



THE STAR

ROSARY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

The praying of the Rosary is no longer taken for granted in Catholic circles. It used to form part of most devotions, processions, family prayer and vigils before funerals. Many school-going Catholics have heard little or nothing of the Rosary and don't know how to pray it.

Pope John Paul has made a move that could bring the Rosary back into public view once more. His Apostolic Letter, *The Rosary of the Virgin Mary* helps us rediscover (or discover) the heart of this time-honoured Christian prayer: contemplation of the face of Our Lord through the mysteries of His life, death and resurrection – with Our Lady's guidance and example.

With great personal devotion he affirms the traditional Rosary, so strongly promoted by Popes and the Church's teaching authority. Encouraged by Vatican II's emphasis on Christ and the lead given by Paul VI (*Marialis Cultus*, 1972), Pope John Paul adds a new round of five "Mysteries of Light", drawn from Our Lord's public ministry. First comes Christ's Baptism, next the Miracle at Cana, then the Proclamation of the Kingdom and the call to Conversion, fourth is the Transfiguration, and finally Christ's Institution of the Eucharist.

Here we are given much food for thoughtful prayer. Nothing is lost and there is much to be gained. While an adjustment needs to be made to fit the new mysteries into the week (Thursday is his recommendation), the mysteries of Joy, Sorrow and Glory remain paramount. It may help to see the Mysteries of Light as comparable with the "Ordinary Time" of the Church's year, while the traditional mysteries correspond to the three great liturgical cycles of Advent-Christmas, Lent-Holy Week, and Easter-Pentecost. Here's a challenge: How can we expand our contemplation of the Christmas season's Joyful mysteries by linking them with the mysteries of Light?

Fr Benedict Hensley OP
Promoter of the Rosary Confraternity.

“O Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.”

I prayed the Joyful mysteries in the church before Mass. It was the very best place to be because we were in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It mattered for all of us to give glory, praise and thanksgiving to God in the recitation of the rosary with the focus on the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, as in the Mass.

The mysteries of the Childhood of Christ help us to understand about human life beginning in God our creator, and about relationships with God and people, of people with one another and with all that He has made.

In this the spiritual and temporal things intertwine and interact.. One example is that Caesar Augustus ordered a census that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Here in the city of David Jesus was born, not in a place of human habitation but in a stable, because there was no room at the inn.

On Christmas Eve, when I went back to the church for midnight Mass, the preparations were complete with a decorated Christmas tree and the crib waiting for the arrival of the figure of the Infant King. The church was full of people, some of them strangers. The procession began and the church was filled with light, the fragrance of incense, and the glorious sound of music. All our senses were brought into play to the glory of God.

When the priest carrying the figure of the infant Jesus arrived at the crib, he place the figure representing the Holy Child in the manger before going in procession to the altar to celebrate the Mass. At Mass we received the peace of Christ and exchanged it with those around us before receiving Christ’s Body and Blood in Holy Communion. We had already been reconciled to God sacramentally, a very important part of our preparations for this great feast.

At the conclusion of the Mass we went to the crib in droves to contemplate Jesus at His birth. We saw Him in His humanity, believed in his divinity, and worshipped Him. We had been doing this during the Mass. Our devotions at the crib were a flow-on from this.

“Merry Christmas”, we said to one another, before going home to take the love and peace of Christ with us and to give it to others.

Among our guests for Christmas dinner was a child whom I did not know. She looked longingly at the presents the other children were receiving and I quickly found one for her. The look on this child’s face said it all. She was one of us, loved and accepted like the other children.

Years later I saw this girl as a teenager doing the same kind of thing to another child on Christmas day and in our home. The children were seen as a blessing; young and old at peace with one another and having fun.

“And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Gen. 1:31)

Mary Gill OPL

The specific character of catechesis, as distinct from the initial conversion- bringing proclamation of the Gospel, has the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Synod of Bishops, 1977)....

In his closing speech at the Fourth General Assembly of the Synod, Pope Paul VI rejoiced “to see how everyone drew attention to the absolute need for systematic catechesis, precisely because it is this reflective study of the Christian mystery that fundamentally distinguishes catechesis from all other ways of presenting the word of God.” (Closing address to the Synod).

