



# THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 33

October 2020

## Rosary and the Life of Prayer

**F**our hundred years ago, the Church in Europe was in certain danger of being conquered by the Muslim armies of the Turks. As the only means of stopping this avalanche, Pope St. Pius V called on all the faithful to pray the Rosary each day. Thanks to obedience to the Pope's call, the invading hordes were halted on 7th October. The Holy Father made this day the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, and since then October has become the Month of the Rosary. Over the past 150 years, Our Lady has appeared repeatedly, asking that every one of us say the Rosary every day, to ward off an even greater danger; the spread of atheism from Russia. Sadly, we have not prayed enough.

Praying the Rosary means trying to meditate on the mysteries and events in the life of Our Lord and His Holy Mother, that brought about our salvation from sin.

We begin meditating when we allow the words of the prayers to fade into the background and concentrate our thoughts on a particular mystery. We paint the scene, so to speak, in our imagination. We make it as vivid as we can in order to move our heart and will to acts of sorrow for sin, of love, of trust, of adoration and of faith. Here are some lines from my old parish priest, Fr. John Shaw. They contain sound advice.

"No one can become perfect at anything, including praying, in a couple of days. We must, therefore, persevere in our efforts even when we seem to be unsuccessful. God will bless our efforts and lead us on.

Meditation is intended to establish convictions in our soul. As these convictions grow stronger within us, we become more intimate with Our Lord. This leads us to the most important element of prayer: making acts of the will. As we progress in prayer, God makes us aware of the need to continue, even when we find the meditation more difficult, and even impossible. Sometimes we find ourselves saying: 'I can't pray any more as I used to. What's going wrong?'

Nothing is going wrong, everything is going right! Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart, i.e. the will, to God. Thinking about God, even having the most beautiful thoughts about God, is NOT praying if our will is taking no part. Such thoughts may lead our will to act; but it is only when our will responds and plays its part that we are truly praying.

Making acts of the will means telling God that we love Him, or asking God to make us love Him by submitting our will to His, or by telling Him we detest our sins and will decide on some definite way of not committing a certain sin again. We make these acts of our will in unspoken words. They amount to what spiritual writers call *affective prayer*.

Affective prayer is a step towards *contemplative prayer*. Contemplative prayer is normal for any Catholic who has matured in his faith by giving adequate time throughout life to daily prayer. Contemplative prayer is simply a union of wills: the union of my will with God's will.

When God leads us on to this kind of prayer, we see how the words of the Our Father and Hail Mary fit in with every mystery of the Rosary. To reach contemplative prayer, which God intends for us all, it is essential that we persevere through difficulties and never give up; that we ask the priest in confession for help if things get hard; that we use the graces God offers us, knowing that He loves us with a boundless love that will lead us into a closer union with Himself.

Upon what meat have we Catholics fed, that we no longer need to pray to God for our needs; no longer need the intercession of our Blessed Mother; no longer find it reasonable to reflect on salvation history about which there is so much talk?

'But the Rosary is not easy to say!' Precisely! And here is the real objection to the beads, here is the nerve of a larger contemporary problem. We appear to have made the remarkable discovery that prayer, the raising of the mind and heart to God, is not easy. Although in the past the difficulty was no less real, people came to a different conclusion. Where we say that no one should be expected to make such an effort, our religious forefathers (and particularly **our mothers**) said quietly: 'You'll have to try harder.'

There is a certain element in avant-garde spirituality that is thoroughly tiresome, an element that looks down its nose at the simplicities of traditional piety.

When David was fleeing from Saul, he went to Achimelech the priest in the priestly city of Nob seeking sanctuary. He and his men were in urgent need of food, and Achimelech gave them the only food they had

*Continued page 3*

# Encouragements on praying the Rosary

The Blessed Virgin Mary promised to Saint Dominic and to all who follow that, 'Whatever you ask in the Rosary will be granted.' She left Fifteen Promises to those who recite the Holy Rosary; these promises were imparted to Saint Dominic and Blessed Alan de la Roche:

1. Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary, shall receive signal graces.
2. I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary.
3. The Rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
4. The Rosary will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire for eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.
5. The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the Rosary, shall not perish.
6. Whoever shall recite the Rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.
7. Whoever shall have a true devotion for the Rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.
8. Those who are faithful to recite the Rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plenitude of His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.
9. I shall deliver from Purgatory those who have been devoted to the Rosary.
10. The faithful children of the Rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in Heaven.
11. You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the Rosary.
12. All those who propagate the Holy Rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.
13. I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the Rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.
14. All who recite the Rosary are my sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters of my only Son Jesus Christ.
15. Devotion of my Rosary is a great sign of predestination.

