

TAKE-HOME 4

Do Whatever He Tells You

Abide in me, and I in you. (John 15:4, RSV2CE)

What We Found

- Jesus forbids *empty* phrases, then gives a fixed prayer (Matthew 6:7-9). He prayed three times “saying the same words” (26:44). Psalm 136 repeats twenty-six times; heaven never ceases (Revelation 4:8). Empty prayer is condemned, not prayer because it is repeated.
- The Hail Mary is Luke 1:28 and 1:42 plus a request for prayer (James 5:16), made to someone whose prayers rise before the throne (Revelation 5:8; Hebrews 12:22-24). “Mother of God” is Elizabeth’s “mother of my Lord” (1:43), defended at Ephesus in 431.
- The rosary is Gospel meditation with Mary: eighteen of twenty mysteries are Gospel or Acts scenes. Mary’s only instruction: “Do whatever he tells you” (John 2:5). A rosary that stops at Mary instead of leading to Christ has gone wrong.
- God instituted wearable reminders (the tassels, Numbers 15) and uses objects tied to holy people (the fringe, Paul’s handkerchiefs, Elisha’s bones). A sacramental disposes; it does not work by itself (CCC 1670). A scapular worn as a charm is superstition (CCC 2111).
- Required: the five precepts, the Church’s indispensable minimum. Offered: every devotion; none is an additional precept. The liturgy far surpasses them (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 13). No Catholic is bound to pray a rosary.
- Abiding in Jesus (John 15) is fruit, his words, his commandments, his love. Remarkably, he uses the same verb for Eucharistic communion: eat his flesh and drink his blood, and you abide in him (John 6:56). Revelation 3:20 ends at a table.

The Twenty Mysteries

Joyful: Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38); Visitation (1:39-56); Nativity (2:1-20); Presentation (2:22-38); Finding in the Temple (2:41-52).

Luminous: Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17); Cana (John 2:1-11); Proclamation of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15); Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8); Institution of the Eucharist (Luke 22:14-20).

Sorrowful: Agony (Matthew 26:36-46); Scourging (John 19:1); Crowning with Thorns (Matthew 27:27-31); Carrying the Cross (John 19:17); Crucifixion (Luke 23:33-46).

Glorious: Resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10); Ascension (Acts 1:6-11); Descent of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4); Assumption (Church teaching); Coronation (read in Revelation 12:1).

Required, or Offered?

Required, the precepts of the Church (CCC 2041-2043):

- Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
- Confess your sins at least once a year.
- Receive the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
- Observe the days of fasting and abstinence.
- Provide for the needs of the Church.

Offered: the rosary, the scapular, novenas, Eucharistic adoration, First Fridays, the Divine Mercy chaplet, medals, pilgrimages, holy water at home, the Liturgy of the Hours (required of clergy and religious, offered to everyone else).

The test for any devotion: does it walk you to the altar? If yes, keep it. If not, you are free to set it down.

Voices of the Church

St. John Paul II *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* 1

“The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer.”

St. Augustine *Letter 130 (to Proba)*, 10.20

Much praying is not much speaking. The monks of Egypt prayed often in very short prayers, like arrows, so attention would not fade. What God forbids is words without the heart. (A summary.)

St. Teresa of Ávila *The Way of Perfection* 22-24

Vocal prayer said with attention to whom we speak and what we say has already become mental prayer. Words said without knowing to whom we speak are not prayer at all. (A summary.)

Live It This Week

- Pray the Our Father once a day, slowly, attending to each phrase. That is vocal prayer becoming mental prayer.
- Choose one devotion freely, or none. Afterward, ask whether it walked you toward the altar.
- Say your three sentences to the person who asked you the question.

- Go deeper: *Abide* (the Eucharist, grace, and staying in Christ), *The True Bread* (the Jewish roots of the Eucharist), and *This Is My Body* are the next Catholic Armory studies on this path.

Memory Verse

Abide in me, and I in you. (John 15:4)

Catechism

CCC 1667-1670; 1674-1676; 2041-2043; 2111; 2676-2678; 971; 2700-2704. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 13; *Lumen Gentium* 66-67.

My Answer

“Why does the Catholic Church add all this extra stuff? Why not just a relationship with Jesus?” Your answer, in three sentences:
