

Importance of the Rosary



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“Look at the sun!” Lucia cried out. The crowd of seventy thousand people gazed heavenward. The clouds parted and the sun, changing into a gigantic silver disk, began to “dance” in the sky. For several minutes, whirling like a firewheel, it cast forth rainbow-like streamers, reflected in the faces of the people and the surface of the ground and trees. Suddenly, the sun plunged in a zigzag dive toward the crowd below.

Frightened and fearing the world’s end, the people fell on their knees to implore Divine mercy. With a sudden shift, the sun began to climb heavenward to its place in the sky, then assumed its customary brilliance, such that one could no longer gaze directly upon it. This extraordinary phenomenon, lasting some ten minutes and witnessed within a thirty-two mile radius by others not part of the crowd, occurred on October 13, 1917, near Fatima, Portugal.

A Form of Meditation

Our Blessed Lady appeared six times at Fatima to three shepherd children, Lucia dos Santos and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto. In her apparitions, Our Lady urged repentance and prayer, in affirmation of the gospel message, with emphasis on the recitation of the Rosary.

The word “Rosary” comes from the Latin “rosarium,” meaning a garden of roses. It is a form of prayer dating back to the 13th century. To have survived almost 800 years as a Christian devotion is an extraordinary achievement. Indeed, this form of prayer has been sanctioned by Our Lady herself, in her numerous apparitions throughout time.

“Mysteries” of our Redemption

According to tradition, the present form of the Rosary was established by St. Dominic around the year 1208, following a vision of Mary. It soon became a popular Christian prayer and was furthered by other saints such as Catherine of Siena and the writings of various popes, down to Blessed John Paul II. In the 15th century, Bl. Alan de Rupe had visions of Our Lady, in which she promised special favors to those who devoutly recited the Rosary.

More recently, in renowned apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima, Mary again urged the Rosary devotion as a special means of spiritual growth. She herself gave the Fatima children the prayer to be recited at the end of each Rosary decade. The Rosary has sometimes been referred to as “the peoples breviary,” or “the people’s Bible,” because it sums up the important episodes in Our Lord’s life and invites one to contemplate their spiritual and practical applications. These events are so replete with Divine Love that they are referred to in the Rosary as ‘mysteries’ and divided into Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious.

Treasure It!

The fundamental purpose of the Rosary is to bring one closer to our Divine Savior and to enlarge one’s appreciation of the incomprehensible love God has for each of us. Through the Rosary we can enter into intimate contemplation of the Divine plan of Redemption.

Let us then treasure the Rosary and lead others to its benefits. The faithful, contemplative use of this form of prayer will inevitably result in new, enduring, spiritual growth to the point that one can eventually assert, with St. Paul” “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).

In Fatima at the Capelinha, (The Chapel of the Apparitions) in front of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, the Rosary is recited each night by the Shrine visitors, led by a priest or other selected person. The five decades are usually recited in different languages, eg. Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, German, Polish, Korean, etc. depending upon which countries happened to be represented by the crowd.