

Reflection: Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

Lord, teach us to pray... (Luke 11:1)

This was a very serious question that the Apostles asked Our Lord. After all, our prayer life *is* our life with God. So what they were really asking for was, Lord, teach us to live with God. Teach us how that we can live right now as though in heaven already. In response, Jesus gives them the formula of the Our Father. I say formula, because, although it is a form of words, it should be treated as a way of being, a sort of blueprint for the heavenly life. It includes, very much, the whole pattern of relationships that Jesus explicitly teaches elsewhere - first the putting of God at the centre, worshipping him, desiring that his will be done and that his sway be over the whole universe, but most especially over us, who are made of the earth in his image. Then there is the relationship to our fellow men. Forgiveness, the avoidance of evil and temptation, the wanting to be in communion with all our brethren. It is the cross shaped pattern - God-wise, and hung upon the God-wise pole, the fraternal cross beam.

And so, we come to the Rosary. Outwardly, the Rosary is a pattern of prayers. Said with just one set of Five Mysteries, there is One Apostles' Creed, Six Our Fathers, Fifty-Three Angelic Salutations called the Hail Mary, Six Glory Be's, One Salve Regina, a versicle and the Rosary Collect. Added to this are all those prayers we add privately, like the Fatima Prayer, or the Prayer to St Michael the Archangel, or whatever else it is that we add. That external structure is one thing, but it is not the most important thing. The real meat of the Rosary, is the chewing over of the Mysteries of our Redemption: Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious. Placing ourselves in them, ruminating over them, letting them speak to our souls, letting their meanings convert our inmost substances where the Spirit is speaking with sighs too deep for words. Those mysteries pondered over and over again never finish their dialogue with us, we can never satisfy their profound communications to us. Each time, some new insight, some light is shed, some praise is elicited from us for God in his great love and mercy, some morsel is given to help sustain our spiritual journey.

Mary is not at the margins. She is central. She is central at the Annunciation, central among the disciples at Pentecost, central in the glory of Heaven. No spiritual life is complete without her. He who has Christ for a Brother, has Mary for a Mother. She is archetype and fulness of the Church. She is for us a nurturer, a mother, a sister, a fellow disciple, a fellow worshipper of the One True God. In heaven, she, the Queen of the Angels, of all the Saints, pleads on our behalf with her Son. Don't let us shrink from asking her powerful intercession, for ourselves, for our parish, for our Ordinariate, for our Church, for our families, for our nation, for the world. Christ wants us to pray through Mary, because God is glorified in her - "*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*" She will hear. She will present our requests and petitions, just like she did at Cana. "They have no wine" she tells her Son. "Do whatever he tells you." she tells us.

Our Lady, Queen of the Holy Rosary, pray for us!