

Herbst, Winfrid, 1891-  
The Rosary  
ADR 2980

# The Rosary

By

Father Winfrid Herbst, S.D.S.

Published by

THE  
SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR

(Salvatorian Seminary)

PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT

St. Nazianz — Wisconsin



# The Rosary

**T**HIS pamphlet is all about honoring Our Lady in the way that pleases her most. I will tell you anew about the sweetest devotion to Mary, the dear Mother of God and our Mother.

But is she really our Mother? Of course she is! One day in Mary's month I stepped into some attractive schoolrooms. In each one I found a lovely altar with a statue of our Lady surrounded by flowers and decorations. And on one of the blackboards, in beautiful colored letters, I read the words, "Angels may call her Queen, but they cannot call her Mother." We can, though! Why? Because Jesus gave her to us as our Mother from the cross when He said, "Behold your Mother!" Yes; He gave us His last and greatest treasure then. Jesus, we thank you. It's just as Mary Immaculate once said to St. Gertrude, "First I gave birth to Jesus and then to all of you; for you are His brethren. With a Mother's love and tenderness I have adopted you."

Yes; she is our Mother. That's why we run to her in confiding prayer. Father Bridgett, C. SS. R., a writer and poet of the last century, gave expression to a very beautiful and appropriate sentiment when he penned the following lines,

The rose when shaken fragrance sheds  
around,

The bell when struck pours forth melodious sound;

The heart of Mary, moved by earnest  
prayer,  
Will scatter grace and sweetness every-  
where.

Now, the earnest prayer which above and before all prayers moves the immaculate heart of Mary and causes her to scatter grace and sweetness everywhere is the rosary. The word "rosary", you know, comes from the Latin word *rosarium*, meaning a place where roses grow, a bed of roses. Has it not often occurred to you that the chaplet which we so often press to our lips, whose beads we devoutly count over and over again in loving prayer, is indeed like a wreath of roses with which we adorn Mary's fair hair and her queenly brow? Ah, these ever-recurring, never-tiring prayers must be Mary's joy indeed! And they never, never cease; they are ever ascending to heaven in one sweet, unbroken, melodious strain. Mary is being ceaselessly crowned with roses of love. Mankind is instinctively seeking Jesus through Mary. And it is so natural. She is a creature like ourselves, "our tainted nature's solitary boast"; and she can help us understand and love things which in our dense darkness we would not otherwise be able to comprehend. All of which is sweetly and simply said by Aubrey de Vere, an Irish Catholic poet of whom we are justly proud, in the lines,

The mystery high of God made Man,  
Through thee to man is easier made:  
Pronounce the consonant, who can  
Without the softer vowel's aid?

Now, of course, you know the divisions of the rosary. It consists of fifteen decades. Each decade contains ten Hail Marys, marked by small beads, preceded by an **Our Father**, marked by a large bead, and concluded by a **Glory be to the Father**. Five decades make a chaplet, a third part of the rosary. This chaplet, however, we call a rosary; and when asked to say a rosary, it is understood that we are to recite but a third part of it. All this, my friends, you knew long ago didn't you?

But do you know how to say the rosary? Are you sure? Well, anyhow, always remember that the rosary is vocal prayer, that in saying it the words must be pronounced with the lips. Otherwise you cannot gain the indulgences. Indeed all indulgenced prayers must be said in this wise. Of course, you may whisper the prayers, and the whisper may be so low that even you yourself cannot hear it; but the words must be formed with the tongue and lips.

But, besides this, the rosary is also mental prayer. To gain the indulgences we must also meditate. To meditate here means to think of the mysteries of the rosary during the recitation of the prayers. There are, you know, the joyful, the sorrowful, and the glorious mysteries. Let's take one of the joyful mysteries, the Annunciation. While saying the **Our Father**, the ten Hail Marys, and the **Glory be to the Father**, we imagine ourselves, for instance, in Nazareth. We see the Blessed Virgin kneeling at prayer. The angel enters. He speaks. Mary answers. The Holy Spirit

8529

overshadows her. God becomes Man. We think of the angel's humility and obedience in coming to Mary; we think of Mary's humble answer: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." We call to mind how long the world had waited for the Redeemer and how, now that He had come, Mary alone knew of it. We reflect upon what the world was before the Savior came: full of iniquity and misery, sunk in idolatry, ignorance and superstition. We realize that, since Jesus wanted to come to us through Mary, so He also wants us to go to Him through her. And then we think such thoughts as this, while in reality or in spirit, we gaze at the tabernacle which contains the Blessed Sacrament, our All: "He never could have been the Bread of Life to us, had she not first been the bread of life to Him." And all the while our thoughts are going from Mary to Jesus and from Jesus back to Mary. And then for a moment we again think of the words of our prayers, only to be lost anew in our meditation of the mysteries, This is what we mean by saying that the rosary is vocal and mental prayer combined. This is how we must say the rosary. This is how we surely can say it. Ninety-nine out of a hundred can really and truly say it thus. Isn't it a most wonderful prayer, a bed of the most fragrant, refreshing roses imaginable? And don't you love it, its month, and Mary, our darling Mother?

Only think of Mary's greatness and goodness and you will appreciate the beauty and excellence of a prayer which is her very own, which she herself gave us. Only think, I say.

And, as a parting gift from me, take these few honeyed crumbs of thought. Imagine the Virgin Queen with Jesus on her lap, looking down upon Him. Hear Our Lady's poet say,

'Twas once said,  
"Look up," 'tis now,  
"Look down, to Heaven."

Another poet has penned these beautiful words of the Queen of the Rosary, words—so consoling!

In everyone her Son she sees,  
Therefore the world her baby is,  
That, like a hurt and frightened child,  
Sobs on her breast, the Undeified,  
Or hides its face upon her knees.

So, my dear readers, let us rejoice in being the faithful children of her whom we call in rapture the sweetest Mother-Maid, an angel-watered Lily, Life's Cradle, the Hem of God's robe, the peace-beaming Star, the sunshiny Peak of human personality, the world's sad aspirations' one Success, and countless other loving names. Do you understand all these endearing titles? No? Then just call her Mother—Mother of God and our Mother. That says everything, yes, everything.

Nihil Obstat

Gregory Rybrook, Ord. Praem.,  
Librorum Censor.

Imprimatur.

† Paulus Petrus, Epps. Sinus Viridis.

Green Bay, Wis.,  
August 30, 1926.

Permissu Superiorum.