply to the archangel: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (Lk. 1:34). And from the words She added then: "Be it done to Me according to thy word" (Lk. 1:38), signifying that She gave Her consent on the condition that, as the angel had assured Her, She should become a mother only by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

St. Ambrose says that "anyone who preserves chastity is an angel; anyone who loses it is a devil." Our Lord assures us that those who are chaste become angels: "They shall be as the angels of God in Heaven" (Mt. 22:30). But the unchaste become hateful to God, like devils. St. Remigius used to say that the majority of adults are lost by this vice. We have quoted St. Augustine as saying that a victory is very seldom gained in this combat. Why is this? Because the means by which the victory may be gained are very seldom used. These means are threefold, according to St. Bellarmine and the masters of the spiritual life: fasting, the avoidance of dangerous occasions of sin, and prayer.

1. By fasting we mean especially mortification of the eyes and the appetite. Although Our Blessed Lady was filled with divine grace, She nevertheless practiced mortification of the eyes, according to St. Epiphanius and St. John Damascene. Her glances were always modest and She never gazed fixedly at anyone. She was so unassuming, even from childhood, that everyone who saw Her was charmed by Her reserve. St. Luke remarks that when She went to visit Elizabeth, She went "with haste" (Lk. 1:39), in order to avoid the public's gaze. Philibert relates that it was revealed to a hermit named Felix that as far as Her food was concerned, when She was a baby She took milk only once a day. St. Gregory of Tours maintains that She fasted throughout Her life. St. Bonaventure explains this: "Mary would never have found so much grace if She had not been moderate in Her meals, for grace and gluttony do not go together." In short, Mary was mortified in everything, so that it was true to say of Her: My hands dropped with myrrh (Cant. 5:5).

2. The second means is avoidance of the occasions of sin: "He that is aware of the snares shall

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a whole year. This was so that they might make beautiful robes of glory for Our Lady out of their Rosaries. This was a secret that the priest had received from Heaven.

So the three sisters said the Rosary faithfully for a year and on the Feast of the Purification the Blessed Virgin appeared to them at night when they had retired. Saint Catherine and Saint Agnes were with Her and She was wearing beautiful robes that shone and all over them "Hail Mary, full of grace" was blazoned in letters of gold. The Blessed Mother came to the eldest sister and said, "I salute you, My daughter, because you have saluted Me so often and beautifully. I want to thank you for the beautiful robes that you have made Me." The two virgin saints who were with Our Lady thanked her too and then all three of them vanished.

An hour later Our Lady and the same two saints appeared to them again, but this time She was wearing green which had no gold lettering and did not gleam. She went up to the second sister and thanked her for the robes she had made Her by saying her Rosary. Since this sister had seen Our Lady appear to the eldest much more magnificently dressed, she asked Her the reason for the change. The Blessed Mother answered: "Your sister made Me more beautiful clothes because she has been saying her Rosary better than you."

About an hour after this She appeared to the youngest of the sisters wearing tattered and dirty rags. "My daughter," She said, "I want to thank you for these clothes that you have made Me." The young girl was covered with shame and she called out: "O, my Queen, how could I have dressed You so badly! I beg You to forgive me. Please grant me a little more time to

make You beautiful robes by saying my Rosary better." Our Lady and the

two saints vanished, leaving the girl heartbroken. She told

her confessor everything that had happened and

he urged her to say her Rosary for another

year and to say it more devoutly than ever.

At the end of this second year on the very same day of the Purification, Our Lady, clothed in a magnificent robe and attended by Saint Catherine and Saint Agnes, wearing crowns,

