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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ROSARY

October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, seems like a good time to explode the myth, for many years promulgated by the RELIGIOUS BULLETIN, even as late as 1962, that Our Lady gave the Rosary to St. Dominic as an instrument to combat the Albigensian heresy in the thirteenth century. The Second Nocturn of the Roman Breviary for the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary (October 7) gives credence to this legend. But then, there's the old saying that goes: "He lies like a second nocturn."

Evidence dispelling this legend is as available as a copy of The Catholic Encyclopedia which has been on library shelves since 1912. In his article on the Rosary the learned Jesuit, Father Herbert Thurston sums up the evidence on the origin of the Rosary in these words: "...we have positive evidence that both the invention of the beads as a counting apparatus and also the practice of repeating a hundred and fifty Aves cannot be due to St. Dominic because they are both notably older than his time. Further, we are assured that the meditating upon the mysteries was not introduced until two hundred years after his death. What then, we are compelled to ask, is there left of which St. Dominic may be called the author?"

Does this mean that the Rosary devotion should mean nothing to us, that October as the Month of the Holy Rosary should be set aside? The same Father Thurston who sums up the damaging evidence of the Bollandists on the legendary origin of the Rosary heartily endorses devotion to the Rosary and answers in 1912 an objection which is being posed in 1964.

"That the Rosary is pre-eminently the prayer of the people adapted alike for the use of simple and learned is proved not only by the long series of papal utterances by which it has been commended to the faithful but by the daily experience of all who are familiar with it. The objection so often made against its 'vain repetitions' is felt by none but those who have failed to realize how entirely the spirit of the exercise lies in the meditation upon the fundamental mysteries of our faith. To the initiated the words of the angelical salutation form only a sort of half-conscious accompaniment, a bourdon which we may liken to the 'Holy, Holy, Holy' of the heavenly choirs and surely not in itself meaningless."

DIAGNOSING THE WORLD'S ILLS "All morality," Dietrich Von Hildebrand once wrote, "assumes a radically different aspect as soon as it is seen in its relations to a living God. As long as morally relevant values are not seen in their relation to the Absolute Person of God, as long as moral evil is not understood in its character of an offense against God, as long as we ignore the fact that in the entire moral life we are confronted with God, the Absolute judge, the full impact of morality, its ultimate seriousness, its character of being a 'breath of the eternal' are absent."

Diagnosers of the world's ills today, as for instance the men who contributed to Suicide of a Nation,* edited by Arthur Koestler, frequently reject, as a preliminary for discussion, this concept of Von Hildebrand's. There can be no return to the old moralities, they tell us. A new system of morality must be constructed and accepted by all. What success, however, this new institution of theirs will have unbolstered by the concept of God, they are unwilling to predict.

We are actually oppressed by sexual freedoms today, one writer in this Koestler volume admits. "The truth doesn't always set you free. When it is truth on a mechanistic level, it can tighten your chains...as in Sweden, where the dissemination of detailed sexual information, combined with an exceptionally permissive social attitude towards pre-marital sex experience (and incidentally an unrivalled economic security) coincides with the second-highest youthful suicide rate in the world."

"Nothing has taken the place of the lost taboos," this same

writer complains, "and we are left without guidance, wandering in a Waste Land of withered certainties. Plainly what is needed is the construction of a new code of conduct consonant with our new insights and dawning convictions. A fundamental re-thinking is essential."

Rethinking, obviously for this author, means thinking God out of the picture, yet a substitute for God, whatever form it takes, will probably appeal to very few. Again, with Von Hildebrand, we say, "How shallow it sounds when those who do not believe in God speak of such things as the sacredness of human life, inasmuch as this sacredness is de-substantialized as soon as human life is no longer the property of God. How dim is the dignity of man viewed in a merely intrahuman world. The full seriousness and grandeur of morality can be fully grasped only in the light of a personal God." Any understanding of morally relevant values today-- such values as those of the human person, of the sacredness of human life, of the grandeur and depth of the bond of marriage-- implies a confrontation with the God of Scriptures.

