

(From the Grey Book - Open Your Hearts to Mary, Queen of Peace)

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"What does it mean to recite the rosary ?"

What does it mean to recite the rosary ? The rosary is a meditative, biblical prayer, and when Our Lady asks for the rosary, she wants us to come closer to the mysteries of the life of Jesus and her life too, so that we may come closer to the mysteries of the Redemption.

Prayer is life with Our Lord, not just words for Our Lord. So it is not enough to say one hundred and fifty Hail Mary's, but to dialogue with Our Lord. Our Lady recommended the entire rosary and said: *"Dear Children, pray and fast wholeheartedly: do not let fasting or prayer become a routine, a habit amongst you. Many have started to pray and fast because everyone is doing so. Pray with your heart."* She told the Parish : *"Thank Our Lord, by fasting and prayer, for allowing me to remain with you for so long."* To recite and pray the rosary means looking for a real stimulus for our own life in each mystery, it does not mean just saying Hail Mary's, but to deepen our prayer. We can begin with ten minutes each morning for one mystery. The first joyful mystery, for example: I am ready to do Your Will. Our Lady said "Thy Will be done; Behold the Handmaid of the Lord" (Ecce ancilla Domini). When we contemplate the Annunciation we really must take time to do so; to contemplate means looking for the significance of the Will of Our Lord for me today. Where does Our Lord want me today ? What does Our Lord expect from me today ? Where can I do Our Lord's Will today ? If we do not take time to pray in this way there is a danger that our prayer will become just lip prayer. When Our Lady asks us to contemplate all the mysteries that the Church gives us in the rosary every day, she wants the life of Christ to speak to us, to mean something to us. The moment in which the Word or a mystery of the life of Jesus or the Madonna starts to speak to us, our conversion has begun - this signifies a change in our life and our behaviour.

When Our Lady tells us : *"Pray with your heart"*, this is one of the biggest problems - not a problem of knowledge because we know the message as the world has known it for two thousand years, but we have become like deaf and blind, we no longer search for Our Lord. Our Lady wants Our Lord's Word to begin to speak to us. I will give you an example : in every Christian family there is a Cross. Many times what do we do in front of that Cross ? We do not forgive others, we quarrel, we blaspheme ... the Cross is the Word for forgiveness, love, sacrifice, eternal life. If it does not mean anything to us why do we have it ? When we look at the Cross new impulses should be born in us for our life with Our Lord and with others.

This is the experience of a man. He started to fast and pray with his wife and children, but his prayer was distracted, as was his first experience of fasting. He told himself that he had never taken to heart the words of the Gospel heard in church, and as he continued to fast he felt that the Word would not leave him in peace any more. But all of a sudden he knew what to do. He has been quarrelling with his brother for many years, but suddenly felt free to go to him and make peace. Without fasting, he had been able to be a Christian but, at the same time, quarrel with his brother. Now he realises that the Word of the Lord requires a radical change on his part.

I believe that this example shows us that this must happen to all of us : the Word must start to mean something to us and start to change us. This means conversion as it is meant in the message of Medjugorje, changing our lives according to the Will of Our Lord which can be found in His Word if we listen with an open heart. Our Lady has explained in a message why she requests so much prayer : *"Dearest, I still need your prayers. If someone asks me why they must pray so much, I tell you : look around you a little and you will see many sins. Pray that my Son may forgive."*

Our Lady invites, not only to change our lives, but to pray, to help, so that the plans of Our Lord and her plans may be fulfilled. Our Lady has made us responsible for peace by asking us for continuous prayer and a more radical life with Our Lord. Who can bring us this peace ? Only human beings, people with a new heart who are capable of forgiveness and making peace with each other. Peace is not possible without forgiveness and reconciliation. Who can forgive and make reconciliation ? It is difficult to do so and you know that many times it is easier to give money rather than to forgive.

Our Lady says that prayer and fasting are the means by which we can start to search for Our Lord in a radical way.

(Fr.Slavko Barbaric, 6th October 1984)