

TWO SINS

A Responsorial Psalm tells us exactly what the two sins of the people were. "They forgot the works of God; they did not wait for his counsel" (Ps. 105: 13). The remedy for these two sins is found in the rosary because in the rosary we remember the works of God and wait for His counsel. The rosary is an unfailing support for the theological virtue of hope. The rosary silences naysayers, pessimists, and cynics, because it immerses the soul in the remembrance of the works of God, and quiets the soul in the presence of the Virgin full of grace. In times of crisis - - and at all times - - hold fast to the rosary as to a lifeline. The rosary is a way of waiting for the counsel of God.

CRYING AFTER THE LORD

The merit of the woman in a Gospel of St. Matthew is, as the disciples said to Jesus, that she kept on "crying after them" (Mt. 15: 23). Jesus was silent, saying not a word to her, but she cried all the more. She was a Canaanite. Jesus tested her by saying that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. What did she do? "She came and knelt before Him, saying, 'Lord, help me'" (Mt. 15: 25). Jesus tested her again. "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." The woman had an answer ready: "Yes, Lord, yet even the puppies eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table" (Mt. 15: 27). With that, Jesus lets her win. "'O woman, great is thy faith! Be it done for thee as thou wilt.' And her daughter was cured from that hour" (Mt. 15: 28).

THE SUPPLICATION OF THE ROSARY

If Saint Dominic preached the rosary, it was because he knew it to be a prayer capable of winning every grace. The rosary has all the attributes of the Canaanite woman's pleading. It is a prayer of repetition. It is a prayer of confidence. It helps one to persevere in supplication, bead by bead, and decade by decade. Our Lord finds the rosary irresistible because His own Mother "subsidizes" it. She stands behind it. The rosary is the voice of the poor, the needy, the downtrodden, and the weak. Persevere in praying the rosary and one day you will hear Our Lord say to you what he said to the woman of the Gospel: "Great is thy faith! Be it done for thee as thou wilt" (Mt. 15: 28).

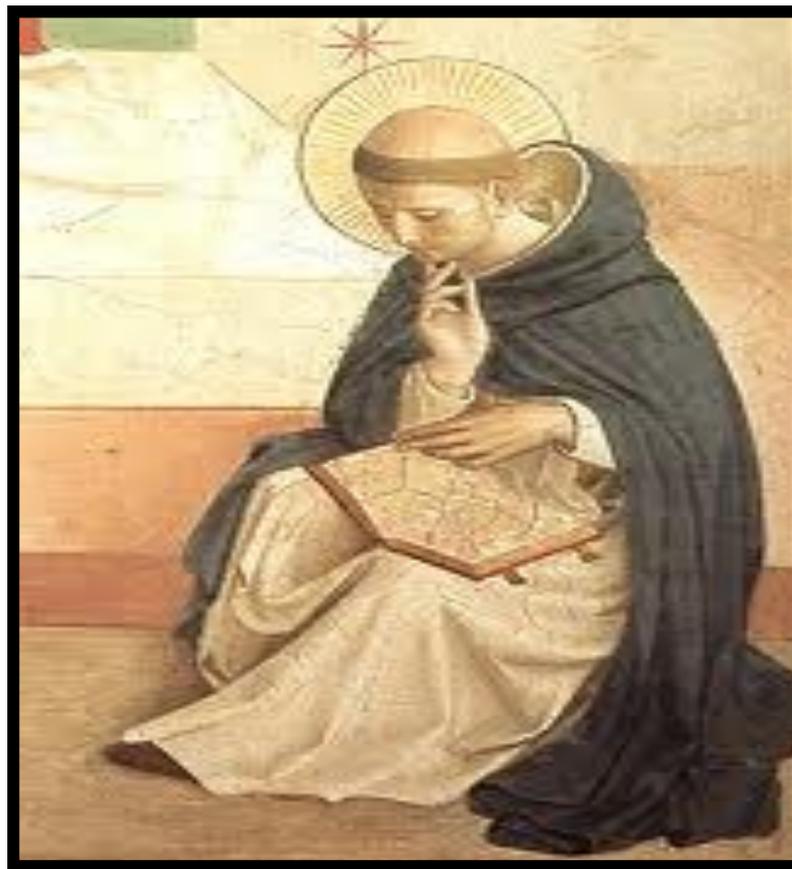
THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE

Saint Matthew's Gospel ends with a healing obtained by persevering prayer and by faith. Saint Dominic's Nine Ways of Prayer - - and his tenth, the rosary - - lead to our own healing and to the healing of those for whom we pray. We need to be healed of our inclination to be naysayers, to disparage the possibilities opened by grace, to spread gloom and discouragement, to foment murmuring and pessimism. We need to be healed of our forgetfulness of the mercies of God and of the restlessness that keeps us from waiting upon His counsel. Saint Dominic shows us that, with the rosary in hand, we will experience the triumph of grace. + + +



