

Celebrating the Year of the Rosary

Father Kantenich gave this talk on 18 June 1949, to a group of women belonging to the German parish in Villa Ballester, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The group had the ideal of being a "living Rosary". Extracts from this talk were printed in the newsletter of the Rosary Campaign, Madison.

My dear ladies, We can often make some very original associations with nature. We are told that if an earthquake is coming, animals are the first to notice it. There are earthquakes not only in the natural order, they also happen in the supernatural sphere. What is meant by an earthquake in the supernatural order? A great supernatural earthquake is approaching. Who should be the first to notice it?

I was told that you have formed a *living Rosary*. I am always happy when I see the one or the other of you in the chapel every morning. ...

I now have the impression than an earthquake of grace is about to happen. In 1914 the first members were very young citizens, yet they did something very similar to what you have done. They told themselves: We will join together and make contributions to the capital of grace. What does that mean? We want to pray and sacrifice in order to draw the Mother of God down to us. From here she should choose a little place from which she can fulfil her task as educator. ...

We want to make contributions to the capital of grace as a living Rosary. How can we do that? Looking at it from outside, it is very simple. Each one of us individually can pray the whole Rosary, or even the three Rosaries, each day. We can perhaps finish five decades. It's fine if we have prayed one Rosary well. We have so many worries about our husband and children, and making ends meet. We cannot do more. So we have joined together and declared that together we will make one living Rosary.

If I have understood you correctly, I think this implies three things:

1. We pray the living Rosary,
2. We are a living Rosary,
3. We create a living Rosary.

We pray the living Rosary. Every day the fifteen members of our group give the Blessed Mother a wreath of roses. If the Blessed Mother were to go through the world today, do you think she would have a rose-strewn path? I don't think so. She would walk many a desert path. Most of them would lead through those areas where Catholics are well off. I became aware of this when the men from the Board of Directors were here. Even our local Catholics, when they become rich, no longer let themselves be seen in

church. They are no longer like a wreath of roses any more. However, we want to pray a living Rosary, we want to give roses to the Blessed Mother each day. They should be living roses. If you think of Germany, how beautiful it is when Spring arrives and we have living flowers on the altars everywhere. What do we want? Each day we want to give the Blessed Mother a wreath of living flowers. We don't want to do it the way it is often done when someone sleeps and mumbles the ten Hail Marys. We want to pray the living Rosary.

In principle, this is a most beautiful thought. We don't just pray the ten Aves, we also meditate on the great mysteries of our faith. In the Rosary you have a compendium of all the great truths that are able to shape our lives. As a result for our fight for survival here in a foreign land, we are always in danger of doing what the animals do and keep our heads down. Down below we have so much to worry about and so much work to do. We don't want to do this, we want to lift up our heads. In the Mass we are always called upon: *Sursum corda – Lift up your hearts!* What do we see when we do this? Our Lord's entire life, Mary's entire life.

I am sure it is very beautiful when you pray the Rosary. Perhaps you vary the decade once in a while. You have to learn to grasp the mystery of the Rosary if it is to become a living Rosary. How could we meditate on this? Imagine that you want to buy something, perhaps a new hat. What do you do next? Do you charge into a shop and say: Give me a hat? No, you think about the hat. You look at it from all angles and consider: Does it suit me? I can still surely learn something from you about how one does that!

You should do something similar when you meditate on the mysteries. How could we do it? Let us look at our Lord as he sweats blood in the garden at Gethsemani. It is a very plain and simple meditation. While we do this we could ask ourselves three questions:

- *What is God telling me through this mystery?* We could also think of our Lord as he is being scourged. What does he tell me?
- *What do I tell myself?* I ask myself: Am I not to blame for this? If I were present, what would I do? He is bearing it all for me. We mostly forget this in everyday life.
- *Now, what do I tell our Lord?* What do we want? To pray a living Rosary, not a dead one. Therefore I think:

We not only want to pray, we want to be a living Rosary. A most beautiful thought. Are you aware of this? The Rosary is actually a mirror of our entire lives. It reflects our life back to us. There is a sorrowful Rosary. I believe we understand this best of all. Is there also much suffering in our lives? There is also a joyful Rosary. Is there also much joy in our lives? And there is a glorious Rosary. We hope that our lives, with their ups and down of joy and suffering, will one day

culminate in glory. Everything that happens in our lives can be seen here in a higher light – our suffering in the sorrowful Rosary. ...

That is such a beautiful thought. The fifteen members of our group not only pray the Rosary, we live the Rosary. I want to bear the cross and suffering in my life in the way the sorrowful Rosary depicts it. How did our Lord, how did the Blessed Mother, bear the cross and suffering? Sometimes we are sorry because we have so many earthly worries, but we would also like to do something for God. So we are urged to do good deeds here or there

So what do we fifteen group members want to do now? We want to pray the living Rosary. What joy this gives to our Blessed Mother. We, who have understood her best in her suffering, are on the way to becoming like her. She answers us: On account of this I will soon come down into the shrine, and it will have been your work. The world doesn't know that the Blessed Mother has used us as her instruments.

Let us quickly move on to the third thought: *We create a living Rosary.*

You will say that you want to see to it that another fifteen come together in a group. In principle I can understand this well. Perhaps you will also do this. But I would tell myself that we need to see things at an even greater depth. I must see to it that my family embodies a living Rosary. Perhaps my husband isn't so attuned to prayer, but I would truly like to make my family into a living Rosary. It means that we see every sorrow, every joy, in the light of faith. Then we are a living Rosary. We don't want to set one act next to another.

This is how I imagine the living Rosary. Do you do this too? If we do it this way, I believe that the Blessed Mother will come soon. When she comes and settles amongst us, everything will be new. Our lives will receive a deep meaning and everything will be tangible. I am happy about this, and our Blessed Mother is also happy.

This is how we want to live, pray and depict the Rosary. If I put it this way, I am reminded of an incident in the life of St Elizabeth. Can you remember the miracle of the roses?¹ Don't you think it would be a similar miracle of roses if we were to embody a living Rosary? We want to become a living miracle of roses, we want to become living roses.

How the human heart delights in the fragrance of roses. We want to become a little miracle of roses by helping to create and form people who, like our Lord and

¹ Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, was known for her charity to the poor. One day her enemies came upon her carrying things in her cloak. When she was forced to open her cloak, all that they found was roses.

the Blessed Mother, give joy to the Father. In this way they can be a blessing to countless other people.