

AMONG THE PLEASANT RECOLLECTIONS of Our younger days are the Encyclicals which Pope Leo XIII used to write to the whole Catholic world as the month of October drew near, in order to urge the faithful to devout recitation of Mary's rosary during that month in particular. These Encyclicals had varied contents, but they were all very wise, vibrant with fresh inspiration, and directly relevant to the practice of the Christian life. In strong and persuasive terms they exhorted Catholics to pray to God in a spirit of faith through the intercession of Mary, His Virgin Mother, by reciting the holy rosary. For the rosary is a very commendable form of prayer and meditation. In saying it we weave a mystic garland of Ave Maria's, Pater Noster's, and Gloria Patri's. And as we recite these vocal prayers, we meditate upon the principal mysteries of our religion; the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and the Redemption of the human race are proposed, one event after another, for our consideration (http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_jo23gr.htm).

The question must be asked, “Why is Mary in a position to intercede for us” as stated by the many popes. The answer is found in their own writings and doctrines where they state emphatically that Mary was sinless, and this belief is needed to align with their false doctrine of original sin. According to Holweck in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

The formal active essence of original sin was not removed from her soul, as it is removed from others by baptism; it was excluded, it never was in her soul. Simultaneously with the exclusion of sin. The state of original sanctity, innocence, and justice, as opposed to original sin, was conferred upon her, by which gift every stain and fault, all depraved emotions, passions, and debilities, essentially pertaining to original sin, were excluded. But she was not made exempt from the temporal penalties of Adam — from sorrow, bodily infirmities, and death.

The immunity from original sin was given to Mary by a singular exemption from a universal law through the same merits of Christ, by which other men are cleansed from sin by baptism. Mary needed the redeeming Saviour to obtain this exemption, and to be delivered from the universal necessity and debt (debitum) of being subject to original sin. The person of Mary, in consequence of her origin from Adam, should have been subject to sin, but, being the new Eve who was to be the mother of the new Adam, she was, by the eternal counsel of God and by the merits of Christ, withdrawn from the general law of original sin. Her redemption was the very masterpiece of Christ's redeeming wisdom. He is a greater redeemer who pays the debt that it may not be incurred than he who pays after it has fallen on the debtor.

Now let's address the history of Beads. According to Volz in the Catholic Encyclopedia while discussing the “Use of Beads at Prayer”:

“The use of beads among pagans is undoubtedly of greater antiquity than their Christian use; but there is no evidence to show that the latter is derived from the former, any more than there is to establish a relation between Christian devotions and pagan forms of prayer. One sect in India used a chaplet consisting generally of one hundred and eight beads made of the wood of the sacred Tulsi shrub, to tell the names of Vishnu; and another accomplished its invocations of Siva by means of a string of thirty-two or sixty-four berries of the Rudrâksha tree.... Most Hindus continue to wear the beads both for ornament and for use at prayers. Among the Buddhists, whose religion is of Brahminic origin, various prayer-formulas are said or repeated with the aid of beads made of wood, berries, coral, amber, or precious metals and stones. A string of beads cut from the bones of some holy lama is especially valued...”

The Moslems use a string of ninety-nine (or one hundred) beads called the subha or tasbih, on which they recite the "beautiful" names or attributes of Allah. It is divided into three equal parts either by a bead or special shape or size, or by a tassel of gold or silk thread. The use of these Islamic beads appears to have been established as early as the ninth century independently of Buddhistic influences. Some critics have thought the Mohammedan chaplet is kindred to a Jewish form of one hundred blessings. The beads in general use are said to be often made of the sacred clay of Mecca or Medina. Among travellers; records of prayer beads is the famous instance, by Marco Polo, of the King of Malabar, who wore a fine silk thread strung with one hundred and four large pearls and rubies, on which he was wont to pray to his idols. Alexander Von Humboldt is also quoted as finding prayer beads, called Quipos, among the native Peruvians.



