

A Fistful Of Beads

By Father Joe Cullen, S.M., B.A.

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So much has been written about the Holy Rosary that one would have thought it impossible to approach this great subject from an entirely new angle. In his "Fistful of Beads", the Rev. Father Joe Cullen, S.M., B.A., has written a pamphlet that will inspire thousands because of its new and arresting analysis.

Father Cullen insists on being called Father "Joe" Cullen. All who read this pamphlet will understand why. The story, yes, it is a story, a lovable story, is so amazingly human. The Catholic Writers' Movement considers that in this it has given to Catholics, and we hope to non-Catholics, its finest pamphlet to date.

A FISTFUL OF BEADS.

JUST a fistful of beads: beads and chain and crucifix! Yet wherever a Catholic goes, they are carried with him. Hard-headed business men, soldiers seasoned in battle, men and women of all nations and of the most varied interests consider themselves as almost naked without them. They are the last thing checked by a mother and the son that is going overseas. They are the last thing discarded when a man or woman dies; even when the Faith dies. They go down with us to the grave.

Have you noticed that they remain clean and burnished, even when they have not been used? As if the very life-blood of a man circulated through them, preserving their freshness and vitality. Not (take notice), when you leave them on a shelf or in a drawer, But when you carry them with you, they move with you and are a part of you.

They are Catholic; they are a test. Yet not on steeple or on altar, not anywhere in the furnishing of a church, is there any display of a Rosary. They are not hung as a string of pearls round the neck — no, not even by their most ardent devotee.

They live in the dark, coming out for exercise in day light or artificial light; but, best of all, when stars are out, along a country road. A man may use them kneeling beside his bed. If he takes them to bed with him, he may lose them; unless it be in his own home. Too late, then, will he discover his nakedness. Be warned!

The Rosary is elemental. The common man evolved it. Look into a man's pocket and you will find it hobnobbing with a knife, a race-card, bits or string, tram tickets, coins of silver and bronze, a driver's licence, a handkerchief — representing the everyday needs of the male of the human species. In my lady's bag, it rests content with cosmetics — understanding and approving their purpose — baby's photograph, coupons, house-keeping money, a prayer book, and general what-nots. It dearly loves company, and only with difficulty can it be prized loose from its friends. But, take careful note of this! — If neglected for any time, it will become entangled. Almost certainly, that is its way of expressing its resentment. The situation calls for the utmost skill. Remember it is a

jointed thing, a vertebrate. You are for the moment a chiropractor adjusting something more loosely linked than the spinal column. Use no violence!

THE ROSARY — A PERSONAL THING.

IT IS a private thing — private and personal; as personal as father's pipe or sister's dancing slippers. It is even more intimate than these. Some stripling has at times taken his father's pipe and smoked; just once! A younger sister has gone to a dance in borrowed footwear and risked discovery. Let us say a toothbrush as representing the limit of exclusiveness. Don't casually ask a man for the loan of his Rosary! Lead up to it asking for a substantial loan, his car, his house, even a blood transfusion. When he is thoroughly beaten into abject servility, he may lend you his beads. But be not sure of it!

This attitude is not without foundation. His Rosary has been blessed for him. It has been set aside for the service of the soul; for his soul in particular. From God through the Church of His building the blessing came. When Christ dropped His bundle of keys into the horny fist of Peter, the Apostle was not to hang them on a nail and forget all about them. They were to operate on a treasure chest: the merits of Christ's Passion and Death fully accredited to humanity. The Church had a model already before it in the talents of the gospel story, where money is given in proportion to the sums already wisely used. What better way could there be than to release spiritual credit pro rata on account of some already meritorious act. It is like rolling a mere handful of snow and seeing it grow; but you must have the initial ball of snow, small though it be.

Now the multiplier in the instance of the talents was two only. Here, it is... well, frankly, we do not know.

We are as helpless in our reckoning as Newton was when he found the mathematics of his day inadequate to handle the movements of the planets. He fashioned his own. Thereby he excelled. But he worked within the compass of the human brain, such a brain. Our problem concerns two worlds, a world of sense and the world of spirit. The problem is beyond us.

The beads in our hands become instruments of grace. An indulgence placed upon them by the Church steps them up. God sees His wealth distributed; the Church acts within its powers; the method conforms to common sense. We are content.

THE BEADS, THE CROSS, AND THE TRIANGLE.

