

into the other room. As he did, Catherine saw that his whole appearance changed. His head was crowned with thorns. His flesh was mangled and torn. His back was covered with blood and pieces of flesh hung down like crimson rags. He turned and spoke to her: "Do you wish to know Who I am? Dost thou not recognize Me? I am thy Redeemer. Catherine, when wilt thou cease offending Me? See what I have endured for thee. Thou has now tormented Me enough; change thy life."

Catherine was shocked. She was overwhelmed with grief for her sins and pity for her Suffering Savior. In fact, she was so overcome that Jesus then comforted her. "Love me now," He said to her, "as much as thou has offended Me, and know that I have granted thee this grace on account of the Rosary thou hast recited in honor of My Mother." With these words Our Lord disappeared.

The next morning Catherine went in search of St. Dominic. She found him and made her confession and from that point on began to live a most holy life. She distributed all her earthly goods to the poor. She became something of a living saint. St. Alphonsus says of her that "...ever afterwards [she] led so holy a life that she attained a very high degree of perfection. Our Blessed Lady appeared many times to her, and our Lord Himself revealed to Saint Dominic that this penitent had become very dear to Him." (*The Glories of Mary*, p.173)

The Rosary not only converts sinners, but it also preserves the faithful in a most astounding way and beats back the powers of darkness from those who pray it. This wondrous devotion was revealed to St. Dominic by the Blessed Virgin Mary when he was greatly distressed because of the Albigensian heretics who were causing such harm to the Church and to souls. The Blessed Mother said to St. Dominic: "This land will always be sterile until rain falls on it." St. Dominic understood "the rain" spoken of by Our Lady to be devotion to the Rosary. He began to propagate it with great fervor and the devotion eventually spread throughout the world with enormous success. The Rosary triumphed over the Albigensians in his day. (*Glories of Mary*, p.510) The Rosary saved the west at Lepanto and broke the back of the forces of Islam which were poised to overrun all of Europe. The Rosary defeated the

Saracens in Hungary in 1716. At Fatima it was offered to the world by the Ambassador of the Heaven, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, as our powerful weapon against modern evils. Pope Leo XIII, after listing the terrible evils of his day, said: "He who ponders this disorder and corruption of the most important things will not be surprised if the afflicted nations are groaning under the weight of God's wrath and are trembling in the apprehension of even worse calamities. Now, to appease the offended justice of God and to obtain the needed healing for those who suffer, there is nothing better than pious and persevering prayer, provided it be joined with the zeal and practice of Christian life. *We believe these must be obtained mainly through the recitation of the Rosary in honor of Mary.*" (Encyclical, *Magnae Dei Matris*, Sept. 7, 1892)

During this month of October, let us rededicate ourselves to the daily, reverent and faithful recitation of the Rosary. Before we begin the Rosary we should momentarily recollect ourselves. Remember who it is we address with our "Hail Marys." It is no one less than the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God. It is not enough to simply to recite the words by rote and think of other things. Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God. The Rosary is a sublime prayer. On the other hand, we should not be distressed if we are afflicted with many distractions during the Rosary. As long as we strive to raise our minds and hearts and not deliberately entertain distractions, then our Rosary is fruitful. It is only willful distractions that offend Our Lady and diminish the value of our prayer.

As you pray, think of the heavenly person to whom you are speaking. Place in your imagination a concrete picture of one of the mysteries of the Rosary and try to realize the meaning of the words you address to your heavenly Mother. Never become discouraged at the number or frequency of the distractions which the devil or fallen human nature suggest. Go to your Mother each day with unbounded confidence that, through her intercession, you will persevere against the Powers of Darkness. One day, with her help, you shall pass from this valley of tears to the happiness God has prepared for those who love Him, and you will enjoy this happiness in the company of Our Lady for all eternity.