

Alter Christus

*“As an **alter Christus** (another Christ) the priest is in Christ, for Christ and with Christ... Because he belongs to Christ, the priest is radically at the service of all people: he is the minister of their salvation” (Pope Benedict XVI)*

Monthly bulletin dedicated to all the Priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

The Rosary is a Great Means of Perfection

By Saint Louis de Montfort

[From the book *The Secret of the Rosary*]

The saints made our Lord's life the principal object of their study; they meditate on his virtues and his sufferings, and in this way arrived at Christian perfection.

Saint Bernard began with this meditation and he always kept it up. “At the very beginning of my conversion,” he said, “I made a

bouquet of myrrh fashioned from the sorrows of my Savior. I placed this bouquet upon my heart, thinking of the lashes, the thorns and the nails of his passion. I applied my whole mind to the meditation on these mysteries every day.”

This was also the practice of the holy martyrs; we admire how they triumphed over the most cruel sufferings. Where could this admirable constancy of the martyrs

come from, says Saint Bernard, if not from the wounds of Jesus Christ, on which they meditated so frequently? Where was the soul of these generous athletes when their blood gushed forth and their bodies were wracked with cruel torments? Their soul was in the wounds of Christ and those wounds made them invincible.

During her whole life, our Savior's holy Mother was occupied in meditating on the virtues and the sufferings of her Son. When she heard the angels sing their hymn of joy at his birth and saw the shepherds adore him in the stable, her heart was

filled with wonder and she meditated on all these marvels. She compared the greatness of the Word incarnate to the way he humbled himself in this lowly fashion; the straw of the crib, to his throne in the heart of his Father; the might of God, to the weakness of a child; his wisdom, to his simplicity.

Our Lady said to Saint Bridget one day, "Whenever I used to contemplate the beauty, modesty, and wisdom of my Son, my heart was filled with joy; and whenever I considered his hands and feet which would be pierced with cruel nails, I

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Born poor. Studied in Paris, France, and ordained in 1700. Under Mary's inspiration, he founded the Daughters of Divine Wisdom, a religious institute of women devoted to the care of the desititute, and a brother organization, the Brothers of Saint Gabriel. During this work, he began his apostolate of preaching the Rosary and authentic Marian devotion. He preached Mary everywhere and to everyone. A member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, Saint Louis was one of the greatest apostles of the Rosary in his day, and by means his miraculously inspiring book, *The Secret of the Rosary*, he is still so today; the most common manner of reciting the Rosary is the method that originated with Saint Louis's preaching. In 1715, he founded the missionaries known as the Company of Mary or Montfort Missionaries.



His greatest contribution to the Church and world is Total Consecration to the Blessed Virgin. He propagated this in his day by preaching and after his own death by his other famous book *True Devotion to Mary*.

wept bitterly and my heart was rent with sorrow and pain.”

After our Lord’s Ascension, our Blessed Lady spent the rest of her life visiting the places that had been hallowed by his presence and on his terrible passion.

Saint Mary Magdalen continually performed the same religious exercises during the last thirty years of her life, when she lived at Saint-Baume. Saint Jerome tells us that this was the devotion of the faithful in the early centuries of the Church. From all the countries of the world they came to the Holy Land to engrave more deeply on their hearts a great love and remembrance of the Savior of mankind by seeing the places and things he had made holy by his birth, his work, his sufferings, and his death.

All Christians have but one faith and adore one and the same God, and hope for the same happiness in heaven; they know only one mediator, who is Jesus Christ; all must imitate their divine model, and in order to do this they must meditate on the mysteries of his life, of his virtues and of his glory.

It is a great mistake to think that only priests and religious and those who have withdrawn from the turmoil of the world are supposed

to meditate upon the truths of our faith and the mysteries of the life of Christ. If priests and religious have an obligation to meditate on the great truths of our holy religion in order to live up to their vocation worthily, the same obligation is just as much incumbent on the laity, because of the fact that every day they meet with spiritual dangers which might cause them to lose their souls. Therefore they should arm themselves with the frequent meditation on the life, virtues, and sufferings of our Blessed Lord, which are presented to us in the fifteen mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

To encourage you still more in this devotion practiced by so many holy people, I should like to add that the Rosary recited with the meditation of the mysteries brings about the following marvelous results:

- 1 - It gradually brings us a perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ;
- 2 - It purifies our souls from sin;
- 3 - It gives us victory over all our enemies;
- 4 - It makes the practice of virtue easy’
- 5 - It sets us on fire with the love of our Lord;
- 6 - It enriches us with graces and merits;
- 7 - It supplies us with what is needed

to pay all our debts to God and to our fellowmen, and finally, it obtains all kinds of graces from God.

