

THE ROSARY

MAY - JUNE 2007

Voice of the Rosary Confraternity

LIGHT & LIFE

FATHER REGINALD E. MARTIN, O.P., *DIRECTOR*

Vol. 60, No. 3 - A WESTERN DOMINICAN PUBLICATION

No one will deny the importance of the human heart. We cannot pass a day without encountering some reminder that the food we eat is – or is not – good for our hearts. At the same time, advertisements for greeting cards, candy, flowers, and almost anything else we can name urge us to use some product to touch the heart of the individuals we love.

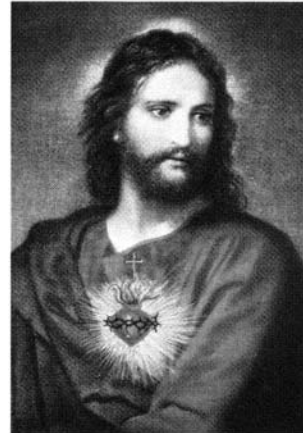
Obviously, we have an obligation to care for the bodies God has given us, and only the most Puritanical among us will condemn the pleasure we derive from giving and receiving tokens of affection and esteem. However, as we commonly think of our hearts, we can run a risk of setting them on the margins of our lives: either considering our hearts solely the site of our physical health, or imagining them to be the center of our emotional lives.

Neither of these views is bad, but neither begins to describe the immense value the Scripture places on the heart, a value we see reflected in the liturgical feasts of the Sacred Heart of Our Savior and the Immaculate Heart of His Blessed Mother.

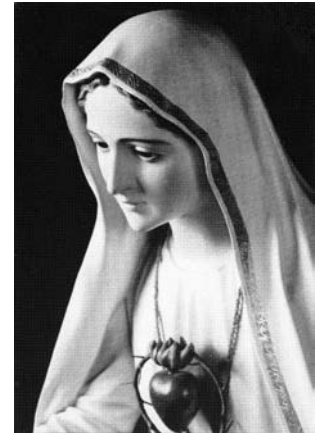
In the Scripture, the heart stands for everything distinctive in a person, everything that characterizes an individual, whether it be noble or evil. In the Scripture, individuals are described as brokenhearted, faint hearted, hard hearted, merry hearted, stiff hearted, stout hearted, and tender hearted, and each of these descriptions tells us all we need to know about the individual.

To this list we ought to add the two adjectives Jesus uses to describe His own heart. “Come to me,” He says, “...and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart...” (Mt. 11 28).

The gentleness (often translated “meekness”) and humility that Jesus claims can easily be misunderstood as passive, yielding attitudes, but our theology teaches us they are far more. Meekness is the virtue that moderates anger, and humility is acknowledging God as the source of everything we have and everything we are. To be meek and humble, as Jesus is, means to be properly assertive in the face of trial, and always aware of our incalculable worth as God’s creatures.



THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS



THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Jesus’ invitation to come and learn from Him includes some of the most consoling words in the gospel. “Take my yoke upon you... and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Scholars say that Jesus’ yoke is easy because it is tailor-made for each of us. Because it fits so well, the yoke is an efficient tool, and one that will not chafe us.

But as we celebrate the great feast of Our Lord’s Sacred Heart, we might consider something about His yoke, and that is the fact that Jesus’ yoke is His yoke. He promises it will be easy and light precisely because it is His, and He helps us bear it.

ROSARY CENTER MINISTRY EXPANDS

Our friends who have been touched by CDs of Fr. Brian Mullady’s conferences and classes will be the first to celebrate the Rosary Center’s gaining access to the complete library of Fr. Mullady’s work. Albertus Magnus Media, which produces Fr. Mullady’s – and other Dominicans’ – CD work, has become a part of the Rosary Center, and this merger means we are able to offer a far broader collection of theological resources than previously.

Those with Internet access have long been aware that the Rosary Center offers a greater selection of books and other prayer and study aids than we list

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THE ROSARY LIGHT & LIFE

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TO BE OFFERED FOR YOUR INTENTIONS

THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY

THE CREED, PART VI

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

HE WILL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

By Father Reginald Martin, O.P.