OUT of the deep recess of my pocket, I draw my beads. I spread them on the table in a wide circle. They are a stout set and will, I hope, be buried with me. I draw the cross and its connecting beads towards me. The "round" is made up of five groups of ten beads. Between each group, there stands in splendid isolation a larger bead. On these are said the prayers immediately to God: Christ's model prayer and praise of the Glorious Trinity. On the other beads, the smallness and number of which emphasise the relative insignificance of anything of mere human origin, are said the prayers to Mary as our advocate before God. God's unique position is thus symbolised by the size and separation of the single beads. We have here no muddled thinking.

The Rosary begins with the Cross, and is never far from it. The cross appears first, as you will see later, as a dark and increasing shadow; then as a stark reality; finally as the standard before an army on the march. On that cross Christ died: Christ Who was both God and man. His Divinity for the while dominates. It is proclaimed in the Creed that is said on the crucifix. It determines the group that follows. Three beads convey the ceremonial recognition of the Three Persons in One, the

Triune God. This must be emphasised; all three Persons in God were concerned about us: in our existence, our redemption, our sanctification.

But when we come to the triangle, the parting symbol of the Eternal Mystery within God, the sign alters. The numbers are now in fives and tens. Christ's Humanity is honoured. He was nailed by hands and feet. Fingers and toes provide the mystic number five; and ten is its double.

We who finger our beads are not conscious of any superiority. We are Catholics and, therefore, know the unique character of our Faith, but alas how poor is our response to its high ideals and lavish graces. We are common men, for whom Christ had to die; or we would perish. Our moral accounts are all subject to audit — I mean, here and now, this side of death. Pope, layman, bishop, priest, whoever we are; and in the process made to admit that we have sinned exceedingly and without excuse. Our sins of yesterday, the good we left undone, were all made vocal by the lips of sneering Jews twenty centuries ago, when evil things mass-demonstrated against the sinless Christ.

We must tell the truth, even to ourselves. We shared in the guilt of the mob. But, happier thought, by dying for them, He died for us. Using our newly bestowed rights, we can call God, Our Father. A second time we have risen from dust!

A FRIEND OF ALL MEN.

IS there a corner in all the world where the Rosary has not found a home? It is the prayer of saints and scallywags and those, like you and me, who fit between. How I love to think of the Rosary leaving for a while the serious, careful people and visiting the world of sport — that bright and generous-hearted class whose great task it is to wipe the frown from frozen faces. I knew a jockey who took his decades as easily as he took his jumps. He was fast and certain in both. I feel sure that the Great Judge, the lover of men and horses, will award him a place. The Rosary with a man with a grin is a Rosary on holiday. Such a man will dip into his pocket for more than his beads. His money and his beads are not of two different worlds. They are linked by their common interest in the distressed.

Did the shepherd of the story find the ninety-nine rather sheepish, when he left them and sought through the mountains and valleys for the one, which simply would not stay put? Adventure had called and the hundredth had followed. It was fool-hardy, for wolves were abroad. Tired now but content, both shepherd and sheep return to the flock.

Now the Rosary has the heart of that shepherd. It goes where men take life lightly in battle or adventure; where all a man's associations are dominantly pagan and his soul starved. It has followed whole peoples driven from the rich pastures of Mass, ceremonial and sacraments into the fastnesses; and then led them out, after the passing of the persecution, with their faith undiminished. It has remained with a man who has abandoned his Faith — remained as a persistent memory of family prayers and the decade that was his. It has led him back at least to a great peace in the home of his fathers.

THE SAYING OF THE ROSARY.

THE curtain rings up. The Mind, God's great gift to man, takes command. "I believe in God the Father... in Jesus Christ... in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church... life everlasting." Then the smashing crescendo — man — in which belief becomes a hundred times emphasised. From the Master Mind of God, the human mind received these truths; to that Mind, he gives them back. All the truths in due order, and all complete. No atheist, or agnostic, or lazy, hazy mind can enter here.

The thinking is clear-cut, the language exact, assent full and without equivocation. The human mind stands militant under the Banner of Absolute Truth. It is now on active service, it is G.O.C. (General Officer Commanding) of operations. (The Banner of Truth, God Himself, inspires it.) The will is sergeant-major, efficient, but not always popular. "Pick 'em Up", it howls when distraction threatens the whole manoeuvre. As for the emotions... If they will march in the ranks, well and good! But we'll have a Rosary even when we do not feel like it and even our sergeant-major finds the going hard. The mind itself may leave the prayer as seagulls leave the sea to follow the plough. All that remains may be the orderly saying of the prayers and the passing of the beads. 'Tis often so. Something, at least, is saved. The prayers are golden. He gave them and His Church. They remain; and with them the good intention that drew the beads out of a dark pocket to honour God and nourish the soul.

