

Even if we live in countries or in places where such public signal is not given, nevertheless, as this pious exercise is strongly recommended by the Church, and several Popes have granted many spiritual favors and indulgences to those who daily and devoutly practise it, let us be careful to say this prayer with great devotion every day in the morning, at noon, and in the evening (The Transl.)

**64.** Why do we say this prayer?

1. To give thanks to God for the Incarnation of Christ; and 2. To honor the Blessed Virgin, and to recommend ourselves to her protection.

**65.** What is the *Rosary*?

It is a very useful and easy form of prayer, mental as well as vocal, which was introduced by St. Dominic in the thirteenth century, was approved by the Church, and has, since then, always been practised and recommended by her.

This form of prayer is called *Rosary* because it is, as it were, a *chaplet* of the most beautiful prayers and meditations, wherein the principal mysteries of our religion are wreathed like fragrant *roses*. Hence the name. It is divided into three parts, each part consisting of five Mysteries. The first five are called the *Joyful Mysteries*; the next five, the *Dolorous* or *Sorrowful Mysteries*; and the last five, the *Glorious Mysteries*. It is true that in the *Rosary* the same salutation is often repeated; but this ought not to surprise us more than that, in Psalm cxxxv. the words, '*His mercy endureth for ever,*' are repeated twenty-seven times; or that the Angels in Heaven incessantly sing, '*Holy, holy, holy.*' Nor ought this practice to appear tedious to us, since the mind is, in the mean time, to be occupied with the contemplation of the Holy Mysteries.

The titles of honor, which are given to our Blessed Lady in the Litany of Loretto, as *Mystical Rose*, *Tower of David*, *Morning Star*, etc., are symbolical expressions taken from the Holy Scripture, and are applied to her on account of the eminent privileges and graces conferred on her.

*Application.* Honor the Blessed Virgin in a most particular and childlike manner. Implore her assistance in all your necessities and concerns, and strive eagerly to imitate her charity, patience, purity, and other virtues.

ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND CEREMONIES IN GENERAL, AND ON SOME IN PARTICULAR.

**1.** What do we understand by *Religious Ceremonies*?

By *Religious Ceremonies* we understand certain significant signs or actions, which the Church has established for the celebration of the Divine Service.

**2.** Why is the instruction on *Prayer* followed here by the explanation of *Religious Practices and Ceremonies*?

1. Because Religious Ceremonies have been instituted to give praise and glory to God, no less than Prayer itself; and 2. Because they help us to elevate our souls to God and to the contemplation of Divine things, and consequently to pray with attention and devotion.

**3.** How do Ceremonies help us to elevate our souls to God and Divine things?

They help us, 1. Because they render the Divine Service more solemn, and thereby captivate our attention, and draw it from earthly objects to God; and 2. Because they represent in a visible manner before our eyes mysteries invisible in themselves, and thereby render it easier for us to meditate on them.

**4.** Are not Ceremonies idle Observances?

Not at all; for, 1. God Himself prescribed, under severe penalties, several kinds of Ceremonies to the Jews; 2. Christ our Lord also used various Ceremonies; and 3. He Himself instituted sacramental signs or Ceremonies.

1. See the Book of Leviticus. 2. For instance, when He healed the man that was deaf and dumb (Mark vii.); when He gave sight to the man born blind (John ix.); when He breathed on His disciples, and imparted to them the Holy Ghost (John xx.) 3. When He instituted the Holy Eucharist, Baptism, etc.

**5.** But must we not adore God in spirit and in truth? (John iv. 24).



By all means; and therefore the Church wishes that we should not merely assist at the Ceremonies, but also understand their meaning, and accompany them with prayer and pious sentiments.

6. Have, then, all Religious Ceremonies a meaning?

Yes; all things which the Church makes use of for celebrating the Divine Service have a mystical signification, and are intended to excite our souls to lively sentiments of devotion.

The Ceremonies of Baptism, see pages 250 and 251; of Confirmation, pages 254 to 256; of the Mass, pages 263 to 268; of the Blessing of water, salt, oil, etc., see pages 308, 310, etc.

7. But are there not also Religious Ceremonies and Practices which are useless and superfluous?

No; that which the holy infallible Church ordains, approves, or practises, cannot but be useful and salutary, because she is always guided by the Holy Ghost.

8. What is, then, the use of *Incense*?

Incense is an emblem of reverence and of prayer which should ascend to Heaven as a sweet odor before God (Ps. cxl. 2).

