

# *Reflections*

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**February 2024**

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**The Weapon Against Satan**



Blessing to All:  
By: Richard Pickard

## The Rosary

The Rosary is a simple prayer that destroys the influence of Satan in your life. One of the surest ways of combatting the devil is by developing a close relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary. The devil hates her and runs away from those who are close to her.

According to Italian exorcist Fr. Sante Babolin, <sup>1</sup>“while I was insistently invoking the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the devil answered me: ‘I can’t stand That One (Mary) anymore and neither can I stand you anymore.’”

Furthermore, he discovered that “‘the strongest reactions’ of the devil during the exorcism occur ‘when references are made to her apparitions.’” Therefore, Babolin frequently invokes the Virgin Mary under her titles of “‘Lourdes, Fatima or Guadalupe.’”

Famed exorcist Fr. Gabriele Amorth confirmed this reality in his dialogues with the devil, where the devil said to him, “I am more afraid when you say the Madonna’s name, because I am more humiliated by being beaten by a simple creature, than by Him.”

Why is the devil so afraid of the Virgin Mary, a simple girl from Nazareth?



During the Rite of Exorcism, the priest will pray, “The glorious Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, commands you; she who by her humility and from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception crushed your proud head.”

This prayer is referring to a prophecy foretold in the book of Genesis, where God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis

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<sup>1</sup> <https://aleteia.org/2018/05/07/this-is-why-the-devil-hates-the-virgin-mary/>

3:15). The verse can also be translated as "she will strike your head," and has traditionally been applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Her humility was so radical that it crushes the "proud head" of Satan and is the surest defense against him and his attacks. As the devil told Fr. Amorth, "She makes me angry because she is the humblest of all creatures, and because I am the proudest; because she is the purest of all creatures, and I am not; because, of all creatures, she is the most obedient to God, and I am a rebel!"

Thus, if someone wants to defeat the work of evil in their own lives and the world, one of the strongest responses is to fly to the Virgin Mary. St. Padre Pio agreed with this when he said, "***Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother. Love the Madonna and pray the Rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother.***"

### **After vision of Christ, Nigerian bishop says rosary will bring down Boko Haram**



A Nigerian bishop says that he has seen Christ in a vision and now knows that the rosary is the key to ridding the country of the Islamist terrorist organization Boko Haram.

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme says he is being driven by a God-given mandate to lead others in praying the rosary until the extremist group disappears.

"Towards the end of last year I was in my chapel before the Blessed Sacrament... praying the rosary, and then suddenly the Lord appeared."

In the vision, the prelate said, Jesus didn't say anything at first, but extended a sword toward him, and he in turn reached out for it.

"As soon as I received the sword, it turned into a rosary," the bishop said, adding that Jesus then told him three times: "Boko Haram is gone."

"I didn't need any prophet to give me the explanation," he said. "It was clear that with the rosary we would be able to expel Boko Haram."

Bishop Dashe leads the Diocese of Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria's Borno State. In 2009, there were around 125,000 Catholics under his guidance. After a surge in violence from the Islamist extremist group called Boko Haram, today "there are only 50 to 60 thousand left," he said.

Most of those who fled sought safer areas in other parts of Nigeria, he said. Some of the same families are now returning home as armed forces from Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon liberate their homes.

In 2014, Boko Haram became known worldwide when members kidnapped nearly 300 girls from a school in Borno State. On March 7, 2015, five suicide bombers killed 54 and wounded nearly three times as many in the capital city of Maiduguri, where the bishop lives and works.

The group has killed 1,000 people across Nigeria in the first three months of 2015, according to Human Rights Watch, which reports that more than 6,000 have died in Boko Haram-led violence since 2009.

Just last month, the group pledged its allegiance to ISIS – also known as the Islamic State – which launched a bloody campaign in Iraq and Syria last summer.

Meanwhile, Bishop Dashe has just completed a "consolation tour" to communities in his diocese, promoting forgiveness and continued faith. He believes he was asked by Jesus to spread devotion to the rosary in order to aid them as they do so.

"Maybe that's why he did it," said the bishop, referring to Jesus in his vision.

Bishop Dashe said he has a strong devotion to Christ's mother, and that "I never joke with 'Mamma Mary.' I know she is here with us."

