

is intended to cope with this sort of difficulty. No, he is saying, Christ never said it was a sin to be rich; he only suggested that it is rather a risk. You don't have to be a pauper to enter the kingdom of heaven—although actual material poverty can be a religious asset, since it can save you the trouble of squeezing into the kingdom like a camel through a needle's eye. Still, even if you are materially well-to-do, there is nothing to stop you being poor in spirit. That means not clutching at wealth or clinging to it; being unreservedly generous in spending it for others, in alms to the poor and to the Church; being sparing in your use of it on yourself; being ready to lose it without too much anxiety, because you have great faith in God and very little in money; in a word it means being the master of your money and not its slave.

In that last sentence I was putting into St Matthew's mouth what was actually St Jerome's way of stating it. To sum up, I would say that being poor in spirit is adopting an attitude to money and what money can buy, that is compounded of three elements; generosity (the exact opposite of poor-spiritedness), self-denial, and confidence in God.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### THE ROSARY DURING MASS

(See *Gamaliel*, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, April 1959, pp. 467-8.)

DEAR EDITOR:

For over fifty years to my own knowledge plenty of people have 'objected' to the public recitation of the rosary during low mass. Many others, on the contrary, have found nothing in it to object to, save some of us priests when the person leading the devotion has been altogether too close to the priest at the altar.

1. It would be altogether most exceptional for the rosary to be recited during mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation. On other days no one is bound to 'hear' mass or even to be present at it.

2. In olden times in England the faithful were content to hear

mass in such a way that they might 'the sacring see and pray thereto'. Today, on the other hand, many people are eager to respond to the encouragement given them by authority to participate more actively in the holy sacrifice. But, again, whereas some people like the dialogue mass, many do not: one must never expect perfect unity of outlook.

3. But is there anything wrong, or even incongruous, in the public recitation of the rosary during mass? Certainly there cannot be with regard to its private recitation. A woman I know, the mother of a priest, never hears low mass without saying the five sorrowful mysteries—what else is the holy mass, she says. And are we not told in the *Imitation of Christ* that whenever mass is celebrated it should seem to us that we are with the blessed Virgin in the stable at Bethlehem when Jesus Christ is born, or standing with her at the foot of the cross while Jesus is dying? And might not the pious author have added, Or accompanying Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the apostles when with great joy they returned to Jerusalem after the Ascension?

4. This is a free country, if not a Free Church(!), and whereas some persons prefer a daily sung mass, others a dialogue mass, others mass meditated with a second priest conducting the commentary, still others again only ask to be allowed quiet in order to follow the mass in their missal. Who then will dare to assert that saying any one of the three sets of mysteries of the rosary is not also a very excellent way of hearing mass? This being so, since it is only during one month in the year that we are asked to 'submit' to the public recitation of the rosary during low mass, and only then in places where it is not possible or practicable to have it recited *coram Sanctissimo*, later in the day, I for one cannot see what there is to object to.

5. Pope Pius XII may have signed the instruction of the S.C.R. that 'it is now lawful to mix liturgical services and public devotions one with the other', but this, surely, has been the law for many years, so that, for example, the divine office may not be recited during mass. But the Pope did not abrogate or abolish the October devotions. The obvious explanation, therefore, would seem to be that such 'mixing' is forbidden when the services and devotions clash. We are still allowed to have hymns to the blessed Sacrament, as well as certain others, during low mass, so I fail to see how anyone, until some fresh ruling has been made,

can invoke the law and prohibit the public recitation of the rosary during low mass in October, or on any days during other months when priest and people want it, as in the *Catholic West Indies*.

Yours, in the 'spacious garden of our Father, Dominic', and of the Church.

FR RAYMUND, O.P.

[Gamaliel replies:

I rejoice at Fr Raymund's liberal principle that what we like doing should be a standard, not to be ignored, of what we do. It is so desirable that people should enjoy worshipping God, offering the sacrifice of the mass, saying the rosary. But our tastes surely require a certain discipline—not just an external regimentation, but the discipline inherent in the things we like doing. If we want to get the most out of going to mass we must be ready to accept the fairly strict disciplines, the rules of the game, which it imposes by its very structure. And surely, if you like doing two things, you do not usually find that your enjoyment of them is helped by trying to do them at once.

I cannot see the force of Fr Raymund's argument from the lawfulness of reciting the rosary privately during mass, which there is no suggestion of forbidding (though it does not seem to me a practice deserving of positive encouragement), to the lawfulness of its public recitation. The incongruity of this lies simply in a congregation trying to perform two public acts of worship at the same time. Does this really double the enjoyment, or the more serious profit, or merit, to be derived from each? Does it do any more than save time?

One cannot but admire the common Catholic zeal for putting on as many forms of worship as possible simultaneously. If the mysteries of the rosary are ultimately the same thing as the mass, the same could be said for the stations of the cross, the litany of the saints, processions of the blessed Sacrament, the divine office, sermons on the four last things. Let us have them all at once. Why not have the fifteen mysteries of the rosary said simultaneously by fifteen different groups in the church? It would save a prodigious amount of time, it would be tremendous fun, and it would only be a *reductio ad absurdum* of what is absurd already.]