How to recite the Holy Rosary

1. SAY THESE PRAYERS...

IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. *(As you say this, with your right hand touch your forehead when you say Father, touch your breastbone when you say Son, touch your left shoulder when you say Holy, and touch your right shoulder when you say Spirit.)*

I BELIEVE IN GOD, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OUR FATHER, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O MY JESUS, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN, mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

O GOD, WHOSE only-begotten Son by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCE *each mystery by saying something like, "The third Joyful Mystery is the Birth of Our Lord." This is required only when saying the Rosary in a group.*

2. IN THIS ORDER...

INTRODUCTION
1. IN THE NAME...
2. I BELIEVE IN GOD...
3. OUR FATHER...
4. HAIL MARY...
5. HAIL MARY...
6. HAIL MARY...
7. GLORY BE...
8. O MY JESUS...

THE FIRST DECADE
9. ANNOUNCE...
10. OUR FATHER...
11. HAIL MARY...
12. HAIL MARY...
13. HAIL MARY...
14. HAIL MARY...
15. HAIL MARY...
16. HAIL MARY...
17. HAIL MARY...
18. HAIL MARY...
19. HAIL MARY...
20. HAIL MARY...
21. GLORY BE...
22. O MY JESUS...

THE SECOND DECADE
23. ANNOUNCE...
24. OUR FATHER...
25. HAIL MARY...
26. HAIL MARY...
27. HAIL MARY...
28. HAIL MARY...
29. HAIL MARY...
30. HAIL MARY...
31. HAIL MARY...
32. HAIL MARY...
33. HAIL MARY...
34. HAIL MARY...
35. GLORY BE...
36. O MY JESUS...

THE THIRD DECADE
37. ANNOUNCE...
38. OUR FATHER...
39. HAIL MARY...
40. HAIL MARY...
41. HAIL MARY...
42. HAIL MARY...
43. HAIL MARY...
44. HAIL MARY...
45. HAIL MARY...
46. HAIL MARY...
47. HAIL MARY...
48. HAIL MARY...
49. GLORY BE...
50. O MY JESUS...

THE FOURTH DECADE
51. ANNOUNCE...
52. OUR FATHER...
53. HAIL MARY...
54. HAIL MARY...
55. HAIL MARY...
56. HAIL MARY...
57. HAIL MARY...
58. HAIL MARY...
59. HAIL MARY...
60. HAIL MARY...
61. HAIL MARY...
62. HAIL MARY...
63. GLORY BE...
64. O MY JESUS...

THE FIFTH DECADE
65. ANNOUNCE...
66. OUR FATHER...
67. HAIL MARY...
68. HAIL MARY...
69. HAIL MARY...
70. HAIL MARY...
71. HAIL MARY...
72. HAIL MARY...
73. HAIL MARY...
74. HAIL MARY...
75. HAIL MARY...
76. HAIL MARY...
77. GLORY BE...
78. O MY JESUS...

CONCLUSION
79. HAIL HOLY QUEEN...
80. O GOD, WISE...
81. IN THE NAME...

3. WHILE TOUCHING THESE BEADS TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS...



4. AND SILENTLY MEDITATING ON THESE "MYSTERIES", OR EVENTS FROM THE LIVES OF JESUS AND MARY...

On Monday and Saturday, meditate on the "Joyful Mysteries"

First Decade (Steps 9-22): The Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
Second Decade (Steps 23-36): The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)
Third Decade (Steps 37-50): The Birth of Our Lord (Luke 2:1-21)
Fourth Decade (Steps 51-64): The Presentation of Our Lord (Luke 2:22-38)
Fifth Decade (Steps 65-78): The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

On Thursday, meditate on the "Luminous Mysteries"

First Decade: The Baptism of Our Lord in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:13-16)
Second Decade: The Wedding at Cana, when Christ manifested Himself (Jn 2:1-11)
Third Decade: The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15)
Fourth Decade: The Transfiguration of Our Lord (Matthew 17:1-8)
Fifth Decade: The Last Supper, when Our Lord gave us the Holy Eucharist (Mt 26)

On Tuesday and Friday, meditate on the "Sorrowful Mysteries"

First Decade: The Agony of Our Lord in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-56)
Second Decade: Our Lord is Scourged at the Pillar (Matthew 27:26)
Third Decade: Our Lord is Crowned with Thorns (Matthew 27:27-31)
Fourth Decade: Our Lord Carries the Cross to Calvary (Matthew 27:32)
Fifth Decade: The Crucifixion of Our Lord (Matthew 27:33-56)

On Wednesday and Sunday, meditate on the "Glorious Mysteries"

First Decade: The Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord (John 20:1-29)
Second Decade: The Ascension of Our Lord (Luke 24:36-53)
Third Decade: The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41)
Fourth Decade: The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
Fifth Decade: The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

You are encouraged to copy and distribute this sheet.