And he is not the only Nigerian bishop putting the future of the country in the hands of Mary. The nation's bishops' conference has consecrated the

country to her twice in recent years.

Bishop Dashe believes that one day his diocese will completely recover and grow thanks to her intercession.

"These terrorists... think that by burning our churches, burning our structures, they will destroy Christianity. Never," Bishop Dashe told several hundred people from the dais of the #WeAreN2015 congress.

"It may take a few months or a few years ... but 'Boko Haram is gone.'"

He later told CNA that "prayer, particularly the prayer of the rosary, is (what) will deliver us from the claws of this demon, the demon of terrorism. And of course, it is working."

The video below is Bishop Dashe telling of his encounter with Jesus, who gave him the sword that changed into the Rosary. When it opens, open the Full Screen, so you can block out the other videos.

<https://youtu.be/83Kiv9tlC0Y>





## **<sup>2</sup>Three Eucharistic Miracles: Which Cases Have Undergone The Most Extensive Scientific Analysis?**



Close-ups of portions (left and right) of the reliquary (center) exhibited on rear-lighted panels highlight the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano, Italy.  
(photo: Public domain)

The three apparent Eucharistic miracles that have undergone the most extensive scientific analysis happened in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1992, 1994, 1996); Tixtla, Mexico (2006); and Sokółka, Poland (2008).

Sabrina Ferrisi, June 11, 2023

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ewtn.co.uk/article-three-eucharistic-miracles-which-cases-have-undergone-the-most-extensive-scientific-analysis/>

Interest in Eucharistic miracles has skyrocketed within the Catholic world during the last 10 years, especially with the advent of YouTube videos on the subject.

The three apparent Eucharistic miracles that have undergone the most extensive scientific analysis happened in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1992, 1994, 1996); Tixtla, Mexico (2006); and Sokółka, Poland (2008).

“In each case, it is the bishop of the diocese who must approve these miracles,” explained Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer, Ph.D., head of the Magis Center and an EWTN host. “For a Eucharistic miracle, the burden of proof lies with the scientific panel.”

Here is a rundown of the most important facts to know about each of these Eucharistic miracles:

## **Buenos Aires**

The parish of St. Mary in Buenos Aires was the site of three Eucharistic miracles.

On May 1, 1992, after Mass, a Eucharistic minister was placing reserved consecrated Hosts into the tabernacle when he noticed two pieces of consecrated Hosts had fallen onto the corporal, the cloth on the altar. A priest was called, who placed the Hosts into a vessel of holy water (as dictated by Church procedure) and then into the tabernacle. On May 8, it was discovered that the Host fragments had become a reddish color. Then on May 10, during evening Masses, drops of blood were observed on the patens, the small plates that hold the consecrated Hosts.

On July 24, 1994, while a Eucharistic minister went to get the pix (a disk-shaped container that holds consecrated Hosts) from the tabernacle, he noticed a drop of blood running along its side.

On Aug. 15, 1996, during Mass, a consecrated Host was found in the back of the church in a candle holder. Father Alejandro Pezet retrieved the Host, which was dirty, and placed it into a vessel of holy water to dissolve. On

Aug. 26, it was discovered that the Host had several stains of blood. These stains became larger every day afterwards. Only this miracle was investigated.

Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, who would become Pope Francis, was contacted. He immediately had the Host professionally photographed. For reasons which are not clear, it was decided not to publicize the event and to keep the Host in the holy water. The Host stayed this way for three years and never decomposed.

In 1999, a scientific investigation was begun under the leadership of Ricardo Castañón Gómez of Bolivia, a clinical psychologist who specializes in brain chemistry. Eight scientists were involved in this investigation from four continents.

On Oct. 21, 1999, Castañón brought a sample to a forensic laboratory in San Francisco to do analysis. On Jan. 28, 2000, scientists found fragments of human DNA in the sample, but not enough to produce amplified DNA. Dr. Robert Lawrence, a top histopathologist, who studies tissues, found human skin and white blood cells upon further analysis. He stated in an interview that the white blood cells were living at the time they were collected, even though they normally die within two hours after being taken from a body.

In 2001, Castañón sent samples to Dr. Edoardo Linoli in Arezzo, Italy, who said the sample was heart tissue and had white blood cells.

