

## THE POLITICS OF THE ROSARY

Whenever somebody recites the rosary, people who do not know what it all means are apt to question—"Why mumble over a few pieces of glass strung together?"

Here is an attempt to explain the performance in everyday terms.

The beads, made of glass, plastic, wood, nuts or what have you, are nothing but a serviceable and convenient means of keeping tract of what we are doing. We want to say a certain number of prayers, so, in order to keep our count right, we have a tally board, an adding machine, a score sheet or whatever you wish to call it. Catholics call it a rosary.

It is divided into five parts—"decades". Within each part is a group of ten beads where we count the ten Hail Marys we wish to say for that decade. Preceding each group is a single bead where we say the Our Father after enunciating the particular thought, the mystery, that we wish to keep in mind for that decade.

The whole Rosary is meant to be addressed to the Mother of God. Sometimes we like to think of her as a joyful mother. So we say the Joyful Mysteries. Sometimes our mood is such that we would like to address her as the Sorrowful Mother,—hence the Sorrowful Mysteries. When the time or the mood is festive, we generally say the Glorious Mysteries. It is up to the individual who recites the rosary. There have been cases of gloomy fellows who keep saying the Sorrowful Mysteries.

Now for the main prayer—the Hail Mary.

Here again, it is quite simple.

The object in saying these prayers is to get nearer the Most Important Personage—God. What better way than to use a little politics and get there by going to the person nearest to this Most Important Personage—His mother?

So we say to the mother:

"Hail Mary." We greet her affably first.

"Full of grace." Who is the woman who does not feel kindly to-

wards anyone who call her gracious, immaculate, beautiful?

"The Lord is with thee." It is always best to mention anybody's greatest honor.

"Blessed art thou amongst women." Here again, who is the woman who would not listen to this?

"And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Her greatest honor again. Remember, mothers are always easy to talk to if we keep on the subject of their son, especially an only son, an only child.

Here we pause to take a deep breath—because we are next going to slip in the petition we have been warming up to all along.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God." We give a short address.

Then:

"Pray for us sinners." We are now asking her to put in a good word for us to the Most Important Personage.

"Now and at the hour of our death." Now and at the most crucial time of our lives when we either get a position in the heavenly firm or get rejected.

Simple?

Of course.

## MACAULAY ON THE CHURCH

"There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing, which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheater.

"The proudest royal houses are of but yesterday, when compared with the line of Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight fable.

"The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the Republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy

remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor.

"The Catholic Church is still sending forth, to the furthest ends of the world, missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine; and still confronting hostile Kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila.

"The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the Old. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn—countries which, a century hence may not improbably contain as large a population as that which now inhabits Europe. The members of her communion are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions; and it would be difficult to show that all other Christian sects united amounted to a hundred and twenty millions.

"Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all governments and of all ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot in Britain—before the Frank had passed the Rhine—when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch—when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor, when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on the broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. —(*Edinburg Review*, Oct. 1840)

#### LEARN OF ME

As a certain ecclesiastic dignitary was about to ascend the pulpit, one of his acolytes stepped on the train of his robe. Angrily swinging about, the dignitary administered a resounding cuff to the unfortunate bungler. The next moment he announced his text: "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart."