

THE THIRD ORDER

Of the Society of St. Pius X



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jordiestephens@hotmail.com

Phone: [61] 2/95677088

Fax: [61] 2/ 95673228

280 West Botany St. Rockdale,
Sydney, Australia

Dear Postulants and Professed members,

If you have been faithful to your 3rd Order Rule, this last month should have seen you send at least 1,500 Hail Mary's to the Queen of Heaven, and 4,500 if you have been doing all 15 Mysteries daily!

There is much to be said in favour of short prayers, such as are the "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and "Glory Be", let alone much shorter aspiratory prayers such as "Blessed be God" or merely "Jesus". It doesn't even seem to merely be the fact that 1 long non-repetitive prayer (which Our Lady *could* have given us instead of the repetitions making up our Rosary) would require so much time to learn, that Our Lady willed Her favourite prayer to be a series of repetitions.

Have you noticed how much more difficult it is to concentrate on the devout recital of, for eg. the prayer to St Joseph (a beautiful prayer by the way) as compared to the "Hail Mary"? The brevity and simplicity (not to mention half of its content being the inspired words of Scripture) of the latter seems to lend itself more to devout concentration. Few would deny that for most of us, the shorter and simpler the prayer, the easier it is to put all of our mind, will and affection into its recital.

"And when you are praying, speak not much" said Our Lord (Matt 6:7). These words are certainly not a condemnation of repetitive prayer ("and He prayed the *third* time, saying the *selfsame* words"-Matt 26:44), and while it *is* of course primarily a criticism of long merely external prayers which pretend to inform God of something He didn't already know, we might also see some practical wisdom here: frequent repetition of long complex prayers have less for the heart than short and simple ones. If we try to dwell upon too many ideas when at prayer, no matter how profound they are, they leave our will at a loss for something to cast its affections upon. The passionate Magdalene needed but to hear "Mary" from the mouth of her Saviour for her will to be engulfed with the flames of love. Her "Rabboni" expressed all the multifaceted affections of a loving will.

The word **Agony** comes from the greek word for a "conflict". What possible conflict could God Himself have to face? He is infinitely happy, and all His adversaries owe their very existence to Him! A pure spirit, as both we and God are, cannot die: but how much more does this apply to God, an **uncreated** and **infinite** spirit? And yet, it has been said that if it *were* possible for God to die, it is mortal sin that would kill Him. "My soul is sorrowful even unto death" said Christ to His soon-to-be-sleeping-and-denying first pope, and the 2 sons of thunder. A mother feels the burden of the sinful and wayward life of her child, and what must have been Our Lord's burden and disgust when engulfed by the countless billions of revolting sins committed by His ungrateful creatures? The devil doesn't know the future, but he *does* know human nature, and he probably whispered "it is useless, most won't care". But divine charity loves without measure, and is heedless of its reciprocation.

The **Scourging** is entirely passed over in Scripture, leaving us with the mere "and having scourged Jesus". Divine Providence has left it to private revelation¹ to give the details of this brutal flagellation. To have a heightened sense of this scene, look at it through the eyes of Our Lady. There before Her was the innocent Son She had borne, tenderly nursed and loved with Her whole being. He is shamefully stripped, and His perfect skin receives its first violent rupture in front of His Mother's eyes. Again and again is His adorable Body struck, without a word of complaint or reproach from His lips. He is truly a meek lamb in the claws of vicious wolves, incited all the more by Satan.

Scripture spends more time on Our Lord's **Crowning with Thorns**, the ultimate in mockery and derision. Surely the Son of God Himself will not allow His infinite majesty to be so ridiculed! The greater the dignity of that which is mocked, the more shameful it is. But despite this disgrace to His majesty, it is probable that Our

¹ The word "revelation" here is of a different species to the "Divine Revelation" which was essentially completed with the last breath of St John the Apostle. Private "revelation" is (when authenticated) indeed revealed by God, but only as an accidental addition. It contributes lustre to the treasures already entrusted to the Church, without adding anything essentially new to the Deposit of Faith. All truths in the Deposit of Faith when known **must** be believed for a Catholic to keep the virtue of Faith, something not required for a privately revealed truth.

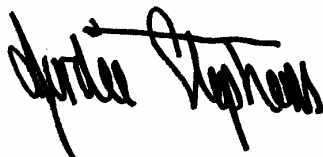
Lord kept his kingly and noble bearing, especially when contrasted with the disgraceful behaviour of the soldiers. How quick we are to defend our dignity when the slightest word of mockery is thrown at us! But man is only dignified when he does the will of God, without which the highest earthly dignity is but dung.

The **Carrying of the Cross** was prophesied by Christ Himself saying "He who does not willingly take up his cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple". As the flames in hell are a merciful distraction from the pain of losing God, the burden of the wooden cross may have taken the edge off the monstrous weight of mankind's sins pressing upon Him. Although He is the Creator and Preserver of the universe, this God-Man accepts assistance from a mere mortal, and an unwilling one at that, because we are told that Simon of Cyrene had to be "forced" to carry the cross behind Our Lord. The Cross is only menacing and imposing when seen from a distance, but when it is up close and embraced, it becomes a faithful companion which rather carries us than is carried by us.

Our Lord's whole life looked forward to His **Crucifixion**, which is why we can say with Fulton Sheen that "while other men are born to live, Christ was born to die". For 3 hours the sun closed her eyes upon such a scene, and the earth trembled at appearing to participate in the death of its Creator. Raised up as a Mediator between heaven and earth, hanging slain on 2 contradictory pieces of wood just as was the paschal lamb, Our Lord has His arms stretched out to embrace all mankind, which latter henceforth cannot embrace God without embracing Jesus Christ and His cross. How many pairs of eyes have looked upon a crucifix in the last 2000 years, and been healed of the poisonous bite of the devil, just as formerly the Israelites had been cured of the sting of the fiery serpents by looking on the bronze serpent hung on a tree by Moses? Salvation is **only** through Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, are ever given to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory".

But while looking at the crucifix, do not fail to see the immobile and immaculate silhouette of the mourning Mother, and hear the words spoken to St John, and to you, and to all mankind, "Son, behold thy Mother".

In the Sacred Heart, through the Immaculate heart of Mary,



Fr Jordie Stephens
Spiritual Director of the Third Order of SSPX for Australia

Note: The remaining Days of Recollection will occur on the following dates:

Tynong, Melbourne- Saturday 17th October

Oxley, Brisbane- Saturday 21st November

Please check with your priest for more information