

Reflections

International
Catholic Family Newsletter
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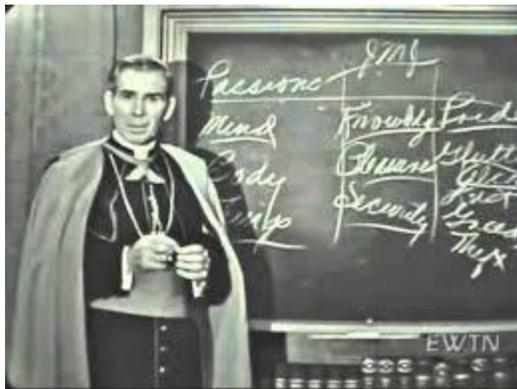
Volume 79

Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

Love of God, Neighbor & Country
The Catholic Church in America
Saint Blaise
Beautiful Insights On the Rosary

Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard



Many years ago, Bishop Fulton Sheen had a TV program on ¹American Patriotism. His opening remarks rooted the word in the Greek and Latin "Pietas". Which he said means, "Love of God, Love of Neighbor and Love of Country. **And if one goes out, they all go out. We no longer have love of God,**" he said on this program.

We now have "Love of Self." Sheen went on to say, that America started from a Revolution. A Good revolution, based upon that all men are created by God with certain inalienable rights, and that we could govern ourselves."

Now Sheen looks into the future of America. He prophesied in this TV show, that what we have is "violence for the sake of violence. And destruction through the violence."

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQA9nxUtlew>

Some Americans say that we are barely hanging on to “governing ourselves.” They note that a few hundred people strategically located, make



laws that are forced upon us, and some of which are against our **Christian beliefs**. Politicians are taking God’s laws out of America and in many parts of the world and substituting Man’s laws. America is slowly losing its democracy. But contrary to popular belief, democracy doesn’t die in darkness. It dies in broad daylight. Its death is slow and protracted, one by a thousand cuts rather

than one fatal stab. Author Steve Levitsky once wrote, “democracies don’t often die at the hands of military generals, but of elected leaders who subvert the very process that brought them to power.”

Bishop Sheen goes on to say that America is being pushed away from God by “**elitism**.” He described these “**elitists**” as a small number of people who have gained power, for the sake of power, to change America. These “**elitists**”, divide us by saying we are racist, or we belong to the wrong political affiliation, or the wealthy are the cause of our problems or poverty was purposely created to enslave people, as reasons for what is wrong with America. Sheen says, at the bottom of all of this violence and disregard for God’s laws, **is Satan**. His true character is being shown in those who **support the killing of innocent and in the unchristian laws passed**. Elitists around the world are involved. Remember what Christ said, **You will know them by their fruits.**”

We also see in America & around the world, the rise of great numbers of



women marching and rallying together, saying “**We are in charge of our bodies, and we can kill that which we do not love that is in our womb.**” We see Hollywood elites supporting abortion and the political puppets who pass these laws, joining forces in a show of power. Satan has taken many souls by accepting the

destruction of life.

The murder of the innocent is nothing new, but now, as St. Mother Teresa has said, **“Abortion has become the greatest destroyer of peace, because it destroys two lives, the life of the child and the conscience of the mother.”** Once we lose our conscience then we falsely believe that there is no sin in anything we do. God will not forget the murder of the innocent. Pray for those who support this sin.

We also see **genocide being openly marketed** through the abortion clinics in America and backed by powerful institutions and politicians. ²**“This much is true: In the United States, the abortion rate for black women is almost five times that for white women per population density.”** You won’t see this on TV, but nevertheless it is true.

There is a great need all over the world for our prayers. Please consider joining a Rosary group in your Parish. If you are a parent reading this Newsletter, you know how spiritually dangerous this time is for your children.