"The word rosary means 'Crown of Roses,' that is to say that every time people say the Rosary devoutly they place a crown of one hundred and fifty-three white roses and sixteen red roses upon the head of Jesus and Mary. Being heavenly flowers these roses will never fade or lose their exquisite beauty."

St. Louis De Montfort



"The rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the book of the aged, whose eyes close upon the shadow of this world, and open on the substance of the next. The power of the rosary is beyond description." Archbishop Fulton Sheen

"The faults of children are not always imputed to the parents, especially when they have instructed them and given good example. Our Lord, in His wondrous Providence, allows children to break the hearts of devout fathers and mothers. Thus the decisions your children have made don't make you a failure as a parent in God's eyes. You are entitled to feel sorrow, but not necessarily guilt. Do not cease praying for your children; God's grace can touch a hardened heart. Commend your children to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When parents pray the Rosary, at the end of each decade they should hold the Rosary aloft and say to her, 'With these beads bind my children to your Immaculate Heart', she will attend to their souls." St. Louise de Marillac

"Even if you are on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the devil as sorcerers do who practice black magic, and even if you are a heretic as obstinate as a devil, sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and will save your soul, if you say the Holy Rosary devoutly every day until death for the purpose of knowing the truth and obtaining contrition and pardon for your sins."

Saint Louis de Montfort

the sacred Bread of the Presence. David told him he also needed a weapon to help him face his enemies. But they had none, except the old sword, wrapped in a linen ephod and hanging up behind the altar. It was the very one with which as a youth David had slain Goliath. David looked at it, handled it, and all his memories came back to him. 'There is none like this,' he said. 'Give it to me'.

Perhaps, for some of us, our beads are rather like David's sword: lost, broken, rusty. Yet it was once our weapon of

victory, and it can be again. Let us persevere this October, taking it into our hands and saying with David: 'There is none like this: give it to me!.'

Fr. John Shaw (+2011), priest of the Nottingham diocese, was a very holy man. We should take his advice to heart and "take up our beads" often.

**Fr. John Brucciani, prior**

---



## Angels

*Rev. Fr. Hennick*

“Angels are created spirits, without bodies, having understanding and free will”, I excitedly read from the catechism to my Senior 1 students. Yet my evident enthusiasm for this definition is lost on them. The children, in turn, assault me with a barrage of whimsical questions which I patiently entertain: How big is my guardian angel? What does he look like? Does he see me right now? I am resigned. Expecting the children to appreciate the richness of this concise definition is an exercise in futility. Nevertheless, in their defence, the addition of years never seems to much erase our native ignorance of the angels.

The angels are without bodies. A better understanding of these transcendent creatures requires that we process this phrase, in all of its extension. So, whereas you and I are spiritual beings, the angels are purely spiritual beings. Like us, they have understanding and free will; but, unlike us, their said spiritual powers are unencumbered by a body.

It is the sober fact of human existence that all of our knowledge begins with information acquired through our senses. To consider and contemplate spiritual realities, we humans must use the material world as our springboard. Even so, our spiritual knowledge is not falsified thereby, but it is admittedly crude.

An English translator of a Dostoevsky novel lamented that he was trying to play a Beethoven symphony with mere tin cans, so unsatisfied was he with the result. The poetry lost in the translation was, to him, tragic. The same can be said of spiritual truths filtered through our understanding. Yes, our embodied intellect is disproportioned to its destiny. As our ultimate goal in life is God—Someone supremely spiritual—vis-à-vis the angels we are at a supreme disadvantage. Or so one might think...

Angels do not acquire knowledge through bodily organs; they were created by God with innate ideas. And with these ideas, they simultaneously directed themselves, and irrevocably so, to an ultimate goal—God or themselves. Hence we have the good and the bad angels.

The angels were given but one chance, and it could not be otherwise. Fr. Benedict Ashley writes:

“Angels cannot change their commitment to their ultimate goal in life because their superior intelligence presents that choice to them with such clarity that they will never have any reason that they have not already taken into account to change their choices. We humans, on the contrary, can change our ultimate goal in life for better or worse, because our bodily condition varies so much that the advantages and disadvantages of our choices appear in different lights at different times.”

