

LENT SERMONS: “Practicing the Presence of God”

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III Lent 2022, the Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 3:1-15, Psalm 63:1-8, I Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9

Depth Psychology Temperament preferences...Intuition, Sensation. Thinking, Feeling

What to do if you are a Feeling type in preference? After age 50, we should be integrating all of them, even if we want to ignore our least favorite. But for a personal spiritual Practice of the Presence of God, there is a method that each type will PREFER to use. So today we're going to look at a Spiritual Practice that suits a temperament attuned to Feeling. It is the practice of praying with a rosary.

Many world religions have a manual type of prayer like a rosary—a circlet of small objects that can be counted through your fingers in order to keep track of what you are doing.

It might seem automatic and ritual, predictable routine, like a job we do only for the goal of saying you did a job. But it is much more than that. For the Muslim, the 99 beads in the circle are there to contemplate the 99 Names of God. [God the Merciful, God the All-knowing, etc.]

The Name “Rosary” harkens back to the idea of the circle made of beads formed from actual rose petals, and the making of such a circle of prayer is in itself an act of devotion to God.

But for the Christian, rosary prayers are meant to help us step into the stories of the Gospels, to feel the emotion of the main character, their story, their passion as the events unfold in your imagination. For Protestants, historically, there has been alarm at focusing on the Life of the Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic Marian rosary practice. On each bead, praying the story of the Angel Gabriel coming to Mary at the Annunciation...“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!”

But, I think, the practice of the rosary prayer is so beneficial and suitable especially for those with a temperament preference of Feeling and imagination., there are other ways to approach the practice and learn more of the Gospels at the same time. As with Jesus and the fig tree, wait in peace and hope, and you will find yourself bearing fruit in the presence of God.

The traditional way of keeping track of the prayer is to pray five decades of ten, that just makes sense if you are using your fingers! You feel your way into the story while you repeat the prayer. Stop with a cleansing breath to say the Lord's Prayer and begin on the next story, imagining it, walking into it, as you go along. Before you begin, dedicate your prayer work in the Name of Jesus, and ask that what you are doing will be for you and increase in your Hope, Faith, and Love of God.

I learned the Tharseo Rosary from Sr. Benedicta, of the Episcopal Sisters of St. Helena, who now have their Mother House (and Guest House) in Augusta, Georgia. It has 5 decades, as well, based on the 5 times the word “Tharseo” [Greek] appears in the Gospels, the Life of Jesus.

The word is a command, and it means “Be of good courage!” Buck up!, Pull up your socks, the King James version translates it “Be of good cheer!” But as you join once more with feeling into these 5 stories, you will

see that each one is a very strong paradox, confusing, confounding, making you think and take yourself into the story, each time asking, "What does this mean to me, now, at this time; what new insight might I take into my own life?" As the Psalm says, "***When I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches, for you have been my helper, and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.***"

It's important to emphasize that you don't need any special equipment to pray this way.

You could sit outside, choose 10 little stones on the ground and be just fine. Or, you could, as historically the Irish did in times of religious persecution, tie 10 little beads into a circle, keep it in your pocket, and move it from finger to finger as you walk along. I used to have a long walk in the cold from the Montreal train station to my seminary, and it kept me warm, chased away boredom from the trek, brought me a new insight every time, and delivered me refreshed and ready to go for another day of study. Give it a try! Amen? Amen.

the THARSEO ROSARY

taught by Sr. Benedicta, OSH, Episcopal Order of St. Helena

Matthew 9:2 1st Decade

And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, ***Take Courage***, son, your sins are forgiven."

Matthew 9:22 2nd Decade

But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, ***take courage***; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well.

Mark 10:49 3rd Decade

And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man, saying to him "***Take courage***, stand up!" He is calling for you.

Matthew 14:27 4th Decade

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "***Take courage***, it is I; do not be afraid."

John 16:33 5th Decade

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but ***take courage***; I have overcome the world."

Practice:✠

"I pray in the Name of Jesus" May it increase my Faith, my Hope, my Love...

the Lord's Prayer... for each bead of the decade: "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner."