

League of the Immaculate Heart Newsletter

"MY IMMACULATE HEART WILL TRIUMPH"

Volume 8 - Issue 25 - April, 2005



The Importance of Forming Prayer Groups

In her famous 1957 interview with Father Fuentes, Sister Lucy of Fatima said:

"... we should not wait for an appeal to the world to come from Rome on the part of the Holy Father, to do penance. Nor should we wait for the call to do penance to come from our bishops in our dioceses, nor from the religious congregations. No! Our Lord has already very often used these means, and the world has not paid attention. That is why now, it is necessary for each one of us to begin to reform himself spiritually. Each person must not only save his own soul but also help save the souls that God has placed on our path."



St. Augustine reminds us that "we must pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on us." Forming prayer groups is one effective way we can gather together to pray, do penance and reform ourselves spiritually, for the purpose of saving our souls and helping others to save their souls.

Sister Lucy of Fatima also told Father Fuentes: "There is no problem, no matter how difficult it is ... that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary." We are living in a time of crisis; and sin and apostasy escalate daily. We, as members of the Church militant, are therefore obligated to take action and to fight against the forces that seek to destroy Christ's reign in souls.

And what action is more effective than prayer, and especially the Rosary? Our Lady of Fatima requested again and again that we pray five decades of the Rosary each day. Speaking of the tremendous power of this prayer, Pope St. Pius X said, "Give me an army saying the Rosary and I will conquer the world."

It is truly efficacious to form prayer groups, and to meet regularly to pray together. Our Lord said: "Where there are two or three gathered in My name, there am I in the

midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). When we gather together to pray, we can be sure that Christ is in our midst and that our prayer will be even more powerful. Saints Teresa and Padre Pio especially encouraged the formation of prayer groups. Prayer groups can take on many forms, but they are essentially simple, and do not require large numbers.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort particularly recommended group recitation of the Rosary. "When people say the Rosary together," he said, "it is far more formidable to the devil than one said privately, because in this public prayer it is an army that is attacking. It is very easy to break a single stick, but if you join it to others to make a bundle, it cannot be broken. In union, there is strength."

In his book *The Secret of the Rosary*, St. Louis de Montfort lists the following benefits to the practice of public group prayer, especially the Rosary:

1. Normally, our minds are far more alert during public prayer than when we pray alone.
2. When we pray in common, the prayer of each one belongs to all. We make one great prayer together, so that if one person is not praying well, someone else in the same gathering who prays better may make up for his deficiency. In this way, those who are strong uphold the weak. Those who are fervent inspire the lukewarm.

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Progress in Prayer

—from the Messenger of the Sacred Heart, Volume IX, Issue 7

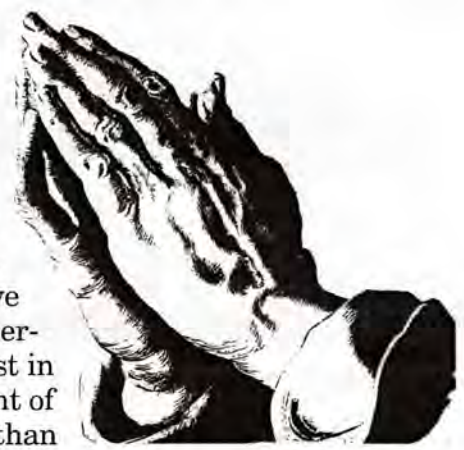
Progress in prayer means progress in spiritual life, and therefore in peace, higher knowledge and perfection. Just as our life and influence in human society, as in our families, depends upon communication of thoughts and affections, in instruction, consolation, counsel, persuasion, request, intercession, and it naturally consists in these because we are intelligent beings, so in just the same way, but chiefly without cumbersome human speech, does our spiritual, or better and higher life consist in relation to God and His great invisible world of spirits, who are, in point of fact, nearer to us and more intimately associated with our thoughts, than are the souls of our fellow wanderers on earth.

Progress in prayer is progress in a higher and truer life, in “the science of the Saints,” in union with God, which is the sole source of our peace, power and perfection. We are united to God by our minds and hearts, as to our fellow-mortals here by communication of thought, impression, affection, by knowledge, love, attachment.

In this supernatural communion we learn the secrets of God, and often in an extraordinary degree. We see things in His light, we understand the reasons of His Providence, we even obtain glimpses of His mysteries. But, what is far better, our wills are brought into harmony with His, they are trained and become stronger, our affections become purified, our hearts are raised above the ordinary world of their desires, we begin to desire keenly what God desires, to grieve over what displeases Him, to aspire to the lasting and the perfect. The illusions which throng so thickly our earthly way gradually disappear, the tyranny of sense and passion grows less, the cowardice and inconstancy of the will are lessened, the dark night becomes less obscure.

