

EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM



WELCOME TO OUR

Spring 2026 Newsletter

Spirituality Team

THE ROSARY UNPACKED PART III

In this time of war and unrest in the Holy Land the power of the Rosary is needed even more. I'm sure our heavenly Mother heard our petitions from the Novena we just completed with the assistance of all the area councilors. With the Our Father and Hail Mary prayers explored, we continue this journey with the short but heartfelt Fatima prayer. This is the third installment of the "Rosary Unpacked" series.



THE ROSARY UNPACKED PART III

A Prayer of Mercy: The Fatima Decade Prayer and the Heart of Christ

In the summer of 1917, in a small Portuguese village called Fatima, three shepherd children received a gift that would transform Catholic devotion for generations to come. During the July 13th apparition, after showing the children a sobering vision of hell, Our Lady taught them a simple prayer to be said after each decade of the Rosary: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy."

This brief petition, now known as the Fatima Decade Prayer, has become nearly universal in Catholic practice, woven seamlessly into the rhythm of the Rosary. Yet its power lies not merely in its widespread adoption, but in its profound invitation to intimacy with Christ and its distillation of the Gospel's central message: divine mercy offered to a broken world.

A Personal Encounter with Jesus

The prayer begins with two words that signal a revolution in relationship: "O my Jesus." Not "O Lord," not "O God," but "my Jesus"—an expression of childlike trust and personal belonging that echoes the Good Thief's plea from the cross, "Jesus, remember me." In these opening words, the Fatima Prayer invites believers into the kind of intimate, heart-to-heart relationship with Christ that lies at the very core of authentic Christian life.

This intimacy is not sentimentality. It is the recognition that salvation is not a distant theological concept but a living Person who knows us, loves us, and calls us by name. Broadly this is a call to discipleship - a call to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. For Catholics who may sometimes experience their faith as a series of obligations or formal rituals, this simple address—"my Jesus"—can be a genuine epiphany: a sudden awareness that Christ desires to live in our hearts, a personal relationship with the Son of Man. Coheirs to the kingdom of heaven; not subjects but friends, not servants but beloved children.



From "My" to "Us": The Catholic Vision

Immediately, the prayer shifts from singular to plural: "forgive us our sins." This movement from "my" to "us" embodies the profoundly Catholic understanding that we stand before God not as isolated individuals but as members of one Body, sharing both in sin and in redemption. We are our brother's keeper; we are responsible for one another.

This solidarity continues throughout the prayer. We ask to be saved from hell, yes—acknowledging the sobering reality of eternal separation from God—but we do so with hope rather than despair, as a plea to a merciful Savior. We pray not only for ourselves but for "all souls," echoing Saint Paul's teaching that God "wills everyone to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). And we direct our charity especially toward "those most in need of Thy mercy"—the unrepentant, habitual sinners, the forgotten, the spiritually endangered, the outcast, the unwanted, the untouchables, those with no one else to pray for them.

The School of Mercy

Prayed after each decade of the Rosary, this petition becomes a school of divine mercy. Ten times during a full Rosary, we acknowledge our sins, confront the reality of hell, and throw ourselves on Christ's mercy while interceding for the salvation of others. This constant repetition forms the conscience, stretches the heart beyond self-concern, and nurtures a missionary charity that is truly Catholic—truly universal.

The prayer balances realism with hope. It does not shy away from the "fires of hell," yet it frames this sobering truth within an act of confident trust in Christ's desire and power to save. For those who pray it faithfully, the Fatima Prayer cultivates not fear but hope, not anxiety but trust in the boundless Love and Mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Participating in Christ's Mission

Our Lady of Fatima's message centered on prayer, penance, and reparation so that "many souls be saved and there be peace." Look at the timing of Mary's apparitions—at the peak of despair of the first World War. Here we are, just over 100 years later, and that deep despair and war still persist.

The Decade Prayer is the concrete way ordinary Catholics participate in this mission. Each time we pray it, we join Christ and Mary in making reparation for sin and seeking the conversion of sinners. We become co-workers in the great work of salvation. We become more effective bridge builders, peace makers and peace givers.

How to Pray It

The practice is beautifully simple. After completing the ten Hail Mary's of each decade and saying the Glory Be, pause and pray slowly and attentively: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy." Then continue to the next mystery.

No special preparation is needed beyond a reverent heart and attention to the words. Yet this small prayer, faithfully repeated, has the power to transform hearts, deepen love for the Rosary, and awaken believers to their calling as intercessors for a world in desperate need of mercy.

In an age of division and despair, the Fatima Prayer reminds us that Christ's mercy is greater than all our sins, and that, through simple, faithful prayer, we can participate in the salvation of souls and the coming of God's kingdom.

Wishing us all Peace and Blessings.

By Kevin McClenahan, KCHS



Spirituality virtues of the EOHSJ

In this issue we will initiate a five-part series on the Spirituality virtues of the EOHSJ.

The modern purpose and mission of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is understood as we look at our constitution and regulations document. As an EOHSJ member, should our Catholic spirituality be different? The spirituality team sought to answer the question of “what is the unique spirituality of the EOHSJ and how would it affect our daily lives.” There are key documents that shed light on our spirituality. The Grand Master, Cardinal Filoni, addressed this directly in his book on the Spirituality of the Order “The Room was filled with Perfume” and the Vatican recently produced a EOHSJ formation document. Additionally, the EOHSJ Constitution, the EOHSJ Investiture prayers/vows, the EOHSJ Spirituality Guide, and EOHSJ Prayers and Reflections book are sources of our spirituality too.