9. What do the *Lighted Candles* signify?

They signify Faith which enlightens, Hope which soars above this world, and Charity which inflames; and they recall also to our mind those times of persecution when the Christians celebrated the Divine Service in Catacombs or subterranean caverns.

10. What do the Candles blessed on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary especially call to our mind?

The words of Simeon, that Jesus is 'a Light to the revelation of the Gentiles,'<sup>1</sup> and that we also are to walk as 'children of the Light' (Luke ii. 32; Ephes. v. 8).

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, a Light to be revealed to the Gentiles, or to lighten the Gentiles (The Transl.)

11. What does the *Paschal Candle* remind us of?

It reminds us of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, who rescued us from the servitude of Satan, as formerly the pillar of fire led the Children of Israel out of the bondage of the Egyptians (Exod. xiv. 20).

12. What do the *Ashes* blessed on Ash-Wednesday call to our remembrance?

That we should humble ourselves, and sincerely repent; therefore the Priest, whilst he puts ashes on our heads, says: 'Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return' (Gen. iii. 19).

Ashes were even in the Old Testament an emblem of penance and humility.—Examples: The Ninivites, Judith, Esther, etc.

13. What do the *Palms* on Palm-Sunday call to our mind?

The triumphant entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem, and His victory over Hell; and that we also should strive to gain the palm of eternal life.

14. For what end are *Public Supplications* and *Processions* made?

1. To praise God also publicly, to thank Him, to draw down, by our prayers, His protection and blessing upon town and country, and to avert His chastisements;

2. To proclaim the victory and triumph of the Catholic Religion, for which purpose the Cross and Banner precede; and

3. To remind us that we are but pilgrims in this world, and that we should constantly walk before God.

We meet with examples of such Public Supplications and Processions as early as the most ancient times of Christianity.

15. What should we think of *Pilgrimages*?

When they are made according to the intentions of the Church, they are certainly much to be commend-



ed; nay, they are even confirmed by the example of the Saints, and by the Indulgences of the Church.

It is true that God is, and hears us, everywhere; nevertheless, He may be more disposed to hear us in certain places, as well as at certain times. Moreover, in Places of Pilgrimage there are many things calculated to excite us to pray with greater fervor and confidence, and, therefore, with more chances of being heard. Should abuses intervene, not the Pilgrimages, but the abuses, should be condemned.

**16.** How does the Church wish Pilgrimages to be made?

The Church wishes, 1. That we should not neglect for them the urgent duties of our state or profession; 2. That we should have a good intention; 3. That we should well employ the time engaged in them, and patiently endure the hardships which attend them; and 4. That we should pray fervently at the Holy Place, and, if possible, go there to Confession and Communion.

**17.** Have Pilgrimages long been in use?

They were in use even under the Old Law, where we see that, by an express command of God, the Israelites went on a pilgrimage to the Temple of Jerusalem, as did also Jesus and Mary. And the first Christians went frequently to the place where Christ lived and suffered, and to the tombs of the Apostles and holy Martyrs.

**18.** What are *Confraternities*?

They are pious Associations, generally approved of by the Popes, and established for the purposes of mutual prayer, encouragement, and assistance in the performance of good works and the frequentation of the Sacraments.

Since Confraternities conduce much to holiness of life, when the rules—which, however, as such, do not bind under pain of any sin—are well kept, the Church has granted them ample Indulgences; yet all are free to apply or not for admittance into them.

*Application.* Participate with great devotion in the Religious Practices and Ceremonies of the Church, and never suffer yourself to be diverted from them either by the mockery or example of impious or thoughtless people.

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## RECAPITULATION.

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**1.** *Our Religion is Divine.*

This is proved by her History from the Creation of the world to the present time; viz., by her age, her Founder, her propagation, her duration, her blessings, and fruits, etc. (See *Short History of Religion*, pages 7-66).

**2.** *This our Divine Religion teaches.*

That we are in this world in order that we may serve God in this life, and be eternally happy with Him hereafter in Heaven. (See *Catech. of the Catholic Religion*, pages 67-69.) For this end we must,

1. *Believe* all that God has revealed (70-153).

2. Keep all the *Commandments* which God has given us either Himself (pages 158-208) or through His Church (pages 209-219); consequently, also avoid *Sin*, by which the Divine Command is broken (pages 220-227), and strive to lead a *virtuous life* (pages 228-237). But this we cannot do without the *Grace* of God (pages 238-245).

Therefore we must also,

3. Make use of the *Means of Grace* which God has ordained; namely, the *Sacraments* (pages 245-310) and *Prayer* (pages 311-326).

THE END.



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