Now we stand uncertainly. The road divides. We must choose between three different routes, each of which has a mood, a tone of its own. Aye, even, I like to think, a colour of its own. They offer us in turn Joy, Sorrow, Glory; Peace, Battle, Victory; home with its promise of things unalterable; adventure, tragedy, pain, steadfastness under test, death, futility; then recovery, restoration, final and triumphant security. Here are the colours they bear: green of the fields and of an ancient home, clothed in ivy; red of blood and of an angry dawn; white of the dancing, rising sun of Easter morn hunting to the caverns of hell the dark and hidden things of the night.

A GRIPPING STORY.

YET these three different ways are not detached from one another. They are one. A God-man and His mother move in succession through them all. The story is without a break. It has plot. From domestic quiet it moves into evil times — evil universal, festering, sadistic and, seemingly triumphant. Moves again. Evil is at bay, is routed. God and the plain man is triumphant and crowned. The story opens with a maid in a common cottage; She is enthroned at its end as the Queen of Heaven and Earth. The Hero is killed, but comes back to life and triumph... Not a pleasant story for the "liquidators"! All living things are drawn upon: God, angels, man; even thorns and the wood of trees. The very elements demonstrated when their Master died.

Though a classic, it has at all times been a best-seller. A masterpiece seldom lifts its author above the bread line. A best-seller dies quickly: to-day it fills the bookstalls, tomorrow it is gathered into bundles for auction. But this story still grips the mind and heart of honest men, still commands the highest price. That price is not measured in mere gold. Blood and sweat and tears buy it. The blood of martyrs, the sweat of those dispossessed for conscience sake, the tears of nations and individuals persecuted for the Faith.

All these centuries the common man has held this story in his mind and heart. It lifted him from savagery. Communities became by it transformed. Europe became civilised. Law, art, music, architecture, all were inspired by it. A forest of Gothic cathedrals enshrined it. But the little man, the private man, was not content. He would fashion himself a dwelling to contain the story. It would be small and portable, a thing of the pocket. He could take it with him to bench or field. The materials used were few but precious. Within, reposed, in fifteen books, the greatest story in the world. The little man scanned daily the story of Christ as enfolded in the fifteen mysteries and so neatly packed within so small a compass. He gathered his family about him, and shared it with them. It is done in homes even to this day. The little man died. His work remains... the Rosary.

ITS PLACE IN THE FAMILY.

WE take up the first volumes so often thumbed by the little man. Did I tell you that his name was John Smith? At least it might have been. They abound. By his fondness for the first five — and I agree with him in this — I take him for a man who never made a formal call. He just dropped in. He would not allow any shuffle of chairs, but took the vacant seat. The conversation went on. Between the puffs of his pipe, he added his little. They talked of crops, of engagements, of births, marriages, deaths, absent friends, relations, religions, accidents, sport, politics... all those things of first-rate importance, since the human personality is involved. He was the average man, or woman for that matter. You and I, by the grace of God, may always remain such.

Imitating the technique of Dr. Watson, I will now show you why I was able to reconstruct so much of the life of J. Smith, Esq. Look at these five titles...

The Annunciation: story of a proposal and marriage. The linking of the Divine and human natures amazes us. Yet we are at home here: we also are betrothed, we marry...

The Visitation: two expectant mothers meet. The situation is as old as the world, but is always new. But, in this case, much was known beforehand of the character of the two children, and of the adventures they were to meet. You know the details. If you have said your Rosary with even a moderate attention, you will have covered many of the facts already. They are full of vitamins. What of the husbands who also are present on this occasion? Their haggard features provide much to the humour of the world. In this case, one has been struck dumb. He is filled to bursting point with news of great moment but cannot say it. The wife speaks for him — this time legitimately. Of course, they withdrew after a time to den or workshop. What happened there, I leave to your imagination. But don't make them share soft drinks! Soda-water, as G. K. Chesterton said, came after the Fall. They drink together a little of the wine of hospitality. Reconstruct, if you can, their seriously handicapped conversation. They were men; and therefore outside the secrets of the other sex...

