



LIGHT & LIFE

VOICE OF THE ROSARY CENTER & CONFRATERNITY

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Fr. Dismas Sayre, O.P., *Director* Jan-Feb 2026, Vol 79, No 1 Western Dominican Province

GO TEAM ROSARY, GO!

We recently had the honor of being visited by the Promoter of the International Rosary Teams¹, who are based in France, Fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand, OP, and Christine Pettinari, the International Coordinator. The Rosary Teams, like our blessed Confraternity, is under the auspices of the Dominican Order, although not connected directly to us. Yet, like I always say, I am not jealous – if someone is promoting prayer of Our Lady’s Rosary, I am *all* for it!

But why have *two* Rosary groups under the Dominican Order? Isn’t the Confraternity enough in itself? Aren’t they redundant? The Rosary Confraternity is meant more for the faithful who are the more active faithful, whether they are able to regularly go to church, are home-bound, or isolated, in prison, what have you. They are already in the Church as best as they are able to be. The International Rosary Teams were founded in 1955 in France by Fr. Joseph Eyquem, OP, who foresaw the wave of secularization and modern push away from parish life. His desire was “to help people live as Christians,” with a particular focus on those who were more and more distant from Holy Mother Church. How to reach them? How to help them start to take their first steps back to God and Holy Mother Church?

This particular movement proposes to start in little steps – not with the whole Rosary, or a single set of Mysteries, but rather, one particular Mystery at a time. The movement invites its members both to daily individual prayer, and to a time of monthly meeting together, to help build community, which is a key constitutional building block of what makes us the Church. As the International Rosary Teams themselves say, “It is a real celebration of the faith with a time of welcome, of prayer to the Holy Spirit, of invocation to Mary, of reading of the Word of God followed by a reflection on this Word with a time of sharing, a prayer of praise and intercession and a sending on mission. Month after month, these meetings and exchanges

allow the development of a path of faith and a fraternal life.” Before “accompaniment” was a buzzword in our Church, the Rosary Teams were already engaged with the world, inviting those outside the Church to engage with the Church as much as possible.

But isn’t this sabotaging *true* evangelization? One cannot just violently yank the lost sheep back into the fold, especially in these times. Yes, God will sometimes give a swift kick to that special lost and stubborn sheep, but we cannot let the perfect become the enemy of the good, as the saying says. Every long journey begins with one step. Every step of the New Evangelization begins with one word, one invite, one hand outstretched in welcome. My own reversion began with one cute girl asking me to go to Church – and it obviously worked! This is not abandoning the Faith, or obfuscating our Faith. As Scripture says, “Although you should be teachers by this time, you need to have someone teach you again the basic elements of the utterances of God. You need milk, not solid food” (Heb 5:12). We cannot just curse the darkness, we must light the single candle, one by one.



Our previous Master of the Dominican Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré, a Frenchman himself, and well-aware of the situation in France, endorsed this movement, saying, “To learn to know the Rosary Teams is to discover that there exists a simple and effective proposition faced with questions raised by the challenges of the new Evangelization. To encourage the Rosary Teams is to allow the laity to become actors of the Announcement of the Good News at the heart of the Church. The Rosary Teams are a gift of the Spirit for our times.”

Of course, one can fully be a member of the Rosary Confraternity and the International Rosary Teams, or remain a member of the Rosary Confraternity without affiliating with the Teams. This is simply another way we Dominicans offer using Our Lady’s Rosary to bring souls closer to Christ, not in competition, but in cooperation;

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Novena of Masses in honor of the

Our Lady of Lourdes

February 2-10, 2026

TO BE OFFERED FOR YOUR INTENTIONS

THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY

The Trinity-Part 2- Baltimore Catechism

By Fr. Dismas Sayre, O.P.

Continuing with the Baltimore Catechism, Q. 30-31, with Commentary

*30 Q. Can we fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God? A. We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God, because this is a mystery.

"Fully"—entirely. We can partly understand it. We know what one God is and we know what three persons are; but how these two things go together is the part we do not understand—the mystery.