And such is the importance of a good death because, after death, we will have permanently committed ourselves. After death, we can no longer utilize our bodies to change our minds. After death, our allotted time to embrace God will have run out, to either our eternal relief or agony.

We humans come to God in a rather clumsy way when compared to our heavenly counterparts. But we humans have a visible Redeemer who has proportioned himself to our childish ways. Our Lord Jesus Christ is a most needed crutch. Mankind now has for itself a face to put to the invisible God. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity did not take to himself angelic nature: “A body thou hast fitted to me” (Hebrews 10:5). Given this turn of events, is it not rather our guardian angels who ought to envy our bodily condition? ❖



**21st Sept - 1st Nov. 2020**

*Reading, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Southampton*

**General Information:**

<https://www.40daysforlife.com/>

Reading contact: M. Martinez:  
[40daysforlifereading@gmail.com](mailto:40daysforlifereading@gmail.com)

Portsmouth contact: Liz  
[40daysforlifeportsmouth@gmail.com](mailto:40daysforlifeportsmouth@gmail.com)

Please sign up to help end the curse of abortion through prayer and penance.

Mgr Benson, in one of his early novels "By what Authority" gave a beautiful explanation of the Rosary. An old nun is trying to make the devotion clear to a young Protestant girl. The enquirer asks:

"How can prayers said over and over again like that be any good?"

Mistress Margaret was silent for a moment.

"I saw young Mrs. Martin last week," she said, "with her little girl in her lap. She had her arms around her mothers neck, and was being rocked to and fro; and every time she rocked she said, 'Oh, mother.'"

"But, then," said Isabel, after a moment's silence, "she was only a child."

"Except ye become as little children—" quoted Mistress Margaret softly— "you see, my Isabel, we are nothing more than children with God and His Blessed Mother. To say, 'Hail Mary, ' is the best way of telling her how much we love her. And, then, this string of beads is like Our Lady's girdle, and her children love to finger it, and whisper to her. And then we say Our Fathers too; and all the while we are talking, she is showing us pictures of her dear Child, and we look at all the great things He did for us, one by on; and then we turn the page and begin again."

Those who have profited the most from the Rosary are the ones who have thus understood it. With hearts full of love they have rested close by the side of our heavenly Mother; and, whispering words of endearment to her, they have gazed the while at those wonderful pictures which the changing mysteries recall, seeing always something new and beautiful. And when they have come to the end of the picture-book, with the insatiable interest of a child, they have gone back to the beginning and turned every page over again. ✱

	Liturgical Calendar Oct. 2020	Masses
1	Feria	7:15
2	Holy Guardian Angels (1st Fri., Holy Hour 6pm)	7:15 / 19:00
3	St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus, Virgin (1st Sat.)	7:30 / 12:00
4	<b>18th Sunday after Pentecost</b>	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
5	Feria	7:15
6	St. Bruno, Confessor	7:15
7	Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary	7:15
8	St. Bridget of Sweden, Widow	7:15
9	St. John Leonardi, Confessor	7:15
10	St. Francis Borgia, Confessor	7:30 / 12:00
11	<b>19th Sunday after Pentecost</b>	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
12	Feria	7:15
13	St. Edward the Confessor, King	7:15
14	St. Calistus I. Pope & Martyr	7:15
15	St. Teresa of Avila,	7:15
16	St. Hedwig, Widow	7:15
17	St. Margaret Mary Alacocque, Virgin	7:30 / 12:00
18	<b>20th Sunday after Pentecost</b>	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
19	St. Peter of Alcantara, Confessor	7:15
20	St. John Cantius, Confessor	7:15
21	Feria	7:15
22	Feria	7:15
23	St. Anthony Mary Claret, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
24	St. Raphael the Archangel	7:30 / 12:00
25	<b>The Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ</b>	6:30, 7:30
		9:00, 17:00
		18:00 Benediction
26	Feria - Mass of 21st Sunday after Pentecost	7:15
27	Feria	7:15
28	Ss Simon & Jude, Apostles (priest meeting)	no mass
29	Feria	18:30
30	Feria	7:15
31	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30 / 12:00

Please note - we are not always able to offer as many masses as we would like on Sundays since we also have to cover other venues. Also, there is sometimes Sunday mass at 11am. **Please use the noticeboard booking system to ensure that everyone is spread out across all the masses.** Please also observe as best possible the hygiene requirements of these strange times, out of respect for others.

<https://noticeboard.sanctusmichael.com/stmichaels/>