



CRUSADERS OF MARY

Newsletter

VOLUME 7 - ISSUE 23
MAY, 2005

Christian Mortification

by Charles J. Mullaly, S.J.

That present social disorders require a remedy, all agree. Authors and students of social questions are writing extensively of the general spirit of unrest and discontent that seems to prevail everywhere. Yet few writers seem to grasp the simple truth, that present conditions have come from inordinate greed and from the mad desire for worldly wealth and pleasure. It is the old story of the baser side of human nature asserting itself and destroying all that is nobler and God-like in man.

The remedy for existing conditions can come only when we, as individuals, realize that this life is but a journey, short in the number of its years. We believe in the immortality of our souls; hence, we know that this journey is one to future happiness or misery; happiness if we obey the dictates of conscience and suppress the baser side of nature and its unlawful inclinations and tendencies. You and I were created by God. The Creator has a claim upon us, for we are His creatures, brought into the world for the definite purpose of saving our souls and enjoying everlasting happiness. He has given each of us a spiritual soul with its marvelous intellect and will. At the same time, we have bodily senses, upon which the intellect depends for its contact with the outer world and which are the source of bodily pleasures. Before the sin of our first parents, the sensitive appetites obeyed reason. There could be no temptation to sin unless man chose it; no inclination to greed, envy, anger, impurity, and other classes of sin which cause all the troubles of our day. If man had not sinned, the body would have been ever obedient to the desires of the soul. All was changed by the sin of our

first parents. With our understanding obscured, our will weakened, the inclination to good lessened, and the tendency to evil increased, we find the two parts of our nature in conflict. The inferior, or sense part of our nature, is in rebellion against reason. Because men in general are freely allowing the sense part of nature to rule over reason and drown its protests against the sins of greed, the sins of lust and sins arising from the fact that human nature has lost sight of the end of its creation and seeks its happiness in the gratification of this world, we have the abuses and evils of our day. Only fidelity to God and to the purpose of our being in life can cure the ills of society.



"If you live according to the flesh," says St. Paul the Apostle, "you shall die ..."

We were created to know God, to reverence Him and to serve Him and thereby to save our souls. We

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The Block Rosary and the 54-day Rosary Novena

In each of Her apparitions, Our Lady of Fatima repeated the request that we pray the Rosary every day. The Rosary is a powerful weapon in this time of evil and discord. Sister Lucy explained the power of the Rosary when she told Father Fuentes:

“Look, Father, the Most Holy Virgin, in these last times in which we live, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all spiritual, in the personal life of each one of us, of our families, of the families of the world, or of the religious communities, or even of the life of peoples and nations, that cannot be solved by the Rosary. There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary.”

Given below are two examples of how we can fulfill Our Lady's request for the recitation of the Rosary in special ways: by means of the Block Rosary and through the 54-day Rosary novena.

The Block Rosary

The Block Rosary consists of groups of people living within close proximity of each other praying the Rosary for the Church, their families, their communities and their country, once a week. It is suggested that they es-

pecially pray for the bishops and the Pope, so that they do their part to bring peace to the world by consecrating Russia in the form requested by Our Lady at Fatima. The group meets at a different participant's home each week at the same day and time. They should not serve refreshments or have discussions or long conversations on these occasions, as it is not a social event. The group should not let the Block Rosary in its area lose its spiritual purpose, little by little, by letting it turn into a social event.

The 54-day Rosary Novena

The 54-day Rosary novena is an uninterrupted series of daily Rosaries, prayed in honor of Our Lady. The devotion was revealed, in 1884, to the grievously ill Fortuna Agrelli by Our Lady of the Rosary at Pompeii, near Naples, Italy. Fortuna had been suffering terribly for thirteen months, and her illness had been declared incurable.

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CHRISTIAN MORTIFICATION *continued from page 1*

cannot serve God unless we fight and suppress the baser parts of our nature. This fight of the superior part of the soul against mere sense impulses and sense gratifications is mortification, and when this fight is assisted by divine grace we have Christian mortification.

By Christian mortification we do not mean mere bodily penances and austerities. Christian mortification is a broader term. It looks to the internal suppression of all that can cause sin. External penances are valuable only in so far as they spring from the soul's determination to fight sinful tendencies and promote the desire of conquering all that can lessen God's grace.

Without Christian mortification we cannot save our souls. “If you live according to the flesh,” says St. Paul the Apostle, “you shall die, but if through the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live” (Rom. 8:13). Christian mortification viewed as overcoming, with the help of divine grace, all temptations to mortal sin, is absolutely necessary for salvation. There is no choice. We must practice Christian mortifi-

cation and resist every inclination to grave sin and, where mortal sin has been committed, we must destroy that sin by using the means that God has given us to obtain His forgiveness. To this extent Christian mortification is absolutely necessary for salvation.

If we realized our purpose in life, we would be determined to use the means to obtain that end, eternal happiness with God. But we must not stop at mere avoidance of mortal sin. That would be, indeed, but a low degree of earnestness and neglect of the means of safety. If we are content only to keep away from the deadline, or the precipice of eternal damnation, we are indeed foolish. To secure our salvation means “safety first.” We will take no chances, we will not walk close to the pathway of sin, and say that we are mortified because we abstain from serious sin. We must go further; we must strike at the very root of our venial sins, which though not sufficient to cause us to lose Heaven, can and do put our souls in danger.