*31 Q. What is a mystery? A. A mystery is a truth which we cannot fully understand.

"A truth," that is, a revealed truth—one made known to us by God or His Church. It is a truth which we must believe though we cannot understand it. Let us take an example. When a boy goes to school he is taught that the earth is round like an orange and revolving in two ways, one causing day and night and the other producing the seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter. The boy goes out into the country where he sees miles of level land and mountains thousands of feet in height. Again he goes out on the ocean where sailors tell him it is several miles in depth.

Now he may say: how can the earth be round if deep valleys, high mountains, and level plains prove to my senses the very opposite, and the countless things at rest upon its surface tell me it is motionless. Yet he believes even against the testimony of his senses that the earth is round and moving, because his teacher could have no motive in deceiving him; knows better than he, having learned more, and besides has been taught by others who after long years of careful study and research have discovered these things and know them to be true. If therefore we have to believe things that we do not understand on the authority of men, why should we not believe other truths on the authority of God? Yes, we must believe Him. If a boy knew all his teacher knew there would be no need of his going to school; he would be the equal in knowledge of his teacher, and if we knew all that God knows we would be as great as He. As well might we try to empty the whole ocean into the tiny holes that children dig in the sand by its shore, as fully to comprehend the wisdom of God. This is the mistake unbelievers make when they wish to understand with their limited intelligence the boundless knowledge and mysterious ways of God, and when they cannot understand refuse to believe. Are they not extremely foolish? Would you not ridicule the boy who refuses to believe that the earth is round and moving because he cannot understand it? As he grows older and learns more he will comprehend it better; so we, when we leave this world and come into the presence of

God, shall see clearly many things that are unintelligible now. For the present, we have only to believe them on the authority of God teaching us. Another example. We take two little black seeds that look just alike and place them in the same kind of soil; we put the same kind of water upon them; they have the same sunlight and air, and yet when they grow up one has a red flower and one a blue. Where did the red and where did the blue come from? From the black seed, or the brown soil, or the pure water, air and sunlight? We do not know. It is there, and that is all. We see it and believe it, though we do not understand it.

So if we refuse to believe everything we do not understand, we shall soon believe very little and make ourselves ridiculous.

I DO BELIEVE; HELP MY UNBELIEF!

Continuing from our exposition on the Trinity from our previous issue, we have arrived at what is *the* central mystery of our Holy Faith, and that is, the Most Holy Trinity in itself. But we have to go back to what, exactly, a "mystery" is, and how this concept is expressed in the Faith. In ancient, pagan Greece, a *mystērion* would be a kind of secret rite or doctrine known only to initiates (*mystēs*) into some kind of philosophy or religion. All this comes from the root Greek word, *myein*, meaning "to shut or close." Perhaps this referred to the initiates keeping their mouths closed as to what, precisely, their mysteries were in their secret philosophies or religions, or perhaps to their eyes, since their eyes would be closed to what the mysteries were, until fully initiated. We can see some correlation in our own Catholic history, where we would have the Mass of the Catechumens, essentially the Liturgy of the Word in our modern Rite, where the catechumens would be led out and the doors closed *before* the Liturgy of the Eucharist began, since the Eucharist was such a powerful symbol of the unity of the initiated believers in Christ as well as the Body and Blood of our Savior, of which they could not partake until they themselves were fully initiated into Holy Mother Church.

Near the end of the consecration of the Body and Blood at Mass, we come to the Memorial Acclamation, present in the Eastern Churches, but only really introduced into the Roman Rite with the newer Mass, and borrowing from those same Churches, is when the priest declares, "The Mystery of Faith," and the people respond with one of the approved responses, for example, "We proclaim your Death, O Lord..." Previously in the Roman Catholic Mass, the words "The Mystery of Faith" was declared quietly by the priest *immediately* after the consecration of the Precious Blood, as a statement of faith and defense against the Manichean heresy, highlighting that Christ's

salvific act *is* deeply and truly done through and in true and material flesh and blood, and truly present in the actual human and divine substance of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine. It is a common local tradition in some places for the people to acclaim “My Lord and my God,” after the consecration of the Precious Blood, mirroring St. Thomas the Apostle’s proclamation of Faith on witnessing the Resurrected Christ in His very flesh. This is done much in the same spirit as the Rosary, which highlights the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, true God and true Man, fully divine, and fully human, and the foretaste of our own glory in the flesh in the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary in her Assumption into Heaven, body and soul. It just goes to show you that we always have to be on the lookout against the same old heresies that keep trying to worm their way back into the heart of the Church.

