

## The Rosary, a String of Pearls

*By Father Isidore O'Brien, O.F.M.*

**T**here are countless instances of the power of the Rosary known only to the individuals who experienced them; for the way of Mary is a quiet way. As She hovered in the background of the Gospels, as She walked along unnoticed on the fringe of the crowd during Her Son's triumphal procession into Jerusalem, as She remained in the shadows in the Upper Room on Pentecost morning, so through the ages has She tended Her children in Her unobtrusive motherly way.

But, too, as She made Her way to Her Son's side when hecklers and blasphemers said He was "mad"; as She stood courageously beneath the Cross on Calvary when the world was against Him; so She who is the "Valiant Woman" will come openly to the assistance of Her clients when the stress of circumstances demands it.

The criticisms which have said, at one time or another, that the Rosary is merely a meaningless, monotonous, mechanical form of prayer, come from those who simply do not understand it, and are therefore not worth discussing. Do pearls grow dull when strung together? Does the sunrise grow staler from repetition day by day? Does a mother leave her baby unheeded because it repeats its cry?

Yet beautiful as pearls are in themselves, they would have a greater value still for their possessor if each one had been bought with toil and sacrifice

and the very life of a loved one. The sunrise, fair in its own right, would have yet greater worth than the blessed light it brings if its rays struck doubts and fears and sorrows from the mind even as it banishes darkness and coldness from the earth. And a mother, if her infant were in such pain that its sobs came in murmuring monotonies, would



scarcely abandon it because its tiny cries were on one note.

The Rosary is that string of pearls, dearly bought; is the soft sunrise of a mother's smile; is the cry of Mary's children to Her in their hours of joy and sorrow and triumph. †

<i>Inside this issue ...</i>	
The Rosary, a String of Pearls.....	1
The Saints on Prayer.....	2
Distractions in Prayer.....	2
St. Raphael the Archangel.....	3
News from the Apostolate.....	3





**“The power of prayer is really tremendous.”**  
- St. Thérèse of Lisieux

## The Saints on Prayer

- “By prayer, man gives to God the greatest glory possible.” - St. Peter Julian Emyard.
- “As the body cannot live without nourishment, so our soul cannot be spiritually kept alive without prayer.” - St. Augustine.
- “It is simply impossible to live a virtuous life without prayer.” - St. John Chrysostom.
- “He knows how to live well who knows how to pray well.” - St. Augustine.
- “He who does not give up prayer, cannot possibly continue to offend God habitually. Either he will give up prayer, or he will stop sinning.” - St. Alphonsus Liguori.
- “When prayer is poured forth, sins are covered.” - St. Peter Julian Emyard.
- “He who prays most, receives most.” - St. Alphonsus Liguori.
- “The power of prayer is really tremendous.” - St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

## Distractions in Prayer

By St. Alphonsus Liguori

**A**s long as you strive to preserve the proper attention at prayer, you need not be disturbed by involuntary distractions; provided you do not consent to them, they can do you no harm. The Lord has compassion on our weakness. Distracting thoughts often enter the mind when we have given no occasion for them whatever. Such thoughts cannot spoil the effects of our prayer. According to the illustrious St. Thomas, even favored souls cannot always remain in the heights of contemplation. The weight of human infirmities bows them down and occasions some involuntary distractions. On the other hand, says the same holy Doctor, he cannot be excused from sin nor expect a reward for his prayer who entertains distractions that are voluntary.

As a good will makes our thoughts worthy of spiritual fruit, says St. Bernard, an indolent will makes them unworthy of the Lord; and therefore, instead of a reward, they receive only punishment.



**St. Alphonsus Liguori, Master of the Spiritual Life, teaches us how to deal with distractions.**

*continued on page 4*



# St. Raphael the Archangel

Feast Day: October 24

The archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael received the veneration of the Church since earliest times, but the liturgical feast of St. Raphael was not introduced into the entire Latin Church until the pontificate of Pope Benedict XV.

What we know of this archangel is recorded in the Book of Tobias. When the young Tobias was about to journey to Media to collect a sum of money owed to his father, he met Raphael in the form of "a beautiful young man, standing girded, and as it were ready to walk" (Tob. 5:5). During the journey the angel, who called himself Azarias, proved an excellent guide and counselor to Tobias. He saved him from "a monstrous fish" that "came up to devour him," and directed him to save certain parts to cure his father's blindness.

Farther on he urged Tobias to visit a man named Raguel and to marry his daughter Sara. When Tobias objected that she "had been given to seven husbands, and they all died," and that "a devil killed them," the archangel told him what to do after their marriage. "Hear me," the angel said, "and I will show you who they are over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves, and to give them-

selves to their lusts, as the horse and the mule that have not understanding, over such the devil has power" (7:11-17). Tobias and Sara were to devote themselves for three days to prayer and to remain continent for that time, and thus the devil would be overcome.