Pope John Paul II
Catechesi Tradendae 20,21

On the Three Births - *An excerpt from a Christmas sermon*

On this day in holy Christianity we celebrate a threefold birth in which each Christian should take such nourishment and joy that they just leap out of themselves for joy –in jubilo- and in love, gratitude and interior joy – so much so that the person who does not sense it within himself or herself might take fright!

Now the first and most sublime birth is that in which the heavenly Father gives birth to his only begotten Son, in the divine essence, in the distinction of Persons. The next birth which we celebrate today is the motherly fruitfulness accomplished in virginal chastity and absolute purity. The third is that in which God every day and in every hour is being born spiritually in a good soul through grace and love.

We intone the first in the dead of night and it begins, The Lord said to me, you are my son, today I have begotten you. This Mass has in mind the hidden birth that occurs in the dark and unknown divinity. The second Mass begins, Today a light has shone upon us, and it has in mind the appearance of the human nature divinised, so the Mass is celebrated partly in darkness and partly in daylight, symbolizing a birth partly known and partly unknown. We intone the third Mass in broad daylight beginning with, A child is born to us, a son is given to us. It has in mind the loving birth which on every day and in every instant should take place and does take place in each good, holy soul. If she wishes it she must give it loving attention, since to be aware of this birth in us and to take notice of it demands the summoning up and the concentration of all our faculties. The God becomes to us our very own; he gives himself to us in a way that no one never had in such intimate possession.

Johannes Tauler
(1300 – 1361)

POPE JOHN PAUL'S APOSTOLIC LETTER ON THE ROSARY

Pope John Paul announced the beginning of the 25th year of his pontificate with a special letter on the Rosary, his “favourite prayer”. It also chimes in with other anniversaries: 120 years since the first encyclical of Leo XIII on the Rosary, and 40 years since the opening of the Second Vatican Council. As well as links with the past there are present concerns prompting the issue of this Apostolic Letter. There is the great need to pray for WORLD PEACE, and on the home front, to restore the practice of FAMILY PRAYER. The Rosary is a substantial help in both these areas of need. And so he proclaims Oct. 2002 - Oct. 2003 to be a year of the Rosary.

Two objections to the Rosary are mentioned and dealt with. The first concerns the liturgy. The emphasis placed on the renewal of the liturgy by Vatican II has been seen by some as a signal to downgrade the Rosary. Since the liturgy is central, some think this “necessarily entails giving lesser importance to the Rosary”.

The Pope finds a response to this objection in the teaching of Paul VI. The Rosary does not conflict with the liturgy but rather it *sustains* it. How? By serving (a) as an excellent introduction, and (b) a faithful echo of the liturgy, enabling people to participate fully and interiorly in the liturgy. In addition, they reap its fruits in their daily lives.

Since active participation in the liturgy is a key principle enshrined in the Council's Constitution on the Liturgy, it follows that not only does the Rosary not become of “lesser importance”, it assumes a key role. It remains for liturgists and rosarians to explore the ways in which full and interior participation is engendered through the Rosary. The second objection concerns ecumenism. The distinct Marian character of the Rosary may seem to some to render it unecumenical. The assumption behind this objection is that fellow Christians of other denominations have a major difficulty with the place accorded Mary in Catholic teaching and practice.

Again, the Pope offers an authoritative general response. The Council (not unaware of ecumenical perspectives) outlined the kind of veneration to be shown the Mother of God. The Rosary clearly belongs to this kind of veneration. It is, he explains, “a devotion directed to the Christological centre of the Christian faith, in such a way that when the Mother is honoured, the Son is duly known, loved and glorified”. Here too, he implies further exploration on the part of rosarians in affirming “If properly revitalized, the Rosary is an aid and certainly not a hindrance to ecumenism.” (n.4).