The Creed now leads us to consider Our Savior's Ascension, the event the Acts of the Apostles tells us took place forty days after His Resurrection.

WHY FORTY DAYS?

We do not have to be Scripture scholars to realize how often the number forty occurs in the Bible. What may be helpful, though, is to ask why the number appears so often.

St. Peter Chrysologus (AD 406-450), noted for his preaching while he was Archbishop of Ravenna, offers a good answer to this question. He distinguishes between

...the man who with simplicity accepts and follows the sacred mystery of the Christian faith and him who is zealous to grasp the mystery of that faith intelligently and understand it profoundly (Sermon 166).

THE VALUE OF SYMBOLS

This tells us that investigating the tools the Scripture writers employ to relate their accounts allows us better to understand the theological points the writers are striving to make. One of these tools is the language of symbols, which is a sign that helps us to understand the invisible things of God's kingdom by examining the things of our world.

The saint goes on to explain that the

...number forty is something so sacred from antiquity, and...is found to be so mystical, that by some unbreakable law it is written as a number which is always used to accomplish divine projects and to explain important affairs of God.

THE VALUE OF FORTY

To illustrate this point, St. Peter enumerates several uses of the number forty in the Bible.

In the unfortunate infancy of the human race, when the world was growing foul with an indescribable squalor...for forty days and forty nights rain was poured out to purify the earth.

St. Peter then compares the water of the flood to the forty days of Lent, which ends with the Easter promise of Baptism. *"Rightly do we run through the fast of forty days to arrive at the font of baptism and salvation"* (Sermon 166).

THE FORTY DAYS OF EASTER

Forty is the number associated with completion of God's designs, so we should not be surprised to find our Risen Savior spending forty days among us, preparing the early Church for its mission to the nations. By remaining among us for forty days after His Resurrection, Jesus helped us to understand that His life was a fulfillment of all God's promises in the Old Testament, and a fulfillment of everything we could hope for.

THE LESSON OF THE FORTY DAYS

Although the account of these forty days takes up only a few chapters of the Scripture, the risen Christ was able to teach His followers a great deal in that time. We have the advantage of reading the gospel *"after the fact,"* knowing how the gospel drama will end; the disciples did not. Jesus used the forty days of Easter to remind His followers what He had taught them, and how all of His signs, miracles, and preaching looked forward to the life in God's kingdom that He came to share with us.

THE HEAVEN OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION

We are used to thinking of heaven as God's dwelling, a spiritual abode beyond the physical universe that science has explored and described in the last five hundred or so years. However, our picture of the universe does not reflect the belief of the Scriptural writers, or even the great minds of the medieval theologians.

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul writes that Christ *"...ascended above all the heavens"* (Eph. 4:10), and St. Thomas Aquinas interprets these *"heavens"* as three heavenly realms: the earthly paradise Adam and Eve inhabited before their sin, the dwelling of the various ranks of angels, and – finally – the abode of God the Father.

We may be reluctant to think of heaven in quite such physical terms, so the important fact for us to bear in mind is that when Christ ascended, He returned to a place of honor that is greater than the glory enjoyed by any of God's creatures.

THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER

St. Thomas warns us that we should consider Christ's place at the right hand of the Father a metaphor, rather than a physical location. A seat at someone's right is

a place of honor, and it denotes equality between the person who sits at the right and the one who confers the honor of sitting there.

WHY DID CHRIST ASCEND?

The Angelic Doctor teaches three reasons for Our Savior's Ascension. It was a reward, he said, for Christ's nature, a reward for His victory, and recognition of His humility.

1) The Reward of Christ's Nature

At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples, *"I came forth from the Father, and... again I leave the world and I go to the Father"* (Jn 16:28). St. Thomas remarks that this is no more than we should expect of Christ, because things return naturally to the place where they originate. At His Ascension, Christ – the second person of the Trinity – resumes the glory He enjoyed with the Father from all eternity.

2) The Power of Christ's Nature

St. Thomas adds that Christ ascended by His own power. Thus, His reward differs from the glory the saints enjoy, and that we hope to share with them. We reasonably hope to share Christ's everlasting life in heaven, but we will do so because we are drawn there by Christ's power, not our own.