Saint Dominic

Feast Day: August 4



*"These, my much loved ones,
are the bequests which I leave to you as my sons;
have charity among yourselves;
hold fast to humility;
keep a willing poverty."*

Saint Dominic

Saint Dominic

*Saint Dominic, founder of the great order of preaching friars which bears his name, was born in the year 1170 at Calaruega, Castile, Spain, of a noble family with illustrious connections. His father, Don Felix de Guzman, held the post of royal warden of the village; his mother, a woman of unusual sanctity, was to become Blessed Joan of Aza. Very early it was decided that Dominic should have a career in the Church. His call was so evident that while he was still a student, Martin de Bazan, bishop of Osma, appointed him canon of the cathedral, and the stipend he received helped him to continue his studies. Dominic's love of learning and his charity are both exemplified in a story of his student days. He had gathered a collection of religious books inscribed on parchment; these he greatly treasured, but one day he sold the whole lot that he might give the money thus obtained to some poor people. "I could not bear to prize dead skins," he said, "when living skins were starving and in need."

At the age of twenty-five he was ordained and took up his duties. The chapter lived under the rule of St. Augustine, and the strict observance gave the young priest the discipline that he was to practice and teach to others all his life. Someone who knew Dominic at this time wrote that he was first of all the monks in holiness frequenting the church day and night, and scarcely venturing beyond the walls of the cloister. He was soon made sub prior, and when the prior, Diego d'Azevado, became bishop of Osma, about 1201, Dominic succeeded to his office. He had then been leading the contemplative life for six or seven years.

*(excerpted from: ewtn.com)

The following is excerpted from a sermon of Father Mark Kirby, Prior of the Diocesan Benedictine Monastery of Our Lady of the Cenacle in Tulsa, Oklahoma:

THE MERCY OF GOD

Saint Dominic would spend whole nights weeping and groaning in prayer before the altar. Over and over again he would say, "What will become of sinners? What will become of sinners?" Saint Dominic's great passion was to reconcile sinners by preaching the mercy of God.

THE POWER OF PREACHING

Dominic understood that the power of preaching comes from ceaseless prayer. His prayer had three characteristics: humble adoration, heartfelt pity for sinners, and exultation in the Divine Mercy. Saint Dominic prayed constantly; he prayed at home and on the road, in church and in his cell. For Saint Dominic there was no place or time foreign to prayer. He loved to pray at night. He engaged his whole body in prayer by standing with outstretched arms, by bowing, prostrating, genuflecting, and kissing the sacred page.

THE PSALTER OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Saint Dominic had a tenth way of prayer too: the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary that today we call the rosary. The use of beads and the repetition of the Hail Mary were both widespread before the time of Saint Dominic. The Hail Mary prayed 150 times is in reference to the 150 psalms that were practiced in Carthusian and Cistercian cloisters before the time of Saint Dominic.

IRRIGATED BY GRACE

Saint Dominic understood that preaching alone was not enough. Preaching had to be irrigated by grace, and grace is obtained by prayer. Inspired by the Mother of God, Saint Dominic interspersed his sermons with the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He exhorted his hearers to continue praying the Psalter of 150 Aves as a way of prolonging the benefits of holy preaching. The rosary allows the seed of the Word sown by holy preaching to germinate in the soul and bear fruit.

SIMPLE MEANS

Divine Wisdom has so ordered things that the simplest material means - - humble and adapted to our weakness - - produce the greatest spiritual effects. Father Raphael Simon, the saintly Trappist psychiatrist, said that, "five decades of the rosary or even three Hail Marys daily may mean the difference between eternal life and death." The effect of the rosary is entirely disproportionate to its simplicity. The fruits of the rosary are well known: among them are detachment from sin and from the occasions of sin, peace of heart, humility, chastity, and joy. The rosary, and all authentic prayer, is always realistic - - that is to say, honest about human weakness and sin - - and, at the same, full of hope - - that is to say, open to the glorious plan of God's mercy.

THE NAYSAYERS

In a lesson from the Book of Numbers Moses sent spies into the Promised Land to see what it was like. They returned from their mission with a single cluster of grapes; it was so enormous that they carried it on a pole between two of them. "We came to the land to which you sent us." they said, "It flows with milk and honey and this is its fruit" (Num. 13: 27). Then, what happened? They say that, in the presence of the inhabitants of the land - - veritable giants - - they felt like mere grasshoppers. They turned into naysayers, pessimists and cynics. They spread discouraging reports among the people, causing them to lose hope in the plan of God. This caused the people to wail and weep.