THE MYSTERY OF *THE* MYSTERY

Overall, however, a “mystery” in the Catholic sense is not something that can be *solved*, like some game of Clue or a detective story, but, rather, something to be believed and assented to, because it is always at least partially, if not greatly, beyond our finite comprehension and finite and material creatures. Our minds, in the natural sense, are always closed to these mysteries, until faith opens the door to the Infinite God, at least in part, and even then, we remain somewhat blinded by the same light of Faith shining through the cracked doors to the Infinite. Think of leaving a dark theater, and all of a sudden, the Sun blinds you as you open the doors. Only when we truly cross back into the outside world and acclimate ourselves to this reality do we see. And *only* when we cross through the other side past the doors of this world into the next will we come to see God as He truly is (cf. 1 Jn 3:2).

Classically, we would have two kinds of mysteries in theology: the absolute (or theological), and the relative. According to the older Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913, “An absolute mystery is a truth whose existence or possibility could not be discovered by a creature, and whose essence (inner substantial being) can be expressed by the finite mind only in terms of analogy, e.g., the Trinity [think of St. Patrick’s use of the cloverleaf]. A relative mystery is a truth whose innermost nature alone (e.g., many of the Divine attributes), or whose existence alone (e.g., the positive ceremonial precepts of the Old Law), exceeds the natural knowing power of the creature.” As the ancient Advent hymn based on the antiphons before Christmas Day relates:

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

This ancient faith was not something the Jews of old dug up or invented wholesale from somewhere: it was truly *revealed* to them and the prophets and forefathers. If there were no revealed faith, if we were “blocked off” spiritually from God, we would live in the same manner as some kind of feral creature – seeking our natural good in

this world, with no thought of the life to come, or the true value of life in this world. We might mourn the passing of a brother or sister in this world, as some creatures do when their fellow animals die, but with no thought of their soul or our own. We would still love, and this love would participate in the Divine Love in some sense, as all creation participates in some manner in the Creator, and it would be at least a *limited* good, but there would be no supernatural character beyond the natural love.

But that is *not* how we are created. We are created with the yearning to open those doors to that which is beyond us. Our souls “hear” something going on beyond this world – there *is* something mysterious locked away, beyond our reach. What, or Who, could be behind those doors? Whether we choose to go on with our lives as seemingly normal, or whether we go investigate what is beyond this life and behind all creation, that desire remains. One can ignore it, but one cannot eliminate it. This desire was often misdirected in ancient civilizations towards false gods, idols, or animals. In the end, the true, revealed faith is still a *gift* – we do not have the mental or spiritual “strength,” as finite material creatures, to open those doors. God *has* to reveal Himself to us if we wish to understand much more than there is a God, and God is one from reason and nature. Nothing in nature is so perfectly correlated to the Trinity or the Eucharist that we would automatically think, “Well, of course, this means that there *has* to be a Trinity!” or “So THAT’S the Eucharist!” Our parents or members of the Church can explain some things to our young minds, but we still have to willfully assent to those teachings of the Faith presented to us.