Each solution offered by Pope John Paul to these objections rests ultimately on the fact that Our Lord is at the centre of the Rosary. “O God, whose Only Begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life...” runs the concluding prayer. Concentration upon this fact, the teaching of it and the display of its expanding dimensions is the point and purpose of the Pope’s letter. He develops the thought of Paul VI whose intent had been to illustrate and apply the Council’s teaching on Our Lady in relation to the liturgy. “As a Gospel prayer, centred on the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, the Rosary is a prayer with a clearly Christological orientation.” (Paul VI - *Marialis Cultus*)

It is his focus on the Rosary’s Christological orientation that leads Pope John Paul to add five new mysteries drawn from Our Lord’s public ministry. These will be in a sense but the extension of “the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation”, throwing further light on the traditional 15 mysteries of Incarnation, Redemption and Glory. The five “mysteries of light” as they have been named, are: Christ’s Baptism, Christ’s miracle at the wedding in Cana, Christ’s proclamation of the Kingdom and conversion, Christ’s Transfiguration, and Christ’s institution of the Eucharist.

And just as these new mysteries reinforce and extend what is already there in the Rosary, so too they themselves gain a further richness when some aspect or other of any of the principal mysteries is allowed to infuse meaning into the public ministry mysteries. “In the course of those mysteries” writes the Pope, “we contemplate important aspects of the person of Christ as the definitive revelation of God.” (n.19)

B H

THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA OF ST THOMAS AS A BIBLICAL CATECHISM

St Thomas' Summa of theology is like a living body. The whole complex body of teaching contained in it works in harmony. The many parts work together in order as a system. The working of some topics is dependent upon other areas of his teaching, rather like the interdependence in the functioning of bodily organs. There are more important and less important workings, but all organs and their functions together make up the complete living body.

And just as the body has distinct functions such as digestion, sense-life, motion, reproduction, so too the Summa "body" has distinct parts expressing (1) the life of God, His creation and providence regarding angels and humanity, (2) the morality of human behaviour, and (3) the role of Christ and the sacraments.

Because St Thomas' body of teaching depends for its life on God's REVELATION before all else, we have picked out the short Bible passages which he knew were decisive and explicit in each area of his study. They would be worth committing to memory, in the light of the question under scrutiny. So far we have covered the parts of his teaching on God, Trinity and Creation. These areas are most important and basic, even if they can seem remote from everyday Christian experience.

It may help to put these doctrinal areas of the Summa on hold for the time being, while turning to human behaviour and morality. This will be closer to everyday experience. Again, we restrict ourselves to just those topics claiming biblical authority in St Thomas' catechism. The value of a catechism lies in its outline of what is essential to the whole faith, set out in order.

la-IIae - **Human Acts: Man's Last End and Human Happiness**

Concerning Man's Last End - Question 1

Article 5 *Whether one person can have several last ends?*
 "No man can serve two masters." (Mt.6:24)

Concerning those things in which Human Happiness Consists - Question 2

Article 8 *Whether any created good constitutes human happiness?*
 "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." (Ps.144:15)

What Happiness Is - Question 3

Article 4 *Whether happiness is an operation of the intellect or of the will?*
 "This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God." (Jn.17:3)

Article 6 *Whether happiness consists in the consideration of the speculative sciences?*
 "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom." (Jer.9:23)

Article 7 *Whether happiness consists in the knowledge of angels?*
 "Let him who glories, glory in this, that he knows and understands me." (Jer.9:23)

Article 8 *Whether human happiness consists in the vision of the Divine Essence?*
 "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

(Jn.3:2)

Concerning Those Things that are Required for Happiness - Question 4

- Article 3 *Whether comprehension is needed for happiness?*
 “So run that you may comprehend” -RSV “obtain”. (1Cor.9:24)
 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; as to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice.” (2Tm.4:7-8)
- Article 4 *Whether rectitude of the will is necessary for happiness?*
 “Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.” (Mt.5:8)“Follow peace with all people and holiness; without which no one shall see God.” (Heb.12:14)
- Article 5 *Whether the body is necessary for human happiness?*
 “Happy are the dead who die in the Lord.” (Apoc.14:13)
- Article 6 *Whether perfection of the body is necessary for happiness?*
 “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (Jn.13:17)
 “You shall see and you heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like a herb.” [RSV “the grass”] (Is. 66:14)
- Article 7 *Whether any external goods are necessary for happiness?*
 “For what have I in heaven? And besides You what do I desire upon earth?” (Ps.73:25)
- Article 8 *Whether the fellowship of friends is necessary for happiness?*
 “All good things came to me together with her” [i.e. with divine wisdom] Wis.7:11)