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Holy Water

Another practice which came from paganism is the use of Holy Water. Regarding the use and origin of Holy Water, Henri Leclercq states in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

The use of holy water in the earliest days of the Christian Era is attested by documents of only comparatively late date. The "Apostolic Constitutions", the redaction of which goes back to about the year 400, attribute to the Apostle St. Matthew the precept of using holy water. The letter written under the name of Pope Alexander I, who lived in the second century, is apocryphal and of more recent times; hence the first historical testimony does not go back beyond the fifth century. However, it is permissible to suppose for the sake of argument that, in the earliest Christian times, water was used for expiatory and purificatory purposes, to a way analogous to its employment under the Jewish Law. As, in many cases, the water used for the Sacrament of Baptism was flowing water, sea or river water, it could not receive the same blessing as that contained in the baptisteries.

The Catholic Church has admitted by their own theological scholars that the use of "holy water" was used among pagans, and that their own historical documents do not show how its use was adopted by the Catholic Church. However, this is known, the Catholic Church throughout the ages has adopted and adapted their own practices to those of whom they are trying to convert in order to make the process easier and more appealing to the convert. This appears to be one of those practices adopted, which has no scriptural basis or authority.

Alchemy & Astrology

Recounting the acceptance and use of astrology in the Catholic Church, Maximilian Jacobi stated in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

In Petrarch's day the questionable activity of the astrologers at the Italian courts had made such progress that this clear-sighted Humanist (*De remed. utr. form.* I, iii, sqq; *Epist. rer. famil.*, III; 8, etc.) again and again attacked astrology and its representatives with the keenest weapons of his wit, though without success, and even without any following except the weak objections of Villani and the still more ineffectual polemics of Salutato in his didactic poem "*De fato et fortunâ*". Emperors and popes became votaries of astrology-- the Emperors Charles IV and V, and Popes Sixtus IV, Julius II, Leo X, and Paul III. When these rulers lived astrology was, so to say, the regulator of official life; it is a fact characteristic of the age, that at the papal and imperial courts ambassadors were not received in audience until the court astrologer had been consulted.

Again, this brings up the Question based on the claim of Papal infallibility. How is it that Popes Sixtus IV, Julius II, Leo X, and Paul III were incorrect on their beliefs of astrology and yet at the same time infallible? Clearly the answer is "they were not infallible" and this

determination is made on the current status of astrology by the Catholic Church. Jacobi state "There was no room in the early Christian Church for followers of this pseudo-science" (Jacobi). Catholicism's own theologians declare the early church rejected the use of astrology, and the Catholic Church today also rejects its validity.

Christmas & Holidays

Paganism also found its way into Catholicism in the form of holidays. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, Martindale states:

The word for Christmas in late Old English is Cristes Maesse, the Mass of Christ, first found in 1038, and Cristes-messe, in 1131. In Dutch it is Kerstmis, in Latin Dies Natalis, whence comes the French Noël, and Italian Il natale; in German Weihnachtsfest, from the preceding sacred vigil. The term Yule is of disputed origin. It is unconnected with any word meaning "wheel". The name in Anglo-Saxon was geol, feast: geola, the name of a month (cf. Icelandic iol a feast in December).

Regarding the origin of the date December 25th, Martindale further states:

Concerning the date of Christ's birth the Gospels give no help; upon their data contradictory arguments are based. The census would have been impossible in winter: a whole population could not then be put in motion. Again, in winter it must have been; then only field labour was suspended. But Rome was not thus considerate. Authorities moreover differ as to whether shepherds could or would keep flocks exposed during the nights of the rainy season.