A most delightful thing about this upward way of the soul is its simplicity as we advance. Meditation, formal, reasoned, and laborious, the purpose of which is to inspire or inflame the will by intellectual reflection, relinquishes its reasoning and details when the will no longer needs them, and becomes a simple and ready practical view, or yields to acquired contemplation, by which the will is immediately swayed to more constant, more uniform, and more perfect action; or rather, we should say, it is at once raised to union with God, spiritual things being seen in His Divine way, at a glance, with great simplicity, and with love, or in entire accord with His Divine Will.

Then we wonder why it took so long to find abundant food in the great simple things – the *fact* of the Incarnation, the Real Presence, grace, the Passion, the Will of God, etc. A soul, for instance, in this ad-



vanced manner of prayer, draws from the simple recollection of what Holy Communion is, or Holy Mass, indescribably more light and inspiration than from the detailed and methodic meditation of a more imperfect time, which manner of meditation would, when God draws us by the simpler view and more immediate union, become a hindrance.

“This simplicity of prayer consists,” says Bossuet, “in a simple and loving attention, or contemplation of some Divine object, either of God Himself or of some of His perfections, or of Jesus Christ or of some of His mysteries, or of some other of the Christian truths. Then the soul, abandoning all reasoning, falls into a sweet contemplation which keeps it tranquil, attentive and susceptible of the operations and the Divine impressions which the Holy Spirit communicates to it: it does little, and receives much; its labor is sweet, and yet most fruitful; and as it approaches nearer to the Source of all light, all grace, all virtue, it also receives more of these.” Not, of course, that there is always attraction, sensible devotion, and light; or that meditation must not be again taken up, and always carefully prepared.

This simplicity of view and ease of communication with God is called *acquired* contemplation, because it may be considered the ordinary result of preceding fidelity to the practice of meditation and of that restraint of self, with regard both to exterior and interior things, to internal and external disorder, by which we become more and more detached from earth, its sensuality, desires and ambitions, and more fitted for union with God because more like Him.

Such contemplation is not acquired in the sense that it so depends on us that God does not attract the soul by special infusion of light and love. It is because there are such light and love that contemplation is so extraordinarily beneficial. The soul is dominated by it,

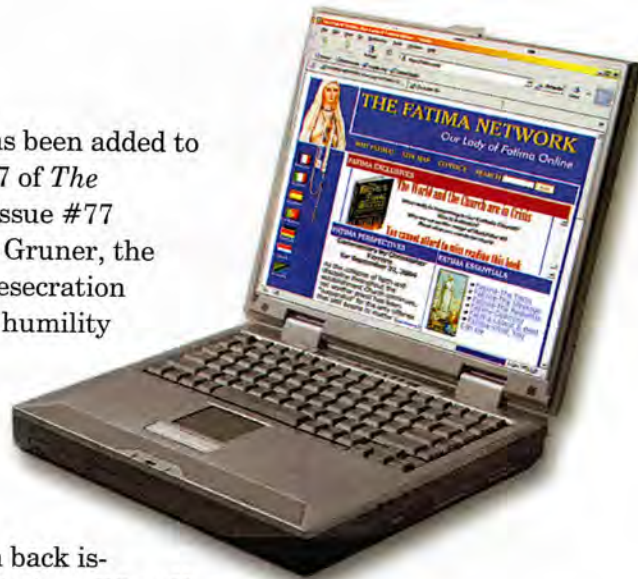
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Apostolate News

In recent months, much new material has been added to the Fatima Network of web sites. Issue #77 of *The Fatima Crusader* can now be read online. Issue #77 (Summer 2004) features articles by Father Gruner, the *Crusader* Staff, and John Vennari on the desecration of the Fatima Shrine, as well as articles on humility and its contrary vice, pride.

Also new to the web are about two dozen articles written specifically for the “Fatima: Opposed” and “The Third Secret” sections of fatima.org; another two dozen very important *Crusader* pieces from back issues put on the web for the first time (in “Fatima: What You Can Do” and “Consecration of Russia”); several Fatima Perspective columns (by Christopher Ferrara); another dozen new links (in the “In Defense of Father Gruner” section of “Our Lady’s Apostolate”) to previously published articles responding to Father Robert Fox’s disinformation on Fatima; and more.