Daily Rosary via Zoom

Help combat Satan’s evil plans. Start a once-a-week or daily “Video” Rosary group. If your parish has one, join. If they don’t have one, “Start One.” Call your Parish and speak to a Priest or Deacon. Our Blessed Mother will help you get one started. **If your Parish won’t start one, then “You”, start one. Here is free download. <https://zoom.us/download>. Hoover over and Ctrl + Click**

² <https://www.gutmacher.org/gpr/2008/08/abortion-and-women-color-bigger-picture>

The Catholic Church in America



America's light is fading in the world. God has given America an abundance of natural resources and a democracy that was unparalleled in the world. But we have become something different. When we see the percentage of people who go to church declining, year

after year, it makes you wonder. ³The numbers now show (2020) that about 47% go to a Church, Synagogue or Mosque. Biblical history teaches us that when we abandon God's laws, bad things happen.

When we look at those that are Protestant vs Catholic, we see a major shift within States. The chart below, is a small sample of what was done by ⁴Pew Research in 2014. Catholics are losing ground.

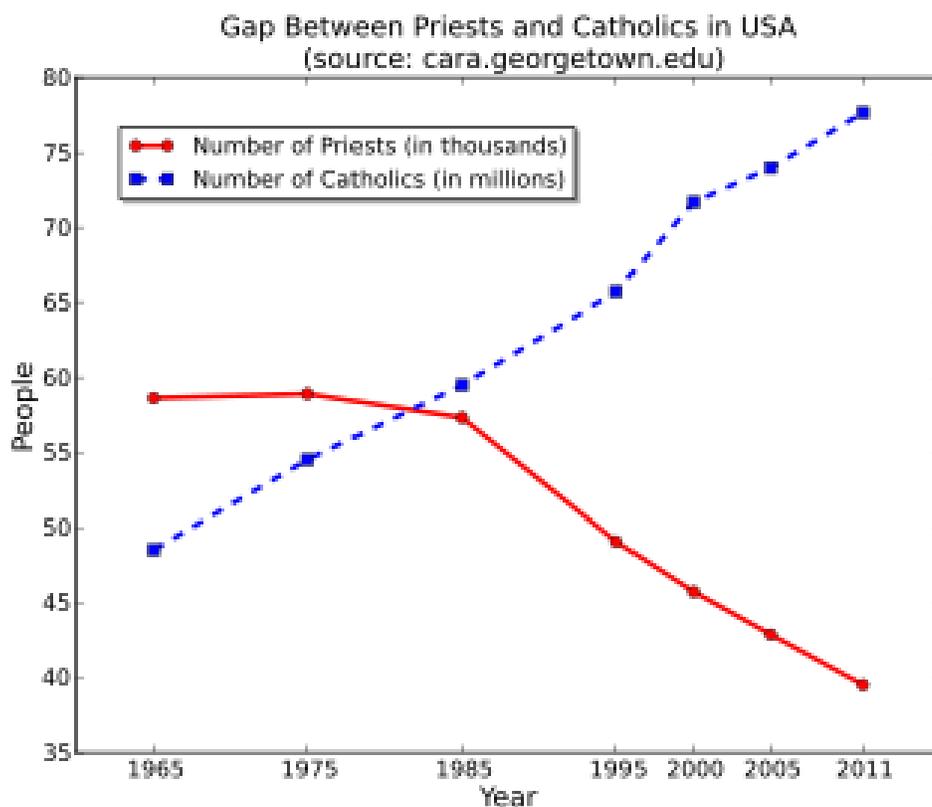
Region	Protestant (%)	Catholic (%)
Louisiana	57	26
South Dakota	57	22
North Dakota	51	26
Texas	50	23
Minnesota	50	22
Pennsylvania	47	24
Rhode Island	30	42
United States	46.5	20.8

³ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_religiosity



We also see a dramatic decrease in the number of catholic priests in America. The chart below represents the severity of the shortage of priests. Please pray that God will motivate more men to enter into the priesthood. In 1965 there were 50,000, now about 37,000.



Perhaps the shortage of priests in America and the movement away from the catholic religion is a reflection of the consequences of the acceptance of unchristian laws passed, the sexual revolution in all of its forms, the millions of abortions, and the tremendous decline in church attendance of all Christian faiths. We are on a dangerous path, and it seems that God has left us alone.

