

Our Lady of the Rosary
Sixth Day of the Novena
May 16, 2020

During this novena we are talking about honoring our Blessed Mother, having a devotion to her. I think that the most beautiful devotion to Mary is praying the rosary.

In an episode of the comic strip "Hagar the Horrible," Helga, Hagar's wife, is preparing dinner. She hears someone coming into the house and yells: "Is that you, Hagar?" She hears his voice: "Yes." She says, "You're late! Where were you?" Hagar answers: "I had a business meeting with Atilla the Hun." Helga yells: "Well, hurry up and wash your hands. Dinner is almost ready!" Hagar shouts: "Uh, could you come in here for a minute?" She says, "Okay, but I'm busy. What do you want?" Now you see Hagar crawling on his hands and knees, arrows stuck in his shield, a hatchet stuck in his helmet. He has obviously been in combat with someone. Battered and beaten he says to Helga: "I need a hug!"

We all do! We need a hug from our Blessed Mother. We need a hug from her at all times, but especially now during this pandemic. I think that Mary gives us a hug every time we pray a Hail Mary as we pray the Rosary. She gives us a hug to let us know that she loves us and cares for us. She gives us a hug to reassure us that she will help us as we face this terrible corona virus.

I would like to make just a couple of reflections about the rosary. Some time ago, I was in the Newark Airport to take a flight to Seattle, Washington. As I prepared to enter the metal detector, I emptied the contents of my pockets into the tray: some loose change, some keys, my wallet and my rosary beads. As the attendant looked at the rosary, he handed it to me and said, "You don't have much confidence in the airline, do you, Father?" You know, I do not look upon the rosary as a good luck charm or a magical insurance that I will have a safe airplane flight or as something that will always protect me from all harm. For me, my rosaries are a reminder of the love that Jesus and Mary have for me, and of the love that I should have for them. So, today I encourage you to have a devotion to Mary and to pray the rosary.

They tell the story of a woman who truly loved our Blessed Mother and prayed the rosary every day. While talking with some friends one day she said: "I have been praying the rosary now for many years now. I have learned that whenever I turn to Mary in my troubles, she will somehow or another get me through them."

A skeptical friend said: “You know, sooner or later something so terrible will happen in your life that even Mary won’t be able to help you.” And he added, and repeated: “Just you wait! Just you wait!” After a short pause, the woman of faith smiled and said: “Many years and many troubles have passed since then, and guess what? I’m still waiting ... because Mary has never failed me.” I, too, have been praying the Rosary for many years. Many years have passed in my life, and I have endured many “troubles,” so to speak. And do you want to know something? Mary has never failed me. And do you want to know something else? I am certain that she never will.

During this pandemic, let us all continue to pray to our Blessed Mother. Let us ask her to give a hug especially to first responders, medical staffs, all those in the front lines, so to speak, who are risking their own life by trying to serve us. Let us ask Mary to give a hug to those who have contracted the virus. Let us ask Mary to give a hug to those whose loved ones have *died*.
O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE.