



# Faith in 52

A yearlong parish retreat based on the work *I Believe in Love*  
by Father Jean C. J. d'Elbee

*Week 50: October 14th through October 20th, 2013*

## For Individuals

(pages 264-266 of the book *I Believe in Love*, from "Always go to Jesus..." to the ☩ symbol.)

### **STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER**

1. Speaking to the Holy Spirit, say: "*O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that You ask of me, and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Only show me what is Your will*" (Cardinal Mercier).

### **STEP 2: PRAYERFUL READING**

1. Prayerfully read ONLY the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*.
2. While reading, pay careful attention to the phrases, ideas, or images that might bring about comfort or even those that are challenging. Rest on these a while and speak with the Lord about them, receive His graces, and ponder what has been laid out before you.

### **STEP 3: MEDITATION**

1. Keeping your imagination quiet, figuratively or literally shutting your eyes to all the things of sense, and closing your ears to all the sounds of earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, do the following:
  - "I hide myself under her mantle, I nestle in her arms, on her heart, blending my love with the love of the Father, her Father, for her; with the love of Jesus, her Son, for her; with the love of the Holy Spirit, her Spouse, for her; with the love of the Holy Spirit, her Spouse, for her. Everything is tenderness, gentleness, mercy; everything is shared; everything is love" (p. 265). To be close to Mary is to be immersed into the heart of the Trinity. Ask the Blessed Mother to hold you in her arms. What does she look like? What is her complexion, the color of her eyes, and the length of her hair? What is it like to be in her presence, to be held close to her Immaculate Heart, to be cradled, caressed and kissed by the Mother of God? What is the timbre of her voice and what does she say to you? Ask Mary to take you into the Sacred Heart of her Son, Jesus.
  - When in your life have you been close to Mary or far from her? Does your proximity to the Blessed Mother correspond to your nearness to Christ? Do you have an excessive love of Mary, loving her more than Jesus? Or do you suffer from indifference and not love her enough? Have you ever considered making what St. Louis Marie de Montfort called the Total Consecration to Mary, to give your whole self to Jesus through Mary?
  - Say to Jesus with all devotion and love: "You are my all; You are my way; You are my truth; You are my life, the life of my life, the soul of my soul" (p. 266).
  - Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■

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## The Graces of the Rosary

Windthorst, a German, was invited one time by certain friends not practicing the Faith, to show them his beads; it was a joke; they had previously taken them from his left pocket. Windthorst, not having found them in his left pocket, put his hand in his right pocket and came out the victor. He always had an extra rosary! Cristoforo Gluck, a great musician, during court receptions in Vienna, used to go apart a few minutes to recite his rosary....

Why do I give these examples of people reciting the rosary? Because the rosary is contested by some. They say: it is a prayer that is infantile, superstitious, and not worthy of a Christian adult. Or else, it is a prayer that is automatic, reduced to a hasty repetition of Ave Marias, monotonous and boring.

The crisis of the rosary is in second place. Before that, it is the crisis in prayer in general today. People are all taken up in material interests. One thinks little about the soul.... Donoso Cortés said, "The world is in a bad way because there are more battles than prayers...."



*The Virgin of the Rosary (detail)*  
by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

To be, for a half hour at least, before God as I am in reality, with all my misery and with the best of myself; to let rise to the surface from the depths of my being the child I once was, who wants to laugh, to chatter, to love the Lord, and who sometimes feels the need to cry so that he may be shown mercy, helps me to pray. The rosary, a simple and easy prayer, helps me to be a child and I am not ashamed at all.

I come to another objection. The rosary is a prayer of repetition? Father de Foucauld said, "Love is expressed with few words, always the same and always repeated."

- from Pope John Paul I, *Humilitas*, English Edition, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, Dec., 2012, Ray and Laretta Seabeck, Ed., Mother Teresa, O.C.D., Lori Pieper, Trs. (Beverton, OR: Missionary Servants of Pope John Paul I). ■

## The Rosary as Contemplation by St. John Paul II

The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without this contemplative dimension, it would lose its meaning, as Pope Paul VI clearly pointed out: "Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas, in violation of the admonition of Christ: 'In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words' (Mt 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are disclosed".(14)

It is worth pausing to consider this profound insight of Paul VI, in order to bring out certain aspects of the Rosary which show that it is really a form of Christocentric contemplation.