The Nativity: the Child is born. The housing problem at its acutest! All the circumstances are known to you. Your mind and imagination can dart hither and thither building on the known facts, the continuous story of the happening from the moment that the journey to the crowded Bethlehem was started, right through to the callous slaying by Herod of the innocents. There is room here in every circumstance for research. I mean profitable research. Not the research of science that is two-edged. It helps, but it may destroy. For science is amoral; it is neither good nor bad. It is indifferent...

The Presentation: religion, the most basic need in man. No subject is so widely discussed. It requires so little knowledge to attempt it.

The Loss and Recovery of the Child: parents frantically searching through the crowded, narrow streets of the big city; days and nights of anxiety; the situation growing hourly more desperate. The situation is as old as the family. In our days, the radio is used to find the child that has strayed. But this incident is but one of very many of the same pattern in any home: disaster, real or threatened, in spite of the utmost that a parent can do. Think of the near-fatal fevers of the young, accidents, evil influences from without, sons away in battle, daughters away from home... The beads of that fifth decade should be well fingered by parents who carry this load of care. Join Joseph or Mary in their anxious search! Share their worry! Neither then will be any longer alone. You will learn this from your common suffering; the main responsibility is God's; you are only His deputy... The journey's end was the House of God!

DESIGNED FOR THE COMMON MAN.

YES, surely, plain John Smith — you and I incorporated — breathes, through all this story, his native air. The human spirit is at home. Very, very successfully did God become the common man. By that, He gave him status. With the choice of all professions, all degrees of comfort, honour, power, He elected to be born and remain for all His private life a worker, a man who made things with his hands. As a babe, He was bathed and fed; He romped as a kiddy; was apprenticed to a trade; balanced His always slender budget; lived in cottages in a row (and not a very straight row at that). He was of the people. Today He would be a straphanger in a packed tram with His fellow-working men.

The forge of Nazareth changed the mind of man towards manual labour. Before that, such work was servile, fit and proper only in a slave. It is so named yet in the technical phrasing of the Sabbath commandment. As more and more men became Christians, slavery receded. Free men took up the tools. But it took centuries to bring about the change. Each human cell within Europe had freely to adopt the new way of life. Through seas of blood, against an order well entrenched, advance continued. One emperor struck a medal proclaiming that not one Christian had survived the slaughter. He was wrong. "The blood of martyrs became the seed of Christians." Victory came at last! The worker came to full stature. He became the guildsman with full civil rights and privileges. This was his zenith. The universal acceptance of the Christian ethic made and maintained it. Without it, it would decay. Be sure of this: reject the Christian way of life, and slavery will return to the earth.

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

WITH reluctance, we bring to a close the first "round" of the Rosary. We proceed to the Sorrowful Mysteries. It is like going from a fireside to face the cold and dark. There is no longer peace and security. War strides the world as a colossus. One man unarmed faces the people; two uneven armies. The Son of God stands challenged by the common man made vile by the propagandists of the day. The solidarity of human nature makes us one with the crowd in their bloodlust. Our personal sins swelled the volume of the rampant evil. We are not excused. But the sudden change from kindness to brutality in the common man by suggestion, carries its lesson to this day. We, who are of the Faith, have cut our teeth. We are very nearly immune. We can smell propaganda, either from the right or the left. The more specious, the more it is suspect. We have never forgotten the change in the average man between Palm Sunday and the Thursday following: how men with souls like to God could be so changed as to sneer at good and enthrone evil.

The scene opens in an olive grove. It is evening. The Easter moon has just risen. Jesus of Nazareth is on His knees in prayer. He has reached that moment that increasingly darkened the whole of His life. As a child He knew of it; it later filled His working hours with dread. Later He openly spoke of it. The savour of it was in His mouth. Now it had reached its climax. He had reached the Moment of Decision! Every detail of the universal torture of His Manhood lay naked before Him. Flesh and blood, nerve and muscle and bone asked that it might not happen; the Human Spirit revolted at facing the monstrous human ingratitude, injustice, mockery, utter desolation — culminating in that awful instant when His Father, identifying Him with the sins of all the world, turned His back upon Him. The very power that was His to annihilate His enemies rebelled at being bound by Him.

Could the Human Will be driven freely to suffer and die for those who tortured and jeered at Him? How can we measure the magnitude of the struggle that went on within that supersensitive being as

He faced a picture as vivid as the reality! His desperate, repeated calls for company of the apathetic apostles, and His return as often to His prayer, indicate the immensity of the strain. His bloody sweat confirms it. Outwardly, He voices the protest of His human soul and body: "If it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me!" But immediately: "Not My will but Yours be done!" There is move and countermove in this gigantic struggle. "And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." The moment is decisive. Inclination is routed; duty wins the day.

