



The rosary – pray it, don't just say it, priest exhorts

By Matt Hadro

Catholics praying the rosary must rediscover the contemplative nature of the prayer and not just recite it speedily if they wish for it to truly transform their lives, said a Dominican priest in the nation's capital.

"It [the rosary] will produce – if prayed correctly – a lot of grace in our personal lives," said Fr. Basil Cole, O.P. However, in the past few decades, "it wasn't taught. It was just simply said...it was therefore not devotional, it did not bring grace."

Fr. Cole is a professor of moral, spiritual, and dogmatic theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. He has written and spoken about the rosary and previously served as the temporary head of the Rosary Center in Portland, Oregon.

Fr. Cole spoke with CNA on Oct. 7, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The feast dates back to 1571, when a Christian naval alliance gained a decisive victory against a large Turkish armada threatening the coasts of Europe.

Pope St. Pius V, who urged Catholics to pray the rosary before the battle, attributed the victory

to the Blessed Mother's intercession and established the feast of Our Lady of Victory, later changed to the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The rosary has always been a powerful prayer against evil, but if more Catholics prayed it and prayed it correctly, "we wouldn't have had the problems we've had" in the past 40 years, Fr. Cole said.

"We would have inoculated ourselves against the world, the flesh, and the devil," he stated, and many Catholics would have better understood "the difficult doctrines of the Church."

The old adage "the family that prays together, stays together" isn't necessarily true, he added, because real prayer must come from the heart and mind.

"I have heard many confessions of many people who have prayed the rosary as a family, and after a while they hated the rosary because they didn't know how to pray it correctly. They rushed it, rushed it very quickly. They said it as if it were a speeding train. They didn't think about the mysteries. They didn't ponder them," he said.

Focusing on the various roles of the Blessed Virgin Mary while praying the rosary can foster true contemplation, Fr. Cole explained.

"I would try to get people to start thinking about the importance of the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary as queen, as mother, as Mediatrix, as Redemptrix," he said, "as someone who is the New Eve. What does it mean to be the New Eve? As Eve brought death, Mary brought life."

"And also, Mary is the cause of the cause of redemption. The cause of the cause of salvation," he continued. "Now when you start thinking about these truths of faith and these theological conclusions about the Blessed Mother, it stimulates your mind to contemplate while you're saying the rosary, the Hail Marys."

Fr. Cole offered some practical advice for individuals and families who want to pray the rosary well.

For instance, a family could pause deliberately before each mystery of the rosary to think about the lives of Mary and Jesus contained in that mystery. Or they could offer up a decade for a specific intention.

Individuals could pray separate decades of the rosary throughout the day and thus have more time to focus on each one.

In a sense, Fr. Cole said, it would be better to pray one decade slowly and thoughtfully, with time to truly reflect on it, than it would be to rush through an entire rosary.

"Scatter it throughout the day, a decade here, a decade there....Ponder it and be quiet. But alas, we're afraid of solitude and quiet."

Many in the world have lost the sense of contemplation, he added, but if it is recovered, prayer could greatly strengthen individuals and families.

“If it [the rosary] is done correctly, wow it can really strengthen a marriage. Because in a marriage, you have to face trials and difficulties. You need patience and kindness,” he said, adding that the “graces that the rosary offers us are there.”

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