By Murray Rundus

During the meteoric rise of Dr. Taylor Marshall's YouTube channel, a common phrase has been heard at the end of his videos. "If you don't pray the Rosary you're not on the team." In an age where there is a complete lack of knowledge of or belief in the basic propositions of the faith, I think this came to many as a refreshing slogan; it certainly did for me. But in recent days there has been a growing contingent of people that have begun to attack this statement. Some suggest it might make one scrupulous, imposing an obligation that doesn't exist in the Church. Others say that it gives too much importance to one devotion when there are many others that exist in the Church that are also fruitful. However, this completely misses the point of the call to action and reflects a complete misunderstanding of the basis of the appeal.

Many people of the present generation are inundated with immediate gratification and overstimulation of the senses. We live on doomscrolling through 30-second clips for entertainment. We get upset when our DoorDash driver is late by a few minutes, and most people can't even be bothered to call their friends, preferring to text them instead. The opposite of this culture of relentless seeking out immediate experiences and dopamine is a peaceful contemplation based on consistent repetition. Practically every Christian devotion comes back to some form of this principle whether it be reciting the Psalms, the Jesus Prayer, or even the liturgy itself. There is a beauty and profound peace that can be found in consistency, and rhythmic repetition. While the world around us might be full of lunacy, we can rest in the fact that, at the very least, there is something consistent in our lives each day. And when that thing is growing in union with God, it is all the more powerful. This alone would justify the whipping into action of modern people who are in desperate need of establishing real habits in their daily lives, rather than ever-changing sentiments. But for Roman Rite Catholics in particular the Rosary is something much more important.

Mental prayer should be at the heart of the spirituality of every Catholic. St. Alphonsus said: "Now, they who do not make mental prayer do not see these truths, neither do they see the importance of eternal salvation, and the means which they can adopt in order to obtain it." If one were to think Dr. Marshall's imperative was fundamentalist or extreme, one surely would have to condemn St. Alphonsus as well! What is particularly unique about Latin spirituality as opposed to many forms of Eastern spirituality is the use of the imagination to obtain this contemplation and conversation with God that mental prayer entails. This is not necessarily an intuitive process and, at least in my experience, it takes a while to understand. One of the best ways to start learning this process is the Rosary itself. There are clear mysteries to meditate upon during each decade and it gets one used to a consistent rule of prayer where one is at least trying to meditate. For someone looking to

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delve deeper into meditative books or contemplating the truths explained by the Doctors of the Church, the Rosary serves as a foundational practice. It is something one can always fall back on if they find themselves becoming more lax in the future. For those just looking to practice their faith without becoming too intellectual, the Rosary serves as a great way to catechize and gives a simple structure of prayer that can fit into even the busiest man's life. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical begging the faithful to pray the Rosary said: "With meditation of the Sacred Mysteries added to the vocal prayers, there emerges another very great advantage, so that all, even the most simple and least educated, have in this a prompt and easy way to nourish and preserve their own faith."

It wasn't just Pope Pius XII or Dr. Marshall who asked us to pray the Rosary, but Our Lady herself. Our Lady had constantly told the children to pray the Rosary every day up until the final apparition, in many respects it was the main part of her message, Sr. Lucy said in regards to the July 13th apparition that "I made some requests which I do not remember. What I do remember, is that Our Lady said it was necessary to say the Rosary in order to obtain these graces throughout the year."But it was on October 13th, 1917, the day of the Miracle of the Sun, Our Lady told Sr Lucy "I am the Lady of the Rosary. May you continue always to pray the Rosary every day." The principal message of Fatima is to pray the Rosary, and I believe that it is more than acceptable to hold the devotees of Our Lady of Fatima to the standard that we should obey Our Lady's wishes.

One might say that even though Popes have promoted it, Saints have been made because of it, and miracles worked to see it spread but still we shouldn't say one 'isn't on the team' if he doesn't pray the Rosary. What obviously is not being meant by Dr. Marshall's statement is that one is automatically excommunicated if he misses his daily Rosary, or prays the Akathist Hymn and the Jesus Prayer instead. But is our faith to be entirely reduced to a matter of 'musts'? A Catholic can surely live his life doing only the bare minimum, choosing to avoid devotion and seek pleasure as much as he can as long as he doesn't sin or go against a precept of the Church. Just as a football player might fulfill the bare minimum of his contract by showing up to his team's games and giving the least effort possible, this player might technically be on the team, but such an attitude won't keep him on the team for very long. Catholicism is not a religion of checking whatever boxes need to be checked according to the Law, and in order to break past scrupulosity that entire paradigm needs to be broken entirely. Rather, our religion is one of the dispositions working with the Law. God reads the hearts of men and knows if we are trying or not. "For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Therefore, in this spirit, we should aim to be on Our Lady's team and pray the Rosary daily.

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