

Sword of Truth

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REMEMBER THY LAST ENDS: DEATH, JUDGEMENT, HEAVEN, HELL

Remember, O Christian Soul, that you shall one day die, but how, when, or where, you do not know. Only at judgement shall you know whether your lot shall be a happy one or a sad one for all eternity.

During this past month of November while remembering in thoughts and prayers the Poor Souls in Purgatory it is very beneficial for a Catholic to remember his own end and what awaits him hereafter. At any moment, on any day, God can call you to Him.

Is your treasure found in heaven or on earth?

Is there anything more important to consider, plan, and secure while you have the opportunity in this life? Can any worldly activity, concern, desire, or pleasure mean more to you than where you will spend eternity!

Run to Our Lady of the Rosary, answer her plea at Fatima and say a rosary every day. See how she loves you and cares for you. Remember: **OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY made Fifteen Promises of the Rosary to those who devoutly recite her beads, especially to members dedicated to her Rosary Confraternity** (see *Sword of Truth* issue No. 2 Spring 1996).

Our Lady of the Rosary

Chapter XVIII from *Mary the Beloved* by Rev. Timothy Harris, 1951

The history of the Church abounds with instances of the intervention of Mary the Mother of God on behalf of men; and amongst the most remarkable are the favours connected with the Rosary. The Office of the feast of the Most Holy Rosary enumerates three such instances. The first was the overthrow of the formidable heresy of the Albigenses in the 12th century, when St. Dominic, instructed, as we are told, by the Blessed Virgin herself, preached the devotion of the Rosary for the first time - with such success that faith, piety and union were at once restored to the churches of Southern France. The second was the great victory gained by the Christian forces over the Turks at Lepanto in the 16th century, on the very day that the Rosary Confraternities at the bidding of Pope Pius V filled the churches of Christendom with their prayers. Yet another victory over the Turks in Hungary in the 18th century was attributed to the Rosaries offered in solemn supplication by the people of Rome at the very hour of the battle. In memory of these triumphs the first Sunday in October, the anniversary of the Battle of Lepanto, was dedicated to Our Lady under the title of the Rosary. In more recent times Pope Leo XIII, confronted with the grave perils that threatened the Church of his day, could find no surer means of relief than the Rosary. Hence he introduced the daily recitation of the Rosary in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament during the whole month of October, and he added to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin the invocation "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us."

The Rosary has come to be the principal devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and the ordinary channel for the favours which Mary has the power to bestow. With the Mass it is the most distinctive exercise of Catholic worship, and the "Beads" are the recognized emblem of the Catholic. The Rosary is the Breviary of the layman, the Book of Prayers of the unlettered, and the Manual of Meditation for simple souls. No devout Catholic would miss its daily recital; and it is the night-prayer which binds together in holy union the members of the Catholic household. Saintly souls may make much progress in the ways of prayer - they may even "be caught up into paradise and hear secret words which it is not granted to men to utter," but the Rosary is not laid aside; to such as these it grows more dear. With the Church's prayer the murmur of the Rosary is the last sound that falls on the ear of the dying; and when the body is laid out in death the "Beads" are twined about the lifeless fingers.

The Rosary is a unique devotional exercise in that it happily combines mental and vocal prayer. And it affords a threefold benefit - the best form of vocal prayer, an easy method of religious instruction and a sure way of spiritual perfection. The vocal prayers employed, the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary", are the first of all prayers, and the Church would have us never weary of their repetition. The objection of non-Catholics that more petitions are addressed to Mary than to the Eternal Father gives no difficulty to those of "the household of the faith" you are taught to revere Mary as the Mother in "God's House," and so to turn to her first in their needs. The Rosary but follows the rule of supplication and conciliation expressed by one of the saints - that every grace communicated by God to man has a threefold course: from the Father it is dispensed to Christ, from Christ to Mary and from Mary to us. We do not indeed shrink from that loving Father Who "knows how to give good things to His children"; but we believe that our prayers will find greater favour with Him if they are communicated by her "whose voice sounds ever sweet in His ears." And we multiply our Aves with filial insistence both for the honour of our Mother and for our own good. For these Aves remind Mary of her glory as Mother of God, and at the same time of her office as Mother of men. As the series of the Mysteries is unfolded, with all that they mean for Mary - the gladness of her motherhood, the anguish of her suffering, the glory that crowns her brow - we cannot conceive what sweet forces constrain the heart of our Mother to plead to her Son for us.

But the Mysteries are more than a mere garland of incidents culled from the Savior's life and twined with loving Aves for the honour of His Mother. These Mysteries are a summary of the doctrines of the Incarnation and Redemption, which are thus brought clearly before us each time what we say the Rosary. Hence Pope Leo XIII recommends the Rosary chiefly because it is an excellent means to inculcate the principal truths of the Catholic faith. In the Rosary these doctrines are presented to us in a manner that is accommodated to the simplest minds. For they are proposed not as truths to be deeply reflected upon, but as pictures which have power to hold the minds and move the hearts of the simple as well as of the learned. As ignorance of the truths of faith may be said to be the root of all the evils that afflict the Church, so it has been found since the days of St. Dominic's preaching that there is no greater safeguard for the faith than the Rosary.

So, too, the Rosary provides as excellent means to attain to holiness of life. For the Mysteries bring before us in all the phases of His life Him "Who is the Way and the Truth and the Life," while the sweet figure of His Mother, ever present in all these scenes, in background or in foreground, seems to point to us the lessons which we may gather from each Mystery. Each time we recite the Rosary devoutly we cannot fail "to know Jesus better, to love Him better, to imitate Him better."

This "looking upon Jesus" has come to be regarded as the great means of progress in the spiritual life. "It is a deep mistake," writes Bishop Hedley, "to suppose that the best progress is made by efforts to acquire virtues and to root out vices. Such efforts must be made; but there is another and a better way. That other way is the contemplative union of our intelligence, will and heart with the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ. For that Sacred Humanity has a most powerful, and almost miraculous, efficacy of transformation. Laden with our weakness and imperfection, we gaze upon Jesus, and they begin to melt away and disappear. An hour or half-an-hour of devout contemplation of His obedience, His patience, His humility, His love of suffering, will change our poor natures for the better far more effectively than many days of striving to practice these virtues, were such practice unaccompanied by the contemplation here described."

Not all have opportunity for the prolonged contemplation that Bishop Hedley recommends, but all have sufficient matter in the devotions of the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary. And the Rosary has the advantage that it can be used in any place and at any time. It has the advantage, too, of enabling us to contemplate Our Blessed Lady as well as her Divine Son and to see in her the virtues which He teaches. Because she is entirely human, a creature like one of ourselves, she is in a sense a better model than her Divine Son. And what we may call the womanly virtues - gentleness, modesty, reserve, sympathy, patience, constancy, have in her such charm that they cannot fail to attract us.

In another way, also, the Rosary suggests to us the perfect form of Christian living. The evils which lead men away from God may be summed up as a distaste for a lowly laborious life, a horror of suffering and the forgetfulness of a future state. It is obvious how devotion to the Rosary supplies the remedy for all these. In the Joyful Mysteries we have the gracious figures of the Holy Family in scenes that breathe of simplicity, labour, submission and union. From the contemplation of these scenes is born that loveliest of human things, the truly Catholic home.

In the Sorrowful Mysteries we have presented to us the image of Him "Who having joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame," and we have also the example of her who from her nearness to Him was Queen of Martyrs and Mother of Sorrows. Thus the lesson comes home to us that the Christian lot must be to do and to suffer hard things. And finally in the Glorious Mysteries we are reminded that "we have not here a lasting city; but we look for one to come." The glorious triumph of Our Saviour and of His Blessed Mother gives us a pledge of our own future triumph. And we are comforted by the thought that we have in heaven a powerful advocate, Mary our Mother, the Queen of Heaven, who watches over us lovingly during the days of our pilgrimage and waits to welcome us to our eternal home.

Seven Infallible Ways of Shortening Your Purgatory

(taken from *Whisperings to God* by Stephen Sweeney, C.P.)

1. **To lovingly use the merits of Jesus Christ.**
2. **To offer Mass frequently for the Dead.**
3. **To have Masses offered now in reparation for your sins.**
4. **To consecrate Monday - and offer all your works for the Departed.**
5. **To gain all the indulgences you can.**
6. **To promote the Family Rosary.**
7. **Especially efficacious in shortening your purgatory are: Fervent Communions, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.**

The Secret of the Rosary by St. Louis Marie de Montfort

(excerpts from the Twenty-Seventh Rose)

The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the science of Christians and the science of salvation; Saint Paul says that it surpasses all human sciences in value and perfection. Blessed is the Rosary which gives us this science and knowledge of our Blessed Lord through our meditations on His life, death, passion and glory.

If by chance your conscience is burdened with sin, take your Rosary and say at least part of it, honoring some of the mysteries of the life, passion or glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and be sure that, while you are meditating upon these mysteries and honoring them He will show His sacred wounds to His Father in heaven. He will plead for you and will obtain for you contrition and the forgiveness of your sins.

One day Our Lord said to Blessed Alan: "If only these poor wretched sinners would say My Rosary, they would share in the merits of My passion and I would be their Advocate and would appease My Father's Justice."

This life is nothing but warfare and a series of temptations; we do not have to contend with enemies of flesh and blood but with the very powers of hell. What better weapons could we possibly use to combat them than the Prayer which our great Captain taught us, and the Angelic Salutation which has chased away devils, destroyed sin and renewed the world? What better weapon could we use than meditation on the life and passion of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? For, as St. Peter says, it is with this thought we must arm ourselves in order to defend ourselves against the very same enemies which he conquered and which molest us ever day.

"Ever since the devil was crushed by the humility and passion of Jesus Christ he has been very nearly unable to attack a soul that is armed with meditation on the mysteries of Our Lord's life, and, if he does trouble such a soul, he is sure to be shamefully defeated." (Cardinal Hughes.)

"Put you in the armor of God." So arm yourselves with the arms of God - with the Holy Rosary - and you will crush the devil's head and you will stand firm in the face of all his temptations. This is why even the material rosary itself is such a terrible thing for the devil, and why the saints have used it to enchain devils and to chase them out of the bodies of people who were possessed. Such happenings are reported in more than one authentic record.

Blessed Alan said that a man he knew of had desperately tried all kinds of devotions to rid himself of the evil spirit who possessed him, but without success. Finally he thought of wearing his Rosary around his neck, which eased him considerably. He discovered that whenever he took it off the devil tormented him cruelly, so he resolved to wear it night and day. This drove the evil spirit away forever, because he could not bear such a terrible chain. Blessed Alan also testified that he had delivered a large number of people who were possessed by putting the Rosary around their necks.