In 2002, samples were sent to Dr. John Walker of the University of Sydney in Australia, who said that the sample was muscle cells with intact white blood cells.

On March 2, 2004, samples were brought to New York for analysis by Dr. Frederic Zugibe, a famous cardiologist and forensic pathologist at Columbia University. He was not told what the sample was. Zugibe found that the sample was heart muscle near the left ventricle. It was inflamed and had white blood cells, meaning the heart was alive and pumping when the sample was taken. The heart showed signs of being under severe stress. When told that the sample came from a consecrated Host, Zugibe was speechless.



Castañon was an atheist when he began the investigation but converted to Catholicism by the end of this investigation.

This Eucharistic miracle does not yet have Church approval.

"The problem is that they waited so long," said Father Spitzer about the investigation. "It took so long to get the genetic sample."

"I personally don't have a problem with it. The evidence was so overwhelming with Dr. Castañon that he converted and so overwhelming with Dr. Zugibe that he was unable to speak for five minutes. He said outright, 'This is naturalistically impossible if what you say is true,'" said Father Spitzer.

## **Tixtla**

On Oct. 21, 2006, St. Martin of Tours parish in the Chilpancingo-Chilapa Diocese of Mexico held a retreat. Two priests and a nun were distributing Communion during Mass when the nun suddenly turned, with tears in her eyes, to face the priest next to her. The Host that she was holding had begun to ooze a reddish substance.

Bishop Alejo Zavala Castro immediately came to see the Host and then convened a theological commission to study the event. In 2009, he contacted Castañon to conduct scientific research. Research was conducted between 2009 and 2012. Conclusions were presented in 2013.

The reddish substance was found to be blood with hemoglobin and DNA of human origin. Two studies were conducted by prominent forensic experts using different methods. Both showed that the blood originated from the interior of the Host, excluding the hypothesis that someone could have placed blood in the Host from the outside.

The blood type was AB, the same blood type that was found in the Host of Lanciano and on the Holy Shroud of Turin. Microscopic analysis showed that

the exterior part of the blood had been coagulated since October 2006. The interior layer of the blood was found to be fresh.

Intact white blood cells, red blood cells and macrophages were found. The tissue was found to be heart muscle, called myocardium. At the time of testing, DNA remnants were found, but not enough to produce amplified DNA.

On Oct. 12, 2013, the bishop declared that what happened in Tixtla was a Eucharistic miracle. It has not yet been approved by Rome.

“In this case, there were 19 appendices to his [Castañón’s] report. He had practically every lab report imaginable in there. So I am sure that this had a bearing on the bishop’s approval,” said Father Spitzer.

### **Sokólka**

On Oct. 12, 2008, in St. Anthony’s Church, a consecrated Host fell to the ground during Mass. A woman who had been kneeling in order to receive Communion told the priest, who immediately placed the Host into a silver vessel with holy water. At the end of Mass, the sacristan — Sister Julia Dubowska — took the silver vessel and poured it into another vessel for increased safety. She then placed that vessel into a safe where the chalices were kept.

On Oct. 19, 2008, Sister Julia opened the safe and smelled the aroma of unleavened bread. She then noticed that the Host was partially dissolved with strange red clots in the center. She told the pastor, who showed the Host to two other priests. The metropolitan archbishop was called, who came in to see it.

On Oct. 30, the Host was taken out of the holy water by orders of the archbishop and placed on a corporal and put in a separate tabernacle in the rectory.

The samples were sent to two laboratories in 2009. Pieces of the Host were sent to Drs. Maria Sobaniec-Lotowska and Stanislaw Sulkowski. Both

scientists work at the Medical University of Białystok as histopathologists, doctors who diagnose diseases in tissues and organs.

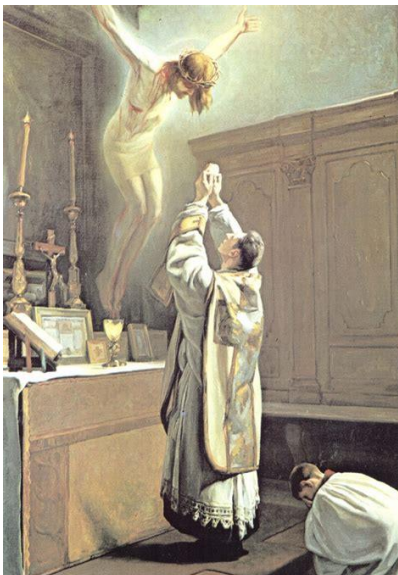
When the samples were analyzed, the undissolved part of the Host was embedded in the cloth. The red blood clot was bright. Both studies concluded that the sample was myocardium of a living person who was near death.