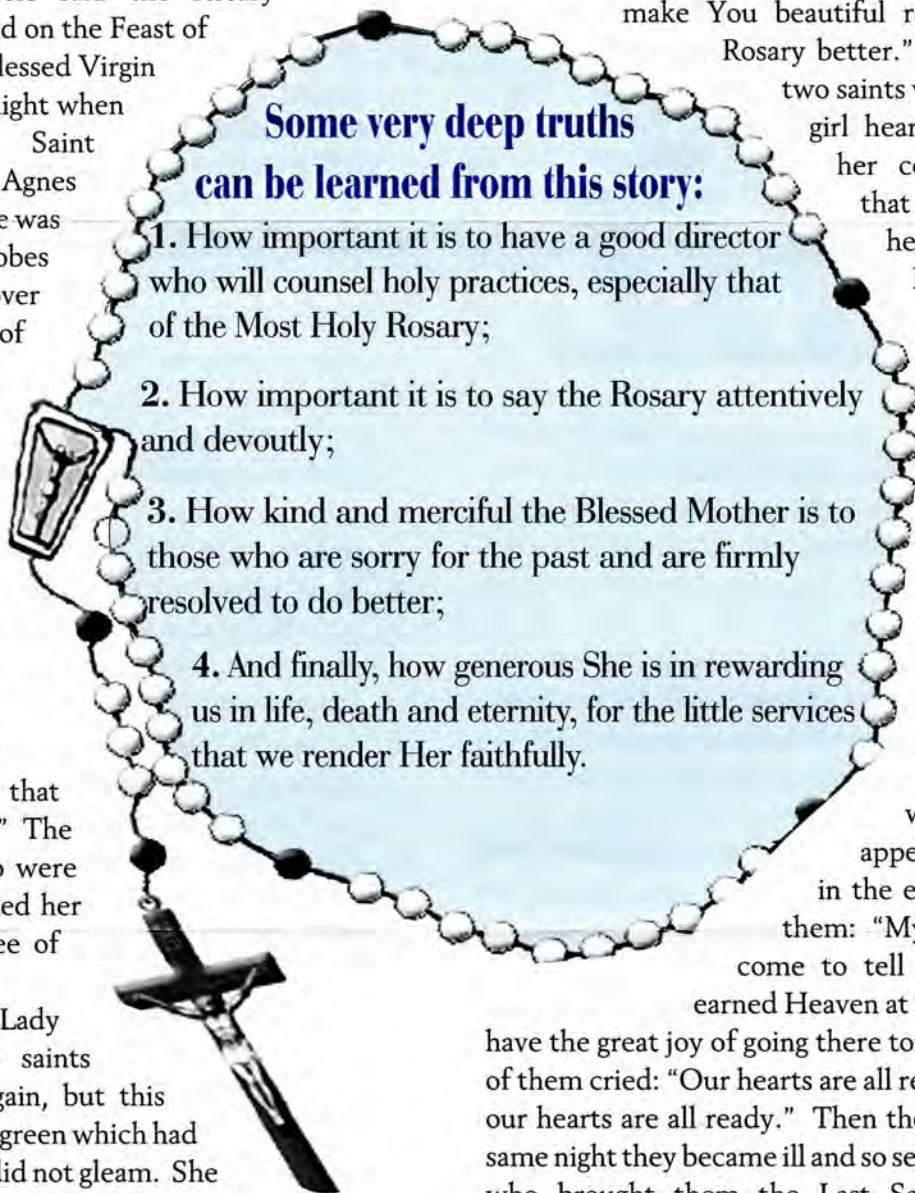
appeared to them again in the evening. She said to them: "My daughters, I have

come to tell you that you have earned Heaven at last – and you will all

have the great joy of going there tomorrow." The three of them cried: "Our hearts are all ready, dearest Queen; our hearts are all ready." Then the vision faded. That same night they became ill and so sent for their confessor who brought them the Last Sacraments and they thanked him for the holy practice that he had taught them. After Compline, Our Lady appeared with a multitude of virgins and had the three sisters clothed in white gowns. While angels were singing "Come, spouses of Jesus Christ, receive the crowns which have been prepared for you for all eternity," they departed from this life. †

**Some very deep truths
can be learned from this story:**

1. How important it is to have a good director who will counsel holy practices, especially that of the Most Holy Rosary;
2. How important it is to say the Rosary attentively and devoutly;
3. How kind and merciful the Blessed Mother is to those who are sorry for the past and are firmly resolved to do better;
4. And finally, how generous She is in rewarding us in life, death and eternity, for the little services that we render Her faithfully.



Apostles of the Rosary MAIL

The Fatima Center
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Dear Father Gruner,

Thank you for your lovely letters and the beautiful gifts you sent me from Our Lady of Fatima.

Fatima is a grace for all mankind. It is Our Lady's Peace Plan from Heaven.

The time has come for all of us to heed Her warnings, as She told Lucy, Jacinta and Francisco in 1917. If we do not, a great chastisement will befall all mankind. We can certainly see this happening all around us as we live in the most immoral of times.

Let us work together to bring Our Lady's Message to the whole world and honor Her request for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Do not be discouraged by the recent scandals that have arisen within the Catholic Church. I, as well as others, know that you and many others are good priests who serve Our Lord and Our Lady so well.

Please write to me any time you need help in spreading Our Virgin Mother's Message. I will be more than willing to help you since Our Lady has answered so many of my prayers. Yours in Christ,

Janet S., NY

Dear Father Gruner,

God Bless you. You are His faith-filled servant. I've never doubted that we will win this battle. Stay strong and know you're never alone. Sincerely,

Kathleen K., PA

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be secure" (Prov. 11:15). St. Philip Neri coined the expression: "In the war of the senses, cowards conquer." By cowards he means those who flee from dangerous occasions. Mary fled as much as possible from the gaze of men. Remember St. Luke's remark that, in going to visit Elizabeth, Mary went with haste into the hill country. One author calls attention to the fact that Our Lady left Elizabeth before St. John was born: "And Mary abode with her about three months; and She returned to Her own house. Now Elizabeth's full time was come, and she brought forth a son" (Lk. 1:56-57). Why did Mary not wait for St. John's birth? Because She wanted to avoid the hubbub and excitement that usually accompany such an event.

3. The third means is prayer. The wise man said: "And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it ... I went to the Lord and besought Him" (Wis. 8:21). Mary revealed to St. Elizabeth of Hungary that She did not acquire any virtue without effort and without continual prayer. St. John Damascene calls Our Immaculate Mother "a lover of purity." She cannot endure those who are content to be unchaste. And if anybody appeals to Her to be delivered from unchastity She will certainly help him. All he has to do is call upon Her confidently. The Venerable John of Avila used to say that many have conquered impure temptations merely through devotion to Mary Immaculate. †

O Mary, most pure dove, how many are now in hell on account of impurity! Most gracious Lady, obtain for us the grace always to fly to Thee in our temptations, and always invoke Thy name, pleading: "Mary, Mary, help us!"

Amen.

We'd like to hear from YOU! Write or call:

The Editor,

Apostles of the Rosary

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