In Hosea 4:17, it is recorded that God said, "Ephraim is joined unto idols; let him alone." There comes a time when God abandons men. God comes to a

point where He lets a people go, lets them go to the consequences of their own sinful choices. They will not accept His counsel, they spurn all His reproof, as Proverbs says, "so they eat the fruit of their own choices, and they have to be satisfied with the devices they have chosen." Of the Pharisees, Jesus said, "Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind." Matthew 15:14, the most terrifying words, "**Let them alone.**"

Has America reached the point in the killing of innocents, and the loss of fear of God, that God says, "**Let them alone.**" I hope not. It is a terrifying thought.



The people who believe in God's laws around the world need to unite in prayer.

Below is an excerpt from Psalm 33 that can be used as a prayer to bring God's blessing upon our country. It reminds us of what is required of our leaders and how God's graces can flow in our lands if we accept his loving plan for us and our nation.

Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all who dwell in the world show him reverence. For he spoke, and it came to be, commanded, and it stood in place. The Lord foils the plan of nations, frustrates the designs of peoples. But the plan of the Lord stands forever, the designs of his heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people chosen as his inheritance. A king is not saved by a great army, nor a warrior delivered by great strength. Useless is the horse for safety; despite its great strength, it cannot be saved. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who

fear him, upon those who count on his mercy, To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive through famine. Our soul waits for the Lord, he is our help and shield. For in him our hearts rejoice; in his holy name we trust. May your mercy, Lord, be upon us as we put our hope in you.



We also see a significant decline in catholic nuns in America. ⁵It's an image woven into America's cultural fabric: Catholic nuns, heads bowed in deep devotion and reciting prayers.

But today, the nuns' time-honored pledges of service, chastity, poverty, and obedience seem far removed from the modern orbit in which we live – igniting a vocal push to save nuns across the nation. For years, the number of women donning habits and devoting their lives to the Lord has been declining, raising fears that the several hundred orders of nuns are not only endangered but teetering on the edge of extinction. In 1965, there were **180,000** Catholic sisters in the United States. But according to the National Religious Retirement Office, in 2019, there were **just 31,350** in 411 institutes. The trend, which is being echoed globally, is making it difficult to find enough nuns to serve in convents and Catholic schools, a problem exacerbated by the fact that most existing nuns are elderly.



⁵ <https://www.foxnews.com/us/keeping-the-sisterhood-from-extinction-the-struggle-to-save-nuns-in-america>

Saint Blaise



St. Blaise lived so long ago that we know nothing about his early life. We do know that he was both a doctor and a bishop in the area that is today either Armenia or Turkey. In the beginning of the fourth century, Christians were being persecuted by the Romans. The Roman Emperor believed that arresting and punishing important leaders like Blaise would prevent other people from becoming followers of Christ.

Blaise's prison was a dark cave. One of the legends that is told about him is that wild animals came to the cave so that he could treat their wounds. It is said that a mother brought her young son to Blaise. The boy was choking on a fish bone. Blaise saved the boy's life by saying a prayer and blessing him with candles crossed upon his throat.

Tradition tells us that the grateful mother visited Blaise's in prison to bring him food and candles. During his time in prison, Blaise was sentenced to death. He was martyred in the year 316.

St. Blaise is the patron saint of people with diseases of the throat. On St. Blaise's feast day, February 3rd, many parishes bless the throats of their parishioners in a special ceremony. Two unlit candles are held next to each person's throat as the priest or deacon says, **"Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."**

St. Blaise reminds us of the importance of taking care of our health and also **to thank God for doctors and medicines** that can help us to recover from illnesses. We honor St. Blaise for his faith and care for his people.



By: [Catherine Birri](#)

Insightful and Beautiful Quotes on the Rosary

1. The rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the book of the aged, whose eyes close upon the shadow of this world, and open on the substance of the next. The power of the rosary is beyond description.” ~Archbishop Fulton Sheen

The Rosary includes four Mysteries: the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Joyful Mysteries, the Glorious Mysteries, and the Luminous Mysteries. Each mystery has five decades dedicated to different parts of the salvation history of Christ. We are meant to meditate on each mystery. By doing so we are learning and contemplating about the life of Christ. Even if you are not taking formal theology classes praying the Rosary draws you into the mystery of Christ and bring you understanding.