The well-known solar feast, however, of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date. For the history of the solar cult, its position in the Roman Empire, and syncretism with Mithraism, see Cumont's epoch-making "Textes et Monuments" etc., I, ii, 4, 6, p. 355. Mommsen (Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, 12, p. 338) has collected the evidence for the feast, which reached its climax of popularity under Aurelian in 274. Filippo del Torre in 1700 first saw its importance; it is marked, as has been said, without addition in Philocalus' Calendar.

The earliest rapprochement of the births of Christ and the sun is in Cyprian, "De pasch. Comp.", xix, "O quam præclare providentia ut illo die quo natus est Sol . . . nasceretur Christus." — "O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born . . . Christ should be born.

Martindale then concludes with his own theory that paganism did indeed lead to the current date for the celebration of Christmas.

The present writer is inclined to think that, be the origin of the feast in East or West, and though the abundance of analogous midwinter festivals may indefinitely have helped the choice of the December date, the same instinct which set *Natalis Invicti* at the winter solstice will have sufficed, apart from deliberate adaptation or curious calculation, to set the Christian feast there too.

Martindale further gives the origin of the nativity scene and the Christmas tree.

St. Francis of Assisi in 1223 originated the crib of today by laicizing a hitherto ecclesiastical custom, henceforward extra-liturgical and popular. The presence of ox and ass is due to a misinterpretation of Isaiah 1:3 and Habakkuk 3:2 ("Itala" version), though they appear in the unique fourth-century "Nativity" discovered in the St. Sebastian catacombs in 1877. The ass on which Balaam rode in the Reims mystery won for the feast the title *Festum Asinorum* (Ducange, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Festum*).

Gervase of Tilbury (thirteenth century) says that in England grain is exposed on Christmas night to gain fertility from the dew which falls in response to "*Rorate Cæli*"; the tradition that trees and flowers blossomed on this night is first quoted from an Arab geographer of the tenth century, and extended to England. In a thirteenth-century French epic, candles are seen on the flowering tree. In England it was Joseph of Arimathea's rod which flowered at Glastonbury and elsewhere; when 3 September became 14 September, in 1752, 2000 people watched to see if the Quainton thorn (*cratagus præcox*) would blow on Christmas New Style; and as it did not, they refused to keep the New Style festival. From this belief of the calends practice of greenery decorations (forbidden by Archbishop Martin of Braga, c. 575, P.L., LXXIII — mistletoe was bequeathed by the Druids) developed the Christmas tree, first definitely mentioned in 1605 at Strasburg, and introduced into France and England in 1840 only, by Princess Helena of Mecklenburg and the Prince Consort respectively.

Review Questions

Question 1) Who is invoked while praying the rosary? How does this compare to 1 Timothy 2:5?

Question 2) Discuss the Catholic doctrine of original sin and its impact that such would have on the birth of Jesus. Consider this in regards to the doctrine of Mary and her "exemption" from sin (doesn't one lie, if kept, always lead to another?). Does the Bible teach "original sin" (cf. Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 19:14)?

Question 3) In regards to rosary beads: is the mode of certain forms of worship acceptable because it is: Ancient? Globally Accepted? Multicultural? Can you find an example in the Bible where an Apostle used or commanded the use of rosary beads? How

do rosary beads and their use relate to the following scriptures: Matthew 6:7; 3 John 11; Romans 10:1 (prayer=heart's desire (cf. Philippians 4:6)?

Question 4) Explain the confidence one could truly hold in a practice such as the use of Holy Water given the following statement: "it is permissible to suppose for the sake of argument that, in the earliest Christian times, water was used for...". Is the use of Holy Water found in the scriptures or even in early writings by those of the first and second century (even though such writings are not authoritative, but may be claimed to be by some such as Catholics)? Could one use "Holy Water" and be carrying out Colossians 3:17?

Question 5) What is the actual origin of these holidays (HOLYdays)? If one celebrates them in his/her mind with no connection to paganism nor as days obligated for Christian observance, is sin committed? Discuss how these holidays may be avoided by some (based upon their upbringing/understanding), yet celebrated as family days of giving and fellowship totally removed from paganistic roots and without any connection to Christian worship by others (cf. Romans 14:19–15:1).



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March 2014

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