When You Find Yourself in a Theological Hole – *Stop Digging!*

St. Augustine once wrote, “*crede ut intellegas*,” meaning “believe so that you may understand,” and St. Anselm of Canterbury even more famously wrote, “*Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam*,” meaning “I do not seek to understand so that I may believe, but rather, I believe so that I may understand.” There is a story of St. Augustine trying to grasp the Trinity, to understand it fully, as he was walking along a beach, thinking. Along the way, he saw a young boy trying to fill a hole in the sand with ocean water. When St. Augustine asked the child what he was doing, the child replied that he was trying to put the ocean inside the small hole he had dug with a seashell. St. Augustine remarked such a task would be impossible, to which the child (actually an angel) told him that so was trying to find a perfect analogy for the Trinity. Our minds cannot take it all in, but we can *begin* to understand. Those who do not believe may scoff at such thinking, but once we accept and internalize certain eternal truths, we come to see the world and the world that is to come in clearer terms. In Scripture, the act of belief often leads to healing from some kind of physical blindness as a spiritual sign, such as we witness in Bartimeus (Mk 10:46-52), who begs Our Lord to heal him, and Our Lord in His mercy and love tells him, “Go your way, your faith has made you well;” or that of St. Paul, when the scales fall from his eyes (Acts 9:18).



The Vision of St. Augustine
from the Altarpiece of St. Barnabas,
Sandro Botticelli (Wikimedia Commons)

FROM SAUL TO PAUL

This leads us to note something interesting about Saul of Tarsus, or Paul. His name in Hebrew is quite beautiful, meaning “something asked for or prayed for.” “Saul” sounds like a name grateful parents might give for the birth of a boy. However, in Greek, it sounded like *another* word meaning, “the sultry manner in which a prostitute walks.” This was certainly *not* fitting for the way of an apostle! What is it that Saul asks for in the end? Faith in Jesus Christ, after sinning grievously against Christ’s body, the Church. In the Old Testament, Israel, when she wandered away from God, was often compared to a prostitute, who would sell her unfaithful love out to other gods and idols. But now, Saul would have to walk a new path to the Gentiles: that of Paul, meaning in Greek something like “little one” or “little fellow.” Christ humbled Saul – we might say, knocked him right off his high horse (although there is actually no horse mentioned in Scripture for St. Paul’s vision of Christ; that’s an artistic license in visual arts that has made its way into our language).

If we want to see, like St. Paul, then, we have to ask for that faith, even if it’s given to us partially at our Baptism. We have to have the humility to accept that there are things, not only beyond us, like perhaps Quantum Physics, Tax Law, or something as seemingly simple as reading music (something I have absolutely no skill at), and ask for help – not from a professor or musician, but from the True Master behind it all, God. Faith, like talents and capacities for sciences, is always a gift from God. Talents and sciences may be developed through human instruction and hard work, but you just can’t teach some things to some people, of which I am one. And, of course, we must remain faithful as we walk that famously narrow way of Christ, living good and holy lives – not just for ourselves, but for those around us, since we, too, may be one of the ways through which God reveals Himself to them, in the lives of His living saints.

Over half of the adults in the USA have no will or trust. Even if you don't include us in your will, please make these necessary preparations. *Please remember the Rosary Center in your will. By arranging a gift to the Rosary Center through your will, you can continue to support our apostolate of serving the Lord and his Mother into the future.*



GO TEAM ROSARY, GO!

(Continued from page 1)

with the lay faithful taking their active role in going to where the priest or religious cannot always go.



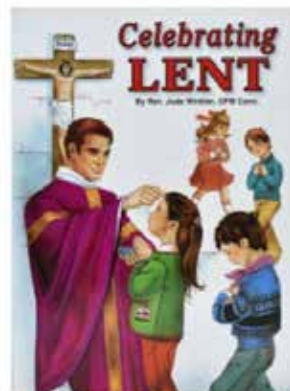
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internationalrosaryteams.org/en/home/

1 - There are various local or national movements called “Rosary Team” or “Rosary Teams,” but are not affiliated with the Dominican Order, although they do good work in their own right. We are speaking of the International Rosary Teams, based in France.

“The Rosary is one of the most powerful devotions entrusted to us by Our Lady, and in these turbulent times, it remains a sure path to peace, conversion, and deeper love of Christ.”
Pope Leo XIV



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Front Page Image: Stained glass in the north transept of the Basilica at Lourdes, France.
Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.