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Contemplating the Rosary through Art and Scripture

In the first centuries of Christianity, not many people were literate and neither were there many copies of the Bible in circulation. However, this didn't prevent them from contemplating the mysteries of our faith, thanks to the work of many artists who depicted stories from both the Old and the New Testament. These were often found in the Catacombs, and later in Churches and even on the streets and squares of the cities, once Christianity

ceased to be a persecuted religion.

10/11/2022

Interestingly, as people became more learned and could read Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers for themselves, one would expect a lesser reliance on pictures to access the deepest mysteries of Christianity. This was not the case and the opposite happened. Artists dedicated themselves even more to the task of translating words into images with deeper levels of meaning and interpretation. There was a proliferation of sacred art and rightly so, since our faith must be lived in the pattern of the Incarnation, materialising the most spiritual things as the Sacraments do.

For this reason, the mysteries of the Holy Rosary are rightfully contemplated in both art and scripture, which make the deeds of Christ visible to our physical eyes and the eyes of our faith. As St. John Paul II said in his letter to artists, “The biblical word has become image, music and poetry, evoking the mystery of “the Word made flesh” in the language of art.”

To help you contemplate the mysteries of the Rosary in this month of October, when Christians practice with more fervour this ancient devotion, we have prepared a booklet with a compilation of sacred images and scriptural references to the Mysteries. It has a short introduction on how to use the booklet, which basically entails letting your imagination wander as you stare at a sacred image, making short acts of prayer. This way, you can accompany each mystery with

some considerations and resolutions after looking at an image or reading a quote from Scripture.

For example, you can look at the painting of the Annunciation and think of how lovely it must be to speak face to face with our Lady, kneeling so close to her as the Angel did. Or you can read the words, “But she was greatly troubled at the saying and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be,” and ask for the gift of humility, especially when others speak well of you.

We hope that it will help you grow in your devotion to our Lady and of course, to Our Lord, to whom all prayer seeks to join us. As St. John Paul II said in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*: “With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face

of Christ and to experience the depths of his love.”

And as St. Josemaría wrote in his book *Holy Rosary*, “The beginning of the way, at the end of which you will find yourself completely carried away with love for Jesus, is a confident love for Mary.”

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