Follows an amazing calm as He turns to face the approaching rabble.

No battle in history was as critical. What if the day had been lost!

The time for saying the first sorrowful decade is short: too short for the study it presents. Take this one aspect... The whole Christ is seen as if He were transparent. His Divinity and Humanity, His Soul and Emotions, the very debate within His Mind, all lie bare before us. Our knowledge grows. But only to lead to great mysteries still. The restless, searching mind of man is beckoned onwards.

Take this other aspect... the heart interest. Compare it with any other love that history or fiction has given us. Christ died willingly for the man whose spittle was still wet upon His face. He forgave him. He brought him into His own household. There was no existing unit with which to measure the intensity of such a love. It is our example; and our hope.

To mention one other side of the mystery... the will. The will that conquered was a human will. It had the texture of our own. We share in the triumph. Its strength is offered to us. Once we were lifted from the slime of the earth. We were created! This time the human will was raised from the slime of evil. We were redeemed!

PROTECTION FOR THE SOLDIER.

HOW great a thing it is for us that God became man; that he showed us in Himself the war within a man. It was no mock battle. We see in it our own story, but on a much larger canvas. In the depths of a man's soul, battle is often joined.

What he would LIKE to do, and what he OUGHT to do stand in opposing ranks.

In the dark, tense hours before zero hour, the soul of a soldier may be in torment. Fear and duty will be in conflict. Bravery is the defeat of fear. A man accustomed to his beads will have company, example and reinforcement. Indecision comes to an end, and assurance fills his soul. His calm assurance in the advance affects his whole unit. By winning victory within himself, he wins it for his country. Gethsemane was decisive!

The same man is later on leave. He leaves the smell of men and the sweating jungle, blood and mud. He visits elegant homes. Woman with her daintiness and refinement draws him as never before. He is away from influences upon which he leaned more than he knew — mother, wife, family, friends, his repute. The uniform cloaks his identity; he is just another soldier. Moral laxity, a by-product of all wars, has spread. In such circumstances, a man, habitually virtuous, will be tempted. Temptation carries no guilt; it is natural. If he is wise, he has anticipated. He is ready for battle. His Rosary brings to him the Mount of Olives. Grace from that power station is sent by power-lines over the face of the world. The first red decade is its switch. Two things he does not do:

rely on his own strength, or go into circumstances of immediate danger. He conquers lust, as once he conquered fear!

THE BATTLE WITH THE WORLD.

IT is morning now. The red drama has gone on through the night. Light of torches has yielded to a red and angry dawn. I like to think it so. The roses in our Rosary have the colour of blood; their thorns are sadistic claws. The day is to be saddest in all human history. God will be beaten, shamed and slowly done to death. The populace will sink to the level of a wolf pack, maddened by the smell of blood. There will be a few exceptions: seed for the re-sowing of the past glories of the human race.

Pilate judged Him innocent. But pandering to the mob, he orders Him to be scourged. He would glut them with the sight of blood plentifully spilled. The move was futile. Later Christ carries His cross along the streets. Evil now spoke through each individual that lined the way. It spoke through the unit as before it spoke through the mass of the people. Can you see now why reparation should be made through private prayer, and through public worship?

In the horse-play of the soldiers, ridicule was the weapon used. It is a pity that the soldiers were involved. What makes it worse, it was their own show. Christ had never said one word against their calling. He knew that they were receiving little pay. They are to this day. Yet they offered the highest return: death for a cause. But badness entered into all men, inciting them to stage their blasphemous farce. They were men to whom blood and pain and death were all commonplace. Their sense of humour was coarse among themselves. These are extenuating circumstances. I have no doubt that Christ was much less seriously hurt by their crude, spontaneous mockery, than by the sinister planners without the barracks. The Pharisees saw evil, and embraced it; these tumbled into mischief through the boredom of barrack life. Christ had so much in common with these men in uniform: they were both prepared to pay the supreme sacrifice. For this reason, the man who gives battle in defence of home and country has the company of the One Who died for all mankind.