3) The Reward for Christ's Victory

Christ came into the world to fight against Satan and sin. Our First Parents' sin closed the gates of heaven, so it was fitting that Christ should be the first to re-enter God's kingdom after He defeated Satan with His death on the cross.

THE REWARD FOR CHRIST'S HUMILITY

The gospel teaches us that *"those who humble themselves will be exalted."* St. Thomas suggests that the exaltation will be proportionate to the humility. In the Incarnation, God lowered Himself to take on our human nature, and a human body, *"being made obedient unto death"* (Phil. 2:8). And after His death, He descended into hell. We cannot imagine a greater humility than Christ's. Therefore, He deserves to ascend to the very heights of heaven, to the throne that was His before the creation of the world.

OUR PROFIT FROM CHRIST'S ASCENSION

St. Thomas teaches that humanity benefits from the Ascension because we now know the path that leads to heaven, whereas before Christ's death we did not. At the Last Supper Jesus told His disciples, *"I go to prepare a place for you"* (Jn 14:2). Christ's Ascension is the fulfillment of this promise.

OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE ASCENSION

The Letter to the Hebrews tells us Christ lives *"...to make intercession for us"* (Hb. 7:25), and St. John reminds us, *"we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just"* (1 Jn 2:1). Among the other losses we suffered

as a result of sin was a loss of hope. When we were exiled from Eden, we had no reason to imagine we would ever be invited back.

Christ's Resurrection is a promise that we will rise with Him if we are willing to die with Him; the Ascension is a promise that we will share His glory if we are willing to follow Him along the way of the cross.

THE ASCENSION RESTORES OUR HOPE

"Teacher" is the title by which Jesus is most often addressed in the gospel, and the early Church writers believed that He came among us to teach us – going through every moment of our lives (even the last) to show us what we must do if we want to "get it right."

In Jesus we see someone who shares our nature, yet doesn't fall prey to the temptations that so often slow our spiritual progress. Jesus' example becomes a source of confidence and hope because when we look at what He did, with a body identical to ours, we realize the greatness we are capable of if we are willing to follow Him.

CHRIST'S RETURN

The angels who witnessed Christ's Ascension spoke to those who were left, looking up to the sky. *"This Jesus Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen Him going into heaven"* (Acts 1:11), and the Creed reminds us that when Jesus returns, He will return as judge. He will also return in the flesh with which He was clothed at His Ascension.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FLESH

St. Thomas reminds us that to see God is a source of such delight that no one can see God without joy. The souls of the damned are deprived of the sight of God precisely because such a vision would make them happy. When Christ returns to judge the world, He will come in human flesh so that He may be seen by all.

Likewise, were we to be judged by God alone, we could easily lose hope. Therefore, when He comes to judge, Christ will come in our flesh so that we may experience hope from being judged by the hand of one who shares our humanity.

WHO WILL BE JUDGED?

"We must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive... as he hath done" (2 Cor. 5:10). Judgment consists in discussion of merit, and assigning rewards, so our fate hangs on Christ's assessment of how we spend the life entrusted to us.

However, those whose poverty of spirit led them to seek Christ perfectly will receive the reward promised in the Beatitudes, but their deeds will not be subject to examination, because they so perfectly imitated Christ's. (ST Supp., 89.6). Moreover, these individuals receive a special reward. Jesus promised, *"You who followed me...shall sit...judging the twelve tribes"* (Matt. 19:28). St. Thomas preached that such (chief among them, the

apostles) will share Christ's act of judging by teaching others the justice of their reward.

REASONS TO FEAR JUDGMENT

Christ the Judge knows all things, therefore none of our actions is hidden from Him. Moreover, as we stand before the all-truthful Judge, we will be compelled to tell the truth. Therefore, our own consciences will bear witness to what we have done or failed to do.

When we are called before the divine tribunal, the time of mercy – St. Thomas' expression to describe the present – will have passed; the judgment is a time solely of justice. Today, with its manifold opportunities to do good, is all that belongs to us. Tomorrow, with its promise of justice belongs to Christ, so meditating on the Day of Judgment ought to bring us to repentance and good works.