Concerning the Attainment of Happiness - Question 5

- Article 1 *Whether man can attain happiness?*
 “Blessed is the man whom You shall instruct, O Lord.” (Ps.94:12)
- Article 2 *Whether one person can be happier than another?*
 “In my Father’s house there are many mansions.” (Jn.14:2)
- Article 3 *Whether one can be happy in this life?*
 “Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries.” (Job 14:1)
- Article 4 *Whether happiness once had can be lost?*
 “...they shall go into life everlasting.” (Mt.25:46)
- Article 5 *Whether man can attain happiness by his natural powers?*
 “Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1Cor.2:9)
- Article 6 *Whether man attains happiness through the action of some higher creature?*
 “The Lord will give grace and glory.” (Ps.84:11)
- Article 7 *Whether any good works are necessary that man may receive happiness from God?*
 “If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them.” (Jn.13:17)

BRIEF MEDITATION MATERIAL FOR THE MYSTERIES OF LIGHT

I Christ's Baptism

1. John the Baptist is being the Forerunner again, in his preaching and in his baptizing
2. Their humility and obedience shows the “new way” of Christianity
3. John baptizes with water; Jesus is to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire
4. As Jesus is baptized the heavens open, signalling the purpose of baptism
5. The witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit reveal the Person of the Beloved Son.

II Christ's Miracle at Cana

1. The significance of the wedding feast: the “marriage” bond of divine and human at the beginning (Annunciation), at the end (the marriage feast of heaven) and throughout (Christ as spouse and Church as bride).
2. Those invited and the order of their listing: Mother, Jesus, disciples.
3. Our Lady's awareness of a need and her intercession.
4. Our Lord's reticence: His mode of address as “Woman”, the expression of their relationship (“What is it to me and thee?”) and the reason for his reticence “My hour has not yet come).
5. Mary's word of teaching: “Do whatever he tells you”.
6. The miracle: its impact on (a) the steward, (b) the servants, (c) the disciples.

III Christ's Proclamation of the Kingdom

1. Christ's Proclamation has been prepared for by John's preaching, John's baptizing, His own baptism and the selection of the first disciples.
2. Christ's kingdom is a life of active participation: “Do whatever he tells you”.
3. He presents heaven as the goal in the beginning (beatitudes) and instructs in the way to get there.
4. His compassionate miracles confirm his teaching with power and mercy.
5. His proclamation of the kingdom, his teaching of its demands, and the power of his reconciling grace challenges and refutes opposition.

IV Christ's Transfiguration

1. This is a special miracle with three apostles drawn apart to witness it on a high mountain, like other mountain revelations in the Old Testament.
2. The three chosen disciples are given a glimpse of the divine glory momentarily unveiled in the dazzling beauty of the face of the "Beloved Son".
3. Moses and Elijah representing the Law and the Prophets speak with the Transfigured One about his approaching Passion and death in Jerusalem.
4. The Father in awesome power from a heavenly cloud gives witness to His Beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased and commands that he be listened to.
Peter, James and John are being strengthened for the "scandal of the cross" by the glory of the Son, the command of the Father and the conversation of Moses and Elijah with Jesus.
5. It is ultimately through the cross and resurrection that all that has gone before, all that is now, and all that is still to come, finds its fulfillment.