But to return to the weapon of ridicule. It is a weapon often used by soldiers among themselves; seldom against the enemy. It has the quality and low dignity of the common flea: it can make one uncomfortable. It will call a man a "Sissy" who says a prayer or goes to church, but not if he pays his tram-fare. Yet both have common honesty, the payment of a debt, behind them. It will call the parents of a large family lustful. In that, it lies; and it knows it. In their case, lust is the rule; birth the rare exception. By their selfishness, they deprive the nation of more lives than are lost in battle. They will be punished. Their only son may die in war, or accident. The vilest sneer of all is for the decent girl who shudders at the touch of a lustful paw. Of the uses of this weapon, there is no end. It requires no logic or common sense. Its intent is evil. It is verminous. But watch for it; it can cause discomfort; even tempt to betrayal. What is the reply? Here it is in parable: a man in company suffers the flea! He recovers without a long illness.

TWO PUZZLING QUESTIONS.

IT is time that we say something of two questions that invite and tantalise the human mind —

(1) Why did Christ allow His Mother to survive Him, and be a witness to His Passion? You and I would have arranged it differently, and ours is only a limited compassion.

We know that the situation was foreseen in all its details. It was prophesied; therefore in the plan of God. Now we know that high diplomas in education are granted to those who pass the harder

examinations. It must be so with sanctity. Mary was no exception to the rule. She welcomed the test. In things brutal to her Son and to her, she yet gave full consent to the Will of God. By that, she kept peace and evenness within her soul. Have we, like her, a challenge to meet in the closing days of our life — perhaps excessive pain or utter dependence on another? Now is the time to acquire, by all the means we can, the Christian knowledge and stamina to face it with calm and resignation.

(2) God allowed evil to work its will upon His Own Son.

Besides this fact, our complaint about the incidence of war upon ourselves, is trivial. We have sinned, and can have no grievance if we are punished. His Son was innocent; and He was God. It is so complex a mystery, that it cannot be studied here in detail. But be assured of this: the matter is not chaotic. There is a fixed and harmonious pattern through it. Where God's workings can be studied with comfort by the human mind, as in the world of physics, order dominates. It is the sure foundation on which the scientist builds. The visible world is found increasingly to be a tidy world. In reference to the other order involving the spirit, only a minor part of which comes within the scope of exact observation, on common sense grounds alone we have certainty of a set but complex design. Prayer, study, and purity of life will, between them, reveal something of the plan. But ahead of us will still lie mystery — more worlds to conquer. The great revelation will come later, only after death. Strangely enough, it never worried the early pioneers in the Faith. For hundreds of years, they witnessed evil in command. Their own martyrdoms were the public amusements of the pagan masses.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

OF the Crucifixion and Death I will say but little. They need no capitulation. The details are too deeply etched into all Christian minds. I might, however, indicate a few points that could with profit be studied. I will number them —

(1) Christ once counselled us to forgive our enemies. How did He Himself act when under the severest provocation, and when His physical resistance was at its lowest? And have we ever completely forgiven and forgotten injuries, even trifling, against ourselves?

(2) There was a moment when Christ was identified with sin. His Father turned His back upon Him. The agony of the moment was so great that for the first time, He cried aloud in His desolation. The volume of sound startled the bystanders, who knew that His strength was almost spent. The scene demonstrates before our eyes the dreadful fact of the misery of the damned. Theologians call it the Pain of Loss, perhaps the worst feature of Hell. It is a warning!

(3) Read before you next begin your red Rosary the account in Saint Luke of the conversation between the three on the Cross. The ends of the two thieves are different. Why? Our meditations should be practical, and personal to ourselves. As Saint Paul would put it, in his sporting way: we fight not as one beating the air.

(4) For all of us, the sight of Christ's Mother beneath the Cross adds a further poignancy to the tragedy. A Mother's soul is tortured. She has ever since been the type and consoler of mothers who also have suffered.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

THE Glorious Mysteries... The change from the second mood to the third is like moving from a dank, underground cave, which the imagination might people with all manner of misshaped and

creeping things (which personify evil), out into blazing sunshine, bright flowers, green fields and smiling, happy people. The translation is swift and emphatic. What is more it is final! For generations men have credited the Easter sun as rising shimmering with joy. Note that darkness ruled through the three hours of the Crucifixion. Is this the reaction?

The Resurrection split the darkness and stillness of death with the sudden violence of ack-ack fire. All nature lay crushed when Christ was placed in the tomb. As He emerged bright, renewed, triumphant, night was over and full day took possession. Evil had its day. Now justice has arisen, and the enemy is routed. It was white revolution; construction began that day. Whole nations were to be persuaded from barbarism; all Europe converted.