The heart muscle fibers were intertwined with that of the bread, as if the Host had transformed partly into flesh. According to the declaration of Sobaniec-Lotowska, this was something that was impossible for human beings to do.

“Even NASA scientists, who have at their disposal the most modern analytical techniques, would not be able to artificially recreate such a thing,” stated Sobaniec-Lotowska in her report.

No foreign substance was found in the sample. There has been no public information on a DNA test done on the Sokółka Host.

“They did transmission electron screening, which advanced knowledge of the Hosts to identify integration of the substance of the Host with the substance of the heart tissue with perfect irregular entanglements,” said Father Spitzer. “This is a very good reason why scientists would believe this.”



## The Miraculous Medal



It was almost midnight when St. Catherine Labouré was awakened by a soft voice, whispering, "Sister, sister, sister." Mysterious events led her to the chapel where the Blessed Mother appeared and sat down near the altar. St. Catherine knelt at her feet, rested her hands in Mary's lap, looked into her eyes, and had a heart-to-heart conversation with her. Later, St. Catherine would refer to that night as "the sweetest moment of my life."

Four months later, in November of 1830, Mary again appeared to St. Catherine at the Rue de Bac Chapel. This time, our Blessed Mother was standing on a globe, with dazzling rays of light streaming from her outstretched hands. Framing the apparition was an inscription: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." When Mary spoke to St. Catherine, she said "Have a medal struck upon this model. Those who wear it will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck. Those who repeat this prayer with devotion will be, in a special manner, under the protection of the Mother of God. Graces will be abundantly bestowed upon those who have confidence."

With approval of the Catholic Church, the first medals were made in 1832 and distributed in Paris. Only ten of the original medals are known to exist, and one of them is housed at the Miraculous Medal Shrine.

Almost immediately, the blessings that Mary promised showered down on those who wore her medal, and soon all of France was clamoring for what the people referred to as the "Miraculous Medal." Use of the Medal spread from country to country, and, at the time of St. Catherine's death in 1876, more than a billion medals had been made. Today, the Medal is still drawing down from God blessings for body and soul.

### **Symbolism of the Miraculous Medal**

The Miraculous Medal was originally called the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, but, because of the numerous accounts of miracles by those who wore it, people began to call it the Miraculous Medal, and the name stuck. The Medal is a visual reminder of our salvation through Jesus Christ.



FRONT SIDE:

The front side of the Miraculous Medal depicts Mary Immaculate, her hands open, full of light. St. Catherine Labouré saw Our Lady appear like this and heard her say, "Have a medal made according to this model. Everyone who wears it around their neck will receive great graces." Mary stands upon the globe as the Queen of Heaven and Earth. Her feet crush the serpent to

proclaim that Satan and all his followers are helpless before her (Gn. 3:15). The year 1830 on the Miraculous Medal is the year the Blessed Mother gave the design of the Miraculous Medal to St. Catherine. The reference to "Mary conceived without sin" supports the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary — referring to Mary being sinless, "full of grace," and "blessed among women" (Lk. 1:28). The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed 24 years later in 1854, and then confirmed when Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France, in 1858.



**BACK SIDE:**

On the reverse side, the Cross and the letter M symbolize the close relationship of Mary to the suffering, passion, and death of her Son. The cross can symbolize Christ and our redemption, with the bar under the cross a sign of the earth and the Altar, for it is on the Altar at Mass that the Sacrifice of Calvary continues to be present in the world today. The M signifies "Mary" and "Mother." The interweaving of Mary's initial and the cross shows Mary's close involvement with Jesus and our world. In this, we see Mary's part in our salvation and her role as Mother of the Church.

Beneath the Cross, bar, and the M are two hearts side-by-side: the Sacred Heart of Jesus crowned with thorns and the Immaculate Heart of Mary pierced by a sword. The two hearts represent the love of Jesus and Mary for us.