--Claude L. Boehm

A PARABLE FROM SCRIPTURE

Once upon a time, a man planned giving a great supper and sent out many invitations. About the time set for the supper he sent his servant to give notice to those invited: "Come; everything is now ready." Then all alike proceeded to beg off. The first said to him: "I have bought a farm, and I must of necessity go and inspect it. I beg you, consider me excused." Another said: "I have bought five teams of oxen; and I am just going to try them out. I beg you, consider me excused." Still another said: "I just got married, and for that reason I cannot come." When the servant returned, he reported these excuses to his master. The head of the house flew into a rage. "Go out quickly," he said to his servant, "into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame." And again the servant reported: "Master, your order has been carried out, and there is still room for more." The Master then said to the servant: "Go out on the highways and among the hedges, and compel people to come in. My house must be filled to capacity."

"I tell you, therefore, not one of those originally invited will taste my supper."

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A PARALLEL FROM NOTRE DAME

This past week, the University Chaplain arranged for two missions for upperclassmen. He informed the hall chaplains who put up signs announcing the missions and inviting the upperclassmen to attend. But when the first mission opened on Sunday night, many upperclassmen had not returned from Madison and those who had were sacked out. Rectors and hall chaplains reminded those whom they saw around the halls that the mission began at the Grotto at 6:45. But practically all of them had excuses -- there was a meeting of the Podunk Club, just getting organized for the year, so they couldn't make the mission; there was a good movie at the Avon, the last showing (a sermon they could hear any time) and so they couldn't come; others had to get their rooms fixed up so they could get a good start on the studies the first full week of school; and still a few others had dates, and, of course, that was a valid excuse.

When the hall chaplains saw the poor turn-out the first night, they put up more signs and went about urging their hall residents to attend the mission the second night. A few more came, but never was Sacred Heart Church filled to capacity (or even a quarter filled).

Such was the response of students who have convinced the administration that they are mature and responsible and need not be compelled to avail themselves of the spiritual riches of Notre Dame.

IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Deceased -- father of Jim Brocke; mother of Father Greg Lombardo, C.S.C.; Father Thomas Richards, C.S.C. Ill -- Jim Gerend, '33; sister of Paul Byrne, former University librarian; Pat Canny, '28.

In the Liturgical Spirit.....

MY PART IN LITURGICAL RENEWAL

Baptism is the birth in Christ of new brothers and sisters; Confirmation, the anointing of the Holy Spirit which marks these new Christians as mature and responsible members of the family; Penance is the power of Christ which strengthens the family bonds weakened by sin; Matrimony and Holy Orders, sacraments which elevate members to new responsibilities within the family and provide for its continuance and leadership; and the Anointing of the Sick is the solemn prayer of the whole parish for the health of one of its members. Each of these sacraments concerns every member of the parish because they concern his parish family. Every parishioner takes part in the celebration of these sacraments to the full extent that the particular rite will allow.

What is my part in the liturgical renewal? To be a Christian is to be a member of the people of God, and the first duty, the highest privilege -- the entire meaning of God's people -- is that they are united in Christ to praise God with all their abilities and energies, with their whole lives. As a Christian, I can never think of participation as a distraction; public worship is the source and most important part of my life as a member of God's people. I can never decline my part in the worship of my parish on the grounds that I am not good at it, that I can't sing or that I can't seem to pray aloud with others; for it is the liturgy itself which will perfect me in these things, and God has decreed that I should learn to worship him in the Church by actually doing so, week after week.

Genuine liturgical renewal begins with me, and it requires first of all that I renew myself, my own basic attitudes toward God and my fellow man. I must get rid of the idea that I am a Christian because I attend Mass each Sunday, and realize that my life as a Christian depends upon the way I do -- or do not -- accept Christ's invitation to worship the Father with him and all of his people. I must also realize that the offering I make at Mass involves my whole life, as a father, a worker, a citizen, a neighbor; and that I cannot pretend to worship the God whom I do not see so long as I fail to respect and love the neighbors who are all around me.

From my own personal renewal will come the general renewal, the aggiornamento, for which Pope John offered his life and for which the Fathers of Vatican II have laid the groundwork by calling for a renewal in worship. And then Sunday Mass will become in fact what it has always been in theory: the center of Christian life, the living and joyous assembly in which God's people praise him, giving back to him everything they have and everything they are. From this weekly sacrament of unity they go back into the world to live full lives as Christians, as Christ's chosen ones, as God's own people.

--from What is the Liturgical Renewal
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