All that followed rested on a single fact, that Christ, being dead, had come to life again. Upon that one fact rests the whole logic of our Faith. He died publicly; His death was certified. He gave as the Test of His Divinity that He would rise again. The challenge was accepted. His claim was unique. He matched it with the promise of an event also unique. Then He came to life. He appeared to very many.

When seven weeks later His Divinity was preached in the very city where it happened, thousands accepted it. They did so against the full tide of their religious and national traditions... The evidence must have been compelling. In all His dealing with men, God always treats daintily and with respect two powers He gave him, intellect and will. He feeds us truth through the tested channels of logic. He urges us to a better way of life, giving His reasons but leaving us free. He stands by our Charter of Rights.

If there be any who think that an emotional avalanche carried men and women into the Church in those early days, then let them try a chapter of Saint Paul as light and fluffy reading. See, in the summaries of the first addresses, the very foundation examined. "If Christ rose not from the dead, then your Faith is vain." This is logic stripped to the bone. You will understand then how the Resurrection has still the power to warm us.

We shall see presently that the Church was built on an arch that stood on two foundations — one was this Resurrection, the other Simon now Petrified.

Now the first group of three facts presented in the white Rosary for our meditation are in order: —
THE RESURRECTION.

LOOKING at it from another angle, the Recovery. Before all the people, the stature of Christ was seen to diminish progressively as His Death drew near. Once they knew Him in His might and power. He played with Nature's laws as their Master. He mended bodies hopelessly diseased; walked upon the waters; calmed the violence of the storm; changed water into wine (a wondrous gift); He vanished when they tried to lay their hands upon Him. Now at every step His impotence became more evident. When His power went down to zero mark, He died.

Of status — His standing among His fellows — the same is true. At ebb of life, His value had sunk so low that the outcast thief pronounced Him despicable.

Then came the Sabbath, the day of rest ordained by God. The law was honoured. That day lay not dead but sleeping; not actual, but potential. We can think of it as 'TNT.' with the fuse already smoking, herald of the great upheaval. The great change is coming to its zero hour!... The stone rolls back, the Roman guards are routed! Christ walks out alive, restored! Power, prestige return...

and mount so rapidly that even the Cross of Shame becomes an honoured thing. It surmounts the grandest temples. Nations use it in their flags. Under the banner of the Red Cross, to the glory of mankind, a vast organisation of mercy brings swift relief to those distressed in war, plagues or the upheavals of nature. Like God and His Church, it knows no national boundaries; its scope is universal.

Now this reverse in action was necessary.

It was the counter-attack. Evil had its day; Justice turned defeat into victory, final and decisive. The dragon first; then Saint George. The battle raged over possession of the souls of men. Sin kills the supernatural life of the soul; therefore, Christ died! Grace restores that life; Christ rose again!

THE ASCENSION.

THE final appearance of Christ has interest of another kind. Many people witnessed the passage of Christ from one order of existence into another. The account given us is very meagre: "While they looked on, He was raised up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: 'You men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen Him going into heaven'."

Christ's departure divided the time of fifty days between Easter and Pentecost in the ration of four to one. During the first and longer period, he visited His apostles at intervals. He might drop in at any time. They were dazed and drifting. His frequent wish to them of peace gives some indication of the turmoil in their souls.

The fifty days are packed with incident... The impossibly slow acceptance of the Resurrection by His followers. They were by no means credulous. For that reason, their evidence becomes of greater value... We have the whole plan of events explained by Christ as He walked with the two to Emmaus. The subsequent repetition of the Last Supper ceremony, which we call the Mass... His frequent use of the Scriptures during His addresses to His apostles... Peter and others go fishing and what happened when Christ joins them... The power of forgiving sins formally handed to the apostles... Filling the vacancy made by the defection of Judas... But principally that their zero hour was drawing very near. It is nice to know that they could take a day off to go fishing. They were, not all the time in hiding.

Let me play the heavy father with you for one moment! Take your Scriptures and read the happenings before you start or even as you tell your beads. This is common sense; for the mind must not be let go hungry, amid such plenty.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

ONE might examine the immense changes brought about in each and all the Apostles. Their individual characters lay bare before us in numerous examples before the changer. When the change came, it was permanent. What is of larger moment, it perseveres to this day. The Church, that ageless spectacle before the world — its unity of belief as sound as when its keel was laid, its government firm and youthful, while empires 'have fallen and thrones come down in ruins' — this Church, unique among societies, is built on men of merely average quality. The work of Pentecost goes on!