2. “Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother. Love the Madonna and pray the rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother.” ~St. Padre Pio



St. Padre Pio reminds us the road to heaven means remembering the Blessed Mother. To forget her in your life would be forgetting one of the greatest gifts God gave us besides Christ. If you do remember her then to invoke her help and comfort for all things necessitates you to say the Rosary. The Rosary was her gift to us to help us on this earth so that we may get to heaven; it is a powerful weapon and means to purify our souls.

3. "The holy Rosary is a powerful weapon. Use it with confidence and you'll be amazed at the results." ~St. Josemaria Escriva

Often the Saints refer to the Rosary as a powerful weapon. Obviously, they do not consider it a weapon to do harm or to hurt another. The Rosary is weapon insofar as it can defend us against all types of evil. St. Josemaria Escriva makes a point though not be forgotten. When we use this weapon, when we intercede to Mary through the Rosary, we should have confidence. Confidence in that Mary will indeed hear us. She will pray for us to her Son our Lord. She will not turn deaf to our cries and wants to bring us to Christ.

She did not give us the Rosary to then only abandon us in our time of need but the opposite. When we pray the Rosary, it should be with complete faith and trust that our prayers will be heard and answered.

4. "Say the Holy Rosary. Blessed be that monotony of Hail Mary's which purifies the monotony of your sins!" ~St. Josemaria Escriva

Monotony has a bad reputation. Often if I hear complaints about the Rosary it is related to the monotony of the prayers and that it can be boring. St. Josemaria Escriva turns what can seem to be a negative about praying the Rosary into a brilliant positive. Have you ever had a fault that you wanted to change but you were having trouble and you seemed no matter how hard you tried you fell into sin? If you have then you can relate. Deciding to change is often not enough to heal our souls of imperfections. Every day we must commit ourselves to striving to rise above temptation and battle our desires and impulses towards sin. While trying to improve we may fall and in those instances, we must rise and strive again. Gaining strength against temptation can take time. Sinning and getting back up can be monotonous, however we are not alone. The Rosary should be our aid to fighting sin. Persevering in saying the Rosary will lead the cycle of sin to be broken.

5. "In the spiritual journey of the Rosary, based on the constant contemplation – in Mary's company – of the face of Christ, this demanding ideal of being conformed to him is pursued through an association which could be described in terms of friendship. We are thereby enabled to enter naturally into Christ's life and as it were to share his deepest feelings. In this regard Blessed Bartolo Longo has written: "Just as two friends, frequently in each other's company, tend to develop similar habits, so too, by holding familiar converse with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary and by living the same life in Holy Communion, we can become, to the extent of our lowliness, similar to them and can learn from these supreme models a life of humility, poverty, hiddenness, patience and perfection." ~St. John Paul II



Praying the Rosary can bring us into friendship with Christ; it can introduce us to Him as a person that is very close to us and not as an idea that is far away. The Rosary can in time become a friendly dialogue between you, Christ, and His Mother. That dialogue can open the door to immense grace as well as knowledge of our Lord.

6. "No one can live continually in sin and continue to say the Rosary: either they will give up sin or they will give up the Rosary." ~Bishop Hugh Doyle. The power of the Rosary is immense. You cannot recite it repeatedly and not be changed in some way for the better. If you continue to say it Mary will not leave you alone to live in sin, she will bring her Son to you. "A similar need for commitment and prayer arises in relation to another critical contemporary issue: the family, the primary cell of society, increasingly menaced by forces of disintegration on both the ideological and practical planes, so as to make us fear for the future of this fundamental and indispensable institution and, with it, for the future of society as a whole. The revival of the Rosary in Christian families, within the context of a broader pastoral ministry to the family, will be an effective aid to countering the devastating effects of this crisis typical of our age." ~St. John Paul II

The threats to the family are great in this modern age. With more divorces and broken homes staying together as a family unit can seem daunting. To help bring peace to your family say the Rosary together and it will give you

strength to love one another, to be selfless, and to be Christ-like to your family.