The twelve stars signify the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, who represent the entire Church as it surrounds Mary. They also recall the vision of Saint John, writer of the Book of Revelation (12:1), in which "a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of 12 stars."

# The Healing Rosary

<sup>3</sup>In the Evangelical church in which I was raised, <sup>4</sup>we didn't hate Catholics, but we thought they were wrong. One of the areas we were convinced they were in error was their "Mary worship."

As I followed the path to the Catholic Church, I came to understand that Catholics don't worship Mary. One of the experiences that changed my mind was the discovery that praying the Rosary opened the door to Christ's powerful healing. As I experienced the real healing power of the Rosary, I came to first understand and then love the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The journey began when I was an Anglican minister. I was in my late twenties, and I was struggling with dark forces in my life. I suffered from depression and spent time in counseling. My "soul friend" was a wise old priest who advised me to pray the Rosary.

## Prayers of a mother

As I prayed the Rosary, I discovered that the joyful mysteries took me into the first stages of Jesus' life and childhood. As I prayed through those stages, something mysterious happened. God's love began to seep into the early stages of my own life, and I began to experience healing from the deep hurts I had received in the very earliest experiences of my life.

As I prayed, I felt an abiding presence of love and concern. I felt this as a feminine presence. Because I was from a Protestant background, I didn't know who or what this was. It was only later that my priest-counselor explained it by saying with a smile, "Our Lady's prayers for you have been so powerful!"

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.catholicdigest.com/faith/201410-25the-healing-rosary/>



Of course! I thought. The presence through all this was that of a mother. That's what it felt like! Suddenly the floodgates opened, and the emotions I had been holding back gushed out in a fountain of healing. Only then did I begin to realize and accept the ministry of Jesus' mother in my life, and since then my devotion and love for her activity has grown through every aspect of my life.

### **The curse of sin**

The difficulties and wounds we experience are rooted in sin. "Sin" is an easily misunderstood word. In our mind's eye we see it written in ominous, large, gothic letters. Sin is the great evil. We think of it as the sordid and sad things we do. It's all that we're ashamed, guilty, and frightened of.

However, sin is bigger—and simpler—than that. The Bible puts it simply when it says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This is the basic definition of sin: We were created to share in the fullness of God's power, beauty, and glory, but we don't. We miss the mark. We are not all we can be, and left on our own, our condition gets worse, not better.

The side effect of sin is that it causes pain and suffering. Eventually we become numb to sin, and as we become numb to sin, we also become numb to the goodness of life. The joyful, hopeful, and youthful part of us starts to die. We become confused, and the emptiness of our lives leads to despair, and eventually this inner illness causes spiritual death.

We suffer from the wrong things we do, but we're caught up in more than just the individual sins we do. We live with other people who are also sinful, and we live in a world that is shot through with evil, like a nasty virus. We have done wrong, but we have also not done what we should, and we have been hurt by the sin of others. All of us are caught in a sticky spider's web of sin, and the more we struggle, the more entangled we become.

### **The cure for sin**

God saw mankind's sinful condition and provided the cure. Two thousand years ago, a baby girl was conceived by the union of a devout Jewish couple

named Joachim and Anna. God touched her life and preserved her from the stain of original sin. The little girl was named Mary. By a miracle Mary was brought into the world in the same pure condition as the first woman, Eve.

We know the story of how Mary's "yes" to God reversed Eve's "no." She conceived and gave birth to her son, Jesus Christ—and the whole point of Jesus coming into the world was to solve the sin problem. Jesus was the antidote to sin's poison. He was the cure to sin's sickness and the warrior who defeated the dark lord of hell. It was natural, therefore, for him to confront the symptoms of sin in his ministry. That's why he healed people, and that's why his healing was different from any other the world had ever seen—Jesus not only healed physical illnesses, but in every case the healing was also linked with the forgiveness of sins.

We can approach Jesus' healing power in various ways. First, we need to approach Jesus through the sacraments of the Church. If we want his healing, we first need to receive him regularly through Communion. If we want this to be a complete meeting with Christ, we also have to meet him in the sacrament of reconciliation. There Jesus meets us and deals with the sin that blocks us from the fullness of his healing love.