- from *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Oct. 16, 2002), §12. ■

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## For Group Sharing

(pages 264-266 of the book *I Believe in Love*, from “Always go to Jesus...” to the ☮ symbol.)

### **STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER**

1. Gathering with your spouse, family, or a group of friends at a time of your choosing, though preferably on the following Sunday, make the Sign of the Cross and then say together to the Holy Spirit: “Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, your well-beloved Spouse.”

### **STEP 2: PUBLIC READING**

1. Depute or invite a competent reader among the group to read aloud the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*. All should be encouraged to listen attentively; any distractions, i.e., cell phones, televisions, etc., should be turned off or removed during this time.

### **STEP 3: PRAYERFUL DISCUSSION**

1. After the public reading, someone should facilitate the public discussion. This facilitator should read aloud the questions below. Considering the constraints of time or the particular audience, not every question need be asked nor discussed. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you when in doubt.
  2. Everyone may speak but should not speak over others, should not dominate the conversation, and should not ridicule others. All should try to be like Christ who is “gentle and humble of heart.” Moreover, all should be asked to keep confidential the contents of the discussion. No one should reveal more than what they feel comfortable sharing or be forced to speak.
- If Jesus chooses and loves Mary, should we not love what and whom Jesus loves?
  - Catholics are sometimes criticized that they love

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*The Nativity (detail) by Petrus Christus*

### **Mother of the Sabbath**

Our Lady did not have that downward pull that we have, but she still had choices, and she could have wrong ones or right ones. She could have insisted after the finding in the Temple that Jesus explain what he meant. She could have said, “I am your Mother, and I have got to get this straight. I don’t understand what you are talking about.” But she preferred, she chose, to accept what was to her not understandable, and to return to her humble home and to go about her duties and to ponder these things in her heart. She made her own choice to allow

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Mary more than Jesus. Is this criticism true in your experience? Is Mary more accessible than Jesus? Why not? What do you think is the proof of appropriate, balanced, authentic Marian spirituality?

- Why is it the “surest way, the most direct way, the sweetest way” to go to Jesus through Mary (p. 264)? To Whom does Mary always lead us? Why is she the perfect educator to teach us about Jesus (p. 265-266)?
- “Each morning at Mass... put Jesus on the altar of the wounded heart of Mary, the Mother of the Church” (p. 265). Have you ever spiritually detected the specific presence of Mary at Mass or in your times of prayer? What is she like?
- What is your favorite set of mysteries of the Rosary and why? What is your favorite mystery of the Rosary? Why are you attracted to or disinterested in praying the Rosary? Have you ever received any particular graces by praying the Rosary?
- What does the expression mean: “Love always says the same things, yet never repeats itself” (p. 265)?
- “He is not loved because He is not known” (p. 266). Is it enough to simply catechize people about the Catholic Faith and to explain its doctrines? What more might be needed? How have you come to “know” Jesus? Are there different levels of “knowing” Jesus? Could it also be said that “He is not known because He is not loved”?

## STEP 4: CLOSING PRAYER

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with the *Hail Mary* prayer:

**H**ail 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. ■

*Mother of the Sabbath* (Continued from page 3)

him to fulfill all that was involved in his Passion. And she did not, when she met him on the way of the cross, lapse into hysterical sobbing, nor did she demand that this should be stopped. She chose the will of God and she chose it freely - again, we say, unencumbered by the downward pull of concupiscence that we know so well, but still a woman quite capable of doing right or wrong, or doing good or better or best.

It is very important that we do not allow our Lady to be distanced from us by her Immaculate Conception, but to be brought closer to us. She is the one to teach us poor sinners because she is called the Refuge of Sinners. Our Lord did not give her to Saint John and say, “Now I am giving her to you, and she is the Mother of all the flawlessly holy ones.” But he gave her to be the Mother of all persons... and he knew what was in man, what is in each one of us, our weaknesses as well as strengths.

- from *Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., Come, Lord Jesus: Meditations on the Art of Waiting* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2010). ■



## Last Eucharistic “Hour of Power” in English

- FRIDAY, Nov. 8th, 7-8 p.m., St. Peter McMahan Hall

## Last Parish Dessert Potluck

- FRIDAY, Nov. 8th, 8-9 p.m., Upper Room Library