The five virtues that will be discussed are not official EOHSJ doctrine, but an attempt by the San Diego area spirituality team to summarize 100’s of pages of the aforementioned content and give some thoughts on how to incorporate the unique spirituality in our lives. The San Diego team has summarized the EOHSJ Spirituality in five main virtues below and the remainder of this series will explore each of them.



Christ centered personal sanctification



Rooted in prayer for people in the Holy Land, the Queen of Palestine, and the Saints of the Order.



Chivalric Virtues: Gentleness, Charity, Loyalty, Courtesy, Generosity



Contemplation of the Cross, Sepulcher, and Resurrection of Christ (DNA of our Church)



Fidelity to the successor of Peter with preservation and propagation of faith in the Holy Land.

Virtue 1 – Christ centered personal sanctification (*A Call to Holiness*)

"Christ-centered personal sanctification" refers to the process of an individual's spiritual growth and moral development within the Christian faith, with a focus on Jesus Christ as the central figure and model for this transformation. As members of the EOHSJ we pledged a commitment at our investiture to strive for personal sanctification and holiness in our lives so that we may be ever more effective in doing God's work in both our local communities and in the Holy Land.

Being Christ-centered implies that the process of sanctification is rooted in and directed by the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. A Christ-centered approach emphasizes building a deep and personal relationship with Christ, allowing His life and teachings to guide all aspects of one's life.

Sanctification is the process of becoming more holy and set apart for God's purposes. It involves an ongoing transformation where one seeks to align their thoughts, actions, and character with the will of God.

Personal sanctification calls for continuous spiritual development. It requires a deepening understanding of faith, consistent prayer life, study of scripture, and active participation in Christian community. As members of the EOHSJ we have spirituality opportunities like our monthly rosaries, participation in Order events such as the mid-year meetings, retreats, days of recollection and other special gatherings. Additionally, we can deepen our faith by participation in daily mass, frequent confession, eucharistic holy hours and praying to the saints of the order. Study of our faith and scriptures is also critical to our spiritual growth and can be done with the aid of digital or on-line resources which are abundantly available. Matthew Kelly's "Dynamic Catholic" and Bishop Barron's "Word on Fire Institute" are two such examples of digital media platforms that offer daily reflections, articles, video courses and many other tools to aid in your spiritual journey.

Sanctification also involves living out one's faith in day-to-day life, adhering to Christian ethics, values, and virtues such as love, patience, humility, and service. As Christians, we must walk the walk and demonstrate through our service that Christ is the driver behind our actions. As Knights and Dames of the EOHSJ we can strive to be living examples of Christ's disciples on earth. In practical terms, this means showing mercy and compassion to those in need within our local community and in the Holy Land. Our actions and our generosity can speak volumes and serve to evangelize the gospel in a powerful way.

In essence, "Christ-centered personal sanctification" emphasizes the believer's journey toward holiness and maturity in faith, drawing strength, guidance, and example from Jesus and continuously seeking to reflect his character in their life.

The Works of the Patristic Fathers

The Patristic fathers were the early church fathers who contributed significantly to the doctrine and theology of the church. In the second century, the Christian thinker Origen --- who was knowledgeable in all the arguments of the Greek philosophical schools ---promoted the Bible as a source of true inspiration. He argued that the literal meaning of the Bible, its laws, stories, and narratives point us to eternal life and that scripture contains the truths necessary for salvation.

Also in the second century, Saint Irenaeus played a decisive role in determining the canon of the New Testament. As dissensions and heresies arose, reference to scripture was the obvious way to determine what the truth was, but without a clear canon, it was easy to attack an opponent's statements by saying they were unscriptural. Saint Irenaeus established a canon that is almost identical to the present one, and also gave reasoned arguments for each inclusion and exclusion.

In the second and third centuries, the Christian theologian Tertullian was a prolific apologist, or explainer of the faith to non-Christians. Being among the first to write in Latin --- the language of the Western Roman Empire --- he shaped Christian doctrine by inventing the words with which to make sense of it, such as "Trinity." While living in a predominately pagan world, he was insistent on not diluting Christianity by compromise with paganism.

In the fourth century, following the Council of Nicaea, the three men known as "the Cappadocian Fathers" --- Saint Basil the Great, his younger brother Saint Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Saint Gregory of Nazianzus --- formulated Trinitarian doctrine precisely and identified the meaning and role of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Being champions of orthodoxy in the face of Arianism, they worked tirelessly to arrive at the true definition of the Holy Spirit, as we know Him today.

In the fourth and fifth century, the Christian theologian and philosopher Saint Augustine significantly influenced the development of the faith and today is a preeminent Doctor of the Church and considered one of the most important figures of the Patristic period. The patron of the Augustinians, he contributed to the understanding of the body and soul, as well as the doctrine of original sin, the necessity of divine grace for salvation, and the importance of loving God over earthly desires. He also wrote extensively on the Trinity and advanced the belief that there is one church having two aspects. The first being the visible, such as the church hierarchy, the sacraments, and the laity, and the second being the invisible, relating to the saved souls in Heaven.

Saint Augustine wrote over 100 titles, with many of them surviving today. He is best known for his classic works Confessions, On Christian Doctrine, and City of God. He served as Bishop of Hippo Regius (modern-day Algeria) in North Africa from 395 A.D. to his death in 430 A.D.