

Sword of Truth

No. 3 Summer 1996

A Rosary Confraternity Publication

AUGUST 4th - the FEAST OF ST. DOMINIC

ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY

from THE ROSARY, THE CROWN OF MARY by a Dominican Father (copyright 1947)

It was the will of God that we should receive His Adorable Son through Mary. It is His will that through her we should receive the graces which He purchased by His sufferings and death. Jesus, as we are told by the Doctors of the Church, committed to His Mother the care of all His elect; and our Immaculate Queen has too often manifested the power of her intercession and the tenderness of her care for us to call her love into question. The miracles of grace, the wondrous cures of body and of soul effected at her shrines, are ample proof of her motherly tenderness.

And as yet, what are all these manifest miracles which she has wrought, in comparison with the hidden wonders which she is daily effecting by means of her Rosary? For next to the gift she made us of her Adorable Son is the wonderful gift of her Beads. Jesus is the author and source of grace; the Rosary is the key by which the treasury of grace is opened to us. If it is true life to know Jesus Christ, the Rosary is the key to that knowledge. If the elevation of the mind to God in the contemplation of His mysteries of mercy and love enlightens the soul and inflames the heart, the Rosary offers to our meditation the most sublime truths of religion. This is the testimony of every soul truly devoted to the Beads. It is the testimony of the saints of God. It is the declaration of illustrious Doctors of the Church.

The period which beheld the wondrous gift of the Mother of God was, perhaps, the darkest portion of the Middle Ages. The great Pontiff, Innocent III, who ascended the Chair of Peter in 1198, was deeply grieved at the sad spectacle which Christendom presented. He saw Sicily deluged in blood, the Germans contending for Lombardy, three rival claimants for the scepter of Henry VI, Philip Augustus scandalizing the world by his shamefull life, and Spain bleeding beneath the iron rule of Moorish dominion. The last traces of Christianity were nearly obliterated in the East, whilst a fearful heresy was ravaging the provinces of France in the West. Laxity shamefully prevailed, and for the first time in her history the Church had to compel her children, under pain of excommunication, to approach the Sacraments at least once a year. It was during this gloomy period that God, Who regenerated the world through the medium of Mary, willed to save society by means of her Rosary.

It is a singular fact that the saints whom Mary honored with special marks of her love were men and women of spotless purity: witness, St. Joseph, St. John, St. Catherine the Martyr, St. Bernard, and St. Catherine of Siena; and among the saints of the Middle Ages none shone with a brighter luster than the noble young Spaniard, Dominic de Guzman. In early youth, like our Immaculate Mother, he made a vow of chastity, which he was able to declare on his death-bed he never violated. He burned with zeal for the salvation of souls as well as for the the glory of his Creator; and it was the sad state of morality in France, when he passed through that country with his bishop, that detemined him to institute his Order of Preachers to labor for the salvation of society.

The horrors which St. Dominic witnessed in Languedoc have their echoes in the ravings of the communists and socialists of our day. The Albigensians pillaged the churches, ravaged the monasteries, desecrated the sanctuaries of God, and murdered the priests, while they rejected every moral-obligation and despised all authority. Pope Innocent sent missionaries among them; but to his special envoy, Peter of Castelnau, they awarded the crown of martyrdom.

It was in the midst of these degraded outlaws that St. Dominic desired to labor and, if necessary, lay down his life for them. They often sought to destroy him; but God had work for His servant to accomplish. Day by day he labored, going from place to place, preaching, and watering that barren vineyard with his sweat, his tears, and his blood. Three times during each night of prayer he scourged his body and offered his innocent blood for the conversion of that obdurate race. To a missionary of less zeal the scanty fruits of such earnest toil would have been discouraging; but St. Dominic was not disheartened. There was yet one Refuge whither he could fly, one Advocate to whom he had never appealed in vain. Rather, the hour was come that had been fixed on eternity when our Immaculate Mother would bestow another great gift upon a sinful world. St. Dominic appealed to the heart of his sweet Advocate, reminding her of the sufferings she witnessed on Calvary, and of her own sorrows, and, with tearful eyes, he besought her not to allow such sufferings and sorrows to be useless to the people for whom Jesus died. Then it was that the heavens opened, and the Mother of God, holding a Rosary in her hand, appeared in dazzling brightness to her servant, whom she thus addressed: "Be of good courage, Dominic; the fruits of your labor shall be abundant. The remedy for the evils you lament will be meditation of the life, death, and glory of my Son, uniting thereto the recitation of the Angelic Salutation by which the mystery of Redemption was announced to the world." Having explained the devotion of the Rosary, she continued: "The earth will remain barren till watered by this heavenly dew. This devotion you are to inculcate by your preaching, as a practice most dear to my Son and to me - as a most powerful means of dissipating heresy, extinguishing vice, propagating virtue, imploring the divine mercy, and obtaining my protection. I desire that not only you but all those who shall enter your Order shall perpetually promote this manner of prayer. The faithful will obtain by it innumerable advantages, and will always find me ready to aid them in their wants. This is the precious gift which I leave to you and your children."

