

**M**um, in her simplicity, was profound in her spiritual insights. She used every occasion to pray and meditate. The act of caring for her garden became her gift to Our Lady, because through the care and nurturing of each plant, the end results would be beautiful, fragrant flowers to bring to our parish church and place at Mary's shrine.

**O**ur yard was not my mother's flower garden, it was her "prayer" garden, her own little chapel where she marveled at God's masterpiece of colorful living things-and praised Him for every bud.

Mum was especially proud of her lilies, and she maintained that they took extra loving care, so it was never a surprise when she won a blue ribbon at the garden club for her efforts. I could usually find her on her knees, a prayerful posture, tending to her flowers.

**O**nce she was meticulously tying a string around the stem of a huge lily blossom, then attaching it to a slender stick she had placed in the ground. She was tending to this procedure with the precision and dedication of a surgeon while I stood over her, rattling on about something important to me. I didn't think she was paying any attention. "Mum what are you doing?" I asked impatiently.

"See this lily, Son? The bloom is so large the stem can't bear the weight of it." She finished, wiped her hands on her apron, and looked up at me. "That lily is very much like you. The bloom is your desire and ambitions. The stem is your faith, not strong enough to support."

**I**m certain now that Mum and her prayers were my stick. And, although I gave her every indication her prayers were going unanswered, she carried on, never losing faith in God and His Mother. Perhaps you are praying for a son or daughter, husband or wife, relative or friend, and it seems that your prayers aren't being heard. Know that we're on God's time, not our time. And even if the things we are praying for seem appropriate to us, remember, we must surrender to God's Will. His plan is always better than ours. Perhaps very often we won't know that until we get to Heaven. Don't give up—your prayers are somebody's stick. **Carry on, praying.**

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## *Carry on Praying*



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## CARRY ON PRAYING

by Fr. Ken Roberts

*I* was responsible for my mother becoming a saint! But it was not because of my direction. No, rather it was my lack of direction.

*Before* I entered the seminary at the age of thirty, I was in the fast lane and my relationship with God was almost nonexistent. Through my mother's perseverance and faith, I got out of the traffic of materialism and came to a full stop. But even then I had no sense of direction. I could have easily made the wrong turn once again. Mum knew that –Mum knew me! So she prayed and prayed and prayed, and never gave up on me.

### Saying Her Rosary

*During* my teens and into my twenties, when I returned home from all-night parties, there she would be saying her Rosary. A few times when I asked why she was still up, she would answer, "I am praying for you." Then off she would go to bed. Conversation finished!

*At* first, I felt pangs of guilt about being the reason my mother was robbed of her sleep, but due to a very "relaxed" conscience, I convinced myself that it was okay. She loved to pray, I was giving her another reason to do what she liked and did, best. So why should I feel badly about that? I continued to pursue my lifestyle, and she continued to pray.

*There* was one occasion, however, that her prayers were coupled with tears, and when I asked what was wrong, she replied, "Kenny, I don't think God answers my prayers. You have not changed."

*Arrogantly*, I answered, "Sure He is Mum. You're becoming a saint. I'll continue to play, and you continue to pray." How insensitive. But that's how I was in those days, so it is no wonder that Mum spent so much of her life clinging to her beads and storming heaven for me. God knows, and Mum knew, I needed it.

*Dredging* up those memories seems to put me in an English frame of mind, and I revert back to the British vernacular. For instance, instead of saying "continue," we said, "carry on." Mum used that expression often, especially when I was trying to make a point and I thought she was distracted and not listening to me. "Mum, did you hear what I said-are you listening?"

*"Every* word—*carry on!*" That was my cue to continue with my story. Then, by the time I finished, she summed it all up, and no matter what the dilemma, circumstance, or problem, she always gave what she thought was the right answer, "Carry on praying, Son."

*Occasionally* she would add a very tangible solution that I could deal with, and on more than one occasion, I was impressed with her insights and perception of things. Her point was, no matter what solution that seemed to be appropriate, it must be arrived at through prayer. I told you she was a saint!

### Her Prayers Not Appreciated

*It's* been said, and quite accurately I might add, that age has a way of making us appreciate all the things that we took for granted in our youth. How true. When I was young, I never appreciated my mother's perseverance in prayer for me, but now after thirty years of priesthood, I believe it was through her "carrying on" in prayer, that I am a priest today.

*Looking* back, I never realized the wonderful practices Mum employed in her everyday life. Once she shared with me that she knew Our Lord and His Mother were always by her side, because every household chore was a source of meditation.

*When* she cooked a meal, she meditated on Our Blessed Mother and how she must have prepared meals for the child, Jesus. When she scrubbed the floor, she thought about how difficult a simple task of cleaning must have been for Our Lady. Did Jesus fetch the water at the well? Did He help her with small tasks? How did they spend their evenings?