It is a lack of the higher degrees of Christian mortification that hinders a close union of the soul with God. We unite ourselves with God as a loving Father and

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APOSTOLATE NEWS

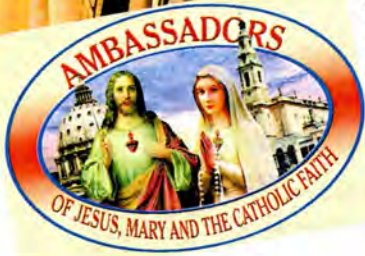


On Saturday, April 2, 2005, our Holy Father Pope John Paul II died. After the appropriate period of mourning, on April 18 the papal conclave convened to determine the Church's next successor to St. Peter. The following day, Tuesday, April 19, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was elected Pope and took the name Benedict XVI. We must pray for the soul of John Paul II, and especially for our new Pope, that he will govern the Church according to the will of God, and that he will comply with the urgent requests of which Our Lady of Fatima is still awaiting the fulfillment.



Also, the apostolate has published three statements concerning the death of Sister Lucy. The first announced the passing of Sister Lucy. The second asked about the Third Secret, whether those in high places will try to bury the yet unpublished part of the Secret with Sister Lucy, who was the last remaining Fatima seer. The third expressed the sentiments of the apostolate regarding Sister Lucy's death, while announcing that we will be releasing a book on the life and letters of Sister Lucy.

Above is the scene at Sister Lucy's funeral.



The Fatima Center has been busy putting the most recent *Fatima Crusader* on the apostolate's website, www.fatima.org This issue covers the Ambassadors of

Jesus and Mary conference that took place last September. Many people have responded to this important issue of the *Crusader* by pledging to be Ambassadors of Jesus and Mary.

The apostolate's website also now contains the February e-newsletter, which highlights updates to the site, contains announcements, and more. Christopher Ferrara has also added several "Fatima Perspectives" columns to the site, featuring a very interesting article on the sealing of Sister Lucy's room.



THE BLOCK ROSARY AND THE 54-DAY ROSARY NOVENA continued from page 2

On February 6, 1884, Fortuna and her relatives commenced a novena of Rosaries. On March 3, the Queen of the Holy Rosary appeared to the sick girl. In the apparition Our Lady, sitting upon a high throne profusely decorated with flowers and surrounded by luminous figures, held the Divine Child. In Her hand She held a rosary. Both Our Lady and the Child were clad in gold-embroidered garments. They were accompanied by St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena. The beauty of Our Lady was marvelous.

Our Lady spoke to Fortuna: "Child, you have invoked Me by various titles and have always obtained favors from Me. Now, since you have called Me by that title so pleasing to Me, 'Queen of the Holy Rosary,' I can no longer refuse the favor for which you petition; for this name is most precious and dear to Me. Make three novenas, and you shall obtain all."

By this Rosary Novena, Fortuna was cured miraculously.

Our Lady appeared to Fortuna again and said, "Whoever desires to obtain favors from Me should make three novenas of the prayers of the Rosary in petition, and three novenas in thanksgiving."

The novena consists of praying five decades of the Rosary each day for twenty-seven days in petition, then immediately five decades each day for twenty-seven days in thanksgiving, whether or not the request has been granted by the time the 27 days are over. On the first day meditate on the Joyful Mysteries, on the second day the Sorrowful Mysteries and on the third day the Glorious Mysteries. On the fourth day meditate again on the Joyful Mysteries and continue thus throughout the fifty-four days.

The 54-day Rosary Novena may seem a laborious novena, but it's actually a novena of love. Those who are sincere will not find it to be too difficult, if they truly wish to obtain their requests. This novena will be especially powerful when groups form to pray it together. ■



Dear Father Gruner,

May the Father, Son and Holy Ghost bless you all at this wondrous Easter time, and may the Blessed Virgin Mary continue to guide you in your work toward the Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart. Thank you for sending me a Brown Scapular, I felt lost without it.
M.B., B.C.

Dear Father Gruner,

A prayer just for you: during this holy Easter season may Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through His life, death and Resurrection, together with the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, help you obtain the joys of eternal life. You'll be in my prayers, and all the workers too, this Easter.

Yours in Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
M.S., ON.

Dear Father Gruner,

You have been doing a magnificent job all of these years. And you are in my prayers. I do hope the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops, will consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary soon. Our Lady of Fatima said there would be no peace until Russia is consecrated to Her Immaculate Heart. And as you hear almost every day there is fighting all over the world.

Keep up the fine job you are doing and may the Holy Family bless you, always. A blessed Easter to all!
Sincerely,
F.K., OH.

CHRISTIAN MORTIFICATION *continued from page 2*

Friend by means of simple, childlike prayer, but there can be no prayer of this type where we are ever seeking the pleasures and the joys of this world. Christ loves to be united with those who love Him, who study to be like unto Him. Christian mortification in its highest degree is to prefer above all else to be like Christ, to suffer with Christ crucified.

The miseries and sorrows of life come from a wrong view of life. We fail to realize that life is only a journey to Heaven, that the things of life, all creatures and all created things, are only as stepping-stones to help us to reach God. They are not the end of life. The gratification of sensuality by base pleasures draws us away from the end of life. There is no reaching the end, if we foolishly try to drag the stepping-stones along with us on our journey. Unhampered by the things of this world,

we must journey on to God. If sorrow comes into our life, we must realize that it is only a stepping-stone to God. If joy, untainted by sin, comes into our life, if wealth honestly comes to us, we must realize that each is only a stepping-stone to Heaven, to be used as such – to reach God.

If this truth comes home to us: that the things of this world are to be used only in as much as they lead to God, to be used only to help us to reach Him, life will take on a different hue. We will practice Christian mortification. We will not only subdue our passions, but we will go on further and carry the warfare against these passions far beyond the mere point of resistance to mortal sin. To straighten a bent and growing tree we must force it in the opposite way. Not only will we never commit a deliberate sin, mortal or venial, but we will strive to see God's holy will in the trials of life and even to ask Him to permit us to carry a little piece of His cross. ■

We'd Like to Hear From YOU!

Crusaders of Mary Newsletter

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