Any with interest in history will find great scope in this event. They might trace the varying vitality within that Church. It is a living thing. It has its fevers. It is menaced from without. What gave it force for widespread good in one generation? Why its waning in another? Then their own responsibility towards a higher level of usefulness of the Church for all mankind. They are not merely spectators. They are within!

Others may be concerned about examples of heroic life. How it was achieved. The varieties of types. How so many have reached such sanctity. The graces, varied in character, released through the Holy Ghost are the weapons that have brought defeat of self and won ultimate victory. But, I beg of you, keep the saints with feet to ground. They were not insulated from earth. Their V.C.'s were won in battle, not at base. They would tell you that Grace of Pentecost combined in them with what nature gave them. Their example is our inspiration. They hand to us the ladder by which they climbed.

Yet another might see in Pentecost the best instance of equal partnership within the Trinity. In these days, we have examples of partnership in big business. It is best shown when each partner exercises different, but complementary functions. Jones gathers the raw material; Smith manufactures; the selling rests with Brown. Now God had dealings with the world. The Father made it; the Son redeemed it; the Holy Ghost distributes.

HOW WE GET OUR LIGHT.

I will take another example... the different operations concerned in lighting a house.

We have in order: (a) the source of power; (b) the change from mechanical energy to electrical; (c) the distribution.

(a) God, through His works, gives us all the sources of power: coal, oil, rainfall plus a high watershed.

(b) The turbine-alternator brings about the change. Some will have already guessed that the joining of these two different machines in the one unit has determined the choice of the illustration. They will be right. Christ had two distinct natures, intimately joined.

The turbine is operated by an almost solid bar of water travelling at a high velocity. From the coupled generator, comes that invisible, mysterious entity called electricity. It is as real as water, though it cannot be seen. With proper instruments, it can give us heat, cold, light, movement and the rest. It can traverse solid wires, be changed and thrown round the world and brought back to what it was. Now what lamps, and radio, and heater unit, and Frigidaire are to this strange fluid, the Sacraments are to Grace.

The turbine moves because it is beaten by common water, or rapid molecules of steam. The human nature of Christ was struck by common man. Divine and human were coupled. Grace came to us because of that close union.

(c) Electricity is commonly produced away in the wilderness. Its reticulation is the function of the power-board. Christ had built up merit and gave it to mankind. The power-lines are in the care of the Holy Ghost. Along the various channels, it is directed to homes and peoples.

This strange energy may travel through conductors; but it can charge condensers to the same high voltage as itself. So in our world of spirit, the power from remote Calvary may flow to us by sacrament; it can charge to its own pressure and give quantity as well: Christ gave us the Mass.

The parallel is remarkable. Yet it should be expected. God has Intellect; so have we. When we were made, He breathed into us our soul. We are alike. That likeness will show best when the human brain is well extended. It will become obvious in the machines that are made.

OUR LADY—GLORIOUS FINALE.

HERE might well have ended the perfect story, on the thirteenth decade. But two more chapters follow. The centre of interest changes. Our Lady takes the stage. The little man, under whose direction we make our way, considered that action had not yet reached its full climax. We pointed out that man was redeemed; the Church established and well insured, Christ had gone back to Heaven, and human nature enlarged by association within the Son of God. He wanted more than this. There must be no untidy ends.

The little man loved and idealized the life of the Holy Family. To pray he had not to lift his head. He bowed over a cot and saw his God. His God had been a babe and grew to be a commoner. You- will remember that for nearly half His story He kept us there. Therefore, He would write finis to His story only when the whole household were again together, and at home. He had his way.

The Son of Mary could not forget His mother. He had been all to her in nature's way that any babe is to his mother. Her body could not return to the level dust of earth and be the plaything of the winds. So simultaneously, He brought soul and body to His Heaven.

But greater honour yet had He in view. He would crown her. Over all created minds, she would excel and govern. She might not, must not, be adored, for with all her high dignity, she was still a dependent being. In so honouring her, he has honoured a second time our poor human nature. Motherhood in her is forever idealized. She is our friend at court. She has kept her mother's heart. All mankind — her special care.

The story is complete. Christ and His Mother are together, and they are at home. The little man's Rosary now declares its purpose to lead us from one home to the other. We find ourselves within the same household, but in different worlds. Its furnishings have now permanence. He has led us not unwillingly on the beads!

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