

From the desk of the Pastor:

As a final installment of the four types of prayer presented by St. Teresa of Jesus. I would like to talk about how the Rosary fits into these four levels of prayer. We have covered the four levels of prayer over the last four weeks: vocal prayer, meditation, contemplation and divine contemplation. I would like to write this week about the very powerful form of prayer which we call the Rosary.

The Rosary is very sophisticated prayer. The Rosary is a unique prayer that can span each of these four levels of prayer. It is obvious that the Rosary includes vocal prayer. It is made up of Hail Mary's and Our Father's as well as a few other vocal prayers. The real strength of the Rosary, however, is not in the vocal prayer that accompanies it. Sometimes the vocal prayers of the Rosary are as deep as we are able to move. Sometimes it is necessary to focus one's attention solely to the vocal prayers of the Rosary in order to maintain a sense of prayer and conversation with Our Lady during the praying of the Rosary, but it is not the real power of this beautiful prayer.

Normally, the vocal prayers of the Rosary take a background position. I like to think of the words of the Hail Mary's and Our Father's as background music that is playing while I have a conversation with Mary and Jesus. Just as you might listen to beautiful music while having a conversation with a friend, in like manner, we may approach the vocal prayers of the Rosary. I have had very intense conversations with some friends while beautiful music is playing in the background. Although the music is not the focus of our attention, it may lend to a peaceful ambiance that is comforting and therefore allows us to enter into an intimate and life-giving conversation. This is usually the value of the vocal aspect of the Rosary: it is background music that provides a sense of comfort to help us enter into mental prayer. At times - depending on our mental state or ability to meditate - we may find that the vocal aspect of the Rosary is the essential aspect that allows us to cling to prayer.

The Rosary should usually be approached as a form of mental prayer. The real power of the Rosary is the meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary. There are a total of 20 mysteries. While praying the Rosary a person should give most of their attention to the consideration

of each mystery. I encourage people to place themselves actively into each of the 20 mysteries of the Rosary. Pretend that you were there and witness anew the unfolding of the great moments of Salvation History. For some people it is easier to simply imagine "watching" the moments in our Jesus' life as they might watch a movie or tv show. Either way, through the meditation of the mysteries of the Rosary, you attain the real value of this illustrious prayer.

The Rosary can also help us to attain contemplative prayer. It is true that contemplative prayer usually means that words and images fade away. Contemplative prayer is defined as the prayer of presence. Even though the vocal prayer continues during the Rosary, the vocal aspect of the Rosary does not seem to hinder the attainment of contemplation. There are very few prayers that span the whole range of prayer from vocal to contemplation. The Rosary is one of these magnificent and powerful prayers. During the Rosary we can absolutely fall into the arms of our Savior and simply experience the prayer of Presence.

Finally, the Rosary can also help us to attain Divine Contemplation. We know that Divine Contemplation is a gift from God and that we cannot force it to happen. The only recourse we have to attain this type of prayer is simply the removal of the obstacles to prayer which we call sin. It is precisely for this reason that the Rosary can help us in the attainment of the highest level of prayer. The praying of the Rosary conquers every vice. When we commend ourselves to Mary through the daily and consistent praying of the Rosary, Mary will vanquish sin, overcome temptation and lead us to the heights of holiness. The Rosary is the great defense of the Christian people. I believe that we may attain every good thing through the Holy Rosary. The Rosary is the greatest weapon against sin and therefore the greatest way for us to dispose ourselves to Divine Contemplation.

My dear friends in Christ, I invite you to enhance your spiritual life and learn the power and beauty of the Rosary. It has been the path of sanctification for millions of souls and it will be a path for you also. All that is necessary is that you trustingly pray this beautiful prayer in union with Mary to the honor of Jesus our Lord.

Peace,
Fr. David