The marriage was celebrated, and "then the angel Raphael took the devil, and bound him in the desert of upper Egypt" (8:3). During the wedding feast Raphael went

on to Rages alone, collected the debt, and then returned and led Tobias and Sara home. Before returning to Heaven he cured the elder Tobias of his blindness and then said: "The Lord has sent me to heal thee, and to deliver Sara thy son's wife from the devil. For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord. ... Bless ye God, and make known all His wonderful works" (12:13). The young Tobias recounted all the blessings received from



Archangel Raphael Heals the Elder Tobias

the angel, and concluded: "We are filled with all good things through him" (12: 3). On account of his name, which means "God has healed," and the cure related in the Book of Tobias, St. Raphael is taken to be the same as the angel who moved the waters of the healing pool called Bethesda (Jn. 5: 1-4). This passage of the Gospel is used in the Mass of the feast of St. Raphael. †

## News from the Apostolate

Since our International conference held in Chennai, India last January, we have been busy just keeping contact with our new friends. Moreover, the Fatima Center has been proceeding conscientiously to contact each bishop in India, introducing the Center through personal correspondence.

This effort has been extremely rewarding, both by the number of responses, and by the enthusiasm of those who have written back. We thought you would enjoy some of the comments from recent months:

"Thank you for the assistance given to the church in O--. I would love to get some Rosaries and the Scapulars. I am making a new Grotto for Our Lady.

It is encouraging to see so many people coming to the Grotto of Our Lady, lighting candles and spending lots of time in prayer. I am convinced that the experience of the love of Our Lady is growing among my people in the diocese." (a bishop from Rourkela)

"I need more of *The Devil's Final Battle*, *The Suicide of Altering the Faith in the Liturgy*, *The Secret and the Church*, [and a number of other Fatima Center publications]... I have been involved deeply in the distribution of the ...materials since the arrival." (Brother P.)

A bishop from I-- wrote, "I will be extremely grateful to you if you could send me more rosaries with

*continued on page 4*



leaflets for free distribution. Almost every Sunday, I make a pastoral visit. The people are extremely happy as they get a rosary and prayer from me. If you send me some, I can distribute them to the people free of charge."

An Indian priest described briefly the area in which he labors: "Now, this mission has 18 Catholic communities in 18 villages. It has about 7000 Catholic population spread out in 18 villages. The Catholics of this mission are very poor. Majority of them belong to the lower classes of the Indian society. They eat from hand to mouth earning hardly enough for their living. They are mostly agricultural laborers. They have been bearing the brunt of the unjust social system." (Father D.)

These personal correspondences have also given the priests an opportunity to ask for assistance: 'please send Mass intentions,' write some, so that I may aid my priests. They also ask repeatedly for more rosaries. The poverty of their charges makes these zealous priests and bishops eager to be able to offer a gift to the villagers they visit in frequent pastoral visits. Your donations

#### DISTRACTIONS IN PRAYER *continued from page 2*

The annals of Citeaux contain the following vision which St. Bernard had one day when at prayer with his religious brethren. At the side of each of the brethren, he saw an angel who stood and wrote. Some of the angels wrote with gold, others with silver, still others with ink, and some with water — while a number held the pen in their hand without writing at all. At the same time God enlightened the saint to know what this meant: the gold denoted that the prayers of these particular brethren were said with the greatest fervor; the silver indicated that the devotion of others left something to be desired; the writing in ink meant that the words were carefully spoken, but that no devotion accompanied them; the water was intended to

are applied to these requests.

Please pause to consider that they are asking on behalf of people who live in such simplicity (read: poverty) that they are profoundly



**Father Gruner, left, looks at a fellow priest's digital camera pictures during the international conference held at Chennai, India.**

grateful for the gift of a plastic rosary! By contrast, how many rosaries does each of us have squirreled away in the pockets of different coats, the glove compartments of cars, on the nightstand, etc.? Let not our satiated lives make us indifferent: not to the material needs of our brethren, nor to the great Spiritual Weapon Our Lady has given us. †

show that the words were carelessly pronounced, and little or no attention paid to what was said; finally, the angels who wrote nothing at all were standing beside the brethren who knowingly entertained voluntary distractions.

"The devout words which the lips pronounce awaken devotion in the heart," says St. Thomas Aquinas. For this very reason the Lord has taught us to use vocal prayer in order that the heart within may desire what the lips externally express. In regard to the words of David: "I have cried to the Lord with my voice" (Ps. 141 :2), St. Augustine writes: "Many call upon the Lord, but not with their voice; that is to say, they call on the Lord not with the voice of the soul, but with the voice of the body. Call with your thoughts, call with your heart, and then the Lord will certainly hear you." †

We'd like to hear from YOU! To reach us: Call or write us at  
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