V Christ's Institution of the Eucharist

1. He shows the depth of His love for the Father in His Priestly prayer and Farewell Discourse in St John's Gospel.
2. He institutes the Eucharist at the Last Supper together with his disciples as they are gathered together around the time of Passover.
3. The Eucharist heralds the saving Passion and Death of the Beloved Son ("This is my body, This is the cup of my blood") which follows immediately after it.
4. The Eucharist becomes the central rite of instruction, worship and communion in which the Saviour's whole saving mission is kept in memory and activated by His Church in all times and places.
5. The institution of the Eucharist as sacrifice and communion enables humankind to share actively in the Son's perfect offering of Himself to the Father, imitating what this mystery contains so as to obtain what it promises.
6. Our Lady images the mystery of the Eucharist in the self-offering of her consent at the Annunciation, in the communion of her conception of the Word, in the presentation of the Christ-child to others, in the support of His Public ministry of teaching and healing, in her motherly identification with Him in his sacrifice on Calvary, and in her presence as Mother of the Church at Pentecost.

Support for Blessed Mary’s Josephite Sisters

While debts and lack of money remained a problem for many years, one thing the Sisters never ran short of was support – they were loved and appreciated by nearly all wherever they went. One of their many champions was Stanley James, known as ‘Vagabond’, who regularly wrote stories on social injustice for Australian newspapers. Several times he wrote about the Sisters of St Joseph, in articles which were poignant and rich in their praise.

‘A sight familiar to all in the streets of Adelaide in the tram cars, and more particularly in what back slums this beautiful city possesses ...is that of two female figures, clad in coarse brown and black alpaca garments,’ he wrote in The Victorian Review journal. ‘Their bandaged features and rosary slung from the waist show that they are nuns...These are the Sisters of St Joseph, who are ever to be seen busy in the cause of their Master...The proof that they are esteemed by all classes is the liberal support that they receive from Protestants, as well as those of their own Creed.’”....

One of the things that most endeared the Sisters to the community was their willingness, in the spirit of Jesus, to help the down-and-outs that no one else would touch. Mary passed on to the Sisters this egalitarian spirit, where every person, regardless of their social standing, religious beliefs, race or education, was valued and respected as an individual.

(From *Mary MacKillop Unveiled*, by Lesley O’Brien pp.162-163)

A Spirituality of Communion

To make the Church *the home and the school of communion*: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God’s plan and respond to the world’s deepest yearnings....Before making practical plans, we need *to promote a spirituality of communion*, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christian are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up.

A spirituality of communion indicates the..contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity..

A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think...of the Mystical Body..

A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others...

A spirituality of communion means finally... ‘bearing each other’s burdens...’

Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, ‘masks’ of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.

**John Paul II,
At the Beginning of the New Millennium, n. 43**

New Regional Superior for the Solomon Is. Vicariate

Fr Stephen Kamoia was elected last month as incoming Regional Prior in charge of the Australasian Dominican Province's Western Solomons' Vicariate. Ordained in 1985, he has been the Superior of the Vicariate Student House at Bomana, Port Moresby PNG. He will take up residence at Honiara.

The Nativity

Within the inn they learned there was no room-
No room for her who bore the very source
Of all creation close within her womb,
Now Almost ripe for birth. Was this the course
Designed by God to save a fallen world,
Who chose a draughty cave, unfit for man,
Where hungry sheep and shepherds sometimes
curled
Cold in uneasy sleep? Was this His plan?

Man's finite mind could never have conceived
The Word made flesh, nor God of woman born,
Nor boundless wealth from poverty retrieved,
Nor love itself enfleshed this Christmas morn,
Could even Mary see what love would come
From Bethlehem, to all deprived of home?
1987

**Eric Seal, *Songs of Hope*
1999**

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Here's an idea for SMALL children's prayer. Sometimes the Rosary is just too hard when it is prayed in the grown-ups' way. All you need is a piece of string. You tie ten knots in it. Then you pray on each knot, "**Jesus mercy; Mary pray.**" Try it out. It works. Now this is really only a mini Rosary, but it says a lot in a few words. The full Rosary is just the expansion of these prayers without leaving them behind.

Bits and Pieces

Please note our new E-mail address.

frben@rosaryafresh.org

We are also in the process of constructing a web page:

www.http/rosaryafresh.org

We plan to prepare a revised edition of our book, The Rosary: Our Lady's School 1993. A revised edition will include the five new mysteries of light.

Also we wish to make available in booklet form St Thomas' divisions of St Matthew's Gospel.

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