7. "You always leave the Rosary for later, and you end up not saying it at all because you are sleepy. If there is no other time, say it in the street without letting anybody notice it. It will, moreover, help you to have presence of God." ~St. Josemaria Escriva

Finding the moments to recite the Rosary during your busy day can be a challenge. St. Josemaria tells us that saying the Rosary while you go about your tasks for the day is better than not saying it at all and it will bring God to your attention during the day.



8. "The word rosary means "Crown of Roses," that is to say that every time people say the Rosary devoutly they place a crown of one hundred and fifty-three white roses and sixteen red roses upon the head of Jesus and Mary. Being heavenly flowers these roses will never fade or lose their exquisite beauty." ~St. Louis De Montfort

Each Rosary said with faith is a treasure to Christ and Mary. Each prayer is beautiful and special. They treasure our prayers because we are honoring them as well as loving them. Picturing Mary with a crown of roses is fitting because when we say the Rosary we are acknowledging her place in heaven as the Mother of Christ. Each prayer of the Rosary is a rose that we crown her with adding to her heavenly magnificence.

9. "In order to pray well, it is not enough to give expression to our petitions by means of that most excellent of all prayers, the Rosary, but we must also pray with real concentration for God listens more to the voice of the heart than that of the mouth." ~St. Louis De Monfort

While praying the Rosary you must always seek to pray not only without distraction, but also with love. The Rosary is not impersonal in the sense you say five decades, and you can cross off something on your to do list. Rather the Rosary is directed to our Blessed Mother, it is an opportunity to connect with her and Christ. For example, while mediating the Sorrowful Mysteries we are able to reflect intimately on Christ's Passion. The Rosary is indeed personal for we must open our hearts to Mary as we lay our intentions before her. For with open hearts, we allow God into the deepest recesses of our souls, where we are most vulnerable. There God comforts us and give us the grace we need thus answering our prayers.



10. "Finally, when people say the Rosary together it is far more formidable to the devil than one said privately, because in this public prayer it is an army that is attacking him. He can often overcome the prayer of an individual, but if this prayer is joined to that of other Christians, the devil has much more trouble in getting the best of it." ~St. Louis De Monfort

Praying as a community is powerful and should never be underestimated. Strength in numbers can apply to fighting spiritual battles.

Imagine gathering together with a group and praying the Rosary for a single intention. The devil will have a harder time distracting a group from their prayer due to their numbers. In a way praying with more people is protecting your prayer.

11. "The rosary should be said with faith—for our Blessed Lord said, "Believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you." ~St. Louis De Monfort

Praying with faith is completely abandoning your fear and doubt; it is to pray with trust in God's love for us as well as to be certain of his all-powerfulness. God will answer your prayers when you pray with faith. The Rosary should be prayed without fear or doubt: it should be prayed with faith.

12. "If you wish to convert anyone to the fullness of the knowledge of Our Lord and of His Mystical Body, then teach him the Rosary. One of two things will happen. Either he will stop saying the Rosary – or he will get the gift of faith." ~Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen

All Christians are called to spread the Word of God to non-believers. If we answer this call, we may even bring someone to Christ. While introducing someone to Christ we would all be remiss if we did not share the Rosary. Through the Rosary a seed may be planted and faith in Christ may come and grow.

The Rosary can save souls. A parent whose children are going astray or have diverted from a path towards God can still be saved. Offering the Rosary for their souls will bring them back. With the Rosary and the Blessed Mother all parents have a place to send their worries and prayers concerning their children that they can trust will be heard.

Pray the Rosary for your Family and You will see them change over time. Persist in praying for them. Never waver. Our Blessed Mother will be their salvation by obtaining the necessary graces from her Son, Jesus.



Romans 16:17-18

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the minds of naive people.

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Is Published Monthly**

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.

<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>

**I am watching over you. Pray my children,
Pray, Pray, Pray, My Rosary For The Salvation of
Sinners**