Jesus also wants to meet us in the more intimate and personal aspects of our lives. He invites us to walk with him in the path of healing. The best way to do this is by meditating on his life, and the person who walks with us through the life of Jesus is Mary, his mother.

### **Walking with Jesus and Mary**

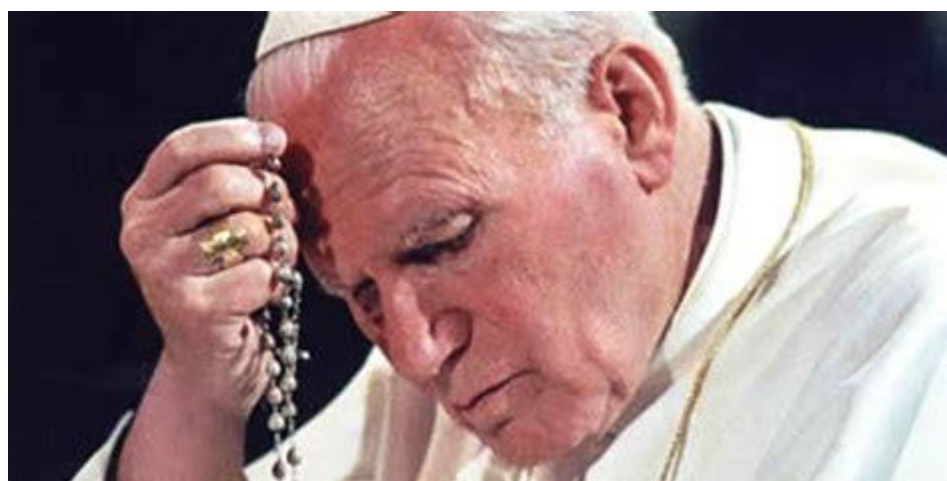
With the Rosary we go through every stage of Jesus' life and make intimate contact with his saving love. The Gospels say that Mary saw all that was happening in her life and in her son's life, and she "pondered these things in her heart." As we pray the Rosary, we "ponder these things in our heart" with Mary.

As our Mother, Mary is like the nurse who helps us through the surgery conducted by Doctor Jesus. Mary is like the mother who goes with her injured child as they enter the hospital to be healed. Mary is like the loving sister or aunt who sits by our bedside as we endure a long illness. She

doesn't heal us—Jesus does. She is there as the vitally important nurse, mother, sister, aunt, and friend. Her prayers are those of a mother for her children.

Jesus' life was all that a human life should be. It was full, complete, and whole. It was mature, fulfilled, and balanced. Because he was God in human form, Jesus was radiantly alive, totally free, and abundantly, overwhelmingly human.

## Mary and St. John Paul II



Because of this, when we enter into the stages of Jesus' life through the Rosary, we experience a life that is healthy and perfect. By entering into the wholeness of each stage of Jesus' life, we begin to share in his wholeness and health. As this happens, we are healed and made whole at a very deep level of our being. In his encyclical *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* St. John Paul II said, "The Rosary does indeed mark the rhythm of human life, bringing it into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life."

Long before I had read John Paul's words, I had discovered this simple principle through my own experience of the healing Rosary. I unlocked the truth that, as the meditations take us through every stage of Jesus' life, so they take us through every stage of our own lives. As we remember the stages of our own life with Jesus and Mary, all that was broken, faulty, or wounded at those stages of our lives can be healed.

By praying the Rosary in this way, we can gently pry open the dark cupboards of our hurt memories, fears, and sins. Once the injuries, sins, and painful memories from each stage are accessed, Christ's healing can begin. As St. John Paul II teaches, "It becomes natural (through the Rosary) to bring...all the problems, anxieties, labors, and endeavors which go to make up our lives.... To pray the Rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and his mother."

As we do this, we are praying not only for ourselves, but for our families, our nation, and our world. If each of us as individuals go through progressive stages of growth, so do groups of people. **St. John Paul II said, "At the same time, our heart can embrace in the decades of the Rosary all the events that make up the lives of individuals, families, nations, the Church, and all mankind."** Many popes and countless Christians have testified to the healing power of the Rosary. Why not join them and begin to use the Rosary again in a new way?



**The International Catholic Family Newsletter  
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**Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.**



**The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. – St. Padre Pio**

**St. Paul Ministry**

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