

THE THIRD ORDER

Of the Society of St. Pius X



19th October 2009

jordiestephens@hotmail.com

Phone: [61] 2/95677088

Fax: [61] 2/ 95673228

280 West Botany St. Rockdale,
Sydney, Australia

Dear Postulants and Professed members,

Recently one of my priestly confreres mentioned that an approximate figure recently obtained regarding the number of rosaries in the USA indicated that the 12 million requested by Bishop Fellay would not be obtained. Should this worry us?

Not at all. Of course these figures are *somewhat* indicative of the progress towards our goal, but they of course only take into consideration those faithful who are regularly submitting totals, which is not the case in Australia. Generosity in the saying of rosaries varies *greatly* from person to person, and from country to country. But another more important reason why statistics like these shouldn't worry us is the basic distinction between quality and quantity, a distinction which is essential to prayer.

It is no small thing to remember that a vocalised prayer without *any* corresponding internal attention and desire has next to no value as such. We say "as such" because one may, and often does, *begin* prayer with attention and affection, but then becomes lost in wanderings of the imagination and memory. If these latter are not willed, then we say that our initial good intention is still "virtually" present in all the remaining prayer, which is subsequently good and meritorious. But if the prayer, let's say the Rosary, is begun and continued without *any* internal affection, then what you see (or hear) is what you get, meriting the rebuke "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me".

Quantity of rosaries said is certainly important, but bear in mind that quality is the *soul* of quantity, which latter is a corpse without the former. What gives a prayer its quality, or its soul? Is it the formula we use, so that the prayer is better if taken from a printed book rather than one we compose ourselves? Or is it the length, so that a 20 minute prayer is twice as good as a 10 minute one? Well, both the formula and length are external and sensible attributes, so as to constitute only an accidental and secondary aspect. The quality of our prayer will depend greatly upon the *earnestness* with which we say it, that is, the *desire* of our will whether it be praising, petitioning, thanking or repenting. This desire of the will is something essentially independent of time, and we know of penitents in history who within a very short time (sometimes only hours!) have amended their whole life by an incredibly great desire of the will (helped by grace of course). This is not to say that the formula we use (which helps us remain focused, and shows humility by following a rule external to ourselves) and the length of time (giving us the opportunity to *multiply* these acts of earnestness) are unimportant, but they are peripheral and secondary.

Our Lady will be much more pleased, and therefore propitious to hear our request for Russia's Consecration, if the flowers making up our proffered bouquet are real, living and fragrant flowers, rather than plastic ones, ie. said with little or no fervour. Would any of us give plastic flowers to another to express our affection? Thus I encourage you to focus on the *quality* of your Rosaries, which should be said with earnestness, affection, calmness and confidence. And if you have time in your day (we have more of this than we think) to say another one, then strive to say it just as well as the first. But now we must finish our brief look at the Mysteries of the Rosary.

The **Resurrection** of Christ was not the first raising of one who had been dead, having had precedents in the Old and New Testament, but it *was* the first time someone had raised *themselves* from the dead. None of *us* can raise ourselves from the dead any more than we can give ourselves existence, but the very Author of life could reunite His own created body and soul on Easter Sunday morning. This Mystery is the hinge of our entire Catholic Faith, the ultimate and incontestable proof of Our Lord's Divinity, and thus of the truth of everything He had said and promised. "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then your Faith is vain..and our preaching is vain..and we are the most miserable of men", said St Paul. For all of us, it is the light at the end of the tunnel of earthly sorrow, and the wonderful exemplar and promise of what we can hope for in our own bodies when the last second of earthly time has elapsed.

Our Lord's **Ascension** to His heavenly Father, unlike His Resurrection, was seen visibly by His apostles and disciples. But if Our Lord is now leaving His infant Church, what becomes of His promise at the Last Supper that

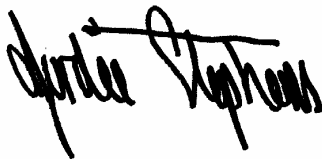
"I will not leave you orphans"? Part of the answer is of course "This is My Body" and "Do this in commemoration of Me", whereby His substantial presence on our altars and in our bodies is guaranteed until the end of time. "The kingdom of God is within you", and Our Lord was well aware that His remaining on earth in His normal appearance would not necessarily ensure greater holiness in His members or more conversions of non-members. "Blessed are those who have believed, and have *not* seen". He knew it to be more beneficial for our supernatural faith to constantly have to look behind and beyond mere appearances to the infallible testimony of Christ and His Church.

Pentecost is the other part of the answer to "I will not leave you orphans", because if Christ and His members are the *body* of His Church, then the Holy Ghost (or "Spirit") is its *soul*. The 3rd Person of the Most Holy Trinity, Love itself, in this Mystery has *His* opportunity to manifest Himself sensibly, as had done the 2nd Person for 33 years. The Holy Spirit is *fire*, because love/charity destroys all sin and egoism in oneself ("charity covereth a multitude of sins") to make room for God, and then subsequently longs to set others on fire with this same love of God and neighbour. The Holy Spirit is *wind*, because "Spiritus" is the latin for "wind" or "breath", and just as Christ imparted power to His apostles by "breathing upon them" after His resurrection, His apostles gathered in the Cenacle are filled with divine power to teach, sanctify and govern the baptized members of the infant Church.

By Her **Assumption**, the Blessed Virgin most likely constitutes 1 of the 2 only visible bodies (with that of Her Son) which have now inhabited heaven for almost 2000 years. Called to co-expiate with Her Son in a *non*-bloody manner, Our Lady left this world not violently as Her Son did, but rather by a peaceful "Dormition" or "Falling Asleep". Love is a going out of oneself to be united with the beloved, and while of course Her *soul* had enjoyed the most perfect union with Her Creator since Her conception, Her *body* now longed to be where Her soul and affections were, namely, with Her glorified Son in heaven. But not even Her profound holiness made Her divine, and thus while Her Son had ascended into heaven by His *own* power, She could not "assume" Herself into heaven, but had to have Her almighty *Son* assume Her there to reign at His side.

Our Lady's **Coronation** is the eternal sealing of Her prophetic words that "all generations shall call Me blessed". This Mystery is really 1 with the Assumption, being merely its continuation and completion, both Mysteries giving us the earthly and the heavenly perspective. Every King needs a Queen, and if Our Lord "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty", then His Mother sits at *His* right hand, perpetually telling us to "Do whatever He tells you". As we contemplate Christ as King on the last Sunday of this month of October, let us never separate His kingship from the queenship of His Immaculate Mother, Whose head we should be daily crowning with innumerable fervently said Hail Mary's from Her Rosary garden.

In the Sacred Heart, through the Immaculate heart of Mary,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordie Stephens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line striking through the middle of the name.

Fr Jordie Stephens
Spiritual Director of the Third Order of SSPX for Australia

Note: The last of the Days of Recollection will occur at:
Oxley, Brisbane- Saturday 21st November