

October 25, 2020

ST. JOHN PAUL II'S APOSTOLIC LETTER ON THE ROSARY

Dr. Tim Gray & Lucas Pollice

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POPE JOHN PAUL II'S LETTER ON THE ROSARY - FORMED NOW!

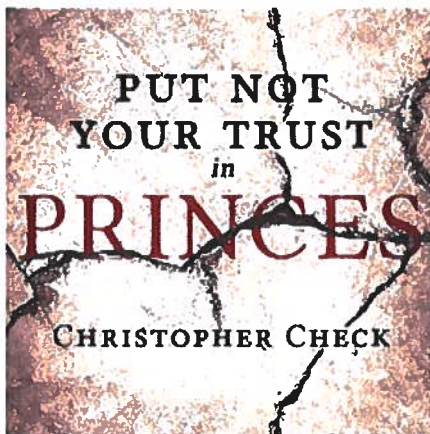
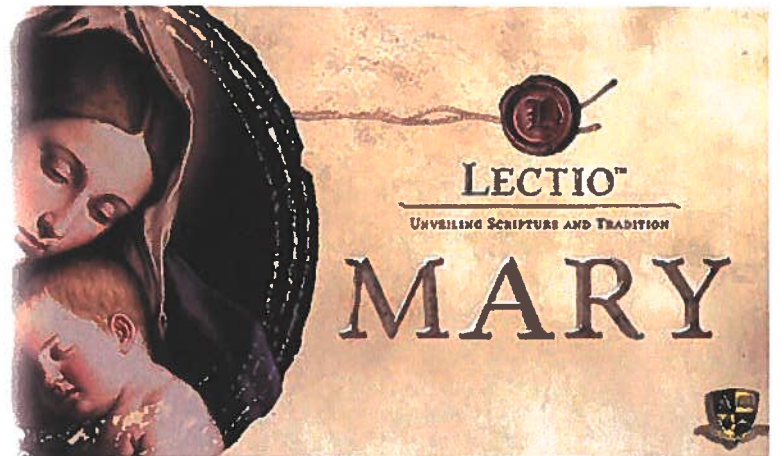
To close out October, the month dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary, enjoy this discussion between Dr. Tim Gray and Lucas Pollice on St. John Paul II's letter on the Rosary. This wonderful discussion will help draw you deeper into the mysteries of Christ meditated on in the Rosary.

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LECTIO: MARY

Why is Mary so important to Catholics, and why have so many people been devoted to her over the centuries? Dr. Brant Pitre, Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Augustine Institute Graduate School, examines what the Old and New Testaments, the life of Christ, and the early Church Fathers reveal about the life and identity of Mary,



PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PRINCES BY CHRISTOPHER CHECK

Speaking from his perspective as a historian, Christopher Check reminds us that the crisis of our age is cultural and, in the end, spiritual. He explains that a flourishing society is not achieved through legislation or at the ballot box, but instead radiates from the family out.

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VI November 2020 Capriola reflection
by Deacon David Capriola
Praying for and Remember Souls

It can be both saddening and comforting to spend time thinking about our closest loved ones who have passed away. Their absence can tear at our hearts and bring about a most profound sadness, yet our memories of times shared can warm us to immense joy.

Anyone who has ever experienced the loss of another knows the challenge of facing the longing to have the person back again. Our faith professes that the souls of the departed have passed from our midst to the reality of eternal life.

Though we have no tangible way of remaining connected to them after death, our spiritual connection need not ever be extinguished. A wonderful nature of faith is its ability to help us see that, ultimately, this spiritual connection is the only one that really matters and the only one that surpasses the limits of this life. November is a month dedicated to their memory and to our prayers for them.

A strong Catholic tradition of praying for the departed souls can be traced back to the earliest years of Christianity. Evidence of this practice can be found in inscriptions in the catacombs (ancient underground cemeteries) of Rome.

Many of the writings of early Church Fathers also give testimony to it. Specifically, Tertullian wrote of the legitimacy of prayers for the dead as early as the latter part of the second century after Christ, stating, "*We annually make offerings for the dead.*" (De Corona) St. Cyprian writes that, "*mutual prayers and good offices ought to be continued for one another even though the other be called away by death.*" (Epistle LVII)

In the New Testament, St. Paul speaks of prayers on behalf of his departed Christian brother Onesiphorus in his Second Letter to Timothy, "*May the Lord grant mercy to . . . Onesiphorus; often enough he revived my spirits . . . he sought me out when in Rome, and succeeded in finding me. The Lord grant that he may find mercy.*" (2 Timothy 1: 16-18)

Our union with the departed is so deep a part of our faith that we profess a belief in it each time we recite the Apostle's creed when we say, "*I believe in . . . the Communion of Saints.*" As supported by St Paul, the Communion of Saints is the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth, the departed souls, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of the same mystical body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices.

The participants in that solidarity are called saints by *reason of their destination* and of their partaking of the fruits of the Redemption. (Based on 1 Corinthians 1:2) The underlying beauty of the Doctrine of the Communion of Saints is that our ties with one another do not end with death. Our faith connects us beyond this world.

What we have shared physically in life on earth continues spiritually, free of any limitations imposed by this world. The challenge to embrace this connection is aided by our own prayers.

Faith in God's unending love and mercy inspire us to pray on behalf of those who have died. Our prayers can be private and personal or public and formal.

The Church places no limits on the practice of prayers for the departed, other than to say that those in heaven, such as martyrs and saints need no prayers for their behalf, though others can benefit from their intercession. The most powerful prayer of the Church, Holy Mass, includes several opportunities to pray for those who have died.

During the Universal Prayer read after the Nicene Creed at Mass, we regularly include intercessions for the departed. More profoundly, the Eucharistic prayers include moments when we commit them to God's mercy and redemption. At no time can our prayers be more sacred than at the moment of Eucharist.

While it is a common practice to have Masses celebrated for the intention of deceased loved ones, most of our prayers devoted to them are private moments. During these times, there are an abundance of formal prayers that we can recite for their behalf and for our own or another's comfort.

Depending on the closeness we feel with someone who has died, many of us can still find it easy to converse with them as if they were still physically in our presence. This can be the most moving and spiritually fulfilling type of prayer as it confirms the Christian belief in life after death.

Certainly, there is no point in speaking with someone who does not exist, but there is a very pleasing and gratifying reason in speaking with someone who is still able to hear us express our love to them, especially if the recollection of our earthly bond remains as real as it was when they were alive with us.

Conversing with the dead is not some strange phenomena of the mystical realm, conjuring up images of psychics and Ouija boards; it is a wondrous and prayerful way to experience the love of someone whose life continues in the reality that eventually awaits all of us. It is also a marvelous way to confirm our faith in life after death, surely the most important reason for even professing a faith in God.

During the month of November, take time to celebrate your relationships with the departed. Offer prayers for their salvation, recall the special moments of your memories of them, and reconnect with their still living presence that exists in your heart.

Allow room for the tears of loss that confirm how much they continue to mean to you, but also embrace the joy and comfort that come from allowing them to help you with rekindling your own faith in God by your prayers that connect you to them. Our prayers for the dead help us to seek peace, not an ordinary or temporal peace, but a lasting, eternal peace that only comes from the comfort that God alone can offer.

This is the peace that St. Francis' prayer invites us to experience. *Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace; Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; And where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek To be consoled as to console; To be understood, as to understand; To be loved, as to love; For it is in giving that we receive, It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.*