Full of gratitude to his Immaculate Mother, and animated with new courage, St. Dominic arose from prayer and, setting out for Toulouse, whence he had retired a little for his devotions, he hastened to obey the command of the Queen of Heaven. Before St. Dominic entered the city, charged with the sublime mission of preaching the Rosary, the people, by a mysterious summons, had already assembled in the church. Dominic ascended the pulpit and proclaimed the devotion revealed from Heaven. For a while they remained insensible to his words, but God was not wanting in aiding His minister. A violent storm arose, the church was lighted up by the lurid glare of the lightning, while peal after peal of thunder resounded. A statue of the Blessed Virgin then began to move, at one time pointing to Heaven in a threatening manner, again pointing to the preacher, as if imploring them to listen to him and obey his voice. The obdurate hearts of the people were at length touched. The victory was gained. The Rosary had conquered. Prostrating themselves with one impulse at St. Dominic's feet, the people begged to be taught this wonderful devotion.

This was the first victory of the Rosary. In a little while St. Dominic saw his labors crowned with complete success. Historians tell us that more than one hundred thousand of these deluded people returned to the true fold, where alone are life and salvation. The devotion of the Rosary soon spread throughout France and Spain. Afterwards it was carried by the faithful children to St. Dominic over the rest of Europe. Wherever that devotion was proclaimed, the people flocked in crowds to join in this glorious devotion. Every rank was represented among its members. Popes and bishops exercised their influence to have it propagated. The nobles taught it to their vassals. The brave Simon de Montfort had his soldiers practice it before each encounter with the enemy. It is from the commencement of this devotion that we may date the revival of faith and piety at the close of the Middle Ages.



Words of Our Lady of the Rosary to the children of Fatima:

“Say the Rosary daily to earn peace for the world and the end to the war... Jesus wants to establish the Devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by myself to adorn His throne. I will never leave you, my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”

The Great Promise of Mary: The Five First Saturdays of the Month

The Blessed Virgin appeared to Sister Lucy assigning to her the great Mission of propagating the devotion of the first five Saturdays of the month, making known her “Great Promise.” Our Lady showed her Her Heart, saying: “My daughter, behold my heart in the midst of thorns that ungrateful persons, at every instant, press on it with their blasphemy and ingratitude. At least you console me, and tell all men that I promise to

help, in the hour of death, with graces necessary for salvation, whoever, the first Saturday of each month, for 5 consecutive months, will go to confession, receive Holy Communion, say 5 decades of the Rosary and keep me company for 15 minutes, meditating the mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparations to me.”

Here are the specific acts requested by the Immaculate Heart of Mary to attain the Great Promise:

1. **Confession**, which must be well done; it is enough to confess within the 8 days; the First Friday confession is sufficient.
2. **Holy Communion**, received with the best dispositions.
3. **A third part of the Rosary**, reciting the mysteries of our own choice.
4. **Fifteen minutes of meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary.**
One can meditate on all 15 mysteries or concentrate the attention on one mystery. This may also be done at home, a little at a time. The important part is that we keep company with Our Lady for 15 minutes.
5. **Five consecutive months**, without interruption, even involuntary, are needed for the above practices. They may start any month.
6. These First Five Saturdays of the month **must be done with the intention of making reparation, to console the Heart of Mary** saddened by the indifference and ingratitude of so many souls, in a spirit of humility and contrition for all sins. (It would be enough to make the Intention once, but it is advisable to renew it every Saturday).

ACT OF REPARATION FOR THE FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

Most Holy Virgin and our beloved Mother, we listen with grief to the complaints of your Immaculate Heart surrounded with the thorns which ungrateful men place therein at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Moved by the ardent desire of loving you as our Mother and of promoting a true devotion to the Immaculate Heart, we prostrate ourselves at your feet to prove the sorrow we feel for the grievances that men cause you and to atone, by means of our prayers and sacrifices, for the offenses with which men return your tender love.

Obtain for them and for us the pardon of so many sins. A word from you will obtain grace and amendment for us all.

Hasten, O Lady, the conversion of sinners, that they may love Jesus and cease to offend the Lord, already so much offended, and thus not fall into Hell.

Turn your eyes of mercy towards us, that henceforth we may love God with all our heart while on earth and enjoy Him forever in Heaven. Amen.