The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the science of Christians and the science of salvation; it surpasses, says Saint Paul, all human sciences in value and perfection:

Because of the dignity of its object, which is a God-man, compared to whom the whole universe is but a drop of dew or a grain of sand;

Because of its utility to us; human sciences only fill us with the wind and emptiness of pride;

Because of its necessity; for no one can be saved without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, while a person who knows absolutely nothing of any other science will be saved as long as he is enlightened by the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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.

The Queen of Sheba, lost in admiration at Solomon's wisdom, cried out, "Blessed are your attendants and your servants who are always in your presence and hear your wisdom." But happier still are the faithful who carefully meditate on the life, virtues, sufferings and glory of our Savior, because by this means they can gain perfect knowledge of him, in which eternal life consists.

Our Lady revealed to Blessed Alan that no sooner had Saint Dominic begun preaching the Rosary than hardened sinners were touched and wept bitterly over their grievous sins. Young children

performed unbelievable penances, and everywhere he preached the Rosary such fervor was aroused that sinners changed their lives and

The Holy Rosary:

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edified everyone by their penances and the amendment of their lives.

If by chance your conscience is burdened with sin, take your Rosary and say at least a part of it in honor of some of the mysteries of the life, passion, and glory of Jesus Christ, and you can be sure that, while you are meditating on these mysteries and honoring them, he will show his sacred wounds to his father in heaven. He will plead for you and 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 often, they would share in the merits of my passion, and I would be their Advocate and would appease the justice of God."

This life is a continual war 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 weapon could we possibly use to combat them than the prayer which our great Leader has taught us, than the Angelic Salutation which has put devils to flight, destroyed sin and renewed the world? What better weapon could we use than the meditation on the life and passion of Jesus Christ? For, as Saint Peter tells us, it is with this

thought that we must arm ourselves, in order to defend ourselves against the very same enemies whom he has conquered and who molest us every day.

"Ever since the devil was crushed by the humility and the passion of Jesus Christ," says Cardinal Hughes, "he has been practically unable to attack a soul that is armed with the meditation on the mysteries of our Lord's life, and, if he does trouble such a soul, he is sure to be shamefully defeated." "Put on the armor of God so as to be able to resist the attacks of the devil."

So arm yourself with the arms of God, with the holy Rosary, and you will crush the devil's head and stand firm in the face of all his temptations. This is why even a pair of rosary beads is so terrible to the devil, and why the saints have used them to fetter him and drive him from the bodies of those who were possessed. Such happenings have been recorded more than once.

Blessed Alan relates that a man he knew had tried desperately all kinds of devotions to rid himself of the evil spirit which possessed him, but without success. Finally, he thought of wearing his rosary round 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 testifies that he delivered a great number of those who were possessed by putting a rosary around their necks.

Father Jean Amat, of the Order of St. Dominic, was giving a series of Lenten sermons in the Kingdom of Aragon one year, when a young girl was brought to him who was possessed by the devil. After he had exorcised her several times without success, he put his rosary round her neck. Hardly had he done so when the girl began to scream and cry out in a fearful way, shrieking, "Take it off, take it off; these beads are tormenting me." At last, the priest, filled with pity for the girl, took his rosary off her.

The very next night, when Fr. Amat was in bed, the same devils who had possession of the girl came to him, foaming with rage and tried to seize him. But he had his rosary clasped

in his hand and no efforts of theirs could wrench it from him. He beat them with it very well indeed and put them to flight, crying out, "Holy Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary, come to my help."

The next day on his way to the church, he met the poor girl, still possessed; one of the devils within her started to jeer at him, saying, "Well, brother, if you had been without your rosary, we should have made short shrift of you." Then the good Father threw his rosary round the girl's neck without more ado, saying, "By the sacred names of Jesus and Mary his holy Mother, and by the power of the holy Rosary, I command you, evil spirits, to leave the body of this girl at once." They were immediately forced to obey him, and she was delivered from them.

These stories show the power of the holy Rosary in overcoming all sorts of temptations from the evil spirits and all sorts of sins, because these blessed beads of the Rosary put devils to rout.