Much more is planned for the near future. Come visit the Fatima Network of web sites: fatima.org, fatimacrusader.com, fatimaperspectives.com, heavenspeaceplan.com, and fatimarosaryrallies.com. ■



PROGRESS IN PRAYER *Continued from page 2*

the passions are more perfectly mastered, even though yet sometimes rebellious and alluring; the Divine Will is accepted, though directly opposed to what we had set our hearts upon; we become holocausts; we die to ourselves in a way we had never foreseen; but we do not wish for anything else, knowing that herein we find true life and a new and marvelous power: we find God, instead of self.

Entrance into this happy state depends, says Father Caussade, on *one thing – complete purity of soul*, which he divides into purity of conscience, heart, mind and action. If we be not disposed for union with the All-holy and All-dominating God by getting rid of our faults and imperfections, we shall make little progress. We must have advanced to a very considerable degree of perfection in order to be disposed to enter into familiarity with the Omnipotent.

Like a machine perfect in its mechanism and running without friction, the soul must have attained a certain ease in the exercise of solid virtue, for if it be constantly disturbed by passion, or dissipation, or any over-ardent desire whatsoever, it is naturally unfitted for, or incapable of, Divine Contemplation.

We must, then, have “a firm disposition of will never to consent deliberately to the slightest offense against God, this disposition being habitual in the sense that any act contrary to it – and we may unfortunately commit such – is instantly retracted.”

We must, moreover, free ourselves, as far as possible, from so-called innocent attachments which divide the heart between God and creatures. How can we taste God if we still relish sensual pleasures, honor, esteem, reputation, and the like? It is necessary to go

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Dear Father Gruner,

I wish to relate another incident about the Green Scapular. My sister married a non-Catholic who was good to his promise to help their children while growing up to practice their Faith. For forty-nine years he kept saying, "I would become a Catholic if I thought I could be all that a Catholic should be." Finally, at home, he was dying and it was decided medicine would do no good. I called when I heard

about it and asked my sister if I could come over only to bring a Green Scapular. She protested that her husband wanted no visitors in his condition. I told her I wouldn't come in the house, only give her the Scapular to put under his pillow. I left and soon got a call from her. She had done as I asked. Almost immediately my brother-in-law had cried out: "Rose (her name) call a priest. I want to be Catholic."

In Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

J.A., MN

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORMING PRAYER GROUPS *Continued from page 1*

3. One who says his Rosary alone only gains the merit of that one Rosary. But if he says it together with others, he gains the merit of each Rosary. This is the law of public prayer.
4. Public prayer is far more powerful than private prayer, to appease the anger of God, and to call down His mercy. Holy Mother Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, has always advocated public prayer in times of public tragedy and suffering.

If the faithful pray five decades of the Rosary in company with others, whether in public or private once a day, they may gain an indulgence of ten years. A plenary indulgence can be gained on the last Sunday of the month – with the addition of detachment from venial sin, confession, Communion, a visit to the church and prayers for the intentions of the Pope – if they perform such recitation at least three times in any of the preceding weeks.

Gathering together to pray on a regular basis may seem too difficult in this modern world, in which everyone is so busy that even individual mental prayer is so often neglected. However, if we view our prayer life in this way it is a sad indication that our priorities are not ordered as they should be. It is the contention of many spiritual writers that if one takes time out of his day, no matter how busy it may be, to devote to prayer, God will give that person the grace to accomplish whatever he needs to do. We should view this obligation of ours in this way: whatever we give to God will be rewarded many times over, and not only in the next world.

Taking the time to pray with others regularly can only be beneficial to us. God will regard the sacrifices we make to do it, and will certainly compensate our efforts. And our prayers will be the cause of many graces, for our own souls, those of others, and for the world. ■

PROGRESS IN PRAYER *Continued from page 3*

even further, and restrain even the vain and idle thoughts which we cherish without any serious self-restraint, and which destroy recollection. Such recollection, furthermore, will not be possible to those whose actions are infected with vanity, conceit, self-esteem, human respect. "Let each one, therefore, reflect," says St. Ignatius, "that he will make spiritual progress just in proportion as he gets rid of self-love, self-will, self-interest."

It is clear that we shall be more and more fitted for peaceful contemplative union with God, the more we have mortified the great natural passions of the soul – extravagant joy and sadness, excessive enthusiasm, desire and fear; and have come to that quiet uniformity of thought, manner and character, which is one of the surest indications of real and more than ordinary advance in holiness. Progress in prayer, fortunately, helps wonderfully to make us thus go forward, as progressing holiness fosters higher prayer. Nor should we omit to say that, in the opinion of many writers, infused contemplation, which is a purely supernatural gift, is given by God more readily and more commonly than is supposed. ■

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

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