PREPARATION FOR THE JUDGMENT

In addition to the remedy offered by the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the good deeds that prepare us for the Day of Judgment are the traditional works of mercy, and love of God and our neighbor. These may seem extremely small in comparison to the immensity of God's justice, but Scripture assures us "*charity covereth a multitude of sins*" (1 Pet. 4:8).

THE PROMISE OF POVERTY

When we considered the Beatitudes, we discovered that poverty of spirit differs from financial distress; it is a deliberate choice by which we moderate our attitudes toward the good things the world offers, and the means by which we gain them.

To be poor in spirit, St. Thomas teaches, is to cultivate the habits of simplicity and moderation that allow us to look beyond what will satisfy us for a short time today, in order to lay claim to a satisfaction without end in the future.

JUDGMENT TO HOPE, NOT DESPAIR

Parents know that fear of an unpleasant consequence is often a powerful reason for a child to make wise – and safe – choices. This is precisely the reason the psalmist urges us, "*fear Him, do not sin*" (Ps 4:4). The prospect of God's judgment is terrifying, but for that very reason Christ took on our flesh, that we might understand the nobility our humanity is capable of, and embrace a life that allows us to approach our Judge with confidence. ■

ROSARY CENTER MINISTRY *(Continued from page 1)*

on the order form that accompanies the Light and Life newsletter. To give everyone an idea of the vast array of our offerings, we are including an expanded order form with this issue of our newsletter. We are certain our friends will find this list a great help to their spiritual and intellectual lives.

ENDOWMENT FUND GROWS

Thanks to a recent bequest, the Rosary Confraternity Memorial Education Fund is now valued at well over \$100,000.00. This means that the Center is able to

increase the support it traditionally offers the Dominican students of the Western Dominican Province.

Says Fr. Reginald Martin, Director of the Rosary Center, "a hundred thousand dollars isn't much, by today's standards, but the Fund is only a year old, and our friends are supporting it generously. Their generosity is helping to educate the next generation of Dominicans to preach the gospel good news of Our Lady's Rosary, so we have every reason to be glad – and grateful."

Gifts to the Memorial Fund become a permanent memorial to the Rosary Center's many benefactors. Gifts are invested in the Fund, not spent, and each month the Fund's income is added to the Rosary Center's contribution to help underwrite the training of young men for ministry as Dominican brothers and priests.

A MILESTONE FOR FR. DUFFNER, A TRIBUTE TO THE ROSARY CENTER'S FRIENDS

Fr. Paul Duffner, O.P., who directed the work of the Rosary Center for many years, recently celebrated his 92nd birthday. No one who knows Fr. Duffner will be surprised to learn that he spent the day, as usual, working in the Center's office. "Our brother is amazing," says Fr. Reginald, who joined the Rosary ministry three years ago. "He has the energy of a man a third his age – proof that playing baseball in college helps keep you young!"

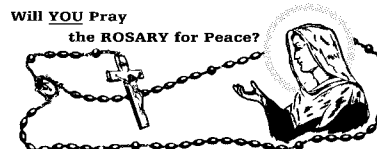
To honor Fr. Duffner and the many friends he has made over the decades of service to the Blessed Virgin, the Rosary Center has made a quarter-million dollar gift to help purchase a new seminary complex to house the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, California, where young Dominicans receive intellectual preparation for their lives of service as Dominican brothers and priests.

Asked what he thought of the gift, Fr. Duffner smiled and said, "we have prayed to have our own school building for years; this one came along, and God enabled us to buy it. We owe everything to the people we serve, and I believe our friends will be proud to be a part of this new chapter in our Dominican history."

Fr. Reginald has asked the president of the Dominican seminary to designate the gift "a tribute to Fr. Paul Duffner, O.P., and the Rosary Center's many friends whom he faithfully tended for nearly three decades."

Another Way of Furthering THE ROSARY CRUSADE FOR PEACE

The design below, a self-adhesive label for the outside of your